

# DIVERSITY WORKS

APRIL 2017 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

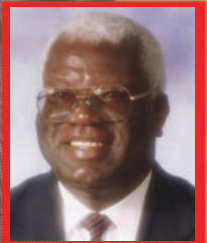
"For All of Us"



LUCINDA FOUNTAIN



WENDELL JONES



REVEREND DR. MUMFORD



JESSICA MORRIS

**DESTINED  
TO LEAD**

**DIVERSIFYING  
HONDA**

**FLORENCE CHAMBER  
HONORS WENDELL JONES**

**SERVING EXCELLENCE  
TO ALL CITIZENS**

**ADP EMBRACES  
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

## FEATURING:

COVER PHOTO: KEVIN LANE  
WAL-MART GENERAL MANAGER, DARLINGTON

# HONDA

*Honda's philosophy is based on "Respect for the Individual." We are committed to bringing together a diverse group of associates, dealers and suppliers to foster the kind of innovation and vitality that enables us to achieve our dreams of creating products and technologies that make people's lives better.*



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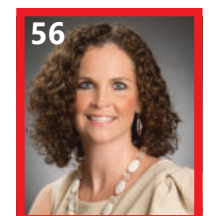
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## MISSION AND VISION

### OUR MISSION

Diversity Works© is a magazine for the socially conscious and responsible worker at any level. The magazine has a commitment to be a showcase for organizations and their individuals that represent best practices in diversity of the workforce and supplier choices. We feature articles on those displaying inclusionary vision in and for the marketplace and 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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## BLOSSOMING IN OUR COMMUNITY



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

We are thrilled to bring to you the latest issue of Diversity Works®, and we thank you for your continued support. If you've walked outside on any gorgeous morning thus far this year, you probably realized that something's definitely stirring out there. You probably noticed the early blooming of trees and flowers as nature began its rebirth. You might even be one who proclaimed that we somehow "completely

missed winter" this time. At the same time though, you might be one who is already feeling the effects of pollen as it toys with your allergies each time you do step outdoors. Well, just like the blossoming of nature, you're about to see just how much our community is blossoming also.

In this issue we bring elements of newness and oneness. We reveal newness in the form of businesses having grand openings, individuals celebrating new ventures, and readers gaining a new way of thinking as the result of companies sharing new information. We reveal oneness in the form of articles on organizations and entrepreneurships that were birthed out of negative circumstances and blossomed into positive forces that are helping people grow individually and together as a community.

Be sure to check out our cover story to hear from Kevin Lane, the featured individual who leads with a new ideal of diversity. Read on to discover whom Lane specifically accredits to his successes as the general manager of Wal-Mart in Darlington, and find out whom he says taught him how to be a great leader.

In this issue we cover all aspects of your life that you may want to flourish in, from spirituality to business to financials and health, to name a few. You can find out about spiritual growth with Mrs. Florence Plus America, Leya Elijah-Eller, and through Helping Florence Flourish (HFF). HFF recently hosted its event, "Oneness Embraced," and has several follow-up sessions the public is welcomed to join. Determine how you can experience growth in your life too by checking in on business leaders who consciously practice diversity and inclusion, leaders like Ann King of United Real Estate.

But wait. We have much more. Another business you might want to stick around to learn more about is the Pee Dee African American Chamber of Commerce, an organization that explains how everyone in the community can benefit from its success. Then be prepared because the City of Florence is letting you know its revitalization plans for 2017, so be ready to be blown away by the growth going on in the city as well as others in the area. If you are a current member of the military or are a Veteran, we have SC Thrive here to help with tax filing needs. If you're looking to purchase a vehicle, Eric Jett and James Dennis of Efir Chrysler Jeep Dodge's sales department have you covered. Find them in our Lifestyle section, along with news on the Senior Citizen Association, which serves seniors and is seeking volunteers.

We at Diversity Works® keep our readers' health in mind, so we bring to you the information you need to improve your health

and that of those around you. We have New York Life here to guide you and your family with life insurance needs. And check out how Anderson Brothers Bank has been working in connection with the American Red Cross to host its annual blood drive. Learn the signs of depression from Susan Carter of Pee Dee Mental Health and about behavioral health from HopeHealth's Eboni Frazier and Tammie Pough. On the other hand, keep reading to celebrate with Amara Sturkey, Executive/Director of The SilentMe, who shares her story of surviving depression. Get help for diabetes, and find out whom Carolinas Hospital System (CHS) has been celebrating recently. Stick around for information on the event CHS is having soon along with The American Lung Association. This event will benefit residents suffering from chronic lung disease, pulmonary fibrosis or lung cancer and will be a learning experience for all in attendance.

Join with us as we recognize people who are making a big difference in the lives of our citizens. Some include organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and McLeod's HOPE Fund and individuals like our very own Les Echols, a member of the Lions Club who is honored for his volunteerism. Similarly, Carolinas Hospital System informs you on how to be of service to those in need.

Let's be sure to show special appreciation to educators who were awarded Teacher of the Year, including Emmanuel Brown III, Linda Cardenas, Tracy Hatcher, Latonya Yates-Ford, and several others. For more school-related news, be on the lookout for what's happening with Florence-Darlington Technical College, Francis Marion University, the Darlington County School District, South Carolina's Governor's School for Science & Mathematics, Florence Career Center and others.

We also bring touching articles in recognition of Autism Awareness, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention, and Child Abuse Prevention month. Stories are about men and women taking a stand against sexual assault, people who are defying all odds, those who tell why you should trust your instincts and others who tell you that you are not alone in life, regardless of the situation. Look for Terester L. McAllister of Sisters 4 the Future, Jessica Brown of All 4 Autism, Giselle, a client of Pee Dee Mental Health, and more.

When it's time to unwind after a tough day at school or work, remember that we understand and definitely didn't forget about you. Simply refer to the articles on fun, local entertainment. Enjoy the new coffee shop and artist venue called Soule' Café as well as Speakeasy1, a new sports bar, both of which opened in Florence and are sure to help anyone looking for diverse atmospheres and entertainment. In addition, find out about upcoming events coming to the area. Some include The Leadership Florence Class of 2017's "Disco Ball" gala, the City of Dillon's "Celebrate Main Street" and Lake City's ArtFields®. These are only a few, so stay tuned for even more.

After reading this issue, we at Diversity Works® hope that our articles have motivated you to grow as much as they did us. So going forward, let's be encouraged and thankful for life and wellness, inspired to live better and enthused about growth as we blossom in the future. Happy reading!

## BRANDING OUR CITY

Submitted by Amanda Pope, CMO Administrator

A collaborative group from the community began meeting over a year ago to discuss the identity of Florence and the idea for a potential new community brand. A branding committee was formed to focus on this effort. With the momentum that Florence is experiencing, as well as notable statewide recognition in recent years, there was a desire to better define Florence as a community and create a new identity that would reflect this positive image.



Avant Marketing Group was the firm selected through the Florence Downtown Development Corporation to aid in this process. Representatives from Avant visited Florence, attending community forums, meeting with City Council members, city staff, community leaders and many other community

members to determine how Florence was perceived. Following their visit and an extensive review of the research obtained, they shared concepts and potential considerations for branding to the committee. After multiple revisions and much discussion, a new brand was developed and agreed upon: a brand that reflects a progressive southern city in the heart of the Pee Dee region.

**“Florence – Full Life. Full Forward.”** was selected by the committee as the tag line to be used with the new logo. It is intended to define and reflect who we are as a community and celebrate the current progressive movement within Florence. The new brand and tag line reinforce our commitment for continued forward motion in order to achieve our brand vision.

**Full Life.** Our community is currently full of life with a revitalized energy from new growth. What was once a hope and vision for the future has become a reality, and the community is invigorated with the quality of life that Florence now offers. Florence is recognized as a model community across the state, boasting five consecutive years of Municipal Achievement Awards. The City’s downtown now provides entertainment options with a state of the art performing arts center, street festivals, restaurants and shopping. As a progressive and socially diverse city we are attracting new industry and growth, boosting the local economy, providing more opportunity for the community and our residents.



**Full Forward.** What’s next for Florence? With the current momentum, Florence has the ability to push full forward and continue efforts “to be recognized as a vital contributor to the South Carolina economy and the

model of prosperity for the Southeast – a community of choice in which to live, work, and play.” Nearing adoption, the City’s updated Master Plan focuses on determining the next geographic area for downtown redevelopment. Important in this process is identifying private sector investors to create additional catalyst projects. Public investments will include construction of streetscape enhancements and parking. Priorities include recruiting additional niche retail, creating more housing, developing a food/artisan overlay district and establishing downtown as a tourism destination. Also critical is the creation of a



downtown gateway to serve as a bridge to adjacent neighborhood redevelopment projects. Construction of downtown connections to the City’s existing trail system is necessary to encourage pedestrian traffic downtown.

City Council and City staff will continue its commitment to strive toward excellence in endeavors to make Florence a great place to live, work and play. There will be continued effort to create an even stronger sense of community by promoting diversity and inclusion as the key to continued success recognizing that new growth brings a diverse and robust “Full Life. Full Forward.” Florence.



**Brand Vision** To be a model community for the growth and prosperity of the state of South Carolina and the Southeast.

**Brand Mission** We are a beacon of progress. Our economy and social diversity offer boundless opportunities and enormous assets.

**Brand Values** Progress. We take pride in our accomplishments, and we are dedicated to the future progress of our community.

**Investment** Our community investment is about people. We believe in providing exceptional educational opportunities, superior healthcare services, and a culture and environment that promote a quality of life for everyone.

**Community** We are a true community – a place where friendship and a genuine welcoming attitude create an enjoyable social environment and define our fullness of life.

**Brand Position** A beacon of progress, Florence is one of South Carolina’s most future-oriented communities. We are focused on being a model for growth and prosperity while ensuring a quality of life that is supported by exceptional education opportunities, superior healthcare services, and an enjoyable social environment. Progress, investment and a strong sense of community define Florence – a place full of life.

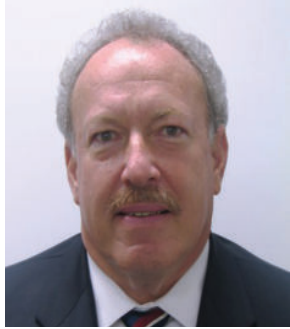


# A NEW COMMUNITY BRAND FOR A NEW DOWNTOWN

*Submitted by Raymond "Ray" Reich – City of Florence Downtown Development Manager*

In so many ways the City of Florence has evolved over the past five years. From our growing number of sports facilities to the revitalization of downtown and the neighborhoods, we are a community that is truly full of life and moving ahead full forward.

Gone are the days when economic development and healthcare recruiters would avoid downtown when showing off our community to prospective industries and healthcare professionals. Instead of being a corridor of shame the downtown is now a place of pride and is one of the "must see" destinations in any tour given to visitors. Best of all, the revitalization shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.



*Raymond "Ray" Reich*

In 2016 we saw the opening of the new Carter Health Science Facility, HopeHealth, The Kress Corner development, The Emerson Apartments, a parking garage, new restaurants and retailers, and new streetscapes.

The year 2017 will bring the completion of the Florence County Judicial Center located on North Irby, the addition of more retailers and restaurants, the relocation of Carolina Bank's corporate headquarters from Darlington to the corner of Evans and Irby, and the moving of the Florence Art Trail Gallery to a new permanent location at 142 North Dargan. Construction on another FMU downtown



facility is also expected to begin in the historic former post office building across from their new health science facility.

Last, and certainly not least, will be downtown's second hotel. The Hyatt Place Hotel will begin construction at the corner of East Evans and South Dargan streets in April, and the construction should be completed by early 2018.

The 2017 projects referenced above represent an investment of over \$85 million in downtown Florence and over \$200 million since 2011. As the new community brand position states, we are a beacon of progress, a future-oriented community, and we are focused on being a model for growth and prosperity. As the downtown revitalization process continues, we will live the brand by embracing our mission to be "full life and full forward" through increased development, more community events and creating downtown as the tourist icon of the Florence community.



*Helping Our Community*

## *Diversity* of Entertainment & Events



*Connect With Us*



FULL LIFE. FULL FORWARD.  
**FLORENCE**  
SOUTH CAROLINA

## *In Downtown Florence*

- City Center Farmers Market
- Fashion Week
- Florence Oktoberfest
- Florence After 5
- SC Pecan Festival
- ...& Much More!

# FLORENCE CHAMBER HONORS WENDELL JONES

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



Wendell Jones

Wendell Jones of Edward Jones Investments was recently honored as the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's 2017 Small Business Person of the Year. Jim Ivey of Dedicated Community Bank recognized Jones during the Chamber's Outlook Luncheon held on March 30. The award is presented annually to recognize a small business owner who exemplifies professionalism, strives to enhance our community and has made a positive impact on the local economy.

"Dedicated Community Bank is pleased to sponsor the Small Business Person of the Year Award" said Ivey, executive vice president. "Our bank is a small business itself and we recognize that small businesses are the engines of our local, state, and national economy. Here in South Carolina, small businesses employ approximately half of the state's private workforce."

Jones has been a financial advisor with Edward Jones for 22 years. He has a leadership and mentoring role as regional leader and general partner for Edward Jones Region 207 covering Florence, Darlington, Hartsville, Cheraw, Lake City, Marion and the coast from North Myrtle Beach to Georgetown. He is also actively involved in the community through Boy Scouts, First Presbyterian Church, Florence Chamber, Florence Symphony and Florence County Progress. "Wendell epitomizes the criteria for the Small Business Person of the Year Award, as he is a leader in the Florence business community, has demonstrated dedication to overcoming the adversities of a small business, and has certainly made a positive economic impact in the Pee Dee area," said Ivey.

Jones received his bachelor's in electrical engineering and master's in industrial management from Clemson University. Prior to coming to Edward

Jones, he was a Surface War Officer in the U.S. Navy, and after that he worked for ABB in Florence and Bloomington, Ind. He has been married to Margaret since 1988, and they have three children--Caroline, Palmer and William.

"Wendell is very deserving of this recognition," said Mike Miller, President of the Florence Chamber. "He's a solid individual that meets each of the qualifications that this award requires. The Chamber is especially proud to have had him in various positions on the Chamber Board of Directors, including being Chairman of the Board in 2012-2013."



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# REVEREND DR. MUMFORD: SERVING EXCELLENCE TO ALL CITIZENS

by Ta' Meeka Epps



Reverend Dr. Waymon Mumford

When we view our work, no matter how humble or exalted as work done in the spirit of service to our fellow beings and, therefore, to God himself, we become the light needed to drive out darkness in the world. Reverend Dr. Waymon Mumford, a lifelong resident of Florence, epitomizes the spirit of service by giving his time and talents serving and helping as many as he can.

When you operate in the true spirit of service, there is no sacrifice because each act of service results in a return. The return comes in the satisfaction of knowing one has done the right thing, one has contributed to a greater cause or one has somehow brought joy to a fellow human being.

Mumford is a decorated scholar who received his high school diploma from Wilson High. He then attended Florence-Darlington Technical College, completing his studies in 1980. In 1983 he graduated from the 133rd FBI National Academy. He earned a bachelor's in business administration from Limestone College in 1992. He completed his seminary studies in 2003 at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC). He was awarded the honorary doctorate degree in law from Morris College in May 2012.

Mumford acknowledged his call to ministry in 1998 and was licensed by the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (Darlington) that year. Six months later, he was ordained by the Pee Dee Baptist Association. Mumford serves as the Pastor of Central Baptist Church in Florence and is a member of the executive of the National Baptist Convention USA.

Mumford retired from the City of Florence and the District Court

of South Carolina and ran for the elected position of County Council for Florence District #7, which he won in November 1994. The Florence County Council is composed of nine elected officials, one from each district in the county. Elected officials make decisions to help the county grow and develop while creating opportunities for the residents of the community. They are elected to oversee the operations of the county.

Mumford sits on the board of directors for the South Carolina Association of Counties and was selected to serve on the National Association of Counties (NACo) board of directors because of his commitment to service and excellence. NACo has established a consolidated family of affiliated subsidiaries to pursue and fulfill a vision of healthy, safe and vibrant counties across the United States. The strategic focus is to strengthen the leadership, ingenuity and investments of county governments and the elected and appointed officials as well as all residents. NACo is owned by America's county governments with oversight and governance by an executive committee and board of directors.

NACo is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. NACo membership is an investment in the county's future because the association works to ensure that counties have the resources, skills and support needed to successfully lead their communities into the future. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money.

Florence County has a God-fearing man with the experience, knowledge and savoir-faire operating in the true spirit of service and voicing the concerns of all citizens.



## Florence County Council

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# CONTINUING AN UNDYING LEGACY

by Les Echols



Lawrence "Chipper" Smith II

Lawrence "Chipper" Smith II is a young burgeoning professional in the Florence area. With his nickname and spirited personality, people would never think he is the third-generation heir of Smith Funeral Home, also located in Florence. "Our business is a part of the funeral industry. Some would say it's an unfortunate type of family business; however, it is a business that we will all need one day," said Smith.

The family business, Smith Funeral Home, was started in 1950 in Florence County by Smith's grandfather James Oscar Smith and his grandmother, Annette McCollum Smith, both Marlboro County College graduates. In addition, Smith's grandparents were also graduates of SC State University, Howard University and Echols Mortuary School. Not only were they a mortician and a funeral directress respectively, but they were also educators in Florence County, which allowed them to touch many lives in different ways. Smith's father, James Lawrence Smith I, represented the second generation of the family business. He was a graduate of Johnson C. Smith University and Gupton Jones Mortuary of Science and joined the family business in 1971.

Unfortunately, a tragic accident occurred when the matriarch of the family, Lawrence Smith I, was killed, leaving Smith's mother, Felicia Robinson Smith, as the sole proprietor to carry on the legacy of the family business as a licensed funeral director. Smith spoke with confidence about his mother's ability to run the business. "I never doubted my mother's success because she loves God and she has a genuine love for people. All through my college experience, she reminded me to keep God first and return home to assist with the family business, the legacy which your family left," concluded Smith.

In speaking on his family legacy, Smith was emotional while explaining what it means to him. "Just imagine someone giving you a shoe size that is a 13, but you only wear a size nine. I have a lot of space to fill in those shoes." Smith's comment alluded to the huge historical impact that the Smith family has had on the industry and the community. During his grandfather's time, they were the first African American funeral home in the Pee Dee Area to have limousines and a large chapel. In 1967, his grandfather, Jo Smith, founded the sixth District Morticians Association, and was the Vice President of South Carolina Morticians Association. "My grandfather and father had the personality and the love of people to continue to render service with compassion I am able to fill those shoes because I am confident in the strong business model that is our family legacy, and I have the distinct advantage of growing up and becoming educated in and around the funeral industry," continued Smith.



Lawrence "Chipper" Smith II standing beside grandfather's photo

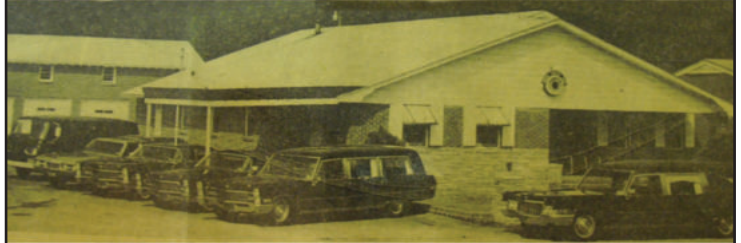
Along with his upbringing and natural business savvy, Smith also boasts great educational credentials. He is a proud graduate of Wilson High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. He also graduated from Gupton Jones Mortuary of Science.

"Chipper," as he is affectionately known, has always had a passion for baseball. "Baseball has always been a part of my life," he said. "I

enjoy golf as well as hoping to become an avid golfer one day. I enjoy my family, and my mother is my best friend. And I also enjoy traveling and spending time with friends."

Smith is also involved in his church, Trinity Baptist Church, and serves as a Board Member of the Florence Boys and Girls Club, and is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. Never shy about his spiritual conviction, Smith concluded by saying, "I credit all of my help to the Lord. Because of my savior, I can give to our community."

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# UNITED IN REAL ESTATE WITH ANN KING

by Mallory Brayboy



Residents of Florence know Ann King as a local real estate expert and professional. King has been in the industry for 35 years, serving 34 of those years as a real estate broker. Having

such a lengthy career in the industry, she has naturally witnessed major shifts take place throughout. Interest rates that were once 18 percent are now at 4 percent, farmer's home properties were sold on a frequent basis, and buyers did not have as many financing options available. "There are so many different products out there for first-time homebuyers, veterans, etc.," says King. "Things have evolved. But you still have to have good credit." She suggests that interested homebuyers visit their local bank and get prequalified to learn about the available options.



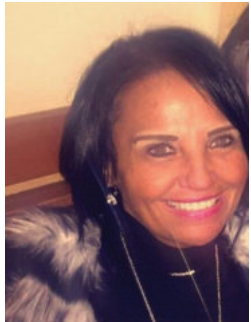
*Ann King, Broker-In-Charge*

Once you are prequalified, real estate professionals are able to match you with a home that fits your price range.

King has made strides in the real estate profession, yet her entry into the field was a bit challenging. "Being a Black woman in real estate 35 years ago was not fashionable," she says. "During the time I got into real estate you could count us on one hand," she says referring to the amount of Black real estate professionals in Florence. Not one to be deterred

easily, King pushed through and made a name for herself. "I had a vision of where I wanted to go. Once you get that vision and God's blessing, man can't stop you." King does, however, thank John Jebaily for being her mentor.

King has recently wrapped up ten years of ownership at the Century 21 brokerage in Florence and now serves as the Broker-in-Charge of United Real Estate. Not wanting to serve another interval of Century



*Tammy Jackson*

21's required ten years, King decided to venture into something different. Simultaneously, Winston Velpula, owner of United Real Estate in Columbia, was in search of a broker to open an office in Florence, and things worked out perfectly for the two. Velpula bought the first SC United Real Estate franchise in June of 2015. He began the company with four agents and has expanded to three South Carolina locations with over 90 agents in less than two years. He and King anticipate doubling the number of agents in the Florence office before the end of the year. The vast majority of King's agents transferred with her to United Real Estate. They make a united team, indeed, with agents from various sectors of the world, speaking multiple languages and sharing a love for real estate.

Tammy Jackson and Paloma Myers are female agents who both experienced difficulty early on. Jackson started out in the area 11 years ago and faced rejection from brokerages



*Paloma Myers*

due to her beginner status. She thanks King for welcoming her in and teaching her the business. Undergoing the same issue, Myers says, "A



*Emem Oyekan*

lot of agencies don't want to deal with new agents. They don't want to take the time to teach." Myers is a fluent Spanish speaker originally from Texas, who lived in Korea before settling in her husband's hometown of Florence.

Emem Oyekan, of Nigeria, is another female realtor at the company who underwent trials upon her entry into the field. When she started out three years ago, her initial brokerage was not a good fit for her. "I came to Century 21 at a time when I had lost confidence in myself. When I came here I felt right at home. People were more friendly and outgoing. From the culture I'm from everyone kind of relates with each other and I saw that with this company when I came here," says Oyekan. Diversity is a major asset in establishing success, yet it can pose as a challenge at times. Oyekan cites her main challenge as being able to speak in a way that people understand her here.



*Patrick Pierre*

She shares the same difficulty with another agent, Patrick Pierre. Pierre, from the West Indies, is fluent in English, Creole, French, and some Spanish. Though he loves showing homes he sometimes finds difficulty in being understood through his accent. He solves this by having a translator come along on the home visits.



*Kim and Robert Gordon*

Team Gordon is a unique duo at the firm. They are a husband and wife team. A major aspect of being a successful real estate agent is mastering the ability to sell. Husband Robert Gordon joined his wife Kim in 2012, two years after she began, to help her with the selling process. He had worked in the insurance business before the rise of technology. "You had to really get out there and prospect and beat the bushes," he says. The couple practices real estate in order to help others, especially new homeowners, make more informed decisions. "When we purchased our house we didn't use a realtor, so we missed out on a lot of information. When I work with someone, I'm not going to let them miss out on information I missed out on," vows Kim Gordon.



*Rita Fayall*

One of the most experienced agents at the brokerage is Rita Fayall, who's been licensed since 1976. Like King, she has definitely seen shifts within the real estate industry. "I came in long before computers. The way we do it is different, but what we do is still the same. We help people realize their dreams and educate them in the process," Fayall says.



*Taylor McFadden-Robinson*

Taylor Robinson, who began her career this January, is already fully aware of how major

# UNITED IN REAL ESTATE WITH ANN KING



*Melissa Floyd*

purchasing a home is. “It’s the biggest investment in their life and I like being a part of that,” she says.

Also new to the field is Melissa Floyd who began in October of 2016. She holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing and enjoys being able to utilize that knowledge in her real estate business. Floyd enjoys the mentorship provided by King. “I see a Black, successful woman and I wanted to have that guidance to follow,” she says. Floyd speaks sign language and is also the resident “tech guru” of the office.



*Charles Odutayo*

One of the agents she offers assistance to is Charles Odutayo. Odutayo entered into the field in 1993 and finds today’s technology to be “mind boggling.” Yet, that isn’t the biggest difference he’s witnessed. Odutayo is originally from Nigeria. “In America you have title companies and lawyers. No such thing in Africa. You pay cash. No financing,” he says. Odutayo has practiced real estate in Houston as well but says that he is still getting accustomed to the culture of the Florence area.

Like Odutayo, Cindy Fletcher finds the technology aspect of real estate to be a challenge. She practiced real estate 30 years ago in Washington, D.C. and has recently dived back into the field. “Because of entering into this at this time period, I find social media the most challenging. Now, a lot of people look, buy, and sell through social media,” she says. Fletcher




*Cindy Fletcher*

is happy to find that there are now several consumer laws in place to protect buyers. “In the past it was just ‘buyer beware.’ There were a lot of legal loopholes that really could have negatively affected the buyer. It makes us agents work harder, but that’s okay because at the end of the day you want to do fair and honest business with everyone you meet.”

United Real Estate’s diverse team of agents all have unique experiences yet share the same loyalty and desire to help others. When asked what she instills in her agents, King says, “Always be honest and treat the client how you would want to be treated, and always be professional.” Her agents trust her expertise and admire her character. “She has a good heart. Because she helps other people, that’s why she’s so successful,” says realtor Paloma Myers. Realtor Patrick Pierre has authored four books and paid tribute to her in one of his works. “I refer to her as the Queen of Real Estate, because she knows the business, she’s a go-getter, she’s not selfish, and she’s willing to help you if you need help.”


United Real Estate – a division of the United Real Estate Group – was founded with the purpose of offering solutions to the challenges facing agents in the residential real estate brokerage industry. Providing the latest training, marketing and technology tools to both agents and brokers under a 100-percent commission strategy, United Real Estate makes it more profitable for an agent to sell real estate and for real estate brokers to leverage a complete system to better grow a successful, thriving real estate brokerage.



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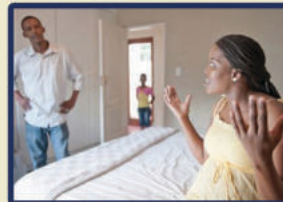
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# ADP EMBRACES DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WITH iWIN

by Ta' Meeka Epps



*iWIN Leadership Board*

In today's workplace equality is at the forefront for businesses, governments, regulators, society and most importantly, the talent that will drive the future success of a company. Companies that embrace diversity gain higher market shares and a competitive edge in accessing new markets. When working with people from different backgrounds and with different experiences and working styles, one is able to learn and receive another perspective or view. Diverse views allow room for better decision-making, leading to a higher-performance culture.

Automatic Data Processing or ADP, commonly known as the "payroll company," is one of the largest payroll providers in the world. ADP offers payroll, HR management software and human capital management services for businesses of all sizes. ADP seeks to reflect the marketplace and the communities they serve all over the world by attracting and retaining a diverse group of talented individuals while nurturing their talents and promoting growth.



*Jessica Morris*

ADP believes that highly engaged, diverse associates are the foundation for building a better company. ADP strives to ensure the workplace is inclusive by valuing individuals and helping associates to reach their full potential. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, the commitment to diversity allows ADP to deliver great service to its clients. More importantly, it enables ADP to be a more effective, empathetic and responsible global corporate citizen while producing employees who share the same

beliefs.

The ADP Office of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) supports the belief that equal opportunities must be created for everyone simply because it is the right thing to do, and iWIN (International Women's Inclusion Network) is a Business Resource Group (BRG) on a mission to support and encourage the career mobility of women.

The Florence ADP Tax Credits office chapter of iWIN is a forty-member team that includes a leadership of five amazing women. Jessica Morris, the chapter president and organizer for the local chapter, sits on the board with Kris Hylan (vice president), LaKecha Rainey (event and program coordinator), Rhonda Cusaac (marketing and communications coordinator) and LeeAnne Tindall (secretary).

Through mentorship, development and networking, iWIN will help members develop skills needed to succeed in the workplace, as well as experience growth in their own personal goals. One of the tools iWIN utilizes is speaker sessions, which exposes its members to internal and external executives they may normally not have access to. Ultimately, iWIN is helping members build their personal brand, invest in themselves just as they invest in others, and give back to the community.

The local iWIN chapter in Florence is all about empowering its members within the walls of ADP and within the community. Although

iWIN is a newly formed group, they have already made their presence felt in the community. When Florence ADP partnered with the Department of Social Services and the Angel Tree Project, the iWIN chapter collected money and adopted one of the children sponsored by the project to send the message there are people in the world who do not know you but still want you to know and experience love and who want you to succeed.

The iWIN chapter at Florence ADP is committed to enabling its members to realize one of their greatest potentials, which is to help position ADP as an employer of choice in the global marketplace while staying inline with the Diversity and Inclusion strategy. When empowering women to succeed in the workplace you place them in a position to reach their own personal goals showing you are vested in their success. When a company makes a commitment to its employees it makes a commitment to the continued growth of its enterprise while enriching the lives of those impacted.



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# KPI FUSION SHEDS LIGHT ON DISPARITIES

by Mallory Brayboy



Joyce Hill and Julia Carlson

Joyce Hill is the founder of KPI Fusion, a training and development company that aims to instill knowledge and power to produce an impact for individuals and companies. Hill has worked in training, development and

manufacturing for over 25 years. After her retirement in 2016, she noticed that companies did not follow up their development initiatives to measure their impact. “There wasn’t the emphasis by the businesses to make sure we are getting an impact. It was more of a check off,” she says. With a passion to help alleviate this problem, KPI Fusion LLC. was born in August of 2016. KPI Fusion comes from the idea of “key performance indicators” being fused together to create an impact.

Hill works side by side with Julia Carlson, who she met ten years prior while both worked for Honda of SC. The two held a “Women in Business” workshop in Florence during the first quarter of the year. A top priority was to provide tangible actions that could be applied right away. “When we approached the workshop, we wanted the women to be able to go back to work and actually be able to make changes,” says Carlson. During the workshop, the two provided statistics and a clear view of the disparities faced by women in the workplace, followed by tools and exercises to make changes both at work and home. “We felt like women really didn’t understand it enough to be able to do something about it, so we felt like we had to educate people to really get them to buy into it,” says Hill.

Women are currently only paid 74 cents on the dollar. Hill emphasizes, “At the rate that our wage gap is moving it will take 118 years for us to break that gap. It is a worldwide problem.” Carlson believes that the biases against women that lead to these numbers are cultural. “We are still fighting those ideas that men are breadwinners,” she says. Carlson also states that men have an advantage when it comes to discussing things in a more informal setting and that men are more likely to promote other men. Hill notes that their male counterparts are promoted based on their potential, while a woman must constantly prove herself over and over again.

The duo also shed light on the fact that women themselves enforce negative biases towards other women. “There are so many women who will fight against other women moving up in a company. When



a woman gets promoted people say she’s too tough to work with but a man doesn’t get criticized like that,” says Hill.

There are several ways that men and women can work together to lessen the issue at hand. Carlson feels that one way to combat the negative trends towards women is for females themselves to form a stronger alliance. “In the area it feels like the women don’t believe in themselves and the ones that do are fighting such a hard battle because they feel like they’re alone” she says. Having years of experience behind the scenes at companies, Hill suggests that bosses ensure there is something in place that rectifies biases.

KPI Fusion’s first public women’s workshop was met with great feedback. “We’re not stopping with just one workshop. We’re branching out to other chambers and areas where we can incorporate this. We’d be glad to visit companies and do the workshops for them,” says Hill. Studies show that women who receive mentoring achieve higher success in their careers. Hill and Carlson plan to branch off and start smaller support groups. These groups will follow modules set by Sheryl Sandburg’s Lean In program, which provides topics, materials and hour-long development exercises for women.

For more information about KPI Fusion and their next events visit [www.KPIFusion.com](http://www.KPIFusion.com).



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# LUCINDA FOUNTAIN ON DIVERSIFYING HONDA

by Les Echols



Lucinda Fountain

Many major corporations have recognized the need to cultivate diversity and inclusion, and several have put practical systems in place to create change. Diversity Works® caught up with Lucinda Fountain of Honda of South Carolina Mfg. Inc. (HSC). We asked her to tell us about what the company is doing to affect change, her position with HSC and how it was created.

“I am the Diversity Leader at Honda of South Carolina Mfg. Inc. (HSC). Each Honda facility has a similar position. My responsibility is

to manage and facilitate interactions with HSC Management, HSC Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Council and other entities of the company. Honda’s commitment to inclusion and diversity in all operations is fundamental to our corporate culture of ‘Respect for the Individual,’” said Fountain. Additionally, creating a workforce reflective of the customer base is critical to HSC’s long-term competitiveness in the North American region and globally. Honda has made steady progress in diversifying our company. Honda’s philosophy in part promotes being a company that society wants to exist.”

Per Fountain, Toshiaki Mikoshiba (president and CEO Honda Motor Company Inc. and North America) stated, “I am committed to making Honda the strongest company possible, and this includes leveraging the talents and creativity of a culturally diverse workforce that reflect the makeup of our existing and future customer base. My vision is that by 2020, Honda of North America will be more reflective of society at all levels of our organization.” But with a movement toward diversity comes some challenges.



Managing diversity is a significant organizational challenge. Obtaining buy-in from the entire management team has been Fountain’s focus for several years. HSC has promoted Cultural Competency, Unconscious Bias and Generational Differences workshops for all the management level associates to identify areas of opportunity and best practices. It is very important to give supervisors and managers the tools needed to recognize the value of differences, while promoting inclusiveness and teamwork. Fountain also mentioned that her present challenge is establishing Business Resource Groups. These groups are associate leads, company-supported groups whose members aligned across broad constituencies such as gender, race/ethnicity, ability, life-stage, experiences and other dimensions of diversity. “I am beginning a campaign to get associates interested,” said Fountain. “This is a great opportunity to assist associates with career development goals and networking, while building relationships with each other, communities, and customers.”

Fountain was also very thorough about how her role directly impacts diversity and inclusion outcomes. “A major part of my role is to build strategies that clearly and proactively convey corporate direction and rationale of the I&D program. The impact is that of educating and helping associates understand cultural differences and the values necessary to work productively in an inclusive workplace. Giving feedback and being intentional allows associates to feel and see the value of their contributions. By maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity HSC reflects its core values of treating people with respect.”

The overall role of I&D is creating a climate of best practices where HSC associates understand what is best for the organization based on teamwork and the dynamics of the workplace. The I&D function is to collaborate with businesses that can help ensure organizational success. Associates come to work seeking new challenges. Diversity is evident. Inclusion is engaging and being a part of the outcome. One of Fountain’s favorite quotes by Verna Myers is “Diversity is being invited to the party: Inclusion is being asked to dance.” This quote helps HSC associates relate to HSC’s goals and objectives, and it helps them think outside the box.

“The impact that results from my position is significant because associates see the company’s commitment to I&D by having an on site source supporting and developing initiatives and strategies to enhance our cultural environment,” Fountain continued. “Associates are more open in discussing challenging topics with each other. Associates are embracing their differences with a new confidence.”

The impact is increased opportunities, creativity, better performance and a greater business image,” concluded Fountain.

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# ARTFIELDS® CELEBRATES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Submitted by Taronda Barnes, ArtFields Program Director



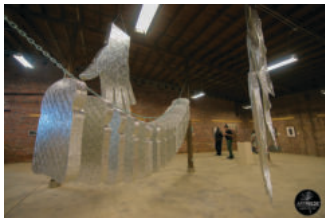
**LAKE CITY** - ArtFields® 2017 will present bigger cash prizes, an expanded Makers Market, more “meet-the-artist” opportunities and a full lineup of activities, food choices and music, culminating with an awards ceremony featuring a

performance from The Suffers.

The competition’s fifth anniversary is poised to be the ultimate celebration of art in the South, with thousands of art enthusiasts, artists and visitors expected to attend April 21 through April 29, celebrating contemporary Southern art, culture and community.

For the full lineup of events happening at ArtFields® 2017, please visit the calendar page at [www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org).

New, for this year are fun activities like mini-golf stations created by college students that lead visitors throughout downtown.



The nine-day art competition transforms historic Lake City. More than tripling its population, Lake City’s downtown historic district will transform into a town-wide art gallery with approximately 400 works of art featured in more than 40 venues –

from cafés to art galleries. A jury of visual art professionals will choose the winning works, and attendees can vote for their favorite in the People’s Choice Awards.

### Event highlights include:

- **Mini-golf stations** created by university art students throughout downtown aren’t just for show. Attendees can play a little putt-putt as they work their



way from venue to venue.

- **Public Art** – Friday, April 21, through Saturday, April 29, during competition viewing hours.

- **Color Me ArtFields 5K Walk/Run** – Saturday, April 22 from 7:30 a.m.

- **Makers Market** – Saturday, April 22 from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. and April 23 from

1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

- **Portrait Contest** – Saturday, April 22 from 2 – 6 p.m.

- **Gospel on the Green** – Sunday, April 23 from 6:30 – 8 p.m.

- **Art of Gardening Tours** – Monday, April 24 – Sunday, April 30. See events page for schedule.

- **Dandelion Gala** – A Culinary & Musical Experience in White, Thursday, April 27 from 7-10 p.m.

- **Plein Air Day** – Friday, April 28 from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. and April 29 from 7:30 a.m. – noon.

- **Lunchtime Crunchtime** Friday, April 28 from 1 – 2:30 p.m.

- **Arts n Drafts** – April 29 from 4 – 6:30 p.m.

- **Finale** – Saturday, April 29 from 7:30 – 10 p.m.

ArtFields® is the recent recipient of the 2017 Southeast Tourism Society Award and The Charles A. Bundy Award.

Meanwhile, join the conversation by following the festival on Twitter (@ArtFieldsSC) and using and searching the hashtag #ArtFields2017. For even more ArtFields 2017 updates, “like” ArtFields on Facebook and follow the competition on Instagram.

*Photos credited to Fred Salley / Meade Agency*



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# PDAACC SET TO IMPACT COMMUNITY

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Gilleon Frieson

**LAKE CITY-** "Are you serious?" Joe Brown Jr. looked Gilleon Frieson square in his eyes when he'd reached out to him with the idea of joining forces, even as strangers, to begin a new Black chamber of commerce in the area. Upon firmly answering "yes" to Brown's question for the second time, Frieson recalls how Brown immediately pulled out his briefcase and opened it, unveiling the tools they needed to get the Pee Dee African-American Chamber of Commerce (PDAACC) on the ground.

Frieson, a program director at Virginia College in Florence and a business owner in Lake City, had seen the disparities with African Americans. He saw the need in the community "to not point a finger, but to lend a hand to Black businesses." Frieson had called Brown that day after he was told, "A man named Joe Brown was already starting a Black chamber in the area."

Brown had first seen the need for the PDAACC years ago when he, as a business owner, "noticed the lack of support in the community" and saw the need to make things better for not only himself but also for other Black business owners. Less than ten months after their initial meeting, the PDAACC is now operational.

The PDAACC is not the same as any other local Black chamber in existence in the Pee Dee area. According to Frieson, while the PDAACC and other chambers may have similar missions, this one is "an affiliate of the U.S. Black Chamber of Commerce." He added that PDAACC is "a duly-qualified member...with access to resources and support from that national body."



Joe Brown Jr.

The PDAACC is a 501(c)(3) organization that aims to educate current small business owners and educate entrepreneurs who are interested in starting a business. Frieson pointed out that anyone can open a business, but "sustaining operations over a long period of time is difficult to do." He added that helping people "gain access to capital, education, and know-how" is much needed. "If we could change the philosophy and start supporting Black businesses, if we can get more businesses sustained past two or three years, and if we increase African American buying power, that will be the tide that will lift all boats. It will help everyone eventually."

Leading the PDAACC as president allows Brown to fulfill his passion to help young people. He said, "I feel obligated to do it...based on the sacrifices made by our 'fore parents' like Rosa Parks." One example Brown cited was the way in which the civil rights activist trusted in God through her situation as she took a stand so that other African Americans could one day have a better life.

Yet, the PDAACC does not exclude anyone of any race or ethnicity. The way the co-founders see it is that everyone in the Pee Dee can benefit from this inclusive chamber that won't leave anyone out. Brown said, "We all are important. We are willing to listen to all ideas and suggestions. Everyone needs to be united in efforts to impact the community in a positive way such as this."

The PDAACC will serve nine counties, including Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Lee, Marlboro, Marion, Williamsburg, Chesterfield and Georgetown. In order for the chamber to be a success, however, community support and participation are both necessary.

The Pee Dee African-American Chamber of Commerce thanks Virginia College in Florence for graciously hosting its March 25 launch. For more information, contact Gilleon Frieson or Joe Brown Jr. through the chamber's website at [www.pdaacc.org](http://www.pdaacc.org).

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# CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Submitted by Simma Lieberman



I just returned from the Global HRD Congress in Mumbai where I received the Global Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Award and also led a panel on diversity, inclusion and innovation.

The conference was amazing, not just because of the incredible people I met from over 100 countries, but also because of how included the conference organizers made us feel, and the sense of community that was created. For four days I felt like I belonged to a community with people I had just met.

Gaining new friends and colleague inspired me to write about inclusion, community and belonging. **If you think inclusion, community and belonging are important to your organization, read on.**



## Why Do We Need to Belong?

Have you ever experienced the feeling of not belonging? Do you remember how awkward, uncomfortable and self-conscious you felt? At some point in our lives, almost all of us will be in a situation where we feel like we don't belong.

It may be because of our skin color, ethnicity, age, religion, work function, etc. or just being the new person in the class, on the job or in the neighborhood. For some, depending on the situation, and context, the feeling of not belonging may be brief, or minor, and for others it may be intense and hard to dispel.

In my over 25 years as a diversity and inclusion strategist, I've found that everyone wants to feel part of something greater than themselves. People thrive when they feel part of a community at work. As a leader, you create that community.

Conversely, feeling like we don't belong negatively impacts our productivity and the way we work with a team.

One of my clients, Charles shared his experience at a health care organization in the state of Washington:

"Not only was I the only man in the department with 30 women but I'm a 6'2 African-American from New York. Everyone else was either White or Filipino and it was a small town. I was hesitant to make any suggestions at first. I felt uncomfortable, and kept second-guessing myself. I spent too much time worrying about how to fit in and what other people were thinking of me."

"After about a week, three of the women noticed my discomfort and invited me to 'a welcome Charles lunch.' I always remembered how I felt and what those women did to make me comfortable. Since I've been director, I've made it a practice take the time to welcome new people, integrate them into the team and have them feel like they belong."

Individual change and growth can occur when we put ourselves in situations with people who are different than us and are willing to be uncomfortable. Stagnation, narrow-mindedness and mediocrity occur when we cling to old ways of being



comfortable and surround ourselves with people who are just like us.

In a global marketplace, leaders need to know how to create environments where everyone has a sense of belonging. They're not afraid to speak up, take risks or make a mistake.

Hiring and promoting people who are most like us because we think it will be expedient and make our work easier, will result in inbred, recycled ideas.

## 3 Essential Actions to Demonstrate Inclusive Leadership and Promote a Culture of Belonging

1- Think of what you can say and do to make people feel individually included.

Remember a time when you felt like you didn't belong and how it impacted your thoughts, actions and emotions. Realize that there are people in your organization who may be feeling that way now. Take time to ask people who are different from you for their ideas to increase the success of your organization and for their feedback on what you can improve.

2- Let go of "shoulds" (i.e. New people "should" be experienced enough to just "fit in," "they should just know how to do their job," or "I shouldn't have to extend special treatment to anyone").

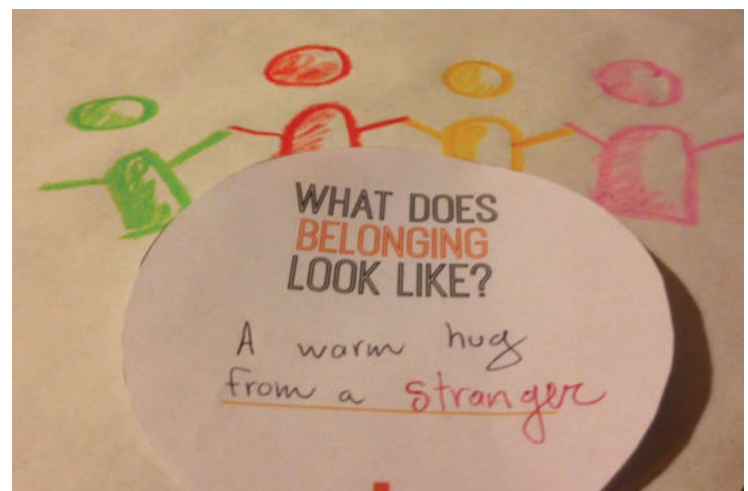
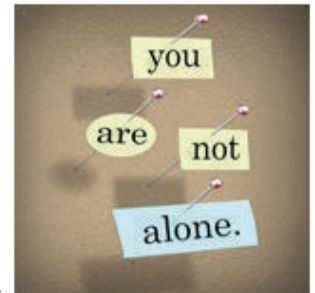
Creating a workplace community of belonging or inclusion is not "special treatment." Be aware that it is always a little awkward being the new person. If someone is different in some way than the majority of the organization or team where people already know each other, they will not only appreciate the extra time you take to welcome them, but it will also shorten the time it takes to ramp up in the organization.

3- Educate your team/organization about the importance of creating a culture of belonging, and implement processes that promote and sustain it.

It's in everyone's interest. If we feel like an outsider, like we don't belong, we spend too much time trying to "fit in" and not be seen. Instead of letting our brilliance shine so we can develop breakthrough products and services, our genius remains hidden and eventually dies out.

Contact us now to discuss how we can help you and your team create a workplace community of inclusion and innovation. Call 510-697-8226 or email [Simma@SimmaLieberman.com](mailto:Simma@SimmaLieberman.com). We'd love to answer your questions or learn about your best practices.

You can also visit us at [www.simmalieberman.com](http://www.simmalieberman.com).



## CACC EXECUTIVES WELCOME BUTERBAUGH

Articles Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President Hartsville Chamber



Quinetta Buterbaugh

**HARTSVILLE**— Quinetta Buterbaugh, president of the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, will serve on the 2017 Carolinas Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (CACCE) Board. CACCE’s mission is to equip Chamber of Commerce professionals with leadership skills and tools to build innovative chambers.

As president, Buterbaugh is responsible for leading the chamber in its mission: to be a catalyst for community success through member support and advocacy. Her knowledge and experience in budget planning, strategy, and execution; event planning; and project management will serve as an asset to the CACCE board and in driving their mission.

“I look forward to serving on the CACCE board and helping to shape the development of chamber of commerce executives and learning from peers across the two states. Compared to other chambers, the Hartsville chamber is small, but we offer valuable benefits to our members. Serving on the CACCE board will be an effective leadership development tool for me and will allow us to adopt best practices from other successful chambers,” said Buterbaugh.

The CACCE organization was formed in August 1994 when the North and South Carolina state chamber associations merged. There are 21 members of the CACCE Board that include both small and large chambers in North and South Carolina. Buterbaugh’s term on the board is three years, beginning Jan. 1, 2017. 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.

## HARTSVILLE MEDICAL ASSOCIATES OPENS DOORS



Dr. Elder, Anita Crawford, Dr. Mendez and Dr. Harless

**HARTSVILLE** — Hartsville Medical Associates celebrated the opening of their new office, located at 206 Swift Creek Road, with a ribbon cutting held in March. Dr. Michael Harless, Dr. Robert Elder and Dr. Yolanda Mendez have opened a state-of-the-art facility to serve the community. They have brought on Anita Crawford, who is a superb nurse practitioner, to help serve this area.

The practice boasts a medical staff of 17 highly qualified staff members that serves an average of 100+ patients per day. The facility has onsite X-ray and laboratory departments with general practice, occupational medicine and worker’s compensation as the focus of care. “We have dreamed of opening our own practice to better serve the people of Hartsville and the surrounding communities. The timing was right and we all wanted to be part of the vibrant downtown community. We are looking forward to serving this community for many years,” stated Elder.

“We are proud of the new facility and all that we have to offer Hartsville and the surrounding communities. Our physicians and medical staff enjoy treating the community and we love what we do. We have been delivering quality, compassionate care to our patients for many years and we have opened our doors to new patients to provide the same quality of care to anyone in need,” stated office manager Susie Sportiello.

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# MODEL THE INCLUSION YOU WISH TO SEE

by Dr. Nika White, President and CEO, Nika White Consulting



Dr. Nika White

**GREENVILLE**-Intention can be the greatest motivation to start a new initiative and achieve a goal. But sometimes plans fail to reach implementation because of misguided actions or lack of intentionality. The work of inclusion is an initiative that doesn't always happen organically, but requires intention.

One of the best ways leaders can create an impact is by committing to a lifestyle that values and leverages human differences. Imagine what the world would be like if we all were intentional

in our pursuit of inclusion. Diversity and inclusion are vital assets to the performance of organizations and communities. What if instead of seeing the work of inclusion as the responsibility of the individuals who carry the title, or the big corporations with social responsibility goals, we each start a movement whereby people embrace the process of becoming an Intentional Inclusionist™?

Promoting diversity and inclusion gives us opportunities to grow and learn from each other. As leaders, we must hold ourselves accountable to create the inclusion we wish to see. Diverse views allow us to make better decisions. Commitment and practice from everyone in becoming an Intentional Inclusionist™ is a solution to address racism, discrimination and marginalization and is equally important to thrive as a business community whereby all people can prosper.

I'd like to invite you to get a copy of my recently published book, "The Intentional Inclusionist™." This book is for leaders who want to grow as inclusion-minded individuals and exercise their leadership to enhance the workplace, build communities, and have a positive impact on other circles of influence to which they belong. To be an Intentional

Inclusionist™ is to be motivated by the power of intentionality and to be proactive in leveraging opportunities to engage people in achieving their full potential. This book, inspired by philosophies of leadership and inclusion, contains principles to help individuals become more intentional in how diversity and inclusion are understood and practiced at the individual level. No matter what your role—executive, manager, business owner, or someone interested in seeing our world improve—you have the power to drive change. It starts with each of us committing our lives to the work of inclusion. We must believe that our collective effort, one person at a time, one story at a time, can change the way the entire world looks at human differences. Please join the movement and model the inclusion you'd like to see by considering the below attributes of an Intentional Inclusionist™:

- Treat inclusion as a function of leadership.
- Be driven by values and a sense of fairness.
- Possess a strong sense of personal responsibility for change.
- Be open-minded and have a passion for learning about human difference.
- Engage in respectful questioning.
- Recognize that diversity in thinking is critical to effective collaboration.
- Encourage others to challenge existing practices that may unintentionally exclude.
- Lead by influence, not by authority.
- Empower others to grow by inspiring them to solve problems and come up with new ideas.
- Focus on results while holding others accountable for the performance they can control.
- Be courageous; stand up for what you believe in when you know it is right.
- Practice humility; admit mistakes and ask for feedback.
- Be proactive in finding ways to create a safe space for all in your sphere of influence to contribute and feel valued.



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# WHEN SOMEBODY WAVES TO YOU, WAVE BACK

Submitted by Norm Steadman, Executive Director, Darlington Chamber of Commerce



New Lamar Police Chief Jason Chaney (left) along with Norm Steadman, Darlington Chamber Executive Director. The location for the photo 3 Doors Down in Lamar.

LAMAR-Aubrey Totten has a vision for Downtown Lamar, and it includes pizza, local treasures and a stuffed alligator on stage with Friday night musicians. She has opened not one, but two businesses on Main Street in Lamar: The Kobby Knead Owl, a consignment shop with a little bit of everything, and 3 Doors Down (located conveniently three doors down from The Owl, naturally). The Owl has quickly become a favorite gathering place for those lucky enough to live in Lamar and for those who are happy to travel from Lamar's Pee Dee neighbors. Lamar natives know the building as Bernard's BBQ, and Bernard's sign still hangs above the front door. Bernard is conducting some renovations, and Totten was happy to occupy the space in the meantime. The name and location of the business are a conversation starter all on their own – giving somebody directions to a place three doors down from a different place that used to be a BBQ place can be tricky! Fortunately, the old standby truly applies in this case: it's on Main Street and you can't miss it.

Totten conducts herself with an energy that leaves one wondering how many more businesses will spring from her imagination before she's done, and that energy is apparent on Main Street these days. Out-of-town patrons to 3 Doors Down can expect to see a few regulars enjoying the outdoor seating near the door and to be greeted with a smile and a wave – Lamar is that kind of town. Though located in the heart of the kind of town that smiles and waves to strangers, 3 Doors Down is anything but sleepy. A distinct buzz is in the air on Friday nights in Lamar centered on the combination consignment shop/restaurant/music venue. A man, a microphone, an acoustic guitar and yes, a stuffed alligator took the stage one recent Friday night to play a set of classic rock and country songs to the small crowd. He took requests, he told jokes to the audience -many of whom knew him personally- and performed for the crowd of dozens like it was a crowd of thousands. After his set he spent time meeting the rest of the audience and appreciating the next performer while Totten dashed from table to table to make sure everybody had what they needed. Bowls of popcorn started appearing on tables during the second set, and the crowd settled in for a great night of music, food and fellowship.

Recently, 3 Doors Down hosted a meet and greet for Lamar's new police chief, Jason Chaney. Members of the community gathered around a table and enjoyed pizza bites, cheesy bread, BBQ sandwiches and sweet tea, excited for the event to start. As the six o'clock start time came and went, we were informed that the chief had received a call that needed to be addressed and would be running late. No groans of frustration were heard from the gathered crowd, as everybody was happy to wait, understanding that the duties of the police chief took priority. Lamar is that kind of town. When Chief Chaney arrived, he had a big smile on his face, eager to meet the community he now

serves. His career in law enforcement has prepared him for the work, and his community-oriented attitude has prepared him to boost his town up to the next level. He spoke about organizing community basketball leagues, creating recreation for Lamar's youth and expressed appreciation for the chance to meet his people in a friendly atmosphere. Naturally, he also expressed some new-job trepidation – the ins and outs of daily police chief duties, and more importantly, the ins and outs of connecting with his community. At this, a local man provided some sage advice: "All you need to know is: if somebody waves to you, wave back."

Lamar is that kind of town.

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## ARE YOU CHOOSING EASY? BE A HERO

by Robin Lewis



**HEMINGWAY** - Yesterday someone told me they felt called to do something that is way outside their comfort zone. I replied that one's comfort zone could be like a prison cell with the door open. You like staying inside looking out through the bars because it's comfortable, and you know what's going to happen there, but if you choose to, you can walk out at any time you **wish into something greater**.

So why do we choose easy and comfortable? Because it feels safer, we resist change, we avoid challenge and most people live in the culture of the easy chair.

### Don't Choose Easy

Most of us have grown up in an era where entitlement has become a strong influence in society. It's almost like there's been an invisible plane flying daily over your home or city, pulling a banner that reads, "You can stay where you are! You deserve to have what you want!" This is a growth stopper, a halt to progress, a killer of dreams and all that is possible for you. This kind of attitude pours water on the sparks of passion and potential. Believing that you deserve to have things easy or without much effort causes you to become inward focused and willing to settle for less. It results in a lack of caring about other people and determines whether your life will leave a positive footprint in the world.

Recently, I led a women's workshop about walking in freedom and gave the foundation that how we see ourselves determines whether we will choose to walk in the greatness that God has designed for our lives. He won't force us to, but don't we want to know who **we are divinely designed** to be and begin unpacking more of the potential we've been given?

Donald Miller, author of "A Million Miles in a Thousand Years," challenges us to not settle for a comfortable life, but instead to choose to live a better story with our lives because all our stories matter. He says if you live your life like a story, making it a good and challenging one where you accomplish meaningful things, then no one shrugs their shoulders when the credits roll. Then your life not only leaves a positive, influential footprint, but you become an inspiration for others.

Miller writes, "Every life is a story. Whether it is a story worth telling and talking about is up to you. People set out with grand dreams

of changing the world, falling in love, doing something amazing. But the drift toward the merely acceptable happens almost without notice. That does not have to be your story."

The "Keep Calm" signs are trending. Have you seen them? Everything from "Keep calm and

carry on," traditionally from England in World War II, to "Keep calm and eat a cookie."



I like the following one better because I believe we were created to live amazing lives that challenge and stretch us while deepening our dependence on God. We were created to be life givers, problem solvers, and yes, even misfits! This one is my favorite: "Don't keep calm. Get active and change the world."

In "Blessing Your Soul," Arthur Burk writes, "The Wright Brothers, Thomas Edison, and Henry Ford were all derided as fools. Dial up the craving to express what is in you so that it is more dominant than the natural drives for self-preservation and community approval. Don't fit the culture and live small inside. Be a misfit and unpack the treasure within you!"

### Don't let your dreams be stolen by the easy life. Be your own hero.

Looking for a hero to cheer you on? Learn to be your own hero, a person whose choices, decisions and dreams won't fit in the easy chair. Every great choice you make increases your self-confidence and builds your faith to try for more!

- What have you not tried because you have become willing to settle for less?
- What door have you not opened because of fear?
- When have you hesitated and stepped back instead of stepping up or speaking up?
- What will people talk about at your funeral? How many will be there?
- What in your life is designed to impact the lives of others?
- And finally, what seemingly impossible dream did God create for you to achieve that will make a positive difference in the world, that if you don't do it, your life will miss its potential because you stayed in your comfort zone?

There. That thing. That's the one.

### Live a Great Story

Be your own hero and bring the hero out in others. Stand up, step forward, speak up. Encourage, right wrongs, serve and inspire. That's the definition of a leader who leaves a positive ripple effect everywhere they step. Set goals in what you do. Find your purpose, that thing that makes you feel fully alive, and live your life with great intention. If you're not taking the steps to get you to that destination, then change your direction. You can move – you are not a tree!

Live a great story with your life. Don't choose easy. Choose the hard, the challenging, and unpack more of your potential, all the while remembering if you were created to do it, then all of Heaven is backing you up.

For nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).

Let me know if you'd like to talk out your dream with me. It would be an honor to encourage you in the living of your one, unique story!

Robin Lewis is a professional speaker, writer, and certified women's life coach who believes every person is a powerful history maker created to live a life of intentional purpose. You can contact Robin by email at [robinlewislife@gmail.com](mailto:robinlewislife@gmail.com) and visit her website at [www.RobinLewisLife.com](http://www.RobinLewisLife.com). "Helping you live a confident, powerful, and fulfilling life."





# LEYA ELIJAH-ELLER'S DECLARATION OF LIFE & UNITY

by Robin Lewis for Faith & Values, Courtesy of the Morning News



Leya Elijah-Eller

Leya Elijah-Eller, like Princess Leia of Star Wars fame, is a woman to be reckoned with, a steel magnolia, a love warrior, a woman who wears her fashion and faith, and a person who is always giving life to others because cancer is always trying to take life from her. It's the way she wins.

Elijah-Eller wears many hats, one being area coordinator for the National Day of Prayer Task Force, and she was recently crowned Mrs. Florence Plus America.

She helps others in the community find solutions to their problems and works to help solve them while fighting her own battle. With the recent presidential election, she saw people being ripped apart over the candidates and the issues, so she made a conscious decision to participate in the conversation differently.

Recently, she found herself in the hospital waiting room starting a conversation with a nice older gentleman who wanted to know why she was there. She laughingly says, "He told me I was too pretty to be in the E.R. I didn't know there was a Cute Code. He asked me about what I did and told me about himself. He said he enjoyed my company and that I was taking his mind off his daughter, who he was worried about." Then she says, he asked her if she was a Republican or a Democrat.



Elijah-Eller replied that she was just herself, a Leya, and that was enough. He pushed a little by asking if she voted and how. She answered with "Yes, I voted. I prayed and made the best decision I felt I should make. I hope everyone did." He seemed unsure as to what to say next.

Elijah-Eller continued by sharing with him her own declaration of life. "I am fighting cancer right now, and unfortunately that has made me think a lot about the end of my life and what people will say about how I lived and who I was. And you know what? When they lay my body to rest, I don't think one person will care what political party I stood for. Most wouldn't even care where I stood religiously to be honest. I hope they would be too busy missing me." The old gentleman was listening.

"No one is going to speak on how great a Republican or Democrat I was, but hopefully they will speak about what I did, who I helped and what I gave, what I meant to people and how I lived as an American, a Christian, and a humanitarian. That's all that will matter. I don't think years later people will remember who was president much less care if I helped vote that person into office. But they will remember that I lived, that I was here. So, I don't speak on political matters in those

terms because I don't want to be remembered that way. It's not why I am here."

"I believe my purpose on this earth is to help people, touch lives and make an impact right where I am. I do look at the news and read the newspaper. I listen to commentaries but I am not ruled by them. I set my course and continue the journey of my life that I desire. I believe you are a part of my journey because you need me to tell you that everything is going to be ok with your daughter and who I voted for doesn't have anything to do with that. You just need me to care. Right?"

When she finished speaking the old gentleman had tears in his eyes. He held her hand and thanked her. When they called him back to see his daughter, he grabbed her hand again and she asked if she could say a prayer and he agreed. As he walked away, he said, "So, you're still not going to tell me?" She answered, "I did tell you. I'm a Leya."

Deciding to enter the political conversation differently brings unity and caring instead of creating more divisiveness. She says that no one will cause her to argue or hate. She instead looks for the good and pursues it. Her message is unity. She has studied the life of Mother Teresa and other people who understand what real love is, the giving of yourself for others.

When her friends tell her she's doing too much she tells them, "Cancer teaches you a lot of things. We have to learn to die in order to live. This is my life and I want to make the most valuable use of my time here. I want to see people love and respect each other more."

For 2017, Elijah-Eller's one word for the year is "peace." Her goal is to be an instrument of peace. She explains, "People think that to be peaceful is to be docile, but it is about bringing change that makes peace possible. Into how many women's lives can I bring peace by telling them my story of domestic abuse, my fight against obesity and cancer, and my struggles through divorce? I want to tell as many as I can that they can make it too."

As Mrs. Florence Plus America, her platform is Autism Awareness. Elijah-Eller has also served as the artistic director of the Pee Dee Community Arts Team, directing the dance team of 22 young people from 13 different area churches. It will be performing "Odyssey, the Musical" on May 6, 2017, at People's United Missionary Baptist Church.

Elijah-Eller said, "Life is painful, but worth it. Like Jesus said, there's no greater love than this than to lay down your life for others."

Photos were used with permission from Rodrick Williams of Agent 31 Studios at [www.agent31studios.com](http://www.agent31studios.com).



# HELPING FLORENCE FLOURISH

by Joyce Black, Victory Marketing Group, LLC

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands: Revelation 7:9



Florence and the Pee Dee came together as one on Feb. 16 and 17, 2017 at the Florence Civic Center. Helping Florence Flourish (HFF), a 501 (c)(3) religious community organization hosted its first major community event, "Oneness Embraced," with Dr. Tony Evans. Evans is a nationally known pastor and author from Dallas. The goal of the organization was to continue to build healthy and strong relationships between the races. The event was free to the public and was well attended by many throughout the state. HFF also received a tremendous financial outpour from business owners, churches and individuals to help make this event a total success.

HFF began in 2014 in the Cumberland UMC fellowship hall as 100 or more people gathered to hear the results of a leadership survey. The survey indicated that one of major primary concerns coming from our community was racial division. HFF has been working through pastors and their churches, hosting breakfasts and gatherings to enhance

communications and relationship building.

In July 2016, a community gathering was held at Savannah Grove Baptist Church concerning the police shootings around the country. Many of our community leaders, pastors, council members, and the police chief were present. Pastor Ralph Canty of Savannah Grove Baptist Church and Florence Solicitor Ed Clemments noted at this event that a movement was needed for the churches to come together for a time of revival and renewal. Canty brought this idea to HFF meeting and suggested that HFF invite Dr. Tony Evans.

The event brought over 3000 people, 30+ churches and 25 non-profits together to hear the message of Evans. The message was moving and inspiring. It gave everyone throughout the Pee Dee a call to action to come together on one accord.

The HFF "Oneness Embraced" event also featured a powerful 100+ voice choir coming from various churches throughout the area.

The event was truly a blessing for the community. New friendships were formed, and new and old relationships were enhanced through the many churches and nonprofits that attended. Many attendees of the event look forward to the next event to continue this oneness and bonding in our community.

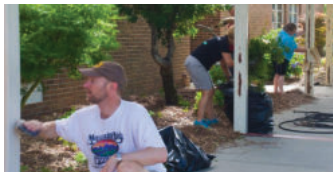
To keep the movement moving forward, HFF has set up six-week study sessions at three churches. For more information contact Rev. Chris Handley, First Presbyterian website, at [www.helpingflorenceflourish.org](http://www.helpingflorenceflourish.org) or <http://helpingflorenceflourish.org/>.

Follow-up sessions: Oneness Embraced Conversations:

- First Presbyterian (700 Park Ave.) Thursday at noon
- Ambassadors for Christ (2196 Alligator Rd.) Thursday at 7 p.m.
- Savannah Grove Baptist (2620 Alligator Rd.) Sunday at 4 p.m.

## HFF ANNOUNCES 2ND ANNUAL SERVEFLO

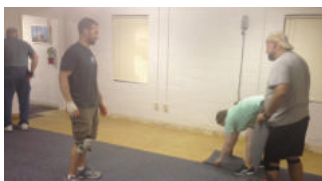
Submitted by HFF



John Scott foreground, Mike Lavespere background at Timrod Elementary

Helping Florence Flourish is pleased to announce the second annual ServeFLO initiative, which will take place June 17-24. This special season of service is taking off with churches aligning to coordinate their service in and to the community as they seek to create a moment where churches visibly unify to bless Florence.

The idea for this initiative was born from a realization that many churches were doing great acts of service in the community already, but, would they not be more evidently a blessing if churches simultaneously brought that blessing? The scriptures that inspire ServeFLO come from Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 where he prays "that believers would be one like he and his heavenly Father are one" and



Jeremy Straus with "Bo" Myers at Lighthouse

Jeremiah 29:7 where the Lord says to the Jews in exiles, "Pray for the peace and prosperity of the city." These passages and others give the church the motivation to spread out across Florence together to bless this community.

Currently, the Helping Florence Flourish team is working to collect two lists:

- What are the needs that our community leaders see, and where are their opportunities for service?
- A list of churches and Christian organizations where teams can be formed to fan out across the community for projects that could involve refurbishing homes, neighborhood cleanups, help at the schools, and more.

Involvement is needed on the ground level in getting answers to these questions. The ServeFLO team is looking for additional helpers



Little Kate Stokes @ Performing Arts Center amphitheater event kick off

to assist with generating these two lists. There will be much to do, and the initiative will only be limited by how many servers get involved.

Another way to become involved in Helping Florence Flourish is to become engaged in monthly "movement gatherings." This is the best way to become aware of the different HFF initiatives. The next movement gathering will occur at First Presbyterian (700 Park Ave.) April 19 at noon. This gathering will be dedicated to hearing from coordinator Tiffany Straus about ServeFLO 2017. RSVP to [helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org](mailto:helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org).

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



Emily Whitehead with her youngest son at Timrod.

Through the willing coordination of local nonprofit organizations, Florence churches and volunteers, Helping Florence Flourish seeks to make visible, positive changes in those four critical areas. For more information about ServeFLO and Helping Florence Flourish, text the message "ServeFLO" to the number "313131" or contact us at [helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org](mailto:helpingflorenceflourish@florencefirst.org).

## CHERAW INTERMEDIATE EDUCATOR NAMED NEW DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR

*Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist*



*Photo: From left: James Sweeney, Chesterfield County School Board chairman; Dr. Harrison Goodwin, Chesterfield County Superintendent of Schools; Tracy Hatcher, Cheraw Intermediate School teacher; and Scott Eddins, principal of Cheraw Intermediate School.*

**CHERAW** - Tracy Hatcher, a fifth grade teacher at Cheraw Intermediate School, was recently named the Chesterfield County School District Teacher of the Year at an annual ceremony.

Hatcher added that her primary goal as an educator is to be a positive role model and facilitator who motivates,

inspires and encourages greatness in students. "I have the unique position to have a direct, positive impact on them that no other profession has," she says.

In addition to earning National Board certification, Hatcher also earned a Master of Science in early childhood education from the University of South Carolina.

Here's a bit of her story in her own words:

"Growing up I had a countless list of teachers, coaches, and mentors that had a profound impact on my life. Yet, it was one inspirational moment with an elementary school principal that set me on my path to teaching. She saw potential in me that I had never seen in myself. 'Would you like to substitute?' is all she said. Just five little words, in a moment in time, changed my future forever. I didn't choose teaching; it chose me."

"As an educator, you have the ability to build relationships with your students that they will take with them throughout their lives. One positive moment with a child can set a force in motion that leaves a legacy for a lifetime, and that's a powerful thing to possess. It is a profession that is widely influential, yet humbling, at the same time."



"As educators, we are facing an enormous amount of pressure to show our effectiveness through student performance on standardized tests. The mounting emphasis of standardize testing puts a strain on teachers because we are required to meet high demands with less funding and more mandates. I feel we work hard and pride ourselves in planning lessons that foster our students' development. We facilitate classrooms that encourage our students to find their creative genius and passion."

"Anyone who knows me personally knows that I love interacting and learning from others. Teaching allows me to be a lifelong learner. My students have always contributed a surprising mix of personalities that intrigue me every year. Even after 24 years of teaching, I'm still fascinated by their interests and how they see the world."



## HANLIN NAMED DCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR

*Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist*



*Hanna Hanlin*

**DARLINGTON** - Hanna Hanlin, a second grade teacher from Pate Elementary School, was named the Darlington County School District's 2016-17 District Teacher of the Year at the district's annual Teacher of the Year banquet. Hanlin beat out four other finalists for the top honor. Andrew Walters, a third grade teacher from Carolina Elementary School, was honored as the Darlington County School District's Outstanding First Year Teacher.

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.

A five-year teaching veteran, Hanlin began her teaching career as a fifth grade teacher at Thornwell School for the Arts. She moved to Pate Elementary in 2014 where she teaches second grade in a multi-grade class setting. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from the University of South Carolina and her master's in educational technology from Lesley University. Hanlin is currently pursuing an education specialist in educational technology certification. She is an Apple Foundations trainer, a Google Certified Educator (level 2), a Schoology Master Trainer, an iTunesU Curator and an Apple

Vanguard. Hanlin is a frequent presenter at the district and state level on technology in the classroom.

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



*Andrew Walters*

The district also announced the DCSD 2016-17 Outstanding First Year Teacher (OFYT) Award at its recent banquet. Andrew Walters, a third grade teacher who teaches English/language arts and social studies at Carolina Elementary School, was chosen for the award. The OFYT award was created to recognize teachers who have excelled and flourished during their first year of teaching. These teachers have demonstrated leadership in their schools and professionalism in their classrooms. Walters was chosen from three finalists, all exceptional teachers. The finalists were Ashleigh Chaplin from Pate Elementary School, Kristen Johnson from Darlington High School and Andrew Walters of Carolina Elementary.

# MEET TRINITY-BYRNES COLLEGIATE SCHOOL TEACHER- MS. LAURA SCOTT

Submitted by Jordan Pupa, Director of Marketing



Laura Scott

**DARLINGTON**--Our students are growing up in a world of connectivity. Through technology, they can see new places, and as they travel, they will meet new people. World language education is one way that we can prepare them for this connectedness, for the global society and job market they will participate in. It is crucial that we see world language proficiency and intercultural understanding as essential skills to develop for the future.

future.

Communication is key. My goal as an educator is to prepare students to speak French with real people in real situations. Even my first-year students speak almost exclusively in French from the first class! My classes are designed around interactive activities, where students can communicate in a meaningful way on a variety of personal topics. In my classroom, I find that a healthy balance of movement and technology is important. I love to see my students out of their seats, traveling about the room as they speak French and spending time outside the classroom when the activity allows. I equally enjoy seeing my students use technology in a way that facilitates their learning, giving them a digital platform for communication. Creating videos, digital stories and audio recordings are some of the ways that students regularly use their devices in French class. It is my hope that as



"Ms. Scott enjoys helping students prepare to interact with native speakers and participate in global experiences, such as traveling or working abroad."

students grow in their ability to communicate in French, they would also learn to think globally, to take risks in pursuit of intellectual growth, to seek to understand others, and to see learning as a lifelong process that they will grow to love. "Petit à petit, l'oiseau fait son nid." This is one of my favorite French proverbs. Translated literally, it means that a bird builds its nest little by little. Patience, hard work and perseverance are all requirements for reaching our goals. On the journey to learn a new language, as with so many things in life, we begin with one word, one phrase, one step or one task. We develop strength as we go, and we find, upon accomplishing what we intended, that we have learned much else along the way.




French 1B - Restaurant scenario

Scott holds a Bachelor of Arts in French and International Affairs and a Master of Arts in French Literature, both from the University of Georgia. She is a member of the American Association of Teachers of French and the South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers Association. When she's not speaking French, she enjoys cooking, running and reading.

When she's not speaking French, she enjoys cooking, running and reading.









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# SUPERINTENDENT SPEARMAN ANNOUNCES SC TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALIST

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



Mary Woodward

State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman surprised North Vista Elementary school teacher, Mary Woodward, at her school with news that she has been selected as one of five finalists for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year award.

“As a former music teacher, I know firsthand the important role that the arts play in a student’s education experience,” said Spearman. “Mary’s ability to engage her students and integrate other subject areas in

her classroom is remarkable. She is not only a leader in the Florence community but also for arts educators across our state.”

Woodward is music teacher at North Vista Elementary School in Florence School District One. She desires to “be the kind of teacher who opens doors for all children, but especially for children who have always believed certain doors were permanently closed to them.” Her classes include lessons in music history, music theory, music composition, music appreciation and music performance. She also integrates math, science, literacy and technology into every lesson. Her students develop an ear for music and create their own pieces through Woodward’s classroom atmosphere that encourages creativity.

“I read in Ms. Woodward’s application that she had teachers who were ‘game-changers.’ Part of her becoming a teacher was to be a ‘game-changer’ for her students. Ms. Woodward is an innovative and creative educator who looks for the talents in all children. She is also mindful of the need to work collaboratively across all curriculum areas to provide each child a quality education,” said Florence School District One Superintendent Dr. Randy Bridges.

As one of five finalists, Woodward will receive \$10,000 and go on to the next stage of competition, which involves an in-person interview with a team of expert judges. The South Carolina Teacher of the Year Gala will be held May 3 in Columbia. The overall winner receives a total of \$25,000 and gets to drive a brand new BMW for one year while advocating for the teaching profession across the state.

The Teacher of the Year program celebrates excellence and strengthens the teaching force by honoring and recognizing exceptional teachers on a district, state and national level. These awards not only assist in retention efforts but also serve as a powerful recruitment tool.

The South Carolina Teacher of the Year serves for one school year as a roving ambassador providing mentoring, attending speaking engagements, working with teacher cadets and teaching fellows, leading the State Teacher Forum and serving as the state spokesperson for over 48,000 educators. Learn more about The Teacher of the Year program.



**Florence School District One**

**2016-17**

**Teacher of the Year**

**Mary Woodard**

**North Vista Elementary School**

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

## LEE COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Superintendent Dr. Wanda Andrews and Emanuel Brown III

**BISHOPVILLE** - Emanuel Brown III, Social Studies teacher at Lee Central Middle School, was selected as the 2016-2017 Lee County School District Teacher of the Year. He has been a teacher in the Lee County School District since 2012. Brown was also named the Upper Pee Dee Conference Coach of the Year for the 2015 football season. He will represent the Lee County School District during the South Carolina Teacher of the Year Banquet in April. Brown encouraged all

teachers to never give up on students, and to continue to help students reach new academic levels and develop those skills that will allow them to compete in a globalized society.

Each teacher nominee submitted written essays and participated in an interview before a panel as a part of the selection process for the District Teacher of the Year. This year, Bishopville Primary Elementary nominated Sheliaka Davis, Lower Lee Elementary nominated Teriann Nash, West Lee Elementary nominated Anga Flynn, Lee Central Middle School nominated Emanuel Brown III and Lee Central High School nominated Zenobia Johnson-McKnight. Superintendent Dr. Wanda Andrews stated, "I am proud of each Teacher of the Year nominee. Emanuel Brown is an outstanding teacher and will represent Lee County School District in an exceptional manner."

## MARLBORO DISTRICT TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Dr. Helena L. Tillar and Linda Cardenas

**BENNETTSVILLE** - Linda Cardenas was named Marlboro County School District Teacher of the Year during convocation at Marlboro County High School. Cardenas has been teaching the students of Marlboro County for the past 25 years. She began teaching language arts and gifted and talented at Bennettsville Middle School in 1991. Cardenas

has also taught at Blenheim Elementary Middle School, McColl Elementary Middle School and currently teaches at The School of Discovery. She currently serves as a mentor teacher for the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and teaches adult education at Evans Correctional Institute in the evenings.

At one point in her career, Cardenas served as TAP master teacher. This role required her to leave the classroom and work closely with classroom teachers to improve student achievement. Although she enjoyed this work, her heart was with the children, and she returned to the classroom where she felt she could make a greater impact.

It is very seldom that you enter into Cardenas' class and find her alone, even during her lunch and planning periods. Students are always in her classroom, and she is working diligently with them to ensure they receive the very best that she has to offer.

Cardenas will assure you that teaching the students of Marlboro County is her passion. She sets extremely high expectations for the students and refuses to lower them. She demands that the children learn. She is a true believer that all students have the capacity to learn and will meet our expectations if given the correct amount of support and love. The students will tell you that "Ms. Cardenas" is tough but is also one of their favorite teachers ever.

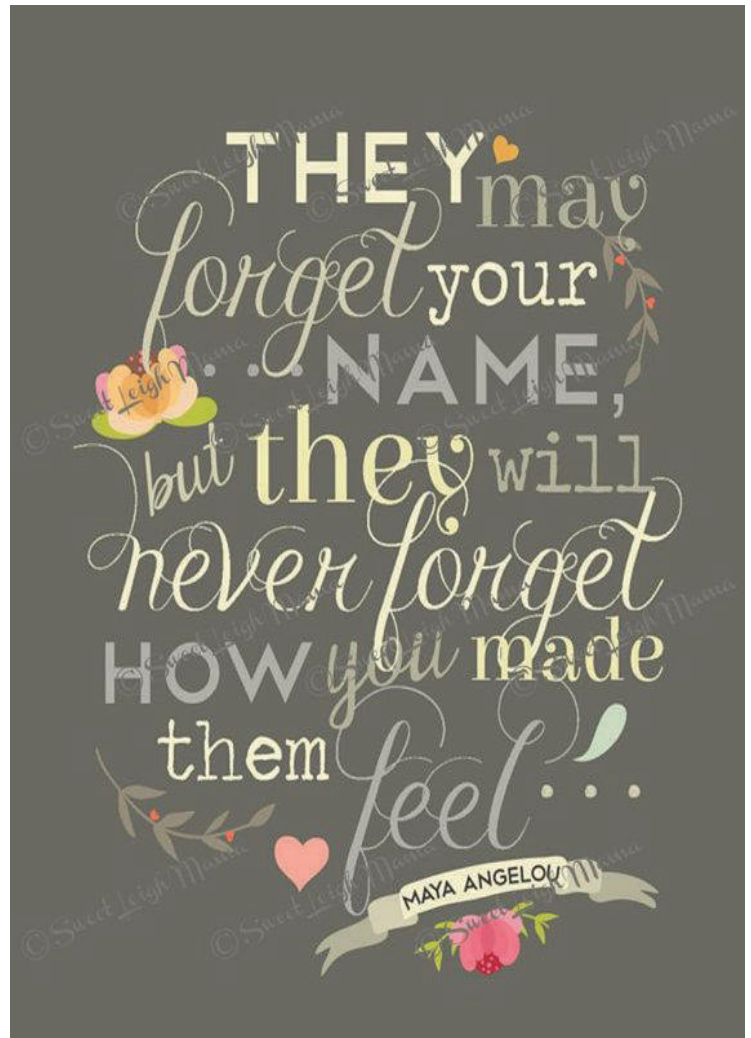
## PALMETTO MIDDLE TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Latonya Yates-Ford

**MARION**- Latonya Yates-Ford was designated Teacher of the Year at Palmetto Middle School by her peers and judged by a panel at the district level to be Marion County School District's Teacher of the Year. With a degree in accounting from Francis Marion University, Ford has been teaching computer applications and keyboarding to Palmetto Middle schoolers for the past eight years. She is a native of Mullins and a product of the Marion County public school system, so she

feels very at home in her current placement. She is currently working on a dual master's degree program in instructional technology and educational leadership from Coastal Carolina University. Ford is excited to be teaching Integrated Business Applications 1 as she knows her students will be able to use the skills they learn in her class for the rest of their lives. "This year let us commit to our calling with the understanding that without us there can be no other profession. We are needed!" commented Ford. "Let us commit to forming positive and respectful relationships with our colleagues and every student who crosses the threshold of our schools. Mentor students who need and who appear not to need mentoring. Some students make good grades but have poor social skills that need to be developed; help them to find their voice." She concluded with this thought: "One might say, what I am asking is impossible, but I say it is imperative for us to educate, prepare and inspire Marion County students."



# VALUE EDUCATION? RECRUIT A TEACHER

Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea, Interim Superintendent



Dr. Kandace Bethea

**MARION** - In the Marion County School District, our purpose is to educate, prepare and inspire our students to become productive citizens in a changing global society. To accomplish our purpose we need highly qualified teachers who come to work with a passion to meet the needs of our students. But finding qualified teachers is proving to be very difficult. Finding and retaining good teachers is a challenge. Once, not all that long ago, hiring teachers was a process of going through a number

of submitted applications for a single position, choosing the top contingents and bringing them in for an interview process and then settling on the top candidate. Today, human resource personnel are out scouring colleges and job fairs, doing their best to lure people into teaching positions which are needed to provide students their education.

According to the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), the oldest and most established teacher recruitment program in the country, 4,800 teachers left the teaching profession in South Carolina at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. This same study found that fewer students were graduating from SC teacher education programs. In 2015-16, only 1,898 students graduated with a degree to teach which is down from 2,447 in 2012-13. Certain areas, such as special education and math are particularly effected by the shortage. Certain areas of the state, such as the Pee Dee are also subject to the shortage.

School districts in areas such as the Pee Dee struggle with lower funding levels and a rural environment. Millennials tend to favor city atmospheres that offer diverse social options. When faced with a decision

to live in an area such as Myrtle Beach or Greenville, where salaries are higher, night life is varied and week-end options abound, they will be less inclined to choose a small town where restaurants (other than fast food) are few and the average age is far from their own. However, small towns can be recreated and are prime for young people to move in and create a new environment filled with the opportunities they are looking for in a hometown. We just need to encourage them and be open to their possibilities.

The state of South Carolina has several initiatives in place to help districts recruit highly qualified teachers. The South Carolina International Visiting Teachers Program currently recruits teachers from China and India. SC CREATE allows full-time employees in public and charter schools to receive cost-free course work to complete add-on, alternative, or initial licensure in areas of special education. These programs along with a variety of additional salary supplements, are all in an effort to recruit the best and the brightest to teach our children. There are also programs that will help people with a four-year degree re-purpose their career to the classroom. Alternative certification programs are available to transition people who are not certified but do have a qualifying diploma, into a classroom position. So, if you care about education, and you know someone who has a four year degree and isn't happy with what they are doing now, talk to them about being a teacher. Any school district will be able to give you more information on this program or on any of the other initiatives available in South Carolina. Value education? Help us recruit a teacher.



## We Are Marion County Educate•Prepare•Inspire

### Our Direction

Marion County School District: Preparing all students to live and work effectively, responsibly and productively within our society.

### Our Purpose

Marion County School District educates, prepares and inspires students to be productive citizens in a changing global society.

### Our Beliefs

- All students can become productive members of society.
- Education is a partnership among students, families, schools, and community.
- Our children are the center of all decision making.
- Education should prepare students to succeed academically and socially so they can compete for quality jobs and become productive members of society.
- Each person has intrinsic value and worth and is a unique individual with different needs and abilities.

# EXCEPTIONAL HARTSVILLE TEEN WINS YOUTH OF THE YEAR HONOR

Submitted by Susan Goldstein, Development Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area



Deriayna Wilson

**HARTSVILLE-** Congratulations to Deriayna Wilson, from the Hartsville Boys & Girls Club (BGC), for competing for and winning the Pee Dee Youth of the Year title on February 2017. She will head to Columbia from April 27-28 to vie with her peers from around the state for the title of South Carolina Youth of the Year.

The other local contestants were Keshon Stovall, 17, a junior at Hemingway High School; Ryan Jackson, 17, in Lake City's Adult Education program; Aaron Gandy, 16, a sophomore at Wilson High School in Florence; and Erika Arriaga, 17, a junior at Hannah-Pamplico High School.

Wilson, a sixteen-year-old Florence native, is now a junior at Hartsville High School. She is one of two daughters of a single mom. Her mom has relied on the Boys & Girls Club to keep the two girls safe and productively engaged during the time she is at her full-time job and away from home for work-related travel. Wilson says, "Keystone Club is my favorite!" This teen program focuses on leadership development, and allows teens to plan and carry out their own activities, including community service projects.

According to Wilson, "My experience with the Boys & Girls Club has been positive for the last four years. Everything that I have learned has given me additional expertise in learning how to become more focused in my goals. I have also learned to be patient and persistent in pursuing my dreams. I continue to be focused on my schoolwork. I understand the importance of achieving a higher level of education. I want to GET the best for my life and BE the best. I have learned the importance of working within the community, as well as demonstrating leadership skills at school. I will take these learned skills with me when I attend college after graduation."

Wilson concludes with this inspiration: "I continue to support my friends and people I meet daily. I wouldn't trade anything for my experiences at the BGC. It has given me more opportunities than I could ever imagine. Therefore, I will continue to be a motivator for the youth of today."

To achieve the title of Youth of the Year on any level, Club members must embody the values of leadership and service, academic excellence, and healthy lifestyles. They should exemplify the critical impact that Boys & Girls Clubs have on the lives of young people. Being named Youth of the Year is the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can receive. As Boys & Girls Clubs of America's (BGCA) premier youth recognition program, Youth of the Year recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club, as well as recognizes those who are overcoming personal challenges and obstacles. Youth of the Year encourages Club members to reach their full potential by achieving academic success, leading healthy lifestyles and contributing to their communities. Each year's honorees are living proof that great futures start at Boys & Girls Clubs.

## About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area ([www.bgcpda.org](http://www.bgcpda.org)) provides daily programs and services to more than 3,000 young people each year. At six locations throughout the region, Clubs are open every weekday after school and throughout the summer, keeping youth active and safe. For more information about local Clubs, call 843-662-1142, or visit [bgcpda.org](http://bgcpda.org).

## About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, headquartered in Atlanta, ([www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)) has enabled young people,

especially those who need Clubs most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, more than 4,200 Boys & Girls Clubs serve nearly four million young people through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs can be found throughout the country and on U.S. military installations worldwide, providing young people 6-18 years old with guidance-oriented character development programs conducted by trained, professional staff. In a recent Harris Survey of alumni, 57 percent said the Club saved their lives. For more information please contact Susan Goldstein at 843-662-1142.



# SCIENTIST ENCOURAGES STUDENTS

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSD Communications Specialist



Dr. Sharaé Meredith, an aerospace engineer working for Lockheed Martin, gives a presentation at the Darlington County Intervention School recently. Meredith offered words of encouragement to students to focus on academics and character building.

**DARLINGTON** - Dr. Sharaé Meredith, an aerospace engineer working for Lockheed Martin, visited the Darlington County Intervention School on Feb. 23 to deliver a message of encouragement to students.

During her presentation she encouraged students to be "brave, unique, tenacious and loved." Meredith paid homage in her presentation to famous engineers and aeronautical professionals who inspired her career directly and indirectly, including Dr. Guion Bluford, Dorothy Vaughan, Katherine Johnson and Mary Jackson.

Afterward Meredith fielded several questions from students about her job and how she kept focused through so many years of school.

Dr. Zenobia Edwards, director of DCIS, said Meredith's discussion provided important insight and inspiration for students to focus on their academics and character building.

"Dr. Meredith is a living, breathing 'Unhidden Figure' who is an inspiration in many ways," Edwards said. "Her life is an inspiring story of success rising from struggle, and she is a young, black woman who has mastered the critical disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. My hope for students is if they see it, they'll want to be it."

Meredith holds degrees from Tuskegee University, Georgia Tech and Penn State. She spent time working for companies known for innovation, such as Northrop Grumman Corporation and Boeing.



Dr. Sharaé Meredith gathers for a photo with students at the Darlington County Intervention School after a presentation at the school recently.



## AKA SORORITY DONATES TO DCSD STUDENTS

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Several members of the Epsilon Chi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. gather with Darlington County School District administrators recently after the sorority donated bookbags and supplies for students in the district.

Dr. Bill Boyd and lead social worker Sue Cataen-Ingram. The group included school supplies, hats, mittens and kid-friendly nonperishable food items with the book bags. Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram thanked the members of AKA for supporting the education of Darlington County students.

“We are always appreciative of the continued support from our community organizations and citizens,” Ingram said.

Carla Jefferson, an instructional technology coordinator for the district and an AKA member, helped organize the effort.

“Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. is committed to promoting the learning process by providing substantial support to students through AKA One Million Backpacks,” Jefferson said. “Through this initiative, Epsilon Chi Omega pledges to provide a minimum of 200 backpacks filled with supplies to the communities of Florence and Darlington in the next two years.”

**DARLINGTON**– The Epsilon Chi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. (AKA) recently gave a generous donation of bookbags and supplies that will be distributed to students in the Darlington County School District. The group presented the donation to Superintendent Ingram, Associate Superintendent



The impact of an education is beyond words.

Barbara Wallace  
Grandmother of Scholarship Recipient



## PROFESSOR RECEIVES AAFSC DIVERSITY AWARD

Articles Submitted by FMU



Professor Jason Owens

Professor Jason Owens of the Francis Marion University Department of English recently received the African-American Faculty & Staff Coalition's (AAFSC) Diversity Award at the organization's annual gala.

In honoring Owens, the AAFSC noted his involvement in helping bring FMU's African-American Studies program to fruition, among other contributions. The new academic program began this spring.

Owens is a native of Moncks Corner who joined the FMU faculty in 2015. He received his bachelor's and master's from South Carolina State University and previously taught at Claflin University.

The AAFSC also recognized 15 recipients of AAFSC-sponsored scholarships at the gala. Through its own fundraising and the support of the university, the AAFSC funds named scholarships for Dr. Joseph E. Heyward, Dr. Leroy "Pete" Peterson, Mrs. Rebecca Lunn, and Dr. Dorothy Harris. State Representative Cezar McKnight of Kingstree delivered the keynote address at the gala.

The AAFSC was founded at FMU in 1995 to stimulate and enhance cultural awareness and to promote professional development and welfare among faculty, staff and students. The organization's goals include increasing morale and communication among members; creating an atmosphere of community for FMU African-American faculty, staff and students; serving as a liaison between the administrative personnel of FMU and the African-American faculty and staff; and examining the university's efforts in recruitment and retention of African-American faculty and staff.

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

## FMU HONORS MCCALL WITH ALUMNI AWARD



Dr. Hari Rajagopalan, the dean of the Francis Marion University School of Business, poses with Carla McCall, the winner of the 2017 Morgan B. Coker Outstanding Alumni Award

The Francis Marion University School of Business awarded Carla McCall with the Morgan B. Coker Outstanding Alumni Award for 2017 in February.

McCall, a 2003 graduate of Francis Marion with a degree in Finance, is the director of business operations at McCall's Supply Inc. – a wholesale HVAC distributor located in Johnsonville.

The award is named for Morgan Coker, the first dean of FMU's School of Business and is one of the top honors that can be bestowed upon a graduate of the school. McCall's career started in 1991 when she was named the director of computer technology at McCall's Supply Inc.

As a non-traditional student, McCall's story stands out. McCall worked not only as a student during her time at FMU, but also as a mother and chief financial officer at McCall's Supply Inc. as well, taking classes in her few spare moments: "All of this was while working a full-time job as the CFO, married with two young children and traveling an hour and a half round trip each time to attend classes," McCall says. In 2013, McCall was promoted to the director of branch operations, and in 2017 she was again promoted to the title of director of business operations.

For more information, contact Francis Marion University's director of media relations, Matt McColl, at 843-661-1227 or mmccoll@fmarion.edu.

## THREE MARION MEDALLIONS PRESENTED



Carl Harmon, Cade Graham - the son of Courtney McGinnis Graham - and Regi Armstrong pose with their Marion Medallions after the ceremony at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

Three cornerstones of the Pee Dee region were recognized for their contributions and service to the people of the area at the 2017 Marion Medallion awards ceremony in Feb. at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

Medallions were presented to Regi Armstrong of Armstrong

Wealth Management, Carl Harmon of Caring and Sharing, and posthumously to entrepreneur and humanitarian, Courtney McGinnis Graham. Armstrong, a lauded philanthropist, founded Armstrong Wealth Management in 2002. One of the focal points of his business and life has been his faith, which has led to his involvement with various organizations that provide help to those in need, such as Lighthouse Ministries, All 4 Autism, HopeHealth and the Parking Lot Mission.

Harmon has been helping the people of Williamsburg, Georgetown and most of Florence County for the past 20 years through his nonprofit organization Caring and Sharing. Through his work with Caring and Sharing, Harmon has positively affected the lives of countless people throughout the region. In 2016 alone, Caring and Sharing spent \$55,000 on food exclusively, with additional funding going to pay for the utilities and medications that were paid for by the organization for people in need.

McGinnis Graham, the first posthumous recipient of a Marion Medallion, left an indelible mark on the Florence community. A tireless advocate for children, the homeless, and the region as a whole, McGinnis Graham's philanthropy goes well beyond any static memorial as her work continues to this day through the Shelter and Nutrition for All Children – SNAC – which provides clothing and food for students of Florence School District One, along with a community shelter named in her honor.

The Marion Medallion is a six-year-old award, sponsored and presented by FMU and the Morning News of Florence. Officials of the two organizations work in partnership in the selection of the recipients. The medallions are awarded on or about Feb. 27—Francis Marion Day — each year. The medallion is named for General Francis Marion, the revolutionary war leader who led Patriot forces in the Pee Dee Region, who is the namesake of FMU.

Previous recipients include:

- Kathy Baxley, executive director of the Darlington Free Medical Clinic, and Henry Johnson and Hayward King, chief executives of the Lake City based W. Lee Flowers Company (2012)
- Former Florence Police Chief Ralph Porter, executive director and founder of CHOICES Charter School and Bill and Olive Timberlake of Hartsville (2013)
- Florence pastors Henry Badie Jr. of Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ and Clyde Odom of King of Kings Church in Florence and Henry Brunson of Latta, founder of Cooks for Christ (2014)
- John and Vicki Kirby of Latta and the founders of Camp RAE, Paige Alexander and Deana Huggins Strickland of Florence (2015)
- Carlos Washington of Florence and the Manna House of Florence (2016)

### About the Medallion:

The medallion award is an actual medallion. It is a gold plated bronze piece that weighs 2.5 pounds and is 6 inches in diameter. Francis Marion's likeness is on one side. The recipient's name is engraved on the reserve side. For more information contact Francis Marion's director of media relations, Matt McColl, at 843-611-1227 or mmccoll@fmarion.edu.

# FMU PRESENTS ALUMNI AWARDS

Articles Submitted by FMU



Michael Youssef, a special recognition recipient, FMU's Director of Alumni Affairs Julian Young, Dr. John Kirby, winner of the Professional Industry Achievement Award in Education and Arts, Judge Melissa J. Buckhannon, winner of the Professional Industry Achievement Award in Public Service and Law, Michael Blue, winner of the 2017 Outstanding Alumnus Award, John Sweeney, winner of the Benjamin Wall Ingram III Young Alumni Award, and Craig Bailey, president of the Francis Marion Alumni Association, pose for a photo after the 2017 FMU Alumni Awards Gala.

Francis Marion University honored Michael A. Blue ('85) as its 2017 Outstanding Alumnus at the university's annual Alumni Awards Gala.

Blue was one of five FMU alums honored at the March 2 event held at the FMU Performing Arts Center in downtown Florence. Blue earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from FMU and proceeded to teach at Marion High School from 1986 to 2011. He is the bishop at Door of Hope Church in Marion and has served as the Presiding Prelate of the Christian Covenant Fellowship of Ministries since 2000.

Judge Melissa J. Buckhannon received the Professional Industry Achievement Award in Public Service and Law. Buckhannon graduated from Francis Marion University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree. She is currently a judge on the South Carolina Family Court Bench. Before her ascension to the bench, Buckhannon practiced law in Horry County from 1995 until 2014. While a student at FMU, she was a member of the Pi Gamma Mu and Pi Sigma Alpha honor societies.

John P. Sweeney received the Benjamin Wall Ingram III Young Alumni Award. Sweeney is a 2009 graduate of FMU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mass communication. Sweeney is currently the director of business development at the North Eastern Strategic Alliance in Florence. As a student at FMU, he was president of the Student Media Association and

a member of the Model United Nations.

Dr. John M. Kirby Jr. received the Professional Industry Achievement Award in Education and Arts. Kirby graduated from FMU in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree and again in 1979 with a master's degree in elementary education. Kirby has served the Latta School District in Dillon County since 1985, and most notably as the district's superintendent for the past 27 years.

Michael Youssef received an award of Special Recognition. Youssef graduated from Francis Marion University in 2015 with a political science degree. He is currently an account manager at ADP in Florence. In 2016, he was named president of the Hispanic Business Resource Group at ADP and elected president of the Toastmaster Club at ADP, and in 2017, he became a United States citizen.

For more information, contact Matt McColl, FMU's Director of Media Relations, at 843-661-1227, or [mmccoll@fmarion.edu](mailto:mmccoll@fmarion.edu).

## GIFT TO FMU



(L to R) Haigh Porter, chair of the Foundation's Grants Committee, Dr. Eddie Floyd, chairman of the board for the Foundation, and FMU President Dr. Fred Carter.

Members of the board of the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation recently presented FMU President Dr. Fred Carter with a check completing the foundation's gift of \$497,500 for medical and instructional equipment for the new Carter Center for Health Sciences.

The Foundation has been instrumental in the creation of the new academic building in downtown Florence, previously providing a grant of \$7.5 million for the building's construction.

For more information, contact Matt McColl, Francis Marion University's director of media relations at 843-661-1227 or [mmccoll@fmarion.edu](mailto:mmccoll@fmarion.edu).

# AFFORDABLE COLLEGE?

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# FLORENCE CAREER CENTER'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

by Ta' Meeka Epps



Charity White

Florence Career Center is a public high school in Florence School District 1 where the mission is to prepare students for employment and/or postsecondary education in order to become independent, productive citizens. It is the responsibility of the Florence Career Center to meet the needs of each student who is interested in developing occupational and life skills.

Occupational education serves as a bridge between the student and the world of work by providing the necessary entry-level training to enter an occupation. It is essential that each individual develop skills that will yield sufficient income to meet the necessities of life.

Occupational course offerings provide educational opportunities for those who are college bound and those who desire training that qualifies them for the ever-changing world of work in business and industry. The Early Childhood Education Program is one of the occupational courses offered at Florence Career Center.

The program is instructed by Charity White, a ten-year veteran in the Early Childhood program with four years teaching experience on the collegiate level. White is a native of Marion, where she received her formal education and graduated from Marion High School in 2003. She continued her studies at South Carolina State University where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in family and consumer sciences business in 2007 and a Master of Science degree in individual and family development 2009. White received a Master of Science degree in curriculum in instruction from the University of Phoenix in 2011 and obtained her education specialist degree in educational leadership in 2014. She is also a certified principal and certified family and consumer sciences teacher.



Upshaw, the director, and Ebony Gillard, the recipient of the \$500 scholarship.

As instructor of the Early Childhood Education Program, White is charged with the task of growing the program by creating partnerships with agencies, schools and business within the community. With hard work and determination White was able to secure a partnership with the Live Learn Grow Child Care Center. One of the Early Childhood Program participants, Ebony Gillard, a

senior at West Florence High School, is the recipient of a \$500 scholarship from the organization.

The goal of Early Childhood Education is to provide students with hands-on opportunities to actively explore and observe the world of children and to prepare them for educational and administrative careers in the field. The course provides an in-depth study of career paths, developmentally appropriate practices, curriculum development, safe and healthy learning environments and collaborative relationships.

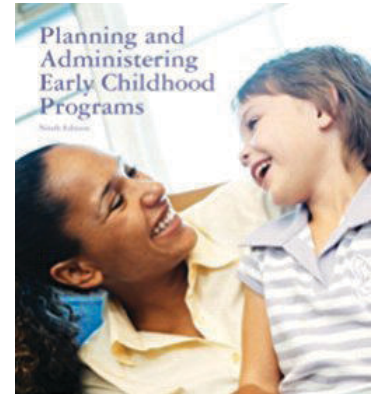
This program prepares high school students to become competent in childcare rules and regulations, learning environments, principles of child development, trends and issues in early childhood education and classroom management techniques. This course is structured in two parts: Early Childhood Education I, and upon successful completion they are recommended to take Early Childhood Education II.

There is an internship program required for Early Childhood Education II students. The internship program is designed based on

the students' interest. During the first week of school White assesses each student's interest to discover what type of early childhood setting they are interested in working. Contact is then made to childcare centers, school principals and curriculum coordinators to see if they would be interested in allowing students into their school to complete their internship. After approval the students are then assigned to a teacher for mentoring and hands-on experience. Students are evaluated weekly on their attendance, dress code and willingness to comply with rules and regulations of the school.

The Early Childhood Program is impacting the students in tangible ways. Two students in the program were offered after-school job opportunities at Savannah Grove Elementary and Excellent Learners Day Care Center based on their performance during the internship. Currently, the only certification offered through the Early Childhood Program is CPR training. However, the Department of Education is researching how to provide additional certifications for students through the program.

The continued growth of the Early Childhood Program at the Florence Career Center is inevitable as the skills and training acquired by the participants are essential foundational building blocks need to become productive members of society.



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*Mr. Alphonso Bradley, Director*

# SC GSSM STUDENT, KAITLYN BALDIZZI, HONORED BY THE NCWIT

Submitted by Lauren Shirley, PR & Marketing Coordinator



Kaitlyn Baldizzi

**HARTSVILLE** – South Carolina Governor’s School for Science & Mathematics (GSSM) senior Kaitlyn Baldizzi, daughter of Christine and Bob Baldizzi of York County, is one of 16 S.C. high school students to receive the National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) Aspirations in Computing (AiC) 2017 South Carolina Affiliate Award.

The NCWIT Award for AiC honors high school women who are active and interested in computing and technology and encourages them to pursue their passions. Recipients are chosen for their demonstrated interest and achievements in computing, proven leadership ability, academic performance and plans for post-secondary education.

“I had lots of fun learning, creating and working on all the projects that helped me achieve this award,” Baldizzi said. “I wouldn’t have been able to receive it without the awesome opportunities that the Governor’s School gave me.”

At GSSM, Baldizzi serves as a Natural Helper, the National Honor Society Vice President, an ENGAGE student teacher, a Lego Robotics Mentor, a member of the FTC Robotics Team 772, and a member of the School’s NASA Microgravity Challenge Team, which recently took first place in a national competition.

Baldizzi conducted summer research at Clemson University under the mentorship of Dr. Yongqiang Wang, Assistant Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Through her research, she worked to help develop wireless communications in iRobot Roombas and to implement a swarm algorithm into the robots.

“Kaitlyn stands out as the only current female student who has taken engineering courses every semester,” said Elizabeth Bunn, Computer Science Instructor at GSSM. “She has been a member of the school’s robotics team, which I coach and mentor, since her first semester. She has been a leader in robotics for many years. I’m very proud of her!”

NCWIT is non-profit coalition of over 200 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and nonprofits working to improve U.S. innovation, competitiveness, and workforce sustainability by increasing women’s participation in information technology careers. NCWIT’s work spans K-12 and higher education through industry and academic careers. Find out more at [www.ncwit.org](http://www.ncwit.org).

## About GSSM

The South Carolina Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM) is a two-year, public, residential high school in Hartsville, specializing in the advanced study of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), with a unique emphasis on economics and entrepreneurship.

GSSM’s residential program can serve as many as 288 high school juniors and seniors annually from across the state. In addition, the school impacts more than 10,000 students and teachers each year through its innovative outreach and virtual programs. Learn more by visiting [www.scgssm.org](http://www.scgssm.org).



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# EDWIN HARRIS EMBRACES THE STUDENT COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE AT CCU

by Ta'Meeka Epps



Edwin "Eddie" Harris

**CONWAY** - Many high school students often find themselves wondering what college life will be like for them if they choose to further their education. Edwin Harris from North Augusta, S.C., is one of those students who wondered what life beyond high school would be like for him if he decided to attend college. He was an active student in high school, and he knew he would have to find a balance between academics and his social

life if he wanted to have a successful college career.

"I always knew I had a strong interest in attending college, but I was not sure if I would even apply to any schools," Harris admits. "That is, I wasn't sure until I visited Coastal Carolina University. Coastal made attending college feel like the best possible choice for me. I knew it would be a challenge as well as a great place to create a second home."

Harris started at Coastal Carolina University (CCU) in August 2013 and is on pace to graduate in December 2017. Even as a double major in business and resort tourism, hospitality, and marketing at CCU, Harris has been able to balance his studies with his active college lifestyle. He is a member of several organizations, including the University's NAACP chapter and the Student Leadership Council, and Harris serves as president of the Coastal Activities Board and as historian of Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity. He also interns with the Office of University Communication, helping manage the University's official social media accounts.

"If you aren't active in some type of way on campus as a college

student, you are truly missing out on around 50 percent of the college experience," Harris says. "You must make the choice to be involved and committed to your chosen organizations."

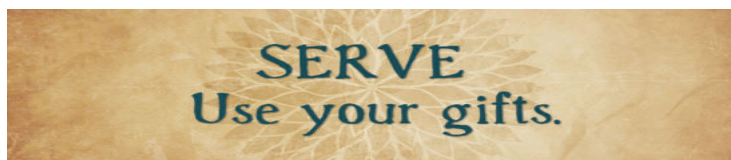
Life on a college campus gives students the ability to shape the university's atmosphere through their own initiatives while learning how to manage their time, fuel their ambition and cultivate their dedication. Harris believes the college experience does not end in the classroom or lecture hall. It extends beyond the four walls and touches every corner of the community in which the college or university is housed.



As he approaches graduation, Harris looks back, sees his growth and acknowledges the part Coastal has played and continues to play in his life and his college career.

"I really got tested as a person at Coastal," he says. "The self-identification process and personal growth took off, and I learned so much about myself as a student at CCU."

Harris' experience is one of many with Coastal Carolina University as the backdrop. When these students become alumni, Harris knows – from experience – that they, like he, will forever be grateful for the opportunities offered and memories created at CCU.



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# FDTC AWARDS CDL LICENSES TO HARTSVILLE NATIVES

Articles Submitted by FDTC



Hartsville natives Kevin Gaskins (left) and Gerald (Jerod) Williams were honored by the City of Hartsville for earning their Commercial Driver's Licenses.

**HARTSVILLE** - Several Hartsville natives were honored recently for completing their Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Truck Driver training at Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC). The recognition took place recently in Hartsville City Hall's Council Chambers.

Kevin Gaskins and Gerald (Jerod) Williams will now be able to pursue a career in truck driving due to their hard work and dedicating their time toward earning their certification through the college's CDL training.

"This particular CDL class is meaningful for Florence-Darlington Technical College for several reasons," said FDTC Associate Vice President of Corporate and Workforce Development, Lauren Holland. "First, it is our inaugural offering of CDL training in Hartsville and represents a successful expansion of the program to another part of the college's service area. Secondly, 100 percent of the students in this class earned their CDL, and the fact that one from the Hartsville Safe Communities program has obtained employment says a lot about the ability of this program to change lives for the better."

Williams was a participant in the Hartsville Safe Communities program, which is a data-driven outreach effort designed to help repeat offenders turn their lives around. Williams' job actually came to fruition due to his success at earning a CDL. Although he is an offender, earning a CDL is a step in the right direction as he looks to turn his life around.

"To me, the CDL program was a big help because it got me the opportunity to do stuff that I never imagined trying to do," Williams said. "The class, itself, it was pretty difficult because you don't see many people parallel park an 18-wheeler. It's possible, though. With me knowing it was something that I needed and having wonderful instructors like Mr. Randolph (Croker) or Mr. Thomas (Pierce), it's something that anybody should try to do." Williams continued, "When I first started, I was a temp, but after I got my CDL, I was promoted to a full time employee. For now, I'm going to be driving some of the city (of Hartsville) trucks, but hopefully in the future, I can move on, and get on the road and get some on-the-road experience."

"The trucking industry is second in the nation in terms of workforce size," said FDTC CDL program manager, Thomas Pierce. "However, the industry need for new drivers needed between now and 2020 is well over 100,000, so employment opportunities for individuals with CDLs is great."

FDTC's CDL training program is one of the largest in South Carolina, and its students typically have a 100 percent job placement rate. The extensive training is usually completed in about five weeks. The college has a small fleet of 18-wheelers that students are able to strap in and get hands-on training in real-world settings. A second CDL class is planned for Hartsville in early 2017. Contact Cynthia Admill in the FDTC Corporate and Workforce Development office at Cynthia.Admill@fdtc.edu or 843-661-8028 for additional information.



## SCATE INC. DONATION SUPPORTS SCATE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE AT FDTC

SCATE Inc., a non-profit company dedicated to systemic change in advanced technological education, recently donated over \$20,000 to the Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) Educational Foundation for new office furniture at the South Carolina Advanced Technological Education (SCATE) Center of Excellence.

The SCATE Center implements projects funded by the National Science Foundation to expand excellence in technician education. Initially funded in 1994, SCATE Center moved to FDTC from the SC Technical College System office in September 2001 with surplus state



One of the South Carolina Advanced Technological Education Center of Excellence offices has a new look, thanks to a sizeable donation from SCATE Inc.

and sustain innovations previously initiated, an updated and more efficient workspace was needed.

In 2015, the SCATE Center moved from the 5000 Building to the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology (SiMT) Advanced Manufacturing Center. Existing SiMT office furnishings

Tech System furniture and one employee. At FDTC, the Center has thrived and reached new levels of national prominence and funding success. With a growing staff to implement new projects and

have been upgraded as a result of a generous donation of \$22,634 from SCATE Inc. The donation enabled the expanded office space to be reconfigured and furnished to accommodate the Center's seven full-time employees.

SCATE Center Executive Director, Elaine Craft, expressed appreciation to the SCATE Inc. Board of Director's for this generous donation to the Educational Foundation for this purpose. Craft concluded by saying, "The work the SCATE Center focuses on advanced technological education at two-year community and technical colleges. The SCATE Center and SiMT are well aligned as they have a shared mission to support FDTC, industry and economic development. This wonderful new office space and the SCATE Inc. donation for furnishings are already impacting the continued success and sustainability of the SCATE Center."

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## KEVIN LANE: DESTINED TO LEAD

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Kevin Lane

**DARLINGTON** - When you are born into a family of strong leaders, chances are, you will also become an exceptional one yourself. Further, you'll more than likely birth future leaders as well. This can all be said as being true of Kevin Lane, the general manager of Wal-Mart in Darlington.

Lane has been a dedicated, hard-working employee of Wal-Mart for seventeen years now. He started his career in Lumberton, N.C., as an hourly associate in 2000. From 2000 to 2006 he served as a department manager

before taking a position over the security department. After working different positions in Wal-Mart stores in Rockingham and Florence between 2006 to 2014, when Lane saw that the company was building a new Wal-Mart in Darlington, he immediately applied to be its general manager. In October of 2015 after a series of several interviews, he received the call saying that he got the job.

Lane has been working in retail for several years, but he hasn't always been in the industry. "I worked in retail at fifteen at a local grocery store in Latta, but I went to college and got a degree in electric engineering. I then got a job in a plant, but it was the same four walls every day. I couldn't stand doing the same job all day long. "Therefore, Lane knew that Wal-Mart would be the perfect new career for him: "I love Wal-Mart and the retail environment because I come in contact with so many different people every day."

Looking back, there was one career decision Lane says he would change if it were possible: "I don't think that I would change anything about my career path as it happened, but if I could have, I would have become a store manager earlier and had more community involvement and influenced a lot more people in my life. I couldn't have had any influence on anyone in any role other than manager. And you have to be the right store manager. I think that in a community the store manager is looked up to anyway as a leader. But it's who you are as a person. It's not the job title. At the same time, I'm glad I waited...I guess that was the right time for it."



Photo was taken at the Darlington Walmart on one of the days we were celebrating One Year Anniversary of Employment with a large number of associates.

When it was his time, Lane had several people who influenced him to be a strong leader. "Both of my grandfathers were great leaders. Both were members of the armed forces and had great careers afterwards." Lane also says that his mother and father taught him how to lead others in the right direction. His father was a public administrator, a leader in the church, as well as a leader at home. He passed away in October 2014, but while raising Lane, he and Lane's mother taught him to have the utmost integrity and to "follow the Golden Rule, which

is to 'treat everyone like you want to be treated.' The way my parents treated each other showed me the right way to live my life, and it molded me to be how I am today." In addition, his father told him to always make decisions based on what is right and to always put God first. Lane added, "Growing up and seeing the way he was made me be a good leader in my own life."

"I am the leader of my home. I don't go home with a manager mentality though. I play Daddy as soon as I get home from work... both my daughter and my son are in the National Honor Society. Part



Photo was taken at Irby Street Walmart while we (Darlington Associates) were there giving a helping hand. Left to right: Rodney, Rene, James, Jeremiah, Heather, Jason, and Kevin.

of being in the Honor Society is being able to show leadership abilities. They both make the Honor Roll, and they have that discipline already established. They can be great leaders themselves, but they don't see it the way we see it yet," which is understandable when children are so young.

Having the backing of a diverse company like Wal-Mart would help any remarkable leader, just as it has helped Lane. According to Lane, "Wal-Mart is a great company to work for. It is so diverse. When people think of diversity, they usually think about someone's race or sexuality, but Wal-Mart takes it to another level. It defines diversity as what a person can bring to the company. It's about diversity in thinking. The set of standards that the company operates by is the same for all stores. There are no inconsistencies with any Wal-Mart store you work in. Everything is the same and supports the beliefs of the company. I stuck with the company because in my position I feel that there is a solid foundation. It's been seventeen years, and the company is still growing...I knew that with Wal-Mart I wouldn't have to worry about being laid off from my job. There have been lots of other places closing down over the years, so I have actually hired a lot of people who used to work in plants. I hired everyone brand new except 17 associates. Now they have a solid foundation with me and Wal-Mart."

Lane advises anyone who is working to accomplish leadership success to be aware of change. He explains, "Change is constant. When things change, we must be diverse in that change. In a leadership role you're faced with change daily. Still keep a positive attitude even if things don't go your way. Sometimes people are waiting on you to mess up. Always maintain a positive composure, even when your day might not be so positive. Remember, everyone is looking up to you, so you can't show any signs of weakness. Also, always learn from your associates. You don't always have to have all of the right answers. That's a part of being diverse. It helps you to be a great leader."

A humble leader who accredits his employees with being the reason for the success of the Darlington Wal-Mart store, Lane says he's so proud of everyone and how the store turned out. "I thank everyone who got me where I am today. I thank all the associates at Wal-Mart for sticking by my side. It's not because of who I am but because of who they made me..."



## NEW RESOURCE CENTER THAT'S ALL 4 AUTISM

by Anna Bowman



Jessica and Sam

Navigating the autism spectrum can feel like a daunting task. Feelings of isolation, being overwhelmed, or even alone, can often hinder the process of seeking assistance or the betterment for both the child and the family as a progressive and cohesive entity. Too often, parents and caregivers struggle with finding the right supports and reliable information. Families in Florence and surrounding areas with children diagnosed with autism, are

extremely blessed to have the organization All 4 Autism, which was created solely for the beneficial nature of serving the needs of the entire family as they navigate the various levels of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

From humble beginnings in 2005, to celebrating 12 years of exceptional service in the Pee Dee, All 4 Autism, once just the brainchild of two mothers seeking an avenue to express their fears, challenges, frustrations and even their joys about raising a child with autism, has helped galvanize and strengthen the lives of those with ASD and their families.

In 2015, the organization formerly known as Autism Advocacy Group of Florence, was renamed All 4 Autism and recently, in 2016, the organization celebrated another milestone by hiring staff and welcoming Jessica Brown as executive director and Amy Pennington, outreach coordinator, to ensure the continued success of the organization. Brown and Pennington are more than just members of the staff. They are mothers of young boys who are both on the spectrum. Throughout the years, All 4 Autism has built a strong and solid foundation because most members of the Board of Directors have firsthand knowledge about autism because they are parents or relatives of someone with it.

In 2007 after learning her son Jack was diagnosed with autism, she found herself searching for both answers and resources to support her son and soon discovered that local resources were scarce and hard to find. Brown recalls her dilemma, "I had no idea what autism was or what the next step should be after a diagnosis. With the help of autism advocates like Erma Quarterman, Susie Bennett and Myra Horton, we were able to get Jack in the autism program at Lester, and got him on the right track. Autism affects the entire family, and I made a promise to my boys that someday I would open a resource center in our area to help families like ours."

To keep her promise to her sons, in 2016 Brown approached the board for All 4 Autism and presented her plan for the Autism Resource Center of the Pee Dee. "Rather than duplicate efforts and compete with their organization, I asked that they let me lead "All 4 Autism" as the executive director and refocus their efforts to my vision of opening a local resource center for autism." Brown, who has over a decade of experience, presented her 18-month strategic plan to the board and was granted approval by the board to guide the efforts to develop a resource center.

Once only a vision, Brown's dream will be realized on April 25, when a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held to open the Pee Dee's first Autism Resource Center to be located at 183 South Coit St., Suite B, Florence. "This center will provide the support and resources so desperately needed for our ASD community and their families," said Brown, adding, "We will have our 'official' opening on June 12. The

resource center will serve as a centralized area for ASD parents, caregivers and individuals seeking guidance and resources in regards to securing services and support. Our staff and volunteers will assist with finding what you need, wherever you may be on your ASD journey. The new resource center will truly enhance the organization's overall mission to increase awareness, resources and support for those of all ages with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families, throughout the Pee Dee region.

Another true passion of Brown's is to provide support for siblings of those with ASD. "These brothers and sisters are often forgotten in the support process, but their lives are deeply affected by having a sibling with autism. We will launch our Siblings Unite program this summer and host events where ASD siblings can have fun socializing and sharing their experiences with others that understand," said Brown. For additional information about the organization All 4 Autism, please email [info@all4autism.org](mailto:info@all4autism.org) or visit the website [www.all4autism.org](http://www.all4autism.org).

Jessica Brown, a Florence native, is a 1997 graduate of College of Charleston, with a degree in communications. She is married to Danny Brown with three sons, Jack, Sam and Max.

## 11-YEAR-OLD SHARES LETTER ON AUTISM

Submitted by Sam Harrington



Jack (Front) and Sam in the (back) at the train station.

My name is Sam, and my older brother, Jack, has autism. If you know me, you know me as Jack's little brother. Sometimes, when you have a sibling with autism that is how people think of you. I want to tell you about Jack, and what it is like to be his brother.

Some people don't know what autism is. Autism: a mental condition, present from early childhood, characterized by the difficulty of communicating and forming relationships with other people and in using language and abstract concepts.

This is what makes Jack different from other kids.

I'm not saying our life is perfect, but I'm definitely not saying that it is bad. There are some good days and some bad days. He could be sad one minute, and then before you know it, he is back on his feet playing like it was all in the past.

Some people judge autistic people by how they look or how they act. I feel bad for bullies because if you bully someone, that just means that you aren't happy with your life, and you want to take your anger out on someone else. (Someone you think can't stand up for themselves.)

Jack acts different than other people. He fidgets, and he can have a hard time keeping his body still. He sometimes gets upset over things and starts to cry. I feel bad because I know he can't help doing it, and it makes me sad when he is upset.

It can be fun to have a brother with autism. Jack isn't into sports like me, but he does like playing video games, and he is really good at it. He has his strengths and weaknesses. He can be afraid of a lot of things, gets upset easily, and doesn't like loud sounds. He has a lot of strengths, too. Jack will back me up whenever he can, loves to play video games with me and is a really nice kid.

That is what it is like to have a brother with autism. Even on the hard days, I still love him. Jack is the best thing that ever happened to me.



## DIVERSITY IS INCLUSIVE

Submitted by Darlene Buchanan, Recreation Manager, City of Florence



The Chapmans at home – From Left to Right, Front Row (Erika, Suubi, and Mark) Back Row (McCall, Eli, and Haig)

The surging growth in downtown Florence is undeniable. It makes for great conversation at local eateries, civic clubs and businesses throughout the city. The growth has offered something for all ages, and the Florence community is thriving in ways that haven't been witnessed in decades. It seems that everyone has discovered a niche and it is this diversity of offerings that continue to move the city and region forward. The City of Florence and a local organization, I Play Florence, have combined to bring the city's first all inclusive playground to Florence. The very nature of an inclusive playground is that it includes all children regardless of limitations. It allows for both a typically developing child and a child with disabilities to play and be successful in their play. The new playground will be steps away from the bustle of downtown activity at the intersection of Barnes and Chase streets.

Erika Chapman, parent and concerned mother of a child with disabilities, founded I Play Florence to lobby for a playground on the simple notion that there were few play opportunities for children with disabilities in Florence. She found herself and others traveling to cities to utilize play spaces that were dedicated to children with special needs. One such place was the Savannah's Place playground in Myrtle Beach. According to the Savannah's Place Facebook page, Savannah's Place "is an enabling playground featuring ADA-approved playground equipment and structures designed to provide children of all abilities the opportunity for play." According to Chapman, traveling to another city just to play was "unacceptable." As a city, she noted, "We could do better than this."

The playground may have never gotten off the ground had it not been for the determination and drive of Chapman. Propelled by the lack of opportunities for play experienced by her four-year-old daughter, Suubi, and others who have disabilities, she trekked on. Born in Uganda and adopted four years ago at the age of four, Suubi was born blind and was later diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Chapman states that Suubi is also considered to be "non-verbal." After wanting to adopt a daughter to complete their family that already consisted of three boys, McCall, Eli and Haig, she and her husband Mark began the process of finding their daughter. They agreed that when they found her, they would name her Hope. As they made varied attempts at adoption, Chapman says that God was leading them towards Suubi by closing doors instead of opening them. She stated one time their path lead them to an infant daughter and after only a few short days, they were forced to return the child to the birth parents who had a change of heart. In all the trials and disappointments, they kept driving towards their desire to make their family whole. When they found Suubi, they learned that her name, when translated in English, meant "hope." They knew they had found their daughter.

As a city on the move, it seemed to Chapman that plans that were moving Florence forward should consider the needs and interests of

all citizens. Representing I Play Florence, she and board member Brian New, CEO of Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, found a willing partner in the City of Florence. Successfully soliciting a grant from the Long Leaf Foundation in Charlotte, N.C., I Play Florence approached the City of Florence as a possible co-sponsor. The City agreed to match the grant funds and provide the site for the playground. "There were so many great parks in Florence and my daughter couldn't really use any of them," stated Chapman. Her appeal to the City was well received and plans quickly were underway to design and build the playground.

The park will begin construction in the coming weeks. However, before the play equipment can be installed, two existing buildings will need to be demolished to make room for the \$130,000 playground. According to city officials, a bid to demolish the buildings has been awarded to an area contractor and work will begin almost immediately. After demolition is complete, residents will see a well-designed play area take shape starting with the surfacing material. In cooperation with I Play Florence, the City of Florence chose a pour-in-place rubber surface material for its safety value, durability and its accessibility for children with mobility issues. In the approximate 150' x 150' space that will serve as the footprint for the playground, the site will feature ADA rated equipment that will include ramps and devices that encourage maximum play by children of all ability levels.

Since the City was on board as a partner, determining the best location for the playground was a question that had to be answered. Realizing that those who would use the park will come from all areas of Florence, it was conceivable that a park of this type would perfectly accentuate an already developing site in the 500 block of Barnes St. It had long been the City's desire to develop the property at the Barnes St. site to promote a campus-like atmosphere. The site was already home to the 14,108 square foot Barnes Street Activity Center and the administrative offices of the Recreation Department. In addition, an April 2016 ground breaking saw the beginnings of the long awaited, highly anticipated, multi-court gymnasium on the southeast corner of the site. The new 35,085 square foot structure will include three basketball courts, programming space, offices, concessions, restrooms, officials' locker room and storage. It will serve as home to the City of Florence Youth Basketball and Adult Basketball Leagues. It will also provide expanded programming space for one of the fastest growing activities in the United States, Pickleball. City officials believe the new gymnasium will generate hospitality revenue by its availability for rental to tournament organizers and for special events. In order to bring together the new gymnasium, activity center, and playground, well-planned connectivity has been designed that will allow all persons, including those with disabilities, to access each facility on the site.

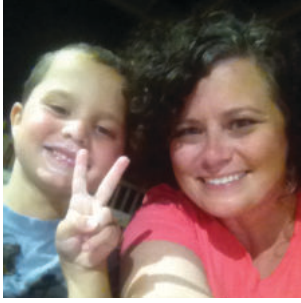
To say that children, like Suubi, are excited about this park is an understatement. When asked what the park means to those with disabilities, Chapman stated, "It shows the heartbeat of a city if there is a place where children of all abilities and disabilities can play. It creates isolation when such a place doesn't exist. It sends a message to families with children with disabilities that their children aren't valued. It's empowering to go to places that are specifically designed for them. It's just as important as all the good things going on in our downtown that a segment of our population that is usually marginalized, is being planned for and that makes me proud to call Florence home."

Footnote: Look for the new playground to be open in late spring 2017.



## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Articles by Kim Williams



*Peg and son Owen after Surfers Healing one day surf camp for kids with autism, at Folly Beach in August 2016*

As a parent, you must remember to trust your instincts. This is what one mother, Peg Leum did, and it made a world of difference for her son, Owen.

Leum is a nurse who has served in the medical field for about twenty-two years, and she has three children, ranging from ages 6 years old to 17. When her third child was born, she noticed some developmental differences from his siblings. Some of the common early signs of a child with autism are lack of eye contact, following objects visually, smiling back, trying to imitate movements or sounds and responding to cuddles.

Since Leum already had so much experience with children, warning flags raised in her mind. As Owen began to grow, Leum confided her concerns in their family's pediatrician. However, since Owen suffered with colic and reflux, the doctor advised that they continue to monitor his development. With Leum's medical background, she knew that when facing a situation like this, early intervention was the key for the best possible outcome.

At Owen's one-year appointment, she again voiced her concerns for her child's development. Owen was then given a Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT), which assesses the risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder. After failing this questionnaire at 18 months old, he was referred to BabyNet. BabyNet is South Carolina's interagency system for infants and toddlers under three years of age with developmental delays or conditions associated with development delays. This system does not require a doctor's referral, and you can actually refer your child if you have suspicions that he or she may have any kind of suspected delay. Owen repeated the MCHAT at his 2-year-old check up and failed it once again. Afterwards, he began to be referred for further help such as a development pediatric evaluation at Medical University of South Carolina

(MUSC).

Owen was diagnosed with autism just before his third birthday. This diagnosis allowed therapy to begin. He has now completed thousands of hours of therapy and has progressed by leaps and bounds. He went from being a child who did not babble and couldn't sit up at 11 months old to a happy, funny and capable first grader in a mainstream classroom.

Owen continues to amaze others around him with how he sees the world. He seems to perceive everything differently, even little things, as something special. Leum shared a precious memory of grocery shopping at Sam's Club with Owen when he was younger. It was a busy day with errands, and trying to accomplish some tasks, and when she stopped to grab him a snack from the deli, she noticed his pure joy and clapping hands as he delighted over the simpleness of a soft pretzel and slushy. Owen has taught his family and friends to stop, slow down and celebrate the small blessings of life.

Leum gushed over how Owen is so caring and compassionate. Owen sees people actually for who they are as a person, not for what they do. A prime example is how Aug. 4 and June 14 are noted on their calendar at home. These are special dates to Owen because he wanted to be sure to think about and celebrate President Obama and President Trump on their birthdays. This child, and every autistic child, is a special gift to our world that should be celebrated as well! Although children like Owen may look typical on the outside, Leum urges people not to judge them or doubt that they struggle with issues daily. In fact, she shared some helpful advice on how people can assist a parent or caregiver with an autistic child:

- Be compassionate-Most caregivers are tired, feel isolated and receive few breaks.
- Give encouragement-A kind word can mean so much and lift the caregiver's spirit, reassuring them that they are not alone.
- Offer to help-Even if the caregiver doesn't accept it, just knowing that people want to help can make tasks less overwhelming.

Leum wants everyone to understand, if you suspect someone has autism or any suspected delay, early detection is a must. Just trust your instincts and follow through.

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE



*Coretta Bailey*

**DARLINGTON** - Meeting Coretta Bailey, a stay-at-home mother of four, three of whom are on the autistic spectrum, was a highlight of my day. She shared with me how, often, parents and caregivers find themselves feeling isolated and alone. Her enthusiasm seemed to explode as she shared her vision to start a group that would support other families with autistic children. Bailey wanted others to know that they are not alone on this journey. The Darlington County Autism Support Group was born about eight years ago. Since that time, it formed a group

of board members who share the vision of assisting local families. This group is not exclusive to Darlington and is open to all surrounding areas.

The board members work together to make many opportunities available to the community, including monthly meetings, trainings, outreach programs, a winter celebration, summer camp and most importantly, the chance to connect with others.

All parents desire for their children to have fun and meaningful experiences. However, with children who have autism, that is not always so easy. Events may be too loud, bright, or otherwise overwhelming for them to enjoy and engage in the activity. Darlington County Autism Support Group understands these challenges and works to lessen these types of anxieties in parents and children while providing a fun, safe experience for all.

At these events, parents and caregivers can connect with others who can relate to their daily struggles and joys of raising and caring for their autistic child(ren). Children enjoy coming together because they are told what they CAN do, not what they can't. Here, they are able to meet friends who regularly experience many of the same difficulties as themselves, be accepted and have fun. Speaking of fun, the support group recently conducted its winter celebration. It was an exciting time as Santa and his elves joined in on the party. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and participating in a festive gift exchange.

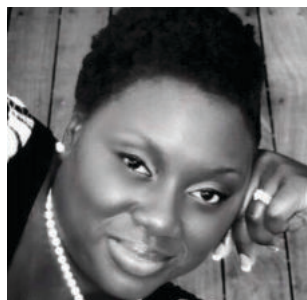
The Autism Support Group is currently making plans for their summer camp. This will be its fourth year offering it to the community. The dates are July 10-14 from 9 a.m. to noon and will be held at the Hartsville Family YMCA. To make it as affordable as possible, the group is asking only \$30 per participant. The children will enjoy awesome experiences, such as crafts, swimming, games and more. This year, they are ecstatic as plans are being finalized to add a field trip during the camp week. This is definitely a week that no child would want to miss.

Before summer, however, there is an opportunity to find out more about this amazing group on April 29. The Autism Awareness Event is at the Hartsville Family YMCA from 12-3 p.m. There will be vendors, food and a raffle featuring Carolina and Clemson baskets. I encourage everyone to attend, meet the founder Coretta Bailey and some of the amazing board members and to see how you can personally connect with the Darlington Autism Support Group.

For more information, visit [www.voices4autism.net](http://www.voices4autism.net).

## WOMEN AGAINST ALL ODDS (WAAO)

Articles by Anna Bowman



Alexan Green

**LAKE CITY** - Her name, “Alexan,” is so beautiful that you can’t help but smile when you hear it. But it’s hard to believe that the lady with the beautiful name had such a disturbing and horrid past. At the precious and tender age of six years old, she was molested. In an article published by the National Association of Adult Survivors of Child Abuse, statistics show that today in our society, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually molested before they are 18

years old; which means an estimated 1 in 5 of America’s youth, nearly ¼ of the entire population are reflected in these unbelievable statistics – unbelievable statistics to most, but not to Alexan Green.

Green recalls her disturbing ordeal: “I was between the age of 5-7 when the molestation occurred. The person who assaulted me was not a stranger. He was a relative of my great-grandmother. In fact, he lived with us for quite some time.” For two years, she was faced with the uncertainty of when the molestations would occur, but she knew it was coming at any given moment. Suddenly, the molestation stopped. Not because her abuser was caught, but because he decided to leave the home, walking away clean and clear of any repercussion(s) for habitually abusing a child. Why was he allowed to walk away free? Because the little girl he abused didn’t tell a soul what she was going through. “No charges were filed since I kept it a secret,” she revealed.

Left alone to shoulder the blame was a little girl who didn’t understand “what” had happened to her or “why.” The aftermath was horrible for Green. “I kept the abuse a secret for many years. I dealt with a lot of changes over the years: struggling with my sexuality, dealing with multiple men, fear of telling, not knowing what would happen if I did, struggling with loving myself and the list goes on. At some point, I felt like giving up. I endured. I wasn’t blamed by others but would always blame myself for anything that I or my family went through: sickness, death, job loss, children acting out, etc.” Time became one of her biggest resources – allowing her to grow in faith and forte. “As I aged, and with God, my experiences strengthened me. I began to know that I had a voice and needed to speak up and out to help other women.”

Green is a true survivor in every true definition of the word. Her search for understanding and healing led her to meet three sympathetic ladies who had experienced the same abuse: Pastor Mary Pinckney, co-founder of Life Changing World Outreach Ministries, an author, and Certified Life and Relationship Coach; Arthenius Jackson, founder of One Touch Transformation; and Jennifer G. Robinson, founder of Empowered to Heal. Jackson hosts an empowering event every year in April to honor victims and survivors of sexual abuse. “This was a platform for me,” said Green, “a starting point to share my story.” Robinson was the person she met with monthly to discuss more in depth what she went through. “The more I felt comfortable talking to her, I shared what I endured all through life. I’m still on this journey of healing,” she explains.

Today Green is a proud wife and mother and the founder of an outreach organization/ministry, Women Against All Odds (WAAO), designed to support women during their toughest challenges. “I began to realize that I had a voice and needed to speak up and out to help other women.” She started the non-profit in 2013. “I was given a vision in 2013 to help other women. I didn’t receive full instructions from God on what he needed me to do but the more I sought help and disclosed the molestation, I understood the healing process I was going through. It was ‘necessary’ for me to endure so that I could hopefully

help other women who experienced the same thing – I was the ‘woman against all odds,’ the same name of my outreach ministry that I received from God in my vision.”

The mission statement for WAAO sums up the organization’s purpose, “Helping every woman live through adversity in order to conquer, survive, and thrive.” Green wants to inspire and empower women during the greatest challenges in their lives. WAAO has hosted networking mixers on the third Thursday of each month in Green’s hometown of Lake City. During the meetings, ladies network and chat about their business, fellowship, pray and share stories of survival. The journey for Green and her organization has been challenging, but she believes and trusts that God will continue to send women to help her build her amazing organization.

From a little girl with an unspeakable burden, to a woman with a powerful mission, Green inspired by the connection to women with the same purpose and drive. “My advice to anyone who may be going through difficulty is to keep fighting until your victory is won,” said Green.

Green and her husband are the proud parents of three children, and they reside in Lake City.

## ONE HUNDRED MEN AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT



**COLUMBIA** - Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands (STSM) is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1983. One of 14 rape crisis centers in South Carolina, STSM advocates for and supports survivors of sexual assault and abuse in Richland, Lexington, Newberry, Clarendon and Sumter counties and educates the community to identify and prevent sexual violence. Since its inception 34 years ago, STSM has worked tirelessly to achieve its vision of healthy survivors thriving in a community free of violence through a three-tiered solution: Community Awareness, Primary Prevention Education, and Advocacy for Survivors.

In 2016 STSM implemented an “innovated” campaign to continue to promote community awareness about sexual assault, primarily against women, by employing a unique and key component – men. The campaign, “100 Men Against Sexual Assault,” was a campaign that harnessed the collective impact of men in the Midlands to create change. “There is power in numbers and, together, men can have a powerful impact in preventing, and even ending, sexual assault. By supporting survivors, educating themselves and others, and being positive role models, the 100 men engaged in the campaign, stood up against sexual assault in our community,” said Layla Ferjani, marketing coordinator, with Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands.

Ferjani explained the concept for the campaign: “The 100 Men Against Sexual Assault campaign started in November 2016 to rally men in our community to support survivors of sexual assault and educate themselves on the powerful impact of preventing sexual violence in South Carolina.” The fact that men were so willing to be an intricate part of the campaign was extremely cathartic for not only STSM and its clients but also especially for the men who were given a unique and special seat at the table to help support the mission and vision for the Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands.

The campaign was instrumental in recruiting 100 men of various diverse backgrounds to participate. “Our board members played a key

# Sexual Assault / Child Abuse

## CONT'D ONE HUNDRED MEN

role in recruiting men from around the state, and across the five counties we serve survivors,” stated Ferjani. STSM was grateful to have such tremendous support of men from all over South Carolina. They wanted these men to understand that there is power in numbers, and together, these men had/have a powerful impact in preventing, and even ending sexual assault. “By supporting survivors, educating themselves and others, and being positive roles models, these 100 Men made a difference in our community.”

Not only did the men contribute their time to the campaign, but they also gratefully and graciously extended awareness about sexual assault in their inner-circle and lent financial support as well. By accepting their role in the campaign, each man pledged to donate \$100 to support the work of STSM in ending sexual violence, stand against sexual assault by neither participating in sexual violence nor tolerating it in others, speak up to stop sexist or abusive language, promote healthy relationships and lead by example by modeling positive male behavior for other men and the next generation.

“We concluded the campaign at the beginning of 2017,” said Ferjani. In fact, the campaign exceeded its \$10,000 fundraising goal. “We had 100 men contribute more than \$10,000 to the no-cost services STSM provides by January 2017.” The money raised will go to counseling and advocacy services provided to survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones. The STSM board members are delighted with the outcome of the campaign. Ferjani stated that the 100 Men Campaign has led to an increase in donations, volunteer applications and survivors seeking help.

Ferjani, an alumna of the University of South Carolina, wants

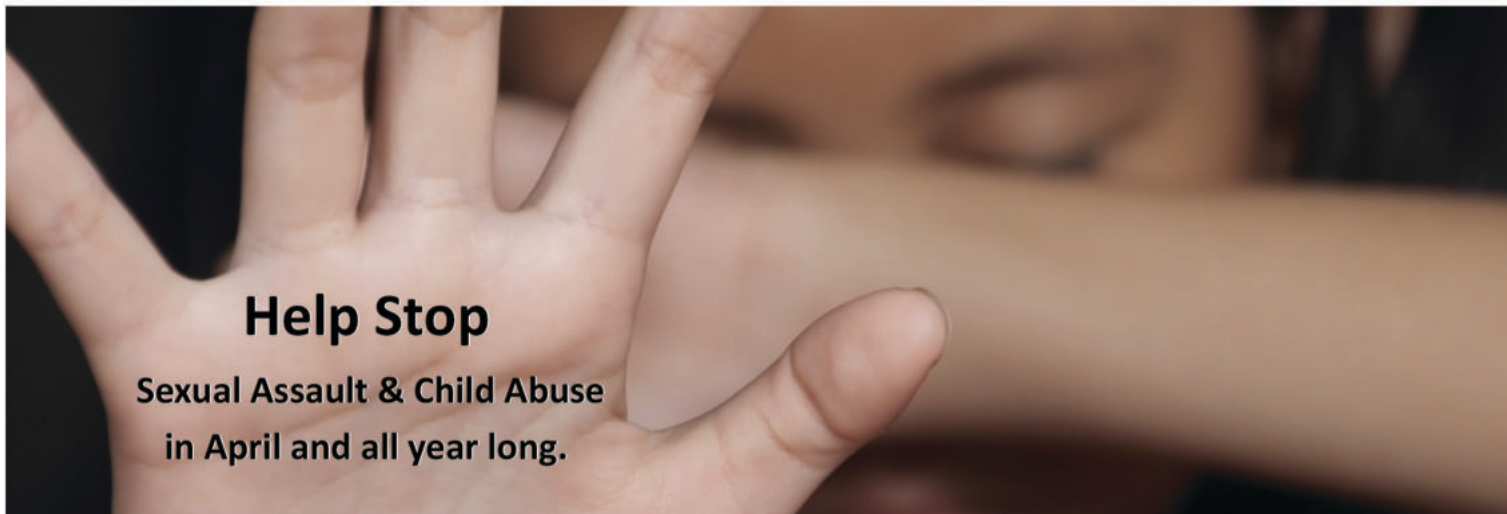
everyone to know, “Sexual assault is a problem in our community that impacts people all year. The 100 Men campaign may have concluded, but we all must play a part in helping survivors heal and preventing sexual violence. Commit to taking an action today that will help: make a donation, fill out the volunteer application, invite STSM to speak to your church or book club or parent group.”

Even though the campaign has ended, Ferjani wants men to know that they are always welcomed to become involved with STSM and its mission. Their commitment to becoming a man against sexual assault is directly supporting a survivor’s healing journey. To donate to this cause and the services STSM provides online donations can be made at [www.stsm.org/donate-now](http://www.stsm.org/donate-now). Or patrons can mail a check to our Columbia Office at 3830 Forest Drive, Suite 201, Columbia, S.C. 29204. Anyone wishing to learn more about services provided by STSM may visit the website at [www.stsm.org](http://www.stsm.org).



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

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



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

**Volunteers working together to help make our communities safer.**  
**[www.peedeecoalition.org](http://www.peedeecoalition.org)**



## I SURVIVED!

by Anna Bowman



There were days when she didn't know if she could make it through the day without being overwhelmed with the memories of the hurt and pain of being assaulted and then abandoned by the people who were supposed to love her unconditionally – her family.

One day, Giselle (\*not her real name), was just a young teenage girl in a huge family with a father, mother and numerous siblings. Then suddenly she was alone trying to survive day by day. What brought on the sudden change in the life of a 15-year old girl? Incest. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of articles detailing statistics about incest, but for victims of the horrendous act, statistics don't matter much once their lives have been irrevocably changed. The healing process can't start soon enough for them – if it can heal at all.

When Giselle was sexually assaulted by her father, she did what any girl would do – she told her mother. But instead of being consoled she was told to leave the home immediately with only the clothes on her back. "My mother didn't believe me! She blamed me for the assault," she said with traces of sadness still in her voice. Her father was never asked to leave the home, or charged with any crime. As bad as things were for her after the assault and abandonment, they were about to get worse for the teenager. "My mother called all of our family members and told them not to take me into their home," she said. Giselle would seek refuge in the stairwell of her family's apartment. She had nowhere else to go.

With the assistance of two of her sisters who believed in their sister's innocence, Giselle was able to receive necessities like clothing, food and blankets to keep her warm as she slept in the stairwell before attending school during the day. Unfortunately, this was stopped immediately once their mother discovered that her sisters were helping her to survive.

Life for Giselle would become long and arduous, and when she became a teenage mother, the mother who neglected her own child, helped to raise her granddaughter, while still refusing to allow her daughter back in her home or her life.

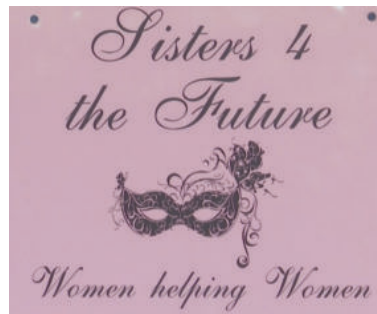
Her survival instincts helped her to make it day by day. But then there were dark days when the memories were too much for her to handle. "I tried to kill myself," said remorsefully. "After several attempts, I founded myself in court facing a judge who told me to get help immediately," she recalled. A social worker helped me to connect with the counselors at the Pee Dee Mental Health Center for me to start dealing with the hurt and pain that would overcome me and made me have suicidal thoughts.

Giselle believes that attending counseling sessions at the Pee Dee Mental Health Center has truly been her saving grace. "I'm a survivor!" she exclaimed with pride. "I was able to control my thoughts and to seek forgiveness for my parents who never ask for my forgiveness," she said. "I was able to find a job to support myself, and I found a loving man who married me and together created our own loving family."

Today, not only does Giselle continue to attend sessions at the Pee Dee Mental Health Center, but her husband also joins her during several of her sessions. "I survived because of the help I received from the Pee Dee Mental Health Center, and I recommend their services to anyone who needs someone to help support them through this journey called life. I survived!" she said with undeniable pride. "And you can too!"

## SISTERS 4 THE FUTURE PROGRAM

Submitted by Terester L. McAllister



Sisters 4 the Future is an independent, non-profit organization founded by Terester L. McAllister. McAllister is a native of Florence, and she created this organization to help women of abuse attain both the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency in the 21st century. In order to ensure that each

component of Sisters 4 the Future functioned effectively, McAllister created a team of professionals to help with the design of the organization. The design of the program is to help at risk women gain self-confidence by increasing their self-reliance by providing workshops, ongoing counseling, job-embedded training and resources that will equip them to take control of their lives and live independently. Sisters 4 the Future has several program components that are utilized to help women of abuse transition to a full life of independency as they learn life skills in independent living, finance, health and wellness, employment preparation, literacy and technology.

The Independent Living Skills Program is designed for women 18-65 years of age. A high percentage of referrals are sent to Sisters 4 the Future from close partnerships with the Housing Authority, local homeless shelters, and transitional facilities within the community. The Independent Living Skills Program offers services based on the individual assessed need of each person at the time that the referral is received. Upon receiving the referral, Sisters 4 the Future begins immediate training sessions, and transportation is provided to accommodate those that are need of services.

Sisters 4 the Future is an organization that women of abuse can depend on. The workers within the organization work diligently with local law enforcement to make sure that all women are treated with respect and dignity. In addition, Sisters 4 the Future is not just a place, but it is more like a home for those who feel that they have any place to go. The program allows at-risk women to be themselves and enter into the program as they are because at Sister 4 the Future we believe in motivating women to be all that they can be, one day at a time.





## HEALING FROM SEXUAL TRAUMA AND ABUSE: A SURVIVOR'S EXPERIENCE

Submitted by Jennifer Robinson, Executive Director of Empowered to Heal



Jennifer Robinson

“Get over it”  
“That was so long ago”  
“It was just a little flirting”  
“She acted like she wanted it”  
“If you don’t tell anyone, I’ll buy you anything”  
“It’s our little secret”

Those statements in the context of sexual aggression seem small, but they leave a lasting impact on the lives of those who have been sexually violated. These statements lead to lives that are filled with shame, esteem issues, broken people, broken families and

broken communities. As a community, our current dialogue about sexual abuse and ways to combat the issue shape the future of how victims can transition to thriving survivors. We must recognize the signs, minimize sexual abuse opportunities, learn the facts about the issue, talk about the issue by being educated about current trends and react responsibly when someone shares their ordeal.

April is recognized nationally as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Prevention Month. These two issues were given a month to be recognized in 2009 and 1983 respectively. These months are promoted annually by various agencies and centers worldwide because of the growing trends in abuse. Many people are aware of the popular but infamous acts of sexual abuse such as rape, incest and molestation. Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies are being trained to recognize threats and acts of human trafficking and pedophilia. Children are being taken from their homes and communities at alarming rates to be sold into prostitution and traded for goods and services.

In 2013, 10,404 children were victims of abuse or neglect in South Carolina, a rate of 9.6 per 1,000 children, representing a 9.9 percent decrease from 2012. Of these children, 68.2 percent were neglected, 42.3 percent were physically abused, and 6.5 percent were sexually abused ([www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org)). What is not listed is that these are the reported cases. We must be reminded that several cases of abuse go unreported for various reasons. In 2016, there were 73 reported cases of human trafficking in S.C. and only 259 calls were made. This is low number considering that nationally over 7500 cases were reported.

## Sexual Assault Awareness

Children are innocent and should be treated with love and respect, but unfortunately, they are often neglected,

abused, and tortured. These acts of abuse lead them to become adults who have difficulty being able to function in society. Because of the lack of immediate recovery care needed to assist children and adults who have been abused, they often turn to behavioral problems that lead them to be criminalized and ostracized by their own communities. Abused children often become hurt adults who react and act based upon things that occurred in their childhood. Per [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men reported experiencing rape at some time in their lives. It also reports 42.2 percent of female rape victims were first raped before 18. The reported numbers indicate that there are many people who need assistance and treatment.

There are resources in our communities to assist those who have been abused. There are crisis centers and child advocacy centers that are available in cities, counties and regions throughout S.C. and the nation. We should support these agencies in their efforts to promote awareness and prevention regarding child and adult sexual abuse.

There are also counseling agencies and private counseling practices that are available to not only assist victims but also secondary victims, friends and loved ones of those who have been abused. It is important for families to be trauma informed to be able to better support their family member(s) who has been through a traumatic experience. Knowing what to do is sometimes challenging to those who are close to survivors of abuse. They have trouble trying to comfort or support their loved ones by giving them well wishes and words of encouragement. Those sentiments may work, but not all survivors of abuse react to trauma in the same way. It is important for people to be trauma informed to be able to respond to survivors in a way that is safe and healthy.

When considering what to say to those who have experienced trauma, [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) suggests these phrases:

- “I’m sorry this happened.” Acknowledge that the experience has affected their life. Phrases like “This must be really tough for you” and “I’m so glad you are sharing this with me” help to communicate empathy.
- “It’s not your fault.” Survivors may blame themselves, especially if they know the perpetrator personally. Remind the survivor, maybe even more than once, that they are not to blame.
- “I believe you.” It can be extremely difficult for survivors to come forward and share their story. They may feel ashamed, concerned that they won’t be believed, or worried they’ll be blamed. Leave any “why” questions or investigations to the experts—your job is to support this person. Be careful not to interpret calmness as a sign that the event did not occur—everyone responds differently. The best thing you can do is to believe them.
- “You are not alone.” Remind the survivor that you are there for them and willing to listen to their story. Remind them there are other people in their life who care and that there are service providers who will be able to support them as they recover from the experience.
- “Are you open to seeking medical attention?” The survivor might need medical attention, even if the event happened a while ago. You can support the survivor by offering to accompany them or find more information. It’s okay to ask directly, “Are you open to seeking medical care?”
- “You can trust me.” If a survivor opens up to you, it means they trust you. Reassure them that you can be trusted and will respect their privacy. Always ask the survivor before you share their story with others. If a minor discloses a situation of sexual abuse, you are required in most situations to report the crime. Let the minor know that you have to tell another adult, and ask them if they’d like to be involved.
- “This doesn’t change how I think of you.” Some survivors are concerned that sharing what happened will change the way other people see them, especially a partner. Reassure the survivor that surviving sexual violence doesn’t change the way you think or feel about them.

Empowered to Heal is a local organization in the Pee Dee that provides transitional services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. It is located at 525 S. Dargan St, Florence, SC 29506. Please call 843-779-5638 if you are a survivor or know of a survivor who needs services to assist with healing from sexual trauma. Visit [www.empoweredtoheal.org](http://www.empoweredtoheal.org) to receive updates about current events and information about surviving abuse.



## HELP, HOPE AND HEALTHY CHILDREN THROUGH CARE HOUSE

by Ta'Meeka Epps



CARE (Child Abuse Resource and Evaluation) House of the Pee Dee was founded to support and protect our most vulnerable population, our children. CARE House is a non-profit children's advocacy center established to provide comprehensive services to victims of suspected and confirmed child abuse and to reduce

the risk of re-victimization. An individual or organization engaging in advocacy typically seeks to protect children's rights which may be abridged or abused in a number of areas. Services offered by CARE House include forensic interviews, counseling, court testimony, forensic medical evaluations, community education and support for non-offending caregivers.

The primary goal of CARE House is to provide help, hope and healing to victimized youth and their supportive caregivers. CARE House and their therapists help the victims and their families to heal beyond the hurt, showing them that great strength comes when working together as a family.

When a parent/caregiver or someone entrusted to protect a child, through action or failing to act causes death, injury, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child, they have committed child abuse.

Protecting a child is a parent's number one job, and even when something beyond the parent's control happens to a child, most parents blame themselves. When a child becomes a victim his or her view of the paradigm of trust changes, and that child's innocence may be snatched away.

Research has shown that children who have been abused may come to view the world as unsafe and adults as manipulative, and they must be assured that good people still exist in the world.

CARE House is here to help families strengthen and rebuild after the pain while advocating for and with the youth. Every situation, every family and every child will be different, but the plan of action remains the same: to find a way to continue to love and grow.

One such family survival story includes an amazing and resilient spirit by the name of Bailey. Bailey was victimized. However, she refused to allow her innocence to be taken from her. Bailey's mother recalls the remark her precious child uttered, confirming Bailey would not allow the situation to win: "Momma, it is not anyone's fault what my other daddy did. He did that."

"I am proud of her for knowing everyone is not bad and that good people sometimes make bad choices," stated her mother. When a child is violated, a parent tends to trust less and protect more, "When you make promises to your child to keep the monsters away, and yet a monster finds a way to violate your child, you blame yourself. Bailey spends more time at home and if she goes anywhere it's with immediate family," stated Bailey's mother.

Children who have been abused or neglected must feel safe and secure within nurturing relationships where the lines of communication are always open. The families play a vital role in helping the child recover from the abuse. The ongoing support, belief and protection are invaluable to the healing process of the child. The foundation of the family may be challenged, but it does not have to be changed because of the abuse.

For Bailey and her family their foundation is built on faith and their personal relationship with God. Bailey's mother knows all too

well the battle between how faith tells you to respond and how hurt makes you respond. "Hurt can never be truly healed until you forgive. Our faith teaches us to forgive the person and not the sin while praying for wisdom to find the right words to comfort your child and the courage to allow them to express their emotions and speak freely about situations affecting them."

Getting past abuse is possible. The hurt can be healed for the victim and the family. There will be hard questions that must be answered, emotional outbursts that seem to reopen the wounds before they completely heal, or anger from the misuse of trust and scars, which remain from frayed ends of broken relationships some adults maybe too afraid to mend. It is important that every supportive member of the family is taken care of during the healing process, allowing each link in the chain to strengthen as they make room for the victim to cope.

The most important message to get across to your child is that you do not blame them for the abuse. The family must always be open and clear while giving the child time to talk at their own pace. This is work that is best accomplished with the assistance of a therapist. At CARE House therapists are trained in evidence-based treatments that support victims and parents in growing their coping skills

so that the child can process his or her abuse when safe to do so.

No one knows definitively how abuse will affect a child in the long run. However, it has been proven when a child is made to feel safe, the child will begin to trust again, and when a child is shown love they will again color the world with all the colors of the rainbow. Children deserve all the peace and security a loving family relationship can provide. Through counseling for the victim and the family the road to recovery begins where the destination is a place of strength and joy overflowing with love.

CARE House of the Pee Dee depends on the support of the community to carry out the mission of help, hope and healing to the abused children of our area. To find out how to become a CARE House Hero, visit [www.thecarehouse.com](http://www.thecarehouse.com). CAPES (Child Abuse Prevention Education & Support) for Kids Run takes place April 29 and CARE House invites the community to participate in this hero-themed event. CAPES for Kids is a 5K/10k/Kids Fun Run and Costume Contest taking place each April. The month of April is Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month, and the symbol for this is the blue pinwheel. When you see a pinwheel spinning this spring, consider the innocence of childhood that all children deserve.



# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## MIND, BODY, SPIRIT: GOING THE EXTRA MILE FOR HEALTHIER OUTCOMES

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth



*HopeHealth treats the whole person, mind, body, and spirit, even when that sometimes means using the Hope Fund to help a patient overcome a financial hardship. By providing one-time assistance to resolve such hardships, our patients can focus on taking care of their health.*

For 25 years, the focus at HopeHealth has been about serving others, giving hope and changing lives. In 2016, the organization put those three short phrases on paper, and together, the entire staff took a pledge to live out that vision in their daily lives in the trenches of their work. Going the extra mile to treat the mind, body and spirit is embodied within the mission, vision and values.

Instead of focusing only on specific symptoms or conditions, providers and staff work to assist patients with determining the underlying causes of poor health and with improving their quality of life. If there are barriers that hinder a patient from life necessities such as working or getting to important medical visits, the goal is to remove those roadblocks and clear the way for whatever goal the patient is working to reach. Often times, those barriers need to be resolved outside of the HopeHealth scope of services. When those needs occur, however, there is a Hope Fund to help fill the void. HopeHealth is committed to excellence through service that exemplifies love for people and passion for their well-being. That is the HopeHealth mission. More importantly, it “is not just our mission, this is our heart,” said Dr. Edward Behling, HopeHealth chief medical officer.



*HopeHealth is committed to excellence through service that exemplifies love for people and passion for their well-being. To fulfill this mission, HopeHealth incorporates compassion, integrity, accountability, innovation, and excellence into every patient experience.*

“Our goal is to ensure all patients within our area of service receive the care that they need. One of the ways we are able to demonstrate this commitment in tangible terms is the Hope Fund. This financial resource is raised through private donations and has no contribution from federal, state, or grant funding,” said Behling.

Monies from the fund are used to pay for diagnostic testing, procedures and specialty care for patients who do not have the financial means to pay for these services. The fund is augmented by healthcare agencies that partner with HopeHealth to offer their services –

often at a discounted rate. Funds are also used as a last resort to pay for needs such as utilities, rent, housing, medical co-pays, etc., when a patient has no ability to pay and has exhausted all other community resources.

“At times, patients come with complicated financial needs and health conditions, and the Hope Fund affords us an opportunity to assist individuals right here in our community,” said Scherrie Cogdill, associate director of community development. “Having the peace of mind knowing we can assist with serious life circumstances outside the HopeHealth walls if necessary is quite special.”

Take John, an insured father making ends meet by working two jobs. John is on track with managing his hypertension and his son’s Type 2 diabetes but has no savings and no extra money at the end of the month. Then his truck breaks down. Without transportation, his job is suddenly in jeopardy. He loses his job and his insurance, and without insurance, he neglects his health to support his son’s medical needs. John’s health declines, his family’s standard of living declines,

and he worries about his son. Quickly John’s string of misfortune snowballs, turning into depression and more health problems. With a somewhat simple but costly repair to John’s car, John can be back on the road to good health, a dependable job and improved health for his son and himself.

This is the type of situation where HopeHealth can use monies from its Hope Fund to help patients with unforeseen circumstances that would prevent them from keeping their appointments or maintaining their care plan.



*Serving others, giving hope, changing lives. At HopeHealth, the Hope Fund provides a way to make a difference in the lives of our patients.*

“The Hope Fund has been an amazing instrument of mercy, giving care to those in need, and exists solely through the generosity of the gracious individuals who are ‘always doing good and helping others,’” said Behling. “Together, we have made a tremendous difference in the life of many.”

Larry Chewning, Ryan White client manager at HopeHealth, likened the fund to a “big, humungous safety net,” for patients who often “pay-it-forward” by helping raise monies for the Hope Fund through supporting events such as the annual HopeHealth AIDSWalk.

“These aren’t people who just can’t pay their bills. These are people who are on the verge of losing their homes, losing power, losing water, losing their ability to receive care; people in abusive relationships in decent homes, but with no where else to go; or people who have lost their jobs and just need a couple of weeks to get on their feet,” said Chewning, one of many on the front lines helping patients. “The fund helps people get back on their feet. It gives them dignity, and you can physically see a change in them in a couple of weeks. They look better, they feel better, they have a little bit of an, ‘I’m going to be OK’ mentality about them. Plus, they stay on their meds – which is the whole point.”

For Deana McHugh, an adult gerontology nurse practitioner at HopeHealth, the benefits of helping a patient overcome such barriers to care by using the Hope Fund have far more value than just the dollars spent: “It has a huge impact on the patient and gives them the ability to participate in their care to make their appointments, and do what they need to do,” said McHugh. “If they cannot make their appointments and be compliant with their care plan, their health care costs can significantly increase. Those patients may wait until they become so sick that they have to call EMS and be taken to the hospital emergency department.”

McHugh added that using the Hope Fund to help patients make their appointments has a positive impact on the local medical system beyond the community health center’s doors. By helping patients remain compliant in their care, the funds can help reduce emergency department visits, keep patients working and part of functional society, and reduce empty appointment blocks from appointment no-shows for providers.

In the first two months of 2017 alone, the Hope Fund has used \$3,500 helping people just with emergency housing. A donation to the Hope Fund helps with emergency assistance, routine procedures such as mammograms and colonoscopies, specialty care, prescription drug assistance and eye care services. Donations can be made through an honorarium, memorial, planned gift, or annual gift and by supporting annual HopeHealth events such as AIDSWalk. For more information about The Hope Fund or to make a donation, contact Scherrie Cogdill at [scogdill@hope-health.org](mailto:scogdill@hope-health.org).

# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING AND LONGEVITY – VOLUNTEER!

Submitted by Sheree Meadows, Senior Circle Advisor & Volunteer Coordinator



Sheree Meadows, Senior Circle Advisor & Volunteer Coordinator

A New Year often motivates us to establish new habits – or explore opportunities we’ve always wanted to try. Goals may range from eating healthier or exercising regularly, to writing a book or beginning an art class. If becoming more social, helping others and giving back to the community are on your list, consider becoming a volunteer at Carolinas Hospital System – it may just improve your wellbeing.

Carolinas Hospital System has volunteer opportunities throughout the hospital campus. Areas that currently have volunteer opportunities include Central Registration, Day Hospital, Emergency Room and Surgical Waiting Rooms, Human Resources, Out-Patient Rehabilitation and Radiology.

There’s scientific proof – giving of yourself, gives back.

Volunteers at Carolinas Hospital System enhance the services hospital staff provides patients, their families and guests. Several years ago, the Corporation for National and Community Service released a study that reviewed a collection of scientific research that revealed volunteers help themselves to better health while helping others. According to the report and its research:

- For adults ages 65 and older, the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from volunteer activities.
- Volunteering led to lower rates of depression among people 65 and older.



Volunteer Auxiliary Board (L to R) Larry Halliburton, Louise Balotti, Jody Jackson, Ron Cann, Dorethea Bailey, Geraldine Buskey-Cannon, and Irene Conner

- People who volunteered after experiencing heart attacks reported decreased feelings of despair and depression – two factors linked to mortality in post-coronary artery disease patients.

“There is now a convergence of research leading to the conclusion that helping others makes people happier and healthier. So the word is out – it’s good to be good,” said Dr. Stephen Post, a professor at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and co-author of the book “Why Good Things Happen to Good People: The Exciting New Research That Proves the Link Between Doing Good and Living a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life.”

So, besides improving your health, why should you consider volunteering at Carolinas Hospital System? Here are the ten top reasons:

- #10 Make someone else’s day.

By being the first person a patient or a guest sees when they come to the hospital or spending time with patients who may not have many visitors, a volunteer has the opportunity to provide comfort and compassion, as well as set the tone for a patient or guest’s experience while in the hospital.

- #9 Have fun.

When you volunteer doing something you love, the time will fly. And

you’ll meet a variety of like-minded volunteers – soon-to-be friends.

- #8 Satisfaction.

It’s almost guaranteed that when you help others, you will enjoy a greater sense of self-worth.

- #7 Explore career opportunities.

Young adults volunteering at Carolinas Hospital System have exposure to learn whether they’d like to pursue a medical career.

- #6 Get off the couch.

Volunteering gives you a reason to wake up and get motivated.

- #5 Learn new skills.

Young adults who volunteer will learn a great deal, and gain valuable work experience. They can also include their service on their resume for future college applications and jobs.

- #4 Fulfill graduation requirements.

If you need volunteer hours to graduate from college, Carolinas Hospital System has opportunities. Fulfill course requirements while learning, meeting new friends and having fun!

- #3 Make someone’s day.

Your extra efforts to assist our healthcare team or help a patient or guest feel more comfortable can mean the world of difference to them.

- #2 Become a part of a team.

Experience the camaraderie of working with others on a common goal and sharing the reward of making a difference in another person’s life. Whether you’re a soon-to-be graduate, considering a career change, or enjoying retirement, volunteering with a team will enhance your life.

- #1 You’ll be appreciated.

At Carolinas Hospital System, we love our volunteers. We respect their time and appreciate their giving of their talents.

To learn more or to have a volunteer application sent to you, call Volunteer Coordinator Sheree Meadows at 843-674-2975 or email [smeadows@carolinashospital.com](mailto:smeadows@carolinashospital.com).

About the author: Sheree Meadows serves as the Volunteer Coordinator at Carolinas Hospital System supporting the Volunteer program and the Volunteer Auxiliary. She also serves as the hospital’s Senior Circle Advisor promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for senior citizens in the community.

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 to facilitate conversations with their physician.

## GIVE A ROAR FOR ONE OF OUR VOLUNTEERS!

by Kim Williams



Les Echols

Les Echols is an outstanding example of the quality volunteers that Florence has to offer. He currently serves as the president of the Florence Lion’s Club. The local chapter has about 50 members and is consistently growing and developing. Echols first learned about the Lion’s Club through a friend and colleague who had referred and invited him to a club meeting. Once there, he was immediately endeared to the group. He fit the perfect description of a prospective member. Lions are people with a passion for community service and civic engagement. Members must be willing to give time and energy in order to give back to their community while living out the club’s motto, “We Serve.” Shortly thereafter, Echols became a member of the Lion’s Club.

This club carries out many useful and important roles in our community, such as their mission, which states that Lions give sight. They conduct vision screenings; help equip hospitals and clinics; distribute medicine and eyeglasses; and raise awareness of eye disease

# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## CONT'D GIVE A ROAR...



Lions pictured with international jazz artist, Ezra Brown. L - R: Mark Deremo, Les Echols (President), Ezra Brown Chris Herring (VP), Kevin McLaughlin (2nd VP)

to Florence residents of need. Lions work towards the goal of providing vision for all.

The Lion's Club also benefits the community in other ways, such as making a difference in the lives of underprivileged children at Christmas time, through its annual Toy Run Parade. Five hundred bikers provide toys, which are distributed by local charities. Another community based service initiative is Goodfellows. Through this public assistance program, the Lion's Club helps to deliver food to over 100 families during the Christmas season. By participating in the Goodfellows program, it has changed him for the better. As he helps to deliver the food to several families, the thankful looks and expressions on the families' faces are the priceless reasons that he can continue with the desire to serve his community. Echols shared how, in 2016, the Lion's expanded their impact to help more people, as they partnered with the Salvation Army and gifted \$3,000 to help provide needy children with bicycles.

Along with the Lion's Club, Echols participates in many other

capacities, such as serving on several local and regional boards, including vice-chair of the Pee Dee Workforce Development Board, Empowered to Heal board of directors, founder and co-chair of MINGLE of the Pee Dee, and a member and committee chair of Pee Dee Boys and Girls Club board of directors. He is also the Director of Community and Minority Enterprise for the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, along with developer and/or coordinator of several of the Chamber's leadership programs and seminars. He is responsible for creating and facilitating efforts based on the needs and priorities of the small and minority business community. Prior to joining the Chamber, Echols spent nearly a decade in workforce development. He was the first executive director of Project HOPE, a grant funded workforce program that assisted in placing 300 people in the Florence area to work. How awesome it is to have such a dedicated volunteer in so many areas in Florence County.

How did Echols come to this point in his life, you may ask. Well, he recalls how he began writing stories and raps at an early age. These young activities have transformed into writing for various business publications like Diversity Works© magazine and Florence Morning News. He is a graduate of Claflin University in Orangeburg and is currently pursuing a master's degree in public administration at Troy University. He resides right here in Florence with his wife and two children, whom he shares with the many friends and rappers he has gained. He considers all that he has been a part of, and helped with... priceless.

If you happen to see Echols out and about, or any of the other hard working citizen volunteers while you are in Florence or elsewhere, please join me in thanking them for their service.

## HOPEHEALTH'S HUMPHRIES RECEIVES SHEHEEN NON-PROFIT EXCELLENCE AWARD

Submitted by FMU



FMU Vice President of Community Relations Darryl Bridges; Rose Sheheen, wife of the late Fred Sheheen; Senator Vincent Sheheen and his wife Amy; with Carl Humphries, winner of the 2017 Fred Sheheen Award of Excellence in Non-Profit Leadership.

Sheheen Non-Profit Leadership Institute (NPLI) or a member of SCANPO who has excelled in the management of a non-profit organization in the state.

Presented jointly by SCANPO and the Sheheen Non-Profit Leadership Institute, the award was recently renamed in memory of, and to honor, the founding Director of the Non-Profit Leadership Institute, Fred R. Sheheen. SCANPO has recently adopted a new name: Together SC.

Humphries is a graduate of the University of South Carolina. He has been with HopeHealth for 16 years and has presided over the organization's growth from a small community health provider to an important regional health center. Much of that growth has taken place in the past five years.

In 2013, after winning a competitive federal grant, HopeHealth

more than doubled in size overnight. The organization, which provides low-cost, need-based medical care to a broad, underserved area, recently moved into a new facility and is already expanding that building. HopeHealth serves more than 35,000 patients and employs more than 300 people in the Florence area/Pee Dee region. Humphries' strong leadership, integrity, passion and commitment to serving others allowed the organization to transition seamlessly during that growth spurt.

Deena Hilton, HopeHealth's chief operations officer, says that Humphries' gifts as a leader are clear to all involved. "From the beginning of Carl's tenure as leader of HopeHealth, he strived to diversify funding, expand programs, and grow our donor base," says Hilton. "Carl has a gift: the ability to visualize what he wants without limiting himself. (He) is widely known in the Florence community as a champion for HopeHealth and our mission to serve the underserved." HopeHealth is a non-profit organization committed to excellence through service that exemplifies its love for people and passion for their well-being. HopeHealth operates nine community health centers, three HIV/AIDS service sites, and a child abuse and neglect advocacy center. Since its founding in 1991, HopeHealth has been committed to offering the very best in affordable healthcare to patients.

For more information about Francis Marion's Fred R. Sheheen Non-Profit Leadership Institute (NPLI), please contact Cheri Richardson with the Francis Marion University Education Foundation at crichardson@fmarion.edu or 843-661-1199.

For more information about Together SC membership and resources, please visit their website at <http://www.scanpo.org/>.

# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## HARTSVILLE CHAMBER HONORS AWARDS RECIPIENTS

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President Hartsville Chamber



Danny Johnson is the 2016 Will Woodham Business Person of the Year



Kim Cranford is the 2016 Rotary Club's Citizen of the Year



Bonnie Bell is the 2016 United Way's Volunteer of the Year



Charlene Lloyd is the 2016 Pilot Club of Hartsville's Caregiver of the Year

**HARTSVILLE** -On Feb. 20, 2017, the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 96th Annual Membership Banquet. The banquet is an evening set aside for the board to report on last year's accomplishments and to provide insight into the program of work for the new year. It is also a night the community honors recipients of seven prestigious, highly respected awards.

Outgoing chair, Leslie Pemberton shared that the chamber grew to 307 members and welcomed 43 new members in 2016. The chamber began offering quarterly meetings for human resources managers and created a small business task force to develop programming to support small business owners. The chamber also created additional meeting space by renovating an unused office into a conference room. Both the Duke Energy Community Room (chamber's boardroom) and the new conference room are rented regularly by members and the community. Pemberton also announced that the chamber has created an ambassador program to give members a direct line to the chamber through volunteer liaisons.

Following Pemberton, incoming chair Martin Driggers Jr. spoke about the chamber's plan for the future. In 2017, members will continue to have access to quarterly human resources managers meetings and will have opportunities to attend small business support meetings. These support meetings will include presentations from the Small Business Administration and other organizations that specialize in small business development. Driggers also shared that the chamber will be hosting two new events in 2017: State of Education Breakfast on March 24 and Women's Leadership Symposium on Sept. 22.

Pemberton thanked outgoing board members, and Driggers recognized the current board members. Following their speeches, the annual awards were presented.

The Hartsville Pilot Club has been giving the Caregiver of the Year Award since 2008. The award recognizes a professional or volunteer who has made life more pleasant for someone in need. This year's recipient was Charlene Lloyd, who cares for her aging,

ailing parents and their family farm.

The Hartsville United Way honored its second recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award at the banquet. The recipient is someone who has volunteered in the Hartsville community for at least two years. Bonnie Bell was this year's recipient for her work with the Guardian ad Litem program. Bell has spent the last eight years of her life dedicated to the children in the program. She has taken over 67 cases with multiple children in some of the cases.

Duke Energy's Citizenship and Service Award is given to individuals

or groups who positively influence the lives of others. In its fourth year being given, the Women's League of Hartsville was honored at the banquet. Since the 70s, the league has been a place for women to build relationships, network and help others in the community. Most recently during their annual auction, the league raised funds and granted \$20,000 to the Trent Hill Center and \$8,000 to Cypress Adventures.

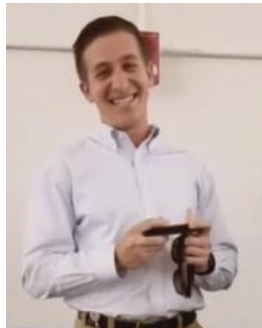
The Hartsville Young Professionals presented their second Hartsville Young Professional (HYP) of the Year Award to Ryan Vento. The HYP of the Year Award is presented to someone who is committed to the group's mission to make Hartsville a place where young professionals want to live, work and play. Vento volunteers at his alma mater Coker College and invests time and energy into making HYP successful.

The first-ever Hartsville Chamber Ambassador of the Year Award was presented to Kelly Benton. Benton stepped up to the plate in 2016 while the program was still new and forming and volunteered to be the lead ambassador. Through her leadership, the program has grown and is a successful, viable part of the chamber.

The chamber presented the Will Woodham Business Person of the Year for the 36th time to Danny Johnson, Jr. of North Industrial Machine. The Will Woodham Business Person of the Year is awarded to a proven leader of a Chamber member business. Johnson is vice president of and a board member of North Industrial Machine, Precision Components and Services and Sun Superior. He is also a partner at Chafin, Johnson and Associates. He was recently presented the 2017 Coker College Alumni Association's Outstanding Young Alumni Award.



Kelly Benton is the 2016 Ambassador of the Year



Ryan Vento is the 2016 Hartsville Young Professional of the Year



The Women's League of Hartsville is the 2016 Duke Energy Citizenship and Service award recipient. President Brandy Stellingworth and long-time member Carla Dunton accepted the award on behalf of the club

Finally, the Hartsville Rotary Club presented the Citizen of the Year Award to D. Kim Cranford. Since 1940, the club has been honoring outstanding Hartsvillians who have a history of active community service. Cranford has been a member of the Darlington County Fire Department for 40 years. He belongs to the Hartsville Lion's Club and has served on boards and committees throughout his career and is also a Hartsville Chamber Ambassador. In December, Cranford arranged funding and logistics for more than 3,000 Darlington county elementary school students to attend performances by the Columbia City Ballet Company in Hartsville.

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

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.

# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## HELPING ONCOLOGY PATIENTS EVERY DAY

by Chinel Boateng



Audrey Gilbert and Robin Aiken are deeply committed to the work of the HOPE Fund which benefits patients receiving care at the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research.

What is the meaning of HOPE? To different people HOPE means different things. For the single mom who's working two jobs while going to school, HOPE means a new life. And for the child who just lost his or her front tooth, HOPE means the Tooth Fairy. On the other hand, for the father whose child has been on dialysis for over five years, HOPE means a kidney. You'll find several definitions of HOPE in the dictionary, but for the cancer patients at the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, HOPE has a new meaning. For them, HOPE means

### Helping Oncology Patients Everyday.

Audrey Gilbert, a native of Timmonsville and resident of Florence, has seen her share of loved ones diagnosed with cancer. Her experiences have drawn her closer to the mission of the McLeod Foundation, and she is an avid supporter. Gilbert is also a passionate supporter of the McLeod Hospice House. So when the opportunity to partner with Robin Aiken and serve on the HOPE Fund Advisory Committee came about, there was no doubt her reply would be "yes." And it was.

Aiken's sister was treated for pancreatic cancer at Duke University and succumbed to the disease in 2006. It was during those days at Duke that Aiken and her family became aware of a program at Duke that assisted cancer patients with their needs, some being traditional, some being unique. Aiken became very interested in bringing a similar program to McLeod once the Cancer Center opened in 2014. Thus the HOPE Fund was created. "The HOPE Fund provides assistance and support to cancer patients," explained Aiken. And that's exactly what

it does. Support comes in the form of financial, emotional, educational, comfort and more. "It is immediate access for staff to funds for the support of cancer patients," Aiken added.

Many of the patient's needs are identified through McLeod clinical staff, and just as each cancer journey varies, each patient's needs vary. They have filled requests varying from paying for dentures and walking shoes, to rent and other medical bills, to prescription assistance. "McLeod does a great job



McLeod Cancer Center Volunteer Linda Mallick offers a patient a snack from the HOPE Cart.

taking care of the medical needs of cancer patients through the McLeod Cancer Clinic, which provides chemotherapy and radiation therapy on an outpatient basis to indigent cancer patients from Florence, Darlington, Dillon, Marion, Marlboro and Chesterfield Counties who have no insurance coverage. But then there are all those other things that you might not be able to afford. Transportation is probably our biggest line item for the HOPE Fund because we serve 15 counties and we have a lot of patients in rural areas who need to get to their treatment. And if you're receiving radiation, you have to be here every day, for a short period of time, and transportation is a big deal," Aiken explained.

Prescription assistance for nutrition is also provided. "We became aware of this right after we started the HOPE Fund," said Aiken. "One of the clinical staff members told us about a gentleman who was

grinding rice to put in his feeding tube because he could not afford his supplement. This patient's story led to the Nutrition Assistance Fund. Now patients can work with the staff to take home a case of whatever supplement they need."

This is a volunteer-based program but Aiken and Gilbert were excited to report that they have secured a full-time HOPE Fund coordinator who's responsible for coordinating and administrating the HOPE Fund. So, instead of putting it on clinical staff to identify needs,



McLeod Cancer Clinic Coordinator Tara Pierce places nutritional supplements in a patient's car.

the coordinator can assess what might be missing and how to fill these unique requests.

The HOPE Fund supports all cancer patients, regardless of their need, with the HOPE cart. When this cart filled with snacks, drinks, magazines, blankets, gifts, donated hats, etc. is pushed through the infusion area and inpatient floor, no assessment is needed. It helps provide

emotional support and smiles. "You'd be surprised how meaningful that is," Aiken shared. From time to time patients need that distraction from their journey. "It's the little things that people might not think about that the HOPE Fund provides," added Gilbert.

Quite often, cancer patients deal with the cosmetic side effects of treatment. "We've Got You Covered" is a program supported by the HOPE Fund that provides a \$100 voucher to purchase head coverings from the Inspirations Gift Shop for all patients who will experience hair loss.

The HOPE Fund was established in October 2014 and has had many individuals and organizations help raise nearly \$400,000 for the program. But getting it started was no easy accomplishment. Most challenging was the financial aspect, both Robin and Audrey agreed. But Aiken's mother provided the first memorial donation, "and that kind of got us started," explained Aiken. The McLeod Foundation's "Evening of Hope," an annual fundraiser benefitting the Cancer Center, was established prior to the HOPE Fund. And because of Aiken's vision and tenacity, proceeds from the event are now allocated to the HOPE Fund.

Moreover, her vision is spreading to other McLeod facilities. McLeod Seacoast, which also treats oncology patients, has started an annual golf tournament to help support its HOPE Fund. Additionally, it also has a bell for patients to ring at the completion of their treatment and a HOPE cart.

Aiken and Gilbert contribute the success of the HOPE Fund program to the McLeod clinical staff. Aiken stated, "The support and excitement of the clinical staff is making this work; it's not us, it's them. They're the ones on the frontline who are identifying these needs and are bringing these stories to us, and saying this is what we need because we don't know. And they are the ones who are sometimes giving of their personal time and resources."

All recipients of the HOPE Fund must be patients of the McLeod Cancer Center. Ultimately, patients' needs are identified and fulfilled, without a lengthy grant process. At the McLeod Cancer Center, HOPE truly means Helping Oncology Patients Everyday.

Having cancer is hard; finding help shouldn't be. Donations for the HOPE Fund can be made at any time through the McLeod Foundation, 843-777-2694 or [www.mcleodfoundation.org](http://www.mcleodfoundation.org).

# Community Service / Appreciating Our Volunteers

## VOLUNTEERING AS A BIG BROTHER OR BIG SISTER

by Anna Bowman



### Big Brothers Big Sister of the Pee Dee

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Florence has been serving kids in the Florence areas for over 60 years. The charitable organization, which was created nationally over 100 years ago, provides mentors for kids in need from single-parent homes.

Big Brothers Big Sisters provides children facing adversity, often those

of single or low-income households, with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. Like so many organizations, Big Brothers Big Sisters depends on volunteers, and the Florence based organization is no different. "Currently the organization has two full-time professional staff members who recruit, train, match and supervise clients on a year-round basis," said Executive Director Joey Edwards, so volunteers are very important to the success of the organization. "Big Brothers Big Sisters is very much a 'people' program. We depend on screened and trained volunteers to work on a 'one-to-one' basis with children from single parent homes. We use many avenues of recruiting such as the media, civic clubs, word of mouth and direct appeal," said Edwards.

Being a Big Brother or Big Sister is one of the most enjoyable and fulfilling experiences, not only for the volunteer, but also for the child and the child's family. Having the opportunity to positively enhance the life of a child is an empowering experience. Edwards explains the process of selecting volunteers: "All volunteers must pass a thorough background

check and complete training by professional staff. Our staff monitors all 'matches' and is there to assist the child, parent and volunteer throughout the life of the match." Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age and have a valid driver's license with not over six points in violations, and they must reside in Florence, Darlington or Marion counties. Volunteers must also agree to a minimum of one year of service.

Volunteers, who range in age from 21-62, typically spend two to three hours a week with their little brother or sister, engaging in activities and/or events that are designed to support the best interest in the growth and development of the child and the child's family, all while having fun. Volunteers are matched with boys between the ages of 8-17 and girls ages 6-14. "Female volunteers are usually more easily recruited," said Edwards. "We always need additional male volunteers," he said, and invites all positive minded males in Florence, Darlington or Marion counties to apply to become a mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pee Dee Area has many events throughout the year, and Edwards encourages people to participate in one or more to learn firsthand about the great work that the Pee Dee chapter of Big Brothers/Big Sisters is doing in our area. For anyone who can't participate as a volunteer, donations are always welcomed. For additional information about the Pee Dee Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Florence, please visit the website at <http://www.pdbbbs.com>. The website has pertinent information about volunteering and donating, and it gives detailed information about the services provided. If you're interested in learning more about volunteering, you may call 843-662-7081 during regular business hours.

## LYNN FAMILY HONORED WITH LEGACY AWARD

Submitted by Teowonna Clifton, Marketing Communications Manager



The Lynn Family of Darlington County was presented the Legacy Award

**COLUMBIA** — The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center in Columbia presented the Legacy Award to the Lynn family for four generations of successful business ownership. The presentation took place on March 10 in the Richland Room at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center as part of the Advocacy Awards Luncheon.

The Lynn Family began its journey with entrepreneurship in late 1950 when Clarence and Salama Lynn, former Lee County sharecroppers, opened a small general store in Hartsville. Lynn Grocery met the community's needs by offering the basic day-to-day goods that families needed, oftentimes on credit.

After Clarence and Salama Lynn both passed away, their daughter Vashti carried on the business until 1986. Their son Lawton Lynn continued the farmer-turned-storekeeper family tradition when he opened Lynn's Meat & Produce Procession Company in Darlington. Lawton Lynn was well known for butchering, curing and processing fresh meats. In addition, he offered garden-fresh vegetables and prepared foods from the store's kitchen.

Dr. Louis Lynn, the third generation, took his love of horticulture in a different direction when he opened ENVIRO AgScience, a landscaping company that focused on installing, landscaping and

maintaining the grounds of upscale residential and multifamily housing communities. It later grew to include large commercial and municipal contracts. Today, ENVIRO has evolved into a successful construction, landscaping and design firm, with nearly 70 percent of its revenue deriving from construction.

When Dr. Krystal Conner and Adrienne Lynn Sienkowski, Louis Lynn's daughters, established ENVIRO Enterprises LLC, the fourth generation of Lynn family business owners was initiated.

Also honored were Delores DaCosta and Sophia Vickers for their longtime advocacy of minority businesses. Both have served minority businesses in various capacities for more than 20 years.

Camille Shaw, director of the MBDA Business Center says, "Minority business owners need success stories like the Lynn family to provide positive proof that success is possible in spite of the many challenges minority businesses face. They also need advocates like Ms. DaCosta and Mrs. Vickers to help them navigate those challenges. It was my pleasure recognizing these deserving recipients."

The 2017 Advocacy Award ceremony is the midday component of SB Connect Economic Outlook Summit, a one-day business development meeting that puts small women- and minority-owned businesses face-to-face with buyers from federal, state and local government agencies. For more information, visit [SBConnect-SC.com](http://SBConnect-SC.com). For more information about the MBDA Business Center – Columbia, please visit [columbiambdacenter.com](http://columbiambdacenter.com).

### About the MBDA Business Center

The mission of the MBDA Business Center – Columbia is to assist Minority Business Enterprises compete in the global economy and to stimulate the national and local economy through job creation. To fulfill this mission, we assist MBEs with access to contracts and capital, strategic business counseling, and becoming export-ready. Complete information about the MBDA Business Center and its services can be found by visiting [www.ColumbiaMBDACenter.com](http://www.ColumbiaMBDACenter.com) or by calling 803-743-1154.



## MILITARY FAMILIES OFTEN NEED EXTRA FINANCIAL PROTECTION



As a member of the military, you've dedicated your career to protecting and serving others. What's more, you've accepted the risks that often accompany your trade. But have you thought about what would happen to your loved ones if something tragic—whether it was in the line of duty or not—suddenly took you away? How long could your family make ends meet without your income to support them?

### You know how important protection can be.

While you may have helmets and armor to protect you, life insurance may be the only financial safeguard your family has in case you pass away. That's because life insurance pays a death benefit that your loved ones can use to fund your children's education, retire a mortgage, or to help meet day-to-day expenses. What's more, permanent life insurance policies offer living benefits—such as cash value accumulation—that you can use to pay for unexpected repairs or medical expenses.<sup>1</sup>

### Do you have enough coverage, and is it the right kind?

Even if you have life insurance through the military, it may not be enough to meet your family's current and future needs. There's also a good chance that your coverage will expire if you leave the service or are no longer on active duty. To find out if your loved ones are adequately protected, ask yourself some basic questions:

- How much is your monthly household income?
- What are your total monthly expenses? How much do you have in available savings?
- Do you foresee any significant financial obligations in the future: college, wedding, car purchase?
- How much life insurance do you currently have?

If you find that your current level of coverage won't meet all of your family's needs, now may be the best time to do something about it. Since life insurance premiums are based partially on age, you will generally pay less for coverage when you act sooner. Of course, there are lots of policies to choose from, so you may want to work with a life insurance professional to make sure you get the right coverage for the right price. That way, you can help make sure that your family's future is as securely protected as our nation's.

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](mailto:jacord@ft.newyorklife.com).

<sup>1</sup> The cash value in a permanent life insurance policy is accessed through policy loans, which accrue interest and decrease the death benefit and cash value.



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## BYRD EARNS CIS MANAGER CERTIFICATION

Articles Submitted by Susan Grant, V.P. Marketing Director/CRA Officer



Stephanie Byrd

**MULLINS**—Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce that Stephanie Byrd recently earned certification as Certified Information Security Manager (CISM) from Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA). This certification focuses on the required knowledge to recognize critical security issues and align compliance, security and data integrity with overall business goals and objectives.

Founded in 1969, the nonprofit, independent association is an advocate for professionals involved in information security, assurance, risk management and governance. Since its inception, ISACA has become a pace-setting global organization for information governance, control, security and audit professionals, and serves 140,000 professionals in 180 countries. ISACA provides its member with education, resource sharing, advocacy, professional networking and a host of other benefits.

### About Anderson Brothers Bank

Anderson Brothers Bank is a full service community bank offering a complete range of competitive loan services and deposit products. Founded in 1933, this family-owned bank blends the elements of traditional personal



service, local market awareness, and advanced technology to meet the financial needs of its customers.

Anderson Brothers Bank offers 21 branches conveniently located in 14 communities throughout the Pee Dee and Coastal regions of South Carolina with plans for growth in the Myrtle Beach area in 2016. The bank's main office is located at 101 North Main St., P.O. Box 310 in Mullins. For additional information about Anderson Brothers Bank, call 843-464-6271 or visit [ABBank.com](http://ABBank.com).

For more information, contact Susan Grant of Anderson Brothers Bank at 843-464-3551 or via email at [susang@abbank.com](mailto:susang@abbank.com).

## ABB HOSTS BLOOD DRIVE



**MULLINS**— Anderson Brothers Bank had its annual Blood Drive with much success. The Bank's employees, along with the community, all came together to make a real difference.

The Red Cross saw 30 donors and was able to collect 20 units of whole blood with four donors able to donate double reds, for the grand total of 28 units. The double reds are so beneficial because those blood donations can go directly to the hospital to start saving lives right

away. This was a little over 20 percent increase from last year's blood drive to help those in need.

"Red Cross Blood Drive has been an annual event in the past, but as it continues to grow with the support of the community, this may become a more recurring event," said Jessica Graham, BSA/HR administrative assistant with Anderson Brothers Bank. "We want to thank all that signed up to give and made the drive such a huge success."

The American Red Cross is known best for blood drives and its response to huge disasters, much like our communities experienced with Hurricane Matthew in October. Every nine minutes, the American Red Cross brings help and hope to people in need, thanks to heroes like you. Whether you donate funds, donate blood or volunteer, it depends on your support to make a difference in communities across the country.

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IF MONEY DOESNT  
GROW ON TREES  
WHY DO BANKS  
HAVE BRANCHES?

# SUCCEED AT TAX FILING THROUGH SC THRIVE

Submitted by Melissa Watson, Director of Programs and Operations



Melissa Watson

**COLUMBIA**-April is Financial Literacy Month and April 15 is National Tax Day. As stressful as this month is for month Americans, it can be especially stressful for military members and Veterans as they try to understand what, if anything, they owe to Uncle Sam.

Military members and Veterans may be confused as to what types of pay and benefits to count as income. However, by using SC Thrive's online application system, The Benefit Bank of South Carolina

(TBB-SC), that confusion can be lessened. Military Members and Veterans can use TBB-SC to file their federal taxes, and if South Carolina is their home state, they can also file their state taxes using the system. The Benefit Bank of South Carolina is an online application system run by SC Thrive. The system allows South Carolinians to file their taxes and to apply for benefits such as SNAP, Medicaid, SSI/SSDI and more. To use the system to complete taxes, a tax filer would need to have an adjusted gross income of \$65,000 or less unless they are married filing jointly. Then, they can have an adjusted gross income of \$95,000. A tax filer could access the online system by visiting [scthrive.org/filetaxes](http://scthrive.org/filetaxes) and utilizing the self-serve option. They could also use the site locator to find organizations with trained SC Thrive tax counselors that would assist them with completing their tax return. The Benefit Bank of South Carolina can also be used to file up to three previous years of taxes that have not been filed yet.

The beauty of using an online system such as The Benefit Bank of South Carolina is it takes the complexity out of filing taxes. The Internal Revenue's current Armed Forces Tax Guide is 37 pages. That is 37 pages of text and charts to figure out if special pay, incentive pay or basic allowance for housing (BAH) needs to be counted as income. Trying to determine if disability payments or social security income should be included can be just as complicated. With The Benefit Bank of South Carolina's easy interview system, the tax filer would enter all of their information, and the system will determine what income to count. Because the expertise is in the system, it decreases the opportunity for errors. The Benefit Bank of South Carolina is always offered free of charge to the client.

In addition to tax filing with The Benefit Bank of South Carolina, SC Thrive also offers free financial wellness education for clients through its partnership with Money Management International by calling 800-726-8774.

Tax filing and financial wellness education are important to South Carolinians, not just military members, Veterans and their families. SC Thrive is here to assist all South Carolinians in the path towards stabilized, healthy communities. You can learn more about SC Thrive at [scthrive.org](http://scthrive.org) or by calling 800-726-8774.



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## April is Financial Literacy Month



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[FinancialLiteracyMonth.com](http://FinancialLiteracyMonth.com).

## BURN AND LEARN TO A HEALTHIER LIFE

Submitted by Rachel Baggett, Director of Marketing and Initiatives



Contestants enjoy a soccer-themed workout with the FMU Women's Soccer team.

On April 6, 2017, two contestants will be crowned Florence's Biggest Loser in Weight-Loss and Florence's Biggest Loser in Inches-Lost. They will have made it through ten weeks of weigh-ins, training sessions, nutritional guidance and physical challenges to claim the title and the grand prize of \$500.

Celebrating with them will be the seventy-eight other contestants who have also made it through the 2017 competition and have created healthier versions of themselves.

Started by the United Way of Florence County in 2014, the Florence's Biggest Loser competition is part of the Burn and Learn Initiative, which aims to combat the high rates of obesity and weight-related health problems in Florence County. Contestants are provided with nutritional guidance, fitness trainings, accountability and other health-related events to help them create a healthy lifestyle, thanks to partnerships with McLeod Health and Fitness Center and Morning News and through sponsorships from Health Facilities Federal Credit Union, PGBA LLC, Community Broadcasters and GE Healthcare. In the past three years of the competition, Florence's Biggest Loser has helped 212 contestants lose over 3,850 pounds, and the competition has raised over \$51,000 to help support local non-profits. At the time of this article, the 2017 contestants had just finished their sixth week of competition and had already lost over 1,000 pounds, 292.2 inches, and raised over \$17,000 in donations.

Although the journey is almost over for this year's contestants, there is always still time to start your own journey to a healthier life. Check out the tips below to live healthier through fitness, wellness and nutrition.

### Fitness and Wellness Tips

1. **Stretch Every Day** – If you are someone who spends long periods of time sitting down, you have probably noticed how stiff your body feels by the end of the day. Not only does sitting for long periods of time cause pain, but it can also cause your blood to flow slower and your muscles to burn less fat. Take time every hour or so during your day to stand up and stretch. Make sure to target areas that are impacted from sitting, like your neck, shoulders, and back.

2. **Create A Plan** – One of the biggest downfalls individuals have when trying to become healthier is not putting together a plan on how they want to achieve their goals. For example, if your goal is to lose weight, but you have not decided what steps you are going to take to lose the weight, you are going to have a difficult time getting started. Once you have decided on what your goal is, take some time to do some research or talk with a professional, such as a personal trainer, to determine what the best options are for you to start working towards your goal.

3. **Listen To Your Body** – When you start working out, it can be tempting to spend long hours in the gym every day to expedite your results. However, if do not give your muscles time to recover between each session, you could slow down your progress or even cause an injury. If your body is telling you that it is tired, listen to it. Take a day or two of rest between each workout by either doing low impact exercises, such as swimming or walking, or doing no exercise at all. These rest periods will give your body the time it needs to repair and

renew in order to perform at its best for your next workout.

4. **Get Enough Sleep At Night**– You could be doing everything right with your fitness and nutrition, but if you are not getting enough sleep at night, you could be undoing all of your hard work. When you do not get a good night's sleep, it can affect the hormones that help control your appetite regulation and metabolism. The functions that help muscle growth and repair tissue, which are vital after a workout, also occur while you sleep. If you are having trouble sleeping at night, try to shut off all electronics an hour before you go to sleep, and try to avoid drinking beverages in the evening that contain caffeine or alcohol.

### Nutrition Tips



Contestants were shown how to read nutrition labels and select healthy products during a Grocery Store 101 event at Harris Teeter.

1. **Make a plan for the week and prep ahead**– Planning and prepping meals ahead means you have healthy options available, and it's much easier to stick to your plan. Plan for at least 3-4 breakfast options, 5-7 lunch options and 10 dinner options to start with. Add new options over time. Plan for prepping several meal options with some you can eat more than once. Experiment with making your favorite meals healthier. If you need to eat out have a strategy for what healthy options you will choose at the restaurants you frequent. Keep healthy snacks at work.

2. **Plan for splurge meals or treats twice a week** – This helps you stick with the plan and keep from feeling deprived. Typically the Biggest Loser participants will have their splurge meals after weigh-ins.

3. **Focus on real food as opposed to processed** – Eat lean protein, more veggies and drink plenty of water. Add in whole grains, fresh fruit and lean dairy to round out your plan.

4. **Consume carb before exercise and protein after exercise**– Carbohydrate foods (fruit, starch, milk) help provide muscles with fuel for a workout. Protein (meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, etc.) helps build, repair and recover after a workout. Don't forget water all through workouts.

5. **Know you will mess up**– People who lose weight and keep it off know they will get off track and plan strategies for getting back on track quickly. Don't give up!

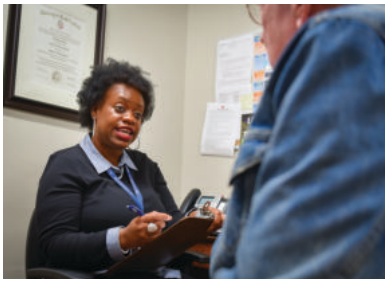
For even more information about how you can create a healthier life, go to the Florence's Biggest Loser website at [www.burnandlearnflorence.com](http://www.burnandlearnflorence.com) or the Biggest Loser Florence Facebook page. Be sure to also check out the "2017 Losers" page on [burnandlearnflorence.com](http://burnandlearnflorence.com) to see the finishers, grand-prize winners and the amount of donations raised for the United Way agencies from the 2017 competition.

# BURN and LEARN

# BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN A PRIMARY CARE SETTING

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth

National trends in patient-centered healthcare include integrating



HopeHealth Behavioral Health Counselor Tammie Pough talks with a patient during a recent health care visit.

behavioral health in the primary care setting to address the recognized need for a more proactive and effective approach to mental well-being.

Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), in the U.S., about 43.8 million people – that’s one in every five adults – suffer from some form of

mental illness in any given year. But, while most people don’t give a second thought about visiting a doctor for a broken bone or to treat a disease in their lungs, many still hesitate to give voice to their mental health concerns and neglect treating their brain.

By integrating behavioral health with primary care, providers are better able to meet the high demand of behavioral health needs in our communities, improve their patients’ mental health and decrease the perceived stigma of receiving mental health care. Medical providers alleviate patients’ concerns about seeking help by making behavioral health a regular topic of discussion and including introductions to behavior health counselors, or behaviorists, during primary care visits. Behaviorists can then provide patients with additional support and address the social and psychological impacts of a patient’s diagnosis.

“During a regular visit for back pain, a cold or even a wellness visit, a primary care physician might diagnose a patient with anxiety, depression, or another mental health disorder, and can call in a behavior health counselor,” explained Eboni Frazier, LMSW, a behavior health counselor at HopeHealth. “This counselor can spend more time helping the patient adjust to a diagnosis and recognize and address those factors and stressors within their lives that may be affecting his or her health negatively between provider visits.”

Key is understanding that behaviorists are not a replacement for therapy with a specialized therapist or psychiatrist. Instead, they augment primary care providers to determine if on-going counseling or medication is needed. They also help with the proper use of medications by educating patients on what they can do at home to manage symptoms of their diagnosis between visits. The behaviorists work with patients to help them make better choices that promote longer and healthier lifestyles by connecting them to resources that can help address their needs.

Tammie Pough, LMSW, also a behavior health counselor at HopeHealth, explained that not every person with behavioral health issues needs a referral to a psychiatrist, but they may need some guidance on how to overcome the issues they are facing.

“If a patient is depressed because they can’t pay his or her rent and are frustrated, or angry, behaviorists can help assess how to resolve that issue,” said Pough. “That helps the individual address his or her needs, and also allows the psychiatrist to address the mental health concerns of another patient with a potentially more severe diagnosis.”

Mental health is a trending concern in the U.S. and, according to 2015 data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), 54 percent of adults in South Carolina do not receive the mental health care they need. Significant gains to meeting these needs are made through the integration of care with primary care. This provides easier access to multiple treatment options and enhanced treatment models of care. As more providers see the benefit of making behavior-health conversations a part of regular patient appointments, mental health care becomes a part of the everyday conversation, and the stigma of seeking mental health care is reduced. That makes more patients receptive to addressing their mental well-being.



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HopeHealth educates its patients on the importance of having a health care home. As a primary care facility, HopeHealth’s medical team works to prevent and detect illness and the early onset of disease, provide routine physical examinations and promote overall healthy lifestyles.

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- Pain Management
- Chronic Disease Services



## Diabetes & Nutrition Services.

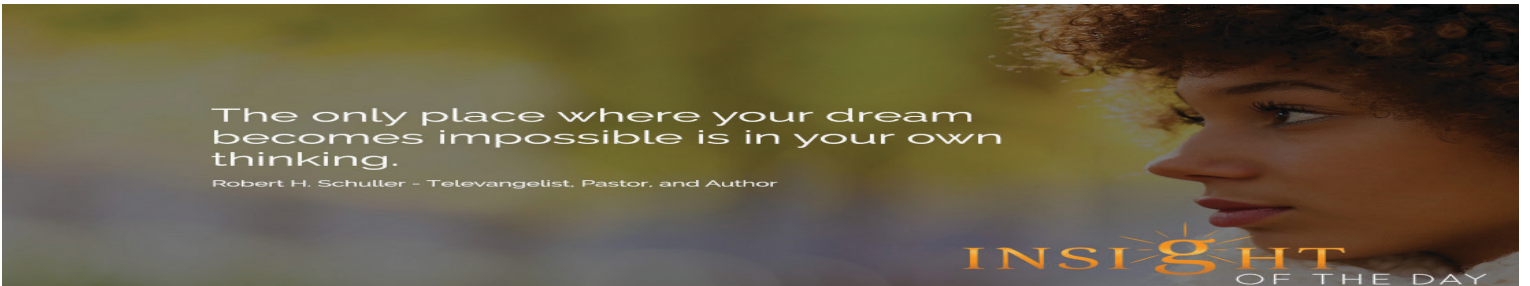
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 Christian D. Larson - 1874-1954, Author



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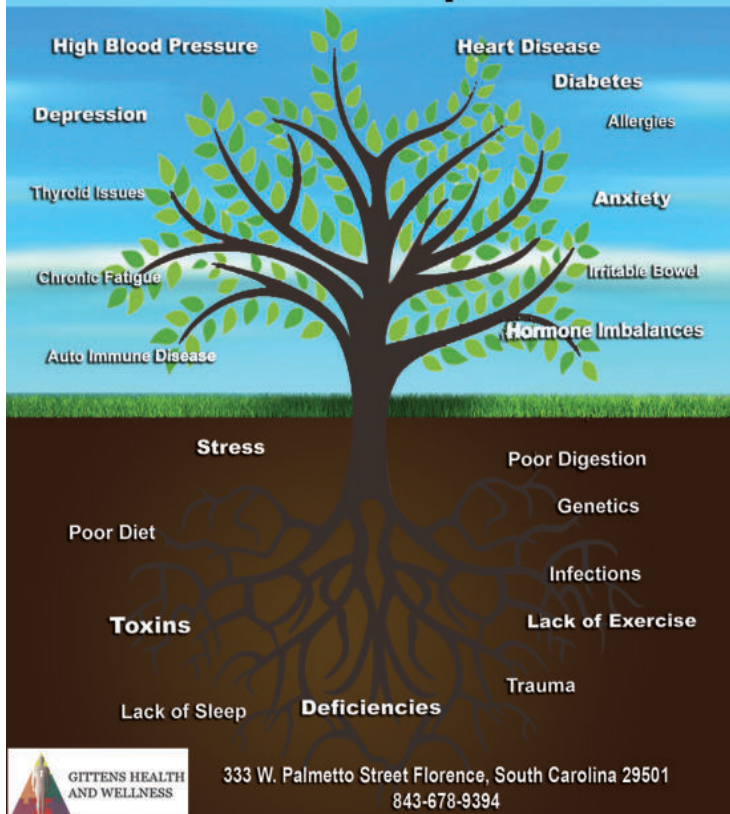
Robert H. Schuller - Televangelist, Pastor, and Author



Being happy doesn't mean everything is perfect. It means you have decided to look beyond the imperfections.

Gerard Way - Musician

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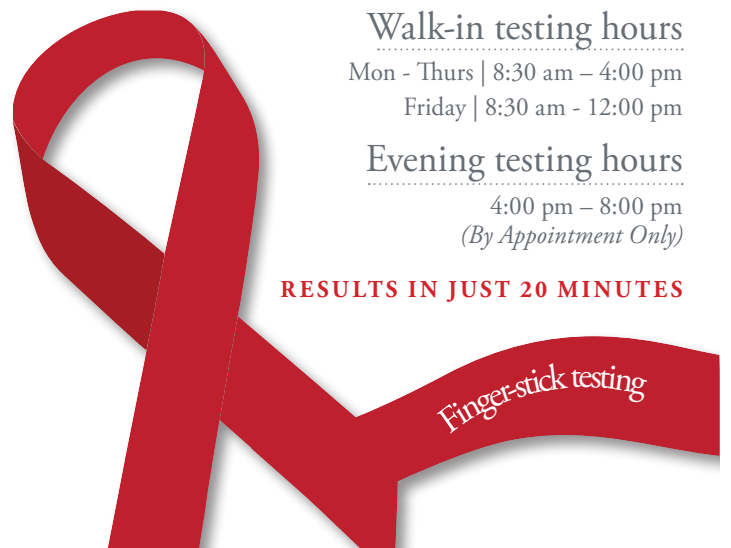
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# LET'S TALK ABOUT DEPRESSION

Submitted by Susan K. Carter, LPC, LPC/S Director of Performance Improvement and Education/Out-Patient Satellite Clinics Program Manager



Susan K. Carter

Depression is a very common condition in the U.S., affecting males and females of all ages, ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds. Without treatment, its progression is often swift, and recurrence is more likely than not. School and work performance, relationships and financial well-being can be permanently affected by the consequences of untreated symptoms of depression. It is important that we create an atmosphere in our homes, workplaces, churches and communities where

individuals in need of psychological support can request help without fear or embarrassment.

Depression is a label many people avoid as this common condition is erroneously considered a “character” flaw, such as weakness or laziness. These stereotypes have been assisted by media portrayals of mentally ill individuals as more dangerous and/or less likely to be employed or part of a stable family than those without mental health issues. In reality, however, people with depression are usually employed and are active community members who pose no danger to their own or others’ welfare.

Everyone feels sad or low sometimes, but these feelings usually pass with time. Clinical depression is a common but serious mood disorder that causes distressing symptoms that affect how you think, feel and carry out daily activities, such as sleeping, eating or working. To be diagnosed with depression, symptoms must be present most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks.

One out of four of us will experience an episode of depression in the next 12 months. In 2015, an estimated 16.1 million adults aged 18 or older in the United States had at least one major depressive episode. This number represents 6.7 percent of all U.S. adults and is an all-time high.



Although depression has many “faces” depending on cultural factors such as one’s age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status, there are universal signs and symptoms that indicate the presence of this condition. A persistent sad or anxious mood, often accompanied by feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, or pessimism is common in depressed individuals. Other feelings frequently experienced include guilt, worthlessness or helplessness. Depression is often marked by a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that used to be pleasurable. Those close to the individual may observe a change in the depressed person’s demeanor, which is often irritable and lethargic. Depression may cause a person to move or talk more slowly or, on the other hand, to become restless and agitated, unable to sit still. Sometimes depressed people have trouble concentrating, remembering information or making decisions. Sleep and appetite changes are common with depression. Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping may occur, causing problems with job performance. Under or over-eating can lead to significant weight changes and health problems such as obesity and diabetes. Depression is also associated with physical complaints such as headaches, cramps or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and that may not respond to treatment. Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts may occur in individuals with high levels of stress and depression.

Depression is so widespread, especially in the United States, that

it has been called the “common cold” of mental illness. Risk factors for this condition include a combination of genetic, biological, environmental and psychological factors. A personal or family history of depression is an indicator of depression risk. Major life changes, even positive ones such as marriage or a new job or promotion, can trigger depression as well as trauma or stress. Certain physical illnesses and medications are associated with depression. Serious illnesses, such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and Parkinson’s disease can make depression more severe and vice versa. Sometimes the side effects of medications taken for these illnesses contribute to depression symptoms.

The good news, often unrecognized, is that even serious cases of depression can be treated. Medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two, are the first lines of treatment. Effective psychotherapies for helping people with depression include cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy (IPT) and problem-solving therapy.

Wellness activities, self-care and self-compassion are effective in warding off mild depression and enhancing the effectiveness of psychotherapy and medication for moderate and severe depression. Physical activity (household chores and exercise, for example) is a deterrent to depression.

If you think you or a family member may have depression, start by making an appointment to see your doctor or a mental health counselor. Pee Dee Mental Health offers walk-in appointments and access to a treatment team including a physician, nurse, counselor and care coordinator. We provide individual, family, and group therapy for chronic mental health conditions, including depression in children and adults.

\*Contact Pee Dee Mental Health at 843-317-4073 for more information and/or to request an appointment for an assessment. Walk-in referrals are also accepted. Our address is 125 E. Cheves Street, Florence, SC 29506.

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Funded in part by the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant of the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# SURVIVING MY DOWNFALL

Submitted by Amara Sturkey, Executive/Director of The SilentMe



Amara Sturkey

**MARION**-Survivor: a person who survives, especially a person remaining alive after an event in which others have died.

When I think of someone who is a survivor, I think of someone who overcame breast cancer, not someone with a mental illness. The first time somebody referred to me as a “survivor” I was extremely confused. I never thought of myself as a survivor or overcomer because, in fact, my illness is chronic. As I look over my life from the time of my

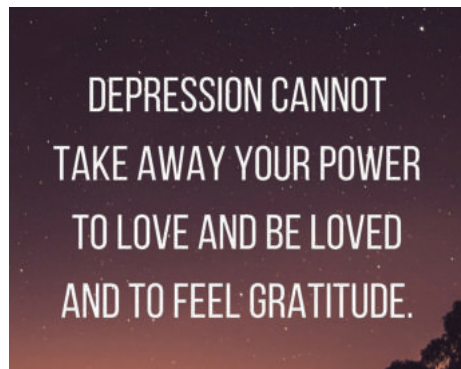
downfall in December 2015, I see how far I have come, the obstacles I’ve faced, and all the times I gave up on myself. Somehow, after still being here after multiple suicide attempts, I know that I am a survivor!

In March 2016 I, an outgoing, loving, family oriented, God-fearing, 23-year-old young woman, was diagnosed with Bipolar II Disorder with depression and anxiety.

I remember asking one of my friends, “Why me? What lesson could this possibly be teaching me? I come from a good family, I’m in school, I’m in a sorority, I’m very well known. Why is this happening to me?”

He replied by telling me, “Maybe it’s not for YOU to get something out of.” At that time, I was being selfish and really didn’t want to hear what he said because I was only worried about me, my image and how this would make me look once it got out.

For months, I sat in loneliness and cried day in and day out. I couldn’t stop shedding tears, no matter how hard I tried, and I couldn’t eat or sleep. I sat there staring and crying, staring and crying. I lost motivation to go to school and work. I didn’t want to do anything with my friends, and I was perfectly content isolating everyone out my life, even my family. I didn’t want to celebrate my birthday and even



canceled my plans on the day of, only recreating them to avoid the many questions that would have resulted. I decided that this would probably be my last birthday. How did it get to this?

My grandmother passed away on Dec. 20, 2015. I had to some extent experienced challenges in my life, but this was a pain like never before. Countless times, people reached out to me and let me know, “I’m here if you need me,” but even in this bubble of comforting words and gestures, for the first time in my life, I felt alone. I decided to return to Durham the following week, possibly prematurely, and tried to live a normal life as if none of my circumstances had changed. I failed miserably. I attributed my emotional rollercoaster to my lack of grieving. From the time Gee (what I called my grandmother) passed away, I hadn’t really cried. In many respects, I simply tried to deny the fact that she was gone. I thought this pain would go away; somehow I would magically go to sleep and return from this nightmare with all of my problems and emotions faded into the night.

It was deeper than that. There was no magical clock to turn back the hands of time, no magic eraser to erase my pains. I had reached a low that I never imagined reaching before. I no longer cared about anything. I didn’t exactly want to be dead, but I didn’t want to live like this, for sure. I often hoped that I just wouldn’t wake up. I was not okay. I needed help. Everything and everybody made me experience

every emotion possible. I had given up on myself. I had given up on life.

Enough was enough. I knew I had to regain control of my life. I reached out to my mom and simply said, “I need to get help.” My dad called me within an hour. My parents knew something was wrong but were not sure to what extent. In the conversation with my dad he stated, “Amara, I don’t want to scare you, but this could be mental illness related.”

In return I told him, “Daddy, I figured that. I’ve done my research. That’s why I’m finally seeking help.” I was relieved to get this response from them because I had convinced myself I’d failed my parents. My dad told me to find a psychiatrist in the Triangle (Raleigh, Durham,



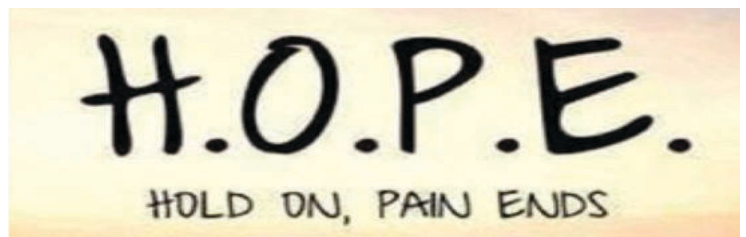
Chapel Hill) area and they would support me in any decision I decided to make. I knew this was something I had to do for myself. When I first met with my psychiatrist, I knew I had to be completely honest with her. That was the only way I could get better and that’s what I did. I let her see the real me, both sides of me: “the silent me” and the “Amara” that I was ashamed to show or tell people about.

The silent part of me has made me the strong woman I am today. It taught me to deal with pain and the feeling of being alone. It also taught me how to overcome it.

In April 2016 I started my Mental Health Awareness campaign called “The Silent Me.” Being open with my story and starting my blog ([www.thesilentme.weebly.com](http://www.thesilentme.weebly.com)) has opened up so many doors now. I recently started to travel to different college campuses in North and South Carolina and even a church, sharing my story. It’s only going up from here. This May, The Silent Me will be hosting its first annual mental health awareness walk in Marion. I am so excited to be able to pour into the place that molded me. We will also be giving away a \$500 scholarship to a deserving Marion High School student. I not only get to see myself overcome, but I also get to see people, friends and strangers overcome their mental illnesses too. Being diagnosed DOES NOT mean your life is over. You can keep going...you WILL keep going.

I thank God every day for my parents. Coming from a GOD fearing family, I was taught how to pray and read the Bible at all times, good and bad. I am often motivated to recite my favorite Bible verse, Genesis 50:20: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives!” In retrospect, it’s frightening to even imagine me being dead, but that was my reality just a few months ago. I’ve learned that with time, things get better, but I’ve also learned that sometimes things are as bad as they seem. This illness is new to me, but it’s my new normal and I’ve learned to accept that. My journey has only begun, but I’m willing to see where it takes me. What doesn’t kill me can only make me stronger...right?

You can contact me at [thesilentme2016@gmail.com](mailto:thesilentme2016@gmail.com).





## CHS CELEBRATING CERTIFIED NURSES

Articles Submitted by Kim Geiger, Marketing Director



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

## CHS NAMES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



David Barino

Carolinas Hospital System is pleased to announce that David Barino has been named as 2017 Employee of the Year. This award is the highest honor bestowed on a hospital employee. Barino was chosen from among 1500 employees for the honor.

He serves as the plant operational manager and is certified by the American Hospital Association as a certified healthcare facility manager. He has been

employed with Carolinas Hospital System for 25 years.

Employees are nominated for the award by their hospital peers based on their commitment to patient care, professionalism and contributions on the job. Congratulations, Barino!

## CHS HOSTS ALA'S BETTER BREATHERS CLUB



Carolinas Hospital System and the American Lung Association of South Carolina have joined together to offer a new benefit to residents in our

community living with a chronic lung disease like COPD, pulmonary fibrosis or lung cancer. Starting on Thursday, April 20, we will be offering a support group called the Better Breathers Club. Led by a pulmonologist and respiratory therapist, these regularly scheduled meetings will provide an opportunity to learn ways to better cope with COPD while getting the support of others who share in your experiences.

Thursday, April 20  
Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Floyd Conference Center, 1592 Freedom Blvd in Florence  
(Located on the main campus of Carolinas Hospital System)

Meetings will be held every third Thursday of the month from noon – 1:30 p.m.

Live the best quality of life you can with support from the American Lung Association and Carolinas Hospital System. Contact Stacie Ward, CRT, Better Breathers Club Facilitator, at 843-674-2242 or email [sward@carolinashospital.com](mailto:sward@carolinashospital.com) for more information or to RSVP.

## CHS EMPLOYEE RECEIVES MERITORIOUS MEDAL



Raymond Worthy Jr.

Carolinas Hospital System is proud to announce that Raymond Worthy Jr., director of materials management, has been awarded the United States of America Meritorious Service Medal. Authorized by the president of the U.S., the award is in recognition for his exceptionally meritorious conduct in performance of outstanding services as Staff Sgt. in the South Carolina Army National Guard from 1987 to 2016.

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# MCLEOD RECEIVES 2017 DISTINGUISHED HOSPITAL AWARD

Submitted by Roxanna Tinsley, Development Officer McLeod Health Foundation



*Pictured from left to right: Tony Derrick, Chief Nursing Officer; Susan Pickle, Associate Vice President of Quality & Safety; Katherine Mongoven, Healthgrades; and Dr. Dale Lusk, Chief Medical Officer and Vice President for Medical Services, McLeod Regional Medical Center.*

McLeod Regional Medical Center has received the Healthgrades 2017 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence™. The distinction recognizes McLeod Regional Medical Center as one of the top 5 percent of more than 4,500 hospitals nationwide for its clinical performance as measured by

Healthgrades, the leading online resource for comprehensive information about physicians and hospitals.

The 258 recipients of the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence™ stand out among the rest for overall clinical excellence across the broad spectrum of care. During the 2017 study period (2013-2015), these hospitals showed superior performance in clinical outcomes for patients in the Medicare population across at least 21 of 32 of the most common inpatient conditions and procedures – as measured by objective clinical outcomes performance data (risk-adjusted mortality and in-hospital complications).

“Consumers are doing their research when it comes to selecting the hospital where they receive their care, and high-marks in quality are a valuable differentiator that can set organizations apart,” said Brad Bowman, M.D., chief medical officer, Healthgrades. “We commend hospitals that have achieved Healthgrades 2017 Distinguished Hospital

Award for Clinical Excellence for demonstrating an unwavering commitment to high quality care for their patients.”

“Today’s consumers want quality healthcare that is convenient and cost-effective. They know they have a choice in who provides their medical care and which hospital they use. “Therefore, they turn to resources like Healthgrades to review hospital and doctor ratings which help them make informed decisions,” said Marie Saleeby, administrator of McLeod Regional Medical Center. “We are pleased to receive this national recognition based on the leadership of our physicians and the work of the McLeod staff who are actively seeking ways to improve quality for the patients we serve. We will continue on this journey to medical excellence and will strive to bring the highest quality medical care possible to our region.”

“I am extremely proud of the medical staff and the medical center for this accomplishment,” said Dale Lusk, M.D., Chief Medical Officer and Vice President of Medical Services. “This recognition is evidence of the endless work that takes place every day to create a culture of quality and safety for our patients.”

“McLeod has been honored nationally for its quality programs by a number of healthcare organizations,” explained Donna Isgett, senior vice president of Quality and Safety. “We compare ourselves to the nation’s best in receiving measurable results and continuously strive to improve everything that relates to the care of the patient.”

McLeod physicians, staff and teams received 24 other top honors in 2016 from Healthgrades for Cardiac Care, Coronary Intervention, Vascular Surgery, General Surgery, Treatment of Heart Attack and Heart Failure, Coronary Interventional Procedures, Repair of Abdominal Aorta, Carotid Surgery, Treatment of Stroke, Total Knee Replacement, Esophageal/Stomach Surgeries, Treatment of Bowel Obstruction, Treatment of Respiratory Failure and Treatment of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

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# CAROLINA PINES WELCOMES BADVE AND CHEPPALLI

Submitted by Harriet Parker, Director of Marketing & Public Relations

**HARTSVILLE-** Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center is pleased to announce that Dr. Suresh Cheppalli and Dr. Siddharth Badve have joined The Medical Group and are associated with Hartsville Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, located at 700 Medical Park Drive in Hartsville.



Dr. Naga Suresh Cheppalli

Cheppalli completed his orthopedic residency in India and further studied in the United Kingdom and Australia as a part of advanced residency training. He is a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

He also completed multiple fellowships: Sports Medicine, American Sports Medicine Institute, Birmingham; Foot and Ankle, University of Alabama, Birmingham; Adult Reconstruction, Virginia Commonwealth University; and Trauma, Sinai Hospital, Baltimore.

Cheppalli treats ligament and tendon injuries in the knee and shoulder, as well as orthopedic trauma. Additionally, he is an arthritis specialist and routinely performs knee and hip joint replacements.

Prior to joining Hartsville Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, he was an assistant professor at Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences, Yakima, Washington.

Badve has graduated from prestigious orthopedic spine surgery fellowship programs in the United States, including:

- Scoliosis and Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio
- Spine Surgery, State University of New York, Syracuse
- Spine Surgery, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan



Dr. Siddharth Badve

Badve completed his orthopedic residency (Master in Surgery, Orthopedics) from the University of Mumbai at the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital and Seth GS Medical College, Mumbai, India. Badve earned his MBBS (MD) degree from Mahatma Gandhi Mission's Medical College, Mumbai, India. In addition, he worked as Faculty in Orthopedics at the TN Medical College and BYL Nair Hospital, Mumbai, India.

He treats adult and pediatric spinal problems including scoliosis and spinal deformity, tumors, disc disorders in the neck and back

and spinal trauma. Additionally, Badve has extensive experience in correcting complex spine disorders affecting senior adults. He specializes in providing advanced care for degenerative spinal disorders with a focus on state-of-the-art minimally invasive corrective surgical techniques.

Prior to joining Hartsville Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, Badve was Consultant Spine Surgeon and Faculty in Orthopedics at Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital and Research Center, Mumbai, India.

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## SCA: SUPPORTING FLORENCE SENIOR CITIZENS

by Kim Williams



Gallo and Josie Marqueses enjoying social dance during Senior Center Month at Leatherman Senior Center.

Many people may have heard about the Senior Citizen Association (SCA) in Florence County. However, do you realize that it is almost 50 years old? This non-profit, community-based organization will be celebrating its 50th year in 2018. You don't need to wait until next year to celebrate though. May is Older Americans Month, and during it, SCA strives to bring light to all of our older Americans in the communities of Florence County.

There are two senior centers that are located nearby, the Leatherman Center in Florence and the Lake City

Senior Center. Each of them are senior friendly environments where adults who are 50 years or older can come together for a variety of information, activities and opportunities.

The executive director for the Senior Citizen Association, Linda Mitchell Johnson, is a hometown Florence native, who has a heart for our seniors. She shared how her journey began in high school, developing her for where she is today. Her interest was sparked as she learned about many social issues and how she could play a role in helping people with their struggles and social changes as they age. Then, she was off to college, where she earned degrees in sociology and social work. She received her master's degree in clinical counseling from Francis Marion University and is a licensed professional counselor.

Her dream of helping people lived on, as she made her way back home to Florence County, where she could help the ones who helped her growing up. This is her 18th year serving as the executive director of the Senior Citizens Association. Her goal is to work for the



Group of Leatherman Senior Center members line dancing during Senior Center Month.

betterment of seniors' lives by being personally invested. She knows the reality of the struggling senior population and the ever changing needs for them as well, and she works to provide information and resource contacts that can help them.

Over the years, the senior center has grown by leaps and bounds as it has partnered with Florence County. The Senior Citizen Association offer services that are aimed to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of senior citizens as well as aiding seniors who are maintaining their independence. To promote physical health and wellness of seniors, light aerobics and group sessions are offered as well as trainings in relation to people living with ongoing health conditions like diabetes or arthritis. The Meals on Wheels Home

Delivered Meal Program is another amenity that is available through the Senior Citizen Association, based on need. Volunteers deliver meals to people who are homebound. Volunteers deliver meals to people who are homebound. It is critical



The Jebaily Family accepting an International Star in memorial of Sylvia and John Jebaily, given by SCA.

for Florence County to continue to support this program to combat senior hunger in our community. One way to show your support is by participating in the Dorothy Blackwell Fundraiser Luncheon on May 12 to raise funds for the Meals on Wheels program.

There is also a Telephone Reassurance program where volunteers will talk to the senior citizens to check on their well-being and provide comfort through their interaction. Transportation is also offered to help



Judge Belinda Timmons with Linda M. Johnson supporting the "A Timeless Love" Luncheon, sponsored by the Jebaily Family.

seniors needing to participate in group dining sites, medical appointments and shopping. Just a few weeks ago, the Senior Citizens Association received a handicap accessible vehicle, so they can now assist an even larger number of people than they were unable to help before in this capacity because of the lift ramp that is on it. The need was realized for veterans and their necessity to attend appointments at the V.A. Hospital. Now, about four times a week the association provides transportation to Columbia, where the V.A. Hospital is located.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is an opportunity to help others while helping themselves as well. Participants must be 55 or older and are given the opportunity to serve in a familiar or new endeavor, based on their experience and talents. There are about 275 volunteers that currently participate in this program. You may spot some of them helping in many locations, like the literacy council, escorting seniors to physician appointments, delivering meals, serving at the reception desk at the hospital or participating in one of the many other volunteer opportunities.

The SCA has a kitchen that serves lunch every Tuesday and Thursday at 11:30 a.m. and is open to the public. Tickets are just \$5 and include a drink. After lunch there are activities that follow at 12:30 p.m. The association encourages seniors who would like to enjoy this opportunity to purchase tickets in advance at the Leatherman Center. There are also several special lunches planned in the near future that I encourage you to mark your calendars for:

Easter Lunch Party April 13 @ 12:30 p.m.

Mother's Day Lunch May 11 @ 12:30 p.m.

Father's Day Lunch June 15 @ 12:30 p.m.

These will be delicious days and friendly fellowship that you won't want to miss.

Linda Mitchell Johnson continually strives to reach out to the community to gain financial funding, companies/organizations to partner with, more willing volunteers and a greater number of senior citizens. If you know someone who can benefit from what the Senior Citizen Association has to offer, please check out their website: [seniorcitizenassociation.com](http://seniorcitizenassociation.com) or call 843-669-6761 for more information.



The mission of the Senior Citizens Association is to provide a full range of services to Florence County's Senior Citizens

# DIABETIC NUTRITIONAL NEEDS FOR OUR ELDERS

Submitted by Amy Sved, FNP



Amy Sved

The population of the United States is aging. As people get older, their risk for Type 2 Diabetes increases. By the year 2025, two-thirds of the people who have diabetes will be age 60 or older, reports a 2009 article in the "International Journal of Diabetes Mellitus." Along with this medical condition, older diabetics are more likely to have high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease or high cholesterol as well. These diseases, along with other factors such as appetite and mobility, can affect the nutrition of an

elderly diabetes patient.

Nutrition also has an impact on the immune system of patients over the age of 65. Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet is essential. However, seniors with diabetes are more likely to suffer from nutritional deficiencies, especially in the vitamins B12, C, D, folate, calcium, zinc and magnesium.

Seniors need about 20 percent less calories than younger adults because of metabolic changes, and they're typically using less energy, but a complete loss of appetite is not normal. There is not a "One size fits all" diet for everyone. If you already follow a healthy meal plan filled with whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean protein, then congratulations. You are taking steps to help control your weight and your diabetes. Carbohydrates have the biggest impact on blood sugar, and one should choose those with higher fiber content that also contain whole grain.

Basic whole-grain options include oatmeal, and brown rice. Other tips include:

- Consume adequate amounts of dairy

- Flush your body with fluids
- Proteins give you energy. Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts are important sources of protein, and iron, zinc, and B vitamins.
- No more than 1500mg sodium daily
- Eat a variety of vegetables

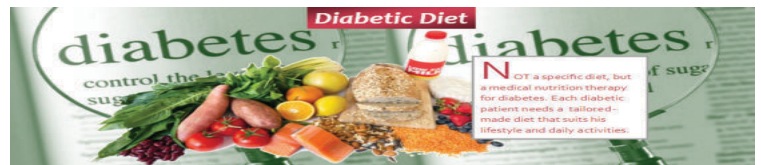
Water is crucial for good health. With age, sense of thirst may decline, and certain medicines increase the risk for becoming dehydrated. Water is especially important if you are increasing fiber in your diet since fiber absorbs water. Nutritionists recommend you drink three to five large glasses of water each day. One sign that you're drinking enough is the color of your urine. It should be pale yellow.

According to Diabetic Living, the top 25 power foods you can put on your grocery lists are:

- Apples, asparagus, avocado, beans, broccoli, blueberries, carrots, cranberries, flaxseed, garlic, fish, kale, melon, oatmeal, raspberries, red onion, spinach, tea, soy, tomato, yogurt, tea, quinoa, red pepper and nuts.
- Think twice about nachos, pizza, battered fish, coffee drinks, canned fruits, biscuits and gravy, processed lunch meat, fast food, frozen meals, baked goods, white rice, fried foods and grits.

Amy Sved is a board certified – ANCC – family nurse practitioner. She is associated with West Florence Family Practice, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. She is accepting new patients.

To schedule an appointment, please call 843-679-4214 or visit [WestFlorenceFamilyPractice.com](http://WestFlorenceFamilyPractice.com).



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## 5 STEPS TO PRESERVING BRAIN HEALTH



*Make memories and support brain health by spending time with friends and family.*

Everyone knows aerobic exercise gets the heart pumping and lifting weights keeps muscles strong. But when it comes to keeping the brain healthy, most people are unsure what to do.

We tend to think about memory decline as an older person's issue, but that's not the case at all. Basically, the standard American diet and lifestyle contribute to those processes. No matter

your age, you can take charge of your brain health by following these five smart steps.

- **Healthy eating:** A Mediterranean-type diet that focuses on whole foods, good fats and foods high in antioxidants is a great place to start. Focus on getting omega-3 fats from fish and monounsaturated fats from olives, olive oil, nuts and seeds.
- **Supplements:** In addition to a quality multivitamin, we recommend an omega-3 supplement. Getting enough omega-3s is one of the most important measures we can take.
- **Regular sleep:** Poor sleep is a risk factor for cognitive decline. A good goal is to go to bed around the same time each night, sleep for 7-8 hours, and get up around the same time every morning.
- **Thinking activities:** We recommend anything that keeps your mind working. Like activities that require things to be arranged or puzzles that have to be put together. Crossword puzzles, word games and board games are all great.
- **Socialize:** Social isolation has been linked with cognitive decline. In one study, people who were lonely experienced cognitive decline at a 20 percent faster rate than people who were not lonely.

Make time to take a foreign language class, join a Toastmaster's Club or take a watercolor class - anything that connects you regularly to other people.



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# SPEAKEASY1 BRINGS DIVERSE IMAGE TO FLORENCE

by Les Echols



Alexandria Holder and Jamasa Gussman

Sisters Alexandria Holder and Jamasa Gussman have lived different professional lives, but are about as close as two human beings can be, both in life and in business. The West Coast born and bred sisters bring an upbeat brand of sports bar to Florence. Speakeasy1 is not only an exciting location, but it's also an opportunity for the sisters to be as innovative and original as they want. Diversity Works Magazine© recently spoke to Holder and Gussman to find out more about their vision, community service and

how Speakeasy1 came about.

Going into business together was a perfect fit for the sisters. "Speakeasy came about because I loved sports, and I wanted to be with like-minded people. We are close and have always been entrepreneurial, so business-wise, we blend very well," said Gussman who handles many of the day-to-day logistics for Speakeasy1 while Holder handles the finances and crunches the numbers. Together, the sisters have created a clean, welcoming atmosphere that caters to everyone from business professionals to bikers to poets. With several signature foods and drinks, and everything from karaoke to "Sports Sundays," Speakeasy1 makes it a part of their marketing strategy to be marketable to many different demographics. "We don't care who you are and what your background is, but anyone is welcome if they behave themselves in a respectable manner," said Holder. "We want people to be comfortable."

"Spoken word Saturdays" brings a young crowd that Gussman described as a "thought and conscious provoking group that defies the preconceived notions many people have about millennials." But the two acknowledge that it took a lot of work to get where they are today.

During the tedious development of Speakeasy1, Holder proclaimed, "I'm done," admitting that she let her own impatience about the lack of progress put her in a negative mindset. Seeing her sister discouraged and dismayed, Gussman immediately challenged her. "Give me 90 days, and we will make significant progress," Gussman said she told her sister. The two have not looked back since and have thrived in their location as they learn the community and business continues to grow.

Growing up on the West Coast, one big adjustment the sisters made was an adjustment to the Florence area. Per Gussman, "It took energy and focus to get past judgements that may be passed on new people moving to the area. We don't look like a lot of people here, and so we end up with a judgment. That judgment may be positive or negative, but a judgment is made nonetheless." Although they are members of a motorcycle club, the sisters made it clear that a motorcycle club is not fully encompassing of the Speakeasy1 brand. "Although we ride motorcycles, Speakeasy1 is its entity rooted in its own image, an image of diversity and community advocacy," concluded Holder.



A big part of the reputation of the sisters is that they are very community-oriented. They give to the House of Hope men's shelter in Effingham and look to help them more in the future. Part of what the sisters espouse is female individuality and empowerment. "We are not male-bashing, but as an all-female organization, it is our responsibility to battle some of the small-mindedness and glass ceilings we see around us. Young girls on their bikes see us and feel inspired. We encourage them that they can ride motorcycles and be or do anything they want."

Speakeasy1 is located at 205B Second Loop Rd., Florence and can be reached at 843-413-0792. Photos contributed by Tonya Morman Jackson

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# SULONDIA HAMMOND: DON'T LET THE SUCCESS SURPRISE YOU

by Anna Bowman



Sulondia "Sue-Ham" Hammond

"Sue-Ham Baby!" Hammond is a highly sought-after motivational speaker who encourages everyone to dream without limitations. The Kingstree native, with the infectious smile, amazingly warm personality and signature blonde locks, always knew she wanted to have a career in the entertainment field, but she didn't want to leave her hometown to pursue her dreams. "I knew Kingstree, S.C., was thousands of miles away from Hollywood, but I had faith in my talent(s) and God; I knew I could fulfill my dreams without packing my bags and relocating," said the multi-talented artist.

Hammond's success is a direct result of more than a decade spent cultivating her 'fierce' talent(s). The proud mother, Marine veteran, author, actress and motivational speaker is also an award-winning playwright who has written and produced three successful stage plays, and she's the owner of Sue-Ham Entertainment, LLC, which includes her very own online Sue-Ham School of Success.

She's having the kind of year some people can only imagine in their wildest dreams. She has the attention of a Hollywood producer and one of the hottest radio and talk show superstars in the country. But anyone who thinks her success is sheer luck doesn't know her journey or her work ethic.

In January 2011 Hammond, through her own production company, created the "Sue-Ham Show," a variety show that showcased a versatile cast, allowed Hammond to interview guests and gave viewers insight



into her hilarious acting, writing and producing skills. Unfortunately, as soon as things started to come together, they quickly unraveled for the budding actress and businesswoman. Even though she was fulfilling a lifelong dream, the show was short-lived. As money became scarce, so did Hammond's dream of having her own show. The laughter, she once shared with her audience, suddenly turned silent. Her once bright future, took an unexpected, dismal detour.

In her 2012 debut novel, "Don't Quit - Follow Your Dreams!" Hammond vividly illustrated how – during this dark period in her life – she didn't shy away from her dreams while struggling to regain her footing. She offered readers a private insight into her life and her determination to face her adversities– poverty, divorce, foreclosures, bankruptcy, repossessions, fear, and doubt– without quitting. Through

her triumph, she realized, "Excellence is not about perfection, but being true to your authentic self." With her strong faith in God, she regrouped and expanded her territory by introducing her talents to the world via social media. Her "Beat Boxing Before Church" YouTube series received over ten thousand "likes," after which, she released several strings of videos with the common thread being comedy, positivity and motivation, which opened doors for her across the country, with a new and diverse audience. From funny, positive and motivational YouTube videos, to a radio talk show, to writing and producing her very own stage plays –



Sulondia "Sue-Ham Baby!" Hammond, was back in full force.

Hammond's social media presence caught the eye of producers from national networks, such as BET and Bravo, where she landed her first ever nationally televised hosting appearance on Bravo's "Thicker Than Water." In 2016, her hard work and dedication paid off for the charismatic Hammond as David E. Talbert, famed playwright, author and Hollywood filmmaker, personally casted her in his No. 1 comedy, "Almost Christmas," alongside Hollywood veteran actor Danny Glover, actress Gabrielle Union, and Oscar winner, comedienne, Mo'Nique. Fans of Hammond's cameo role in the movie, "Almost Christmas," will be excited about her upcoming television role in "Church on Fire," where Hammond will be a regular cast member.

She's still on "cloud nine" after being selected by producers of the highly rated "Steve Harvey Show" to become a special guest panelist. Her electric personality on the show led to a request from producers and Mr. Harvey for her to make a second guest appearance on the show in early January 2017. She's even hinted at a possible third appearance in the immediate future.

The proud mother of three, Hammond is a philanthropist, who thoroughly enjoys speaking to organizations, colleges, high schools, elementary and primary schools. Her motivational messages are delivered with high energy, authenticity, comedy and inspiration. She never misses an opportunity to motivate and encourage everyone she meets to rock this life out: "To Live, Love, Learn, and Laugh!" To not quit, but to "Follow Your Dreams to Success!"

Hammond is hard at work tweaking her upcoming stage play "Rise Up," which will take place June 10-11, 2017, at the Williamsburg County's Alex Chapman Auditorium, 147 W. Main St., Kingstree. Additional information can be found at SueHamStagePlays.com. Follow her on Twitter and Instagram: @SueHamBaby; Facebook: Sulondia.Hammond and SueHamBiz. Watch her motivational, inspirational and funny videos on YouTube, at Sue-Ham. For bookings, contact BookSueHam@yahoo.com.



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# MEET TWO MEN BEHIND THE SALES AT EFIRD CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE

by Ta'Meeka Epps



Eric Jett & James Dennis

“This is the one job where you get paid what you are worth.” This quote was told by one of the salesmen to the sales manager of Efird Chrysler Jeep Dodge located at 1711 West Lucas St., Florence. When I sat down to interview the sales manager and a car salesman they gave me a better understanding of the art of the sale.

If you are not going to be great in sales, you might need to make another career choice. The car sales business is too competitive if you do not set out to be great. Great salespeople are the engine of every economy in the world

if you think about it. Great salespeople are helping to build a business. They are not just out to make a sale. You must think beyond the sale if you are to get the attention of the buyer and then close the deal.

James Dennis the sales manager of Efird Chrysler Jeep Dodge, has been in the car business for over 25 years and employed with Efird for the last 11 years. Dennis is a native of Fayetteville, N.C. He stated everyday is a little bit different in his chosen field, and he enjoys not being tied to a desk performing monotonous tasks. Dennis worked as a car salesman for eight years before he tested the water part time in the Finance and Insurance(F&I) department, completing the financing and contracts. As a salesperson Dennis was top salesmen of the month 18 times in a two-year timespan. For the last ten years he has been the sales manager where he works the deal with the potential buyers and then hands the customer off to his qualified staff.

As sales manager, one is responsible for profitability in both the new and used vehicle departments and for customer retention. To achieve this, one must effectively manage sales personnel, have a strong knowledge of the market and an in-depth understanding of all sales departments' financial data as well as strong customer relations skills.

Dennis believes what makes him a great manager is his ability to listen, pull up his sleeves and work, and be consistent, flexible and understanding. He believes to build the rapport between a manager and his staff one must understand that every member of the staff does not possess the same talents and abilities, and you must be able to work with each member of the team as an individual.

When asked what motivates him to complete his job at the highest level he stated, “I like my job. I thoroughly enjoy what I do every day for a living. Every day is not easy, but to be able to help people who need help, to be a problem solver and to bring satisfaction to other people, it makes the job that much easier and satisfying.”

The business of car sales has a bottom line which is to generate sales and earn a living. However without making the customer's needs a priority you will never meet the bottom line. Dennis desires to treat others just as he wants to be treated and when dealing with people he finds common ground



James Dennis



with his clients to ensure he is genuinely interested in their needs and not just selling a car.

Managers are required to maintain the profitability of their department while controlling expenses and maintaining customer satisfaction. Car sales is a commission-based business. The product has a value, and the goal is to sell a vehicle for more than what it is valued so it generates a profit. Then the salesmen receives a percentage of the profit from the sale and the sales manager receives a percentage of the total gross between the sale and what is made in the F&I office for each unit sold. The potential to earn an impressive living in car sales depends on the experience, geographic location and the ability of the salesperson to think outside the box while grasping the attention of the potential buyer.

Dennis has planted his roots in the city of Florence and has watched the tree flourish, giving him amazing fruits from his union to his wife of 26 years: his two children and six grandchildren. Dennis is an active member of Anointed Word Bible Way Church in Timmonsville, and he lives his life by the words of his mother, “Whatever you decide to do in this life do it to the best of your ability.”

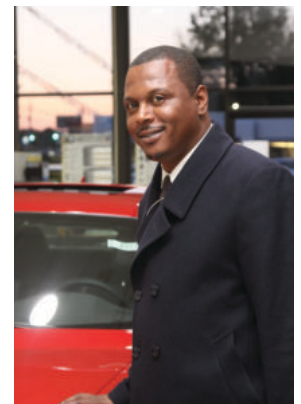
There would be no need for a sales manager if there were no people to manage. Car salesmen are an integral part of any car dealership. They demonstrate the car to the potential buyer while wooing them to make the sale. Car salesmen use their persuasive skills to give the customers what they are seeking while making a profit for the dealership.

Eric Jett is a native of Hartsville, and April 1, 2017 will make seven years he has been an employee of Efird Chrysler Jeep Dodge. Jett is an alumnus of Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. However, his story started at Denmark Technical College. “I was wild young and free at Denmark and got kicked out twice, but Head Basketball Coach Chap saw something in me I had yet to see in myself; he called in a favor to his fraternity brother at Shaw and helped me secure a partial baseball scholarship and that's when I started to grow up,” he stated. After completing his business management degree with a minor in accounting he drove onto a car lot looking for a job received, an interview on the spot and was hired on the spot. He knew he had found his niche.

Car salesmen at Efird can expect to earn a check every week the amount of the check of course depends on the number of sales and the amount of profit retained from the sale and if you make no sales you can receive a draw check. In the seven years Jett has been employed by Efird Chrysler Jeep

Dodge, he has been able to make sales to earn his check 80 to 90 percent of the time and has never received a draw check although there have been a few times he did not receive a paycheck on payday.

“If you are going to hire me for a job and I cannot sell cars to make a check I do not deserve a check and do not want one given to me. Pay me what I earn. Do not give me anything. I will work for every dime I earn,” stated Jett. His philosophy to being a successful



Eric Jett

## CONT'D MEET TWO MEN

# EFIRD

CHRYSLER Jeep DODGE RAM

The job of car salesmen is to meet the customer's needs while opening the door to new relationships and new customers. A great salesperson understands the importance of loyal customers and the value of creating a network of customers with buying power. Great salespeople listen more than they speak, getting an understanding of the customer's needs and then finding a solution. Great salespeople always ask their customers, why they want something done. In listening more than talking, they are better equipped to accommodate the customers with what they are looking for.



Eric Jett

The art of selling cars requires you to have the spirit of a hustler, the smile of a toothpaste model, the heart of a lion and the spirit of service. All of these characteristics can be found in Jett. When you are looking to buy your next ride, go see Eric Jett at Efird Chrysler Jeep Dodge.

## MUST-DO TIPS TO GET YOUR VEHICLE READY FOR SPRING



With the sun out and shining for spring, drivers are getting themselves and their cars ready for more outdoor activities. Before setting off on that next adventure, drivers should check the health and maintenance of their vehicle, as April marks the start of National Car Care Month. In light of the awareness month, Hankook checked in with drivers across America to see how they maintain their

vehicles, uncovering trends on general upkeep around tire replacement, vehicle mishaps and roadside emergencies.

### Sounds and smells mean service

If you are driving a car that clunks or a ride that rattles, it's likely an indication of some much-needed service. According to the latest Hankook Tire Gauge Index, over two-thirds (70 percent) of Americans will immediately schedule a trip to the repair shop after hearing irregular sounds from their vehicle and 59 percent of drivers will take their car in if they smell something funky. While your senses can certainly help indicate when it's time for a visit to the mechanic, it's important to consider the date since your last visit to the shop, which less than half (46 percent) of Americans do. Remember to check the little things like air filters or that your air conditioning system works now as pollen starts to dust the roads and temperatures climb.

While you might be able to hear or smell the problems within your vehicle, how do you know when to change your tire? A majority of Americans (65 percent) trade in for a new set of tires when the tread looks worn down. However, only 8 percent adhere to the mileage rating of the tire to help make more accurate decisions on when it's

# EFIRD

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time to replace their tires. Major tire manufacturers will list the tread life/mileage on their website, but you can also use the Tire Tread Indicator on the bottom of the tire's grooves to ensure the tread depth is sufficient for optimum safety and performance.

### Trouble on the road

While drivers can make sure their cars are in tip-top shape, the condition of roads and highways can be another issue. Nine in 10 Americans believe the infrastructure or condition of roads and highways is a current issue for drivers. This sentiment might stem from the fact one-third of drivers have had their vehicle or tires damaged from a pothole, and more than a quarter of drivers have had a flat tire as a result of a pothole. Not only can potholes be a hazard, but Hankook found that over a quarter (26 percent) of drivers don't know how to change a tire, including nearly half (43 percent) of all women.

### Spare me the details

In case you do find yourself on the side of the road with a flat tire, it's important to regularly check the health of your spare tire. By design, spares are often just a temporary solution to get to a mechanic, as performance and safety are limited by their smaller contact patch and overall diameter compared to a standard tire. In addition, a spare is also not nearly as durable by comparison, making any road hazard more dangerous.

However, the Hankook Gauge found that 34 percent of Americans will drive straight to the mechanic with a spare tire, but almost one-quarter (22 percent) of Americans will drive over 50 miles on a spare. If you are a driver with worn-out tires or currently driving on a spare, there are deals available to help you save on tires, including Hankook's **Great Catch Rebate program.**

As the weather heats up, there is not a better time to check the health and safety of your vehicle to get you out on the open road.

# EXPLORING AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Submitted by Dawn Dawson-House, Ex-Officio Member of the SCAAHC for the SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism



A Travel Guide to S.C.  
African American Cultural Sites

American Cultural Sites,” the responsive website will feature more than 300 historic homes, churches, schools, districts, monuments and stories that illustrate the roles African Americans played in shaping South Carolina.

Attractions ranging from historic markers that plot the site of Butler School in Hartsville and “The Gulf” African American business district in Bennettsville, to the plethora of historic AME churches and Rosenwald Schools that were established across the state after the Civil War, are featured in the guide. Each entry includes a narrative defining the historic significance of the site and directions on how to reach it.

“We’ve always known that the preserved and protected places in South Carolina that interpret African American history have particular appeal, especially for cultural travelers,” said Jannie Harriot, vice chairperson for the SCAAHC. “We’re happy that we’re able to compile it all into a single source that makes it easier for people to find us, learn about us and experience us.”

The Green Book pays homage to publications that were considered the first travel guides for African Americans in the nation – “The Negro Motorist Green Books” – first published in the 1930s that outlined safe places for African Americans to travel during times of segregation. Those publications promoted hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other stops that welcomed traveling African Americans, and they were published from the 1930s to 1960s by New York postman Victor H. Green.



Cannon Street All Stars Marker

Today’s Green Book of South Carolina subtly acknowledges the roots of the African American travel experience in the nation but also symbolizes the progress the nation has made over the decades, inviting all travelers to enrich their experiences in South Carolina by visiting these historic sites.

When it launches in the spring of 2017, the guide will be available in a responsive web-based format, meaning it can be easily read from computers, laptops and mobile devices alike, with an interface similar to that of a mobile app. The digital

format meets a growing demand from travelers for real-time, easy-to-access information on the devices they are increasingly using for everyday tasks. A printed guide is scheduled to be available within a year.

The project also helps expand tourism’s impact in the Palmetto State, which is now a \$20.2 billion industry, by inviting people to venture off the beaten path. Among the hidden gems featured in the guide are the Southern African American Heritage Center in Cheraw, the Bertha Lee Strickland Museum in Seneca and Jamestown community near Florence.

Located in Cheraw’s historic black business district, the Southern African American Heritage Center is dedicated to collecting, documenting and preserving the contributions of African Americans in Chesterfield County. Visitors will find documents and artifacts on display that relate to local history and culture from the 1800s to the mid-1900s, including Dizzy Gillespie, Coulter Memorial Academy, Long High School, and civil rights and church history. The Center offers walking tours of

**COLUMBIA**—The South Carolina African American Heritage Commission (SCAAHC) will launch a new mobile travel guide in April that encourages tourists to discover historic places in South Carolina. Called “The Green Book of South Carolina: A Travel Guide to S.C. African

African American landmarks in downtown Cheraw, educational programs for adults and children, and a gift shop.

The Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum is the only exhibit museum in Oconee County that underscores the rich, colorful, turbulent history of the local African American community. As stated in its motto, “Honoring the Past – Elevating the Future,” the museum incorporates technology and tradition to create a meaningful and educational experience. Rotating exhibits two to four times annually, the museum showcases ordinary people of the past and present whose stories and achievements will impact generations. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and admission is free.

Jamestown has a lengthy history that traces to former slave Ervin James (1815-1872) who was determined to own his own land rather than to rent or sharecrop. In 1870 he bought a 105-acre tract near today’s Mars Bluff community. His five sons and a son-in-law later divided the tract into individual farms, and other area families purchased additional land, creating a rural community of some 250 residents that flourished for 70 years. Among its institutions were Jamestown Cemetery; Summerville Methodist Church (now Bowers Chapel United Methodist Church), established about 1880; and an elementary school founded in 1926. Only one of the settlement’s original houses remains. A large family reunion, with educational programs open to the public, is held each July.

“The stories behind these places are more than interesting; they’re compelling,” Harriot said. “And they engage travelers into the deeper meaning of South Carolina when they visit.”

SCAAHC is working with Flock and Rally Integrated Communications firm in Columbia to launch a marketing blitz in the spring and early summer, hoping to spread the word about The Green Book of South Carolina to consumers within easy driving distance of the Palmetto State.

For more information, visit [www.GreenBookofSC.com](http://www.GreenBookofSC.com), or find them on Twitter and Instagram at @GreenBookofSC.

**African-American History and Genealogy Cruise**





**July 3 – July 8, 2017**  
to benefit the South Carolina  
**African-American Heritage Foundation**

Itinerary and Information

July 3	Charleston	Depart 4pm
JULY 4	At Sea	Workshops offered
July 5	Nassau	Arrive 8am, Depart 5pm
July 6	Freeport	Arrive 8am, Depart 5pm
July 7	At Sea	Workshops offered
July 8	Charleston	Arrive 8am

Join Cruises For Causes and the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission on the African American History and Genealogy Cruise from July 3 to July 8 aboard the Carnival Ecstasy.

Workshops are offered on this cruise for education and enlightenment. On the days at sea, workshops will be offered each day. You will have your choice in attending workshops on the following subjects: Civil Rights Era, Reconstruction, Civil War, Genealogy, Recording Family History and Planning A Family Reunion. Anita Singleton-Prather, designated as The First Lady of Gullah and Known as Aunt Pearl Sue, will entertain with her famed Gullah stories. See photo above.

Non-refundable deposits are \$200 per person and are due on or before March 5. Cruisers will then be placed on a monthly rotating payment plan. You will be billed 30 days after you pay your initial deposit and subsequent payments. Payments in the latter part of the billing cycle will be manually processed as everyone will have different ending balances. You will receive an invoice for any remaining balances. For every booking, you will receive a FREE ticket to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture for March 26, 2017.

**STATEROOMS**

Ocean view 6D \$1,060.00 per person	Next deposits: \$200 per person, \$200 per person and \$300 per person.
Ocean view 9C \$1,040.00 per person	You will be contacted by Cruises For Causes agent to settle any final balances. For more information contact Cruises For Causes at
Ocean view 6B \$1,035.00 per person	<a href="mailto:info@cruisesforcauses.com">info@cruisesforcauses.com</a> or 866-314-2433.
Inside (no window) 4D \$940.00 per person	
Inside (no window) 4C \$930.00 per person	
Inside (no window) 4B \$925.00 per person	

# SPRINGTIME IN FLORENCE

Submitted by Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau



2016 Plant and Flower Festival

Spring's early arrival despite what the groundhog forecasted brought early blooms to the area. And it brings a new round of exhibits, festivals, and outdoor activities to enjoy.

Arts and entertainment in Florence County in the spring features a beautiful lineup. From the notable April festivals in Florence to "The King and I" at the Florence Little Theatre to concert lineups, there's a variety of activities to enjoy.

Returning for its fifth year, ArtFields has plenty to do day and night. The nine-day festival in Lake City is an art competition with \$100,000 in cash prizes given to artists across the Southeast. Winners are determined by attendees as well as a juried panel. ArtFields runs April 21-29. For a list of the events, visit <http://www.artfieldssc.org/attendees/events/>.

Arts International will be held from noon to 6 p.m. April 8 in downtown Florence. There'll be three stages of continuous music as well as the Artisan Village and food vendors. Don't forget the eighth annual Welding Rodeo returns to Arts International as well. The daylong contest starts at 7:30 a.m. and finishes with judging and auction, which benefits the Florence-Darlington Technical College Educational Foundation's scholarship fund.



2016 Arts International

The season finale at the Florence Little Theatre is "The King and I," and it runs from April 21-30. "The King and I" is one of Rodgers & Hammerstein's finest works that boasts a score of classics. Set in 1860s Bangkok, the musical tells the story of King Siam and a schoolteacher. It is best for adults and young people ages 11 and older. For more information, visit [www.florencelittletheatre.org](http://www.florencelittletheatre.org).

A featured exhibit at the Florence County Museum focuses on the artistic journey of Eugene Thomason, a "product of the industrialized New South." The exhibit ends May 28. And don't forget -- on Thursdays, the museum hosts public tours at 2 p.m. And remember Family Day, which includes gallery activities and hands-on studio projects, are on the second Saturday of each month from 1 to 3 p.m. Visit <http://www.flocomuseum.org> for more information.

There's plenty to choose concert-wise this spring, as well. Remember Florence After Five returns this month to downtown Florence, and Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center continues its concert line-up with Springtime to Remember with Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Rick Springfield.



2016 Arts International

The Florence Symphony Orchestra, one of the oldest continuously operating symphonies in the state, finishes its season with "George Gershwin to John Williams: A Pops Celebration!" at 7:30 p.m. Monday, May 1, at the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center. The line-up includes "An American in Paris," "Star Wars," and many more favorites. And one not to forget -- the Taste of the Symphony is from 7 to 10 p.m. April 20 at Roseneath Farm on Cherokee Road in Florence. Visit <http://www.florencesymphony.com/> for more information.

Our new Ag-Cited brochure is available as well. It highlights area farm festivals, wine tastings, plant shows and more. For more ideas of what to do this spring, visit the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau's calendar online at [visitflo.com/events](http://visitflo.com/events). From local performers to Broadway shows, local festivals to pro-tennis tournaments to Wild Weekends at the Environmental Discovery Center, we'll keep you busy in Florence and across the Pee Dee.

# It's Happening in Darlington!

TICKETS AVAILABLE  
DARLINGTON CHAMBER NEWS & PRESS  
JEWELERS BENCH  
MAIN STREET JEWELERS  
CITY HALL  
CAROLINA BANK  
IN HARTSVILLE, LAMAR, SOCIETY HILL & DARLINGTON  
BURRY BOOKSTORE  
THE HEALTHY FOOD STORE

# TASTE of... DARLINGTON

7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 13  
DARLINGTON RACEWAY INFIELD GARAGE  
FREE PARKING

**\$30** MUST BE 21 YEARS OF AGE TO ATTEND  
**\$35** AT THE GATE

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DDRA Darlington Downtown Revitalization Association  
CROWN Beverages IGR Coca-Cola  
Pee Dee Electric Your Tasteless Energy Cooperative



## Darlington Recreation Trips

- April 13 - Sumter Bits & Pieces**
- April 24 - Artfields in Lake City & Moore Botanical Garden Tour**
- May 11 - Cheraw State Park**
- May 18 - Tanger Outlet in Myrtle Beach**
- May 25 - Big M Casino**
- June 8 - Reed's Goldmine Tour**
- June 15 - Columbiana Mall**

To Reserve a Space or For More Information

**Call 843-398-4030**

**Market on Darlington Square**  
1st Saturday 9am - 1pm  
May through October

**FREEDOM FEST**  
**JULY 1st**

4-10 pm Darlington Raceway

**S.C. Sweet Potato Festival Weekend**  
**Festival 9a-4p Saturday, October 14**  
**Yam Jam 7pm at Palmetto Office Furniture**

  
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**www.DarlingtonSOnline.com**



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# NEW THIS YEAR

Submitted by Maggie Riales, City of Dillon Revitalization Coordinator



**DILLON**– “Celebrate Main Street” Saturday, April 29 – **NEW:** three bands to perform.

“Celebrate Main Street” is an annual festival held in the heart of historic downtown Dillon. It starts at 10 a.m. and lasts until 10 p.m. There will be vendors, food concessions, senior BINGO, pony rides, inflatables, trackless train rides and a car show. Live entertainment will perform on the Duke Energy Stage, the BAD ALIBI will perform from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Jebb Mac Band will start at 3 p.m. and play until 5 p.m., and following will be the Fantastic Shakers from 7-10 p.m.

Special for children will be an appearance of a princess and Spiderman from 2-3 p.m. This will be held in Lockemy Courtyard next to the Dillon County Theatre located on North MacArthur Ave. Also for children is production of “Goldilocks” by the Porkchop Players.

Early that Saturday will be the McLeod Dillon Fitness Challenge 5K Run/Walk “Excellence Beyond Boundaries Race Series.” Registration is from 7-7:45 a.m. at the McLeod Professional Building at 705 North 8th Ave., Dillon. The race is at 8 a.m. with awards at 9 a.m. You can pre-register at [www.McLeodRaceSeries.ItsYourRace.com](http://www.McLeodRaceSeries.ItsYourRace.com).

There is also a walk/ride for the benefit of Huntington’s Disorder. Registration is at 7:30 a.m. at the Historic Train Station at the town clock on Main Street. The event will start at 8 a.m. and return to the station for a participant’s breakfast. For more information please call Kathy Rowell at 843-245-8544 or reach her via e-mail [atkathyh16th@aol.com](mailto:atkathyh16th@aol.com).

This year’s entertainment sponsors are Anderson Brothers Bank, Badcock Home Furniture & More, First Bank, First Citizens Bank, Kintyre House and IHeart Media-Florence on the Duke Energy Stage.



**Saturday, April 29th**  
Street Festival 10:00am to 10:00pm

Vendors Concessions Car Show  
Live Entertainment Senior Bingo  
Children’s Trackless Train Inflatables  
Bungee Trampoline  
More events & Schedule: [www.cityofdillonsc.us](http://www.cityofdillonsc.us)  
Band Performances on the “Duke Energy Stage”



**Jebb Mac Band**  
3:00pm - 5:00pm



**Bad Alibi Band**  
11:30am- 1:30pm

**Fantastic Shakers**  
7:00pm - 10:00pm



Bands sponsored by:  
Anderson Brothers Bank, First Citizens  
and Kintyre House

## DISCO BALL GALA TO BENEFIT NON-PROFITS

Submitted by Celeste M. Kahn, Director of Development for Institutional AdvancementFDTC



The Leadership Florence Class of 2017

The Leadership Florence Class of 2017 will host “The Disco Ball” gala on Thursday, May 18 to support three local non-profits. The event will begin at 7 p.m. in the Waters Building at 135 S. Dargan St. in historic Downtown Florence. All proceeds will benefit Help4Kids of Florence, The Naomi Project, Inc. and SNAC.

Leadership Florence is a program designed to identify, cultivate and motivate new leadership for the Greater Florence Area. Participants will increase their knowledge of the Greater Florence area and enhance their involvement in community activities while further developing their leadership skills. One of the Chamber’s longest and most recognized programs, Leadership Florence, helps to develop effective leaders through hands-on activities, behind-the-scenes tours and information on the area’s businesses, industries, culture and municipal activities. The yearly class consists of about 30 selected participants.

Help 4 Kids of Florence is a program that supplies food packs to elementary schools in Florence County. Each week hundreds of children come to school on Monday morning hungry, irritable and not ready to learn because they had no food on the weekend while they were home.

Through the efforts of Help 4 Kids of Florence, each Friday children at risk of being hungry are sent home with their backpack full of food items for the weekend, providing them food for Saturday and Sunday. It is the organization’s goal that these children return to school on Monday rested, fed and ready to learn.

The Naomi Project, Inc. is the only operation of its kind in the Pee Dee area. The organization’s core mission is to change the lives of homeless families fleeing domestic abuse. The Naomi Project is designed for people who can benefit from long term housing as well as educational, financial, emotional, mental and spiritual support.

SNAC is a non-profit organization with the desire to improve the conditions for homeless children and their families within Florence School District One. This organization empowers children and families to become independent and productive citizens as they overcome their obstacles. SNAC offers community referral resources such as faith-based programs, counseling services, financial education classes and job assistance.



Tickets to The Disco Ball Gala are \$30 each or \$50 per couple. Disco attire is encouraged. The Best Dressed Male will receive a \$100 gift card from Butler’s Fine Men’s Clothing, and the Best Dressed Female will receive a \$100 gift card from Pretty N’ Bliss. To purchase

tickets, call Katie Waring at 843-319-6576, or email [leadershipflorence2017@gmail.com](mailto:leadershipflorence2017@gmail.com). Tickets are also available through Eventbrite.

For more information on how you can apply for next year’s Leadership Florence Class, contact the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce at 843-665-0515.

### Leadership Florence Class of 2017 presents:



**THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2017**

**7:00pm**

**The Waters Building, Downtown Florence**

Dancing – Heavy Hors D’oeuvres – Silent Auction

*An event to benefit local charities: The Naomi Project, SNAC, and Help4Kids*

*Tickets: \$30 each or 2 for \$50 Contact: [LeadershipFlorence2017@gmail.com](mailto:LeadershipFlorence2017@gmail.com)*

# SPRING INTO WARMER MONTHS WITH A PICNIC SPREAD



This time of year the urge to go outside increases day by day. There's more sunlight, birds are chirping and, in some lucky parts of the nation, flowers might even be in bloom. What better way to welcome spring than with a picnic prepared from the heart, complete with homemade breads and baked

goods made from scratch?

Whether you're celebrating a spring holiday or birthday, looking for a new idea for date night or just want an excuse to relax on a lazy Sunday afternoon, these tips will equip you for a picnic that's sure to please you.

## Location, location, location

The wonderful thing about picnics is that they can be enjoyed just about anywhere. Whether you want to take in your own backyard, visit a favorite park in your neighborhood or town or escape to a cherished remote spot that is secret to you, picnics allow you to make your meals extra special as you surround yourself in nature.



Spring showers got you down? Prepare for summer by transforming your living room into an indoor picnic space. Lay out a blanket, whip up a delicious spread, pick up some flowers, grab your favorite board games and make a day of it. You'll forget the gray weather in no time.

## A cause to celebrate

Warmer temperatures are cause for



celebration alone, but the spring season is also filled with festive holidays like Easter and Mother's Day. This Easter, while the kids run through the yard on the hunt for Easter eggs, adults can lounge on picnic blankets and enjoy tasty traditional Easter treats, like homemade hot cross buns.

When it comes time to show Mom she's special (and every day of the year, of course), change up the usual Mother's Day breakfast in bed or brunch plans with an indoor or outdoor brunch picnic, complete with all of her favorite foods. Enjoying fresh flowers and homemade cinnamon rolls or coffee cake while surrounded by her favorite people will make it a day to remember. Plus, who really wants crumbs in their comforter?

Picnics are also a great way to celebrate a spring birthday in the park. Or, for a new twist on your next date night, plan a romantic picnic dinner spread somewhere special, or right out your own back door.

## The food: The reason we picnic

Whether a brunch, lunch or dinner picnic, food is always the star of the show; it's the reason to own a picnic basket and the lovely accoutrements. For your next picnic, no matter the occasion, make it a priority to bake something from the heart.

From Hot Cross Buns or an Easter Egg Nest for Easter to Beginner's Frosted Cinnamon Rolls or Strawberries and Cream Coffee Cake for a Mother's Day picnic, a homemade treat makes every holiday complete.



# MARION FOXTROT FESTIVAL

## Thursday Night (May 18, 2017)

FREE Children's entertainment at Marion Opera House

## Friday Night (May 19, 2017)

Fireworks at Withlacoochee Park @ 9:15pm

## Saturday (May 20, 2017)

FREE Marion Foxtrot Festival Souvenir bags while they last

### Parade @ 10am

- Marion County elected/appointed officials
- Variety of marching bands
- JROTC Color Guard/Drill Team Units
- Past/Present Homecoming Queens
- Churches
- Civic Groups
- Cartoon/Storybook Characters
- Motorcycle Clubs

### Food

International Food Pavilion, includes foods from a variety of cuisines

### Entertainment

- Cruizin 4 Christ Car Club Car Show
- Live Entertainers at the main stage to include: local singing groups/soloist including Socially Awkward, Bubba Rushing, and closing act: D. Myers Band; dance schools including: Justine Roberts Performing Arts Academy, Emmalyn Davis School of Dance, Driven By Design Dance

Studio; step teams, live DJ, street dance, and much more.

- Zumba with Jessica Herrington
- Mime
- Cartoon/Storybook Characters
- Electric Bull
- Children's carnival rides
- DNR exhibit
- Game truck with the latest gaming systems (Nintendo, Xbox, etc.)

- Inflatables
- Trackless Train
- Orbitron

### Arts/Crafts Vendors

Clothing, jewelry, paintings, portraits, professional face painting, & more...

### Marion Foxtrot Festival Contact Information

President: Regina Stanley

Vice President: Sharon Grice

Treasurer: Joey Powell

Secretary: Al Blake

Stage Entertainment Chairperson: Al Blake

Parade Chairpersons: Sabrina Davis and Lisa Seabrook

Recreation Chairperson: Frank Page

Food Vendors Chairperson: Cynthia Legette

Arts/Crafts Vendors Chairperson: Patricia Burgess

Address: P.O. Box 1454

Marion, SC 29571

E-mail: marionfoxtrotfestival@gmail.com

Website: www.marionfoxtrotfest.com



# LOCAL ENTREPRENEUR COMPETING FOR MISS SOUTH CAROLINA

Submitted by Thomasena Thomas, Owner of Fairy Cakes SC



Thomasena Thomas

Thomasena Thomas is a young entrepreneur in the Florence area. What you may not have known is that she is currently a contestant for the title of Miss South Carolina 2017. She is seeking your financial support as a sponsor for the 2017 pageant to be held on her birthday Saturday, June 24 at the Township Auditorium in Columbia.

The Miss South Carolina Pageant was created to advance the creation, promotion and support of community service and educational opportunities for young women

in the state while providing a forum in which to express their opinions, talent and intelligence. As a sponsor, you will contribute to her hopeful future by helping her inspire youth through her platform Passion & Pursuit. Passion & Pursuit encourages students to find their God given purpose and passion in life and pursue it at a young age.

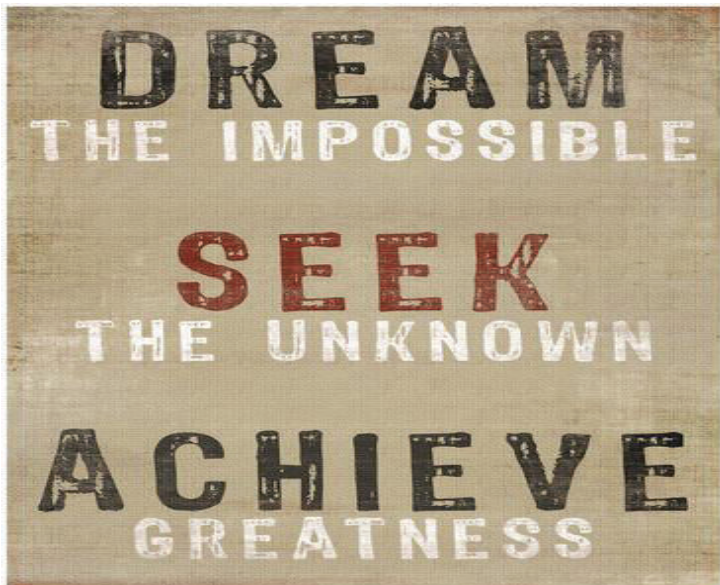
At the age of 14, she created her own business FairyCakesSC. She is now a certified culinary chef and business owner. In 2016, She was awarded the 2016 South Carolina Entrepreneur of the year award. She was a recipient of the Disney Dreamers Academy and received other wonderful opportunities the Lord has given her. Her goal for the pageant is to inspire other students to follow their dreams at a young age. She wants to lead by example and allow her past experiences to inspire other youth.



Each contestant is required to obtain as many sponsorships as they can. The more money the contestant raises, the better chances they have. Your business will be recognized in the 2017 Miss South Carolina program book, on banners and on other promotional materials.

We believe she will be the next Miss South Carolina, but she can only achieve this dream with your support and assistance. Please help me make her dream come true this year and let her represent you.

Kindest Regards,  
Miss South Carolina Pearls Team 2016





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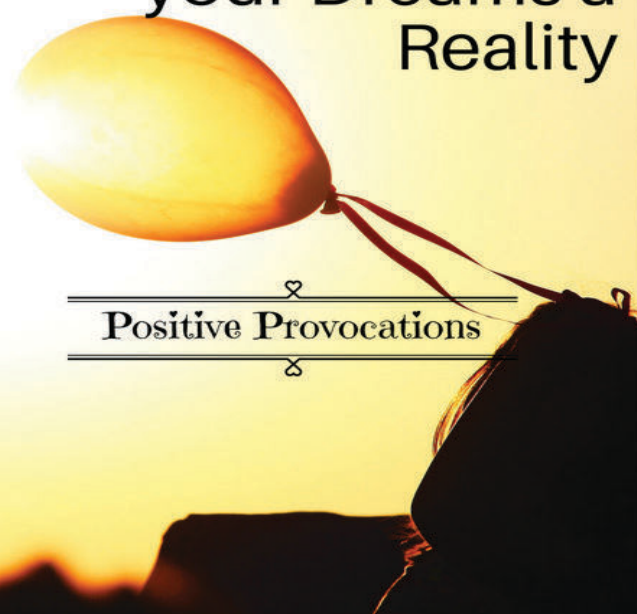
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# A MODEL WITH A MESSAGE

Submitted by Kelli R. Williams, CEO/Founder



Kelli Williams

Modeling With A Message (M-WAM) is a female-based platform/brand founded by CEO Kelli Williams. It not only gives women a voice, but it also highlights the different barriers that women face. These barriers are present in the work place as well as day-to-day living (discrimination, stereotypes, labeling, etc.). As a woman we are told that there are things we can't do, we can't say, we can't wear, we can't want to be or we can't strive for. We are pulled apart, analyzed, labeled and then placed into this box that we are forbidden to ever leave. Modeling

With A Message is that ladder for every woman who seeks to leave this box. This ladder represents one's focus on her aspirations and prosperity. By climbing it, this gives the implication that an individual is working to achieve her goal. Modeling With A Message is a business to empower and give women the push to live out their lifelong dreams.

The vision of Modeling With A Message came to Williams in 2012 but was not launched until February 2015. After witnessing the death of her first cousin/brother, she went through many transitions. Diagnosed with bipolar depression and attempting to commit suicide several times, Williams had a breakthrough. In a dream, God blessed her with the vision of Modeling With A Message. This platform was created, not only to fulfill her lifelong goal of becoming a model, but to also share her story. Modeling With A Message was created to encourage females that no matter what life throws at you, it is your duty to fulfill your dreams. Make them happen no matter what adversity is brought your way. Williams attended Coastal Carolina University and finished up at Miller-Motte College with a degree in business

administration. She is continuing on her journey to achieve her doctorate degree as well as aiding women across the nation to achieve their goals.

Since 2015 M-WAM has evolved so much. It now has a mentoring program for girls 12 to 18 years old and is in the process of opening up a 20,000 square foot facility to be able to expand its mentoring program, which will be called M-WAM University of the Scholars and Fine Arts Academy. The mission of Modeling With A Message's University of Scholars and Fine Arts Academy is to educate, empower and equip young women with the social, academic and character-building skills they need to enhance their current and future lives through mentoring opportunities, college and career readiness workshops, and exposure to STEAM concepts. The fine arts academy will service modeling development, art, music and photography.

M-WAM also offers business startup consulting, motivational speaking, social media management and so much more. We are a full-service brand who wants to make as much impact on the communities and the world as a whole.

Connect with M-WAM:

- Facebook: @modelingwithamessage
- Instagram: @modelingwithamessage
- LinkedIn: Kelli R. Williams
- Website(s): www.modelingwithamessage.net and www.mwamusfaa.org
- Email: modelingwithamessage01@gmail.com or mwam.usfaa@gmail.com



**JUNE 24TH**

**MODELING WITH A MESSAGE UNIVERSITY OF SCHOLARS & FINE ARTS ACADEMY**

**Fundraising Gala**

**"NIGHT OF THE ARTS & SILENT AUCTION"**

**Host:**

**Speaker:** **JENNIFER REED**  
CEO OF JFK CONSULTANT

**DR. JENNIFER EVANS**  
DC CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

**Speaker:** **LEISA THOMPSON**  
CEO OF PRACTICE MADE PERFECT, LLC  
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**A BLACK TIE EVENT**

*Honoring those mentors who paved the way for our communities!*

**Francis Marion Performing Arts Center**  
201 S. Dargan St. Florence SC, 29508

100% of Donations go directly to M-WAM USFAA | www.mwamusfaa.org  
For more information & ticket information email mwam.usfaa@gmail.com

Modeling With A Message Mentoring Program Presents...

**"Bridging the Gap" Mother-Daughter Tea**

**May 20, 2017**  
**from 11am to 1pm**

Location: **City Grill** - 260 W. Palmetto Street, Florence, SC 29501

Cost: **\$20 Per Pair** or **\$10 Per Person**

Attire: **Dressy Attire (Informal)**

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Keynote Speaker: **Ashli Smart**, Founder of Girls University

All proceeds will go towards M-WAM University of Scholars and Fine Arts Academy (501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization)

# SOULE' CAFÉ BRINGS EXCITING COMBO TO DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

by Les Echols



Ezra Brown

Diversity Works© had the unique opportunity to speak with locally bred, world-renowned jazz artist Ezra Brown. Brown, a Florence native, has taken on a new and exciting role as a developer through the building of his latest creation, Soule' Café. Soule' Café is a combination coffee shop and artist venue that brings a new, original

flavor to the revitalized Downtown Florence area. Although he was born in Florence, Brown attended high school in Georgia, college at Jackson State University, and has worked abroad extensively. His mother is a music instructor and his father a radio personality, so he has always been around music and developed an ear and love for it. That has given Brown an opportunity to see, perform and experience music in other places. As a full-time artist, he has a passion to bring a more sophisticated style of art and diversity to the Pee Dee that embodies progression and unity.

Soule' Café is a concept that Brown, who currently resides in Singapore, envisioned when he wanted to bring something back to his community. It has been a two-year journey of taking all of his experiences in music and business to build a platform that merges the two. Brown set out to create an outlet that, in many instances, didn't exist. "Florence is a huge anime and pop art area, but there is no venue to showcase the artists that produce those works." Brown started a movement in the right direction by creating a SoulArt festival in Downtown Florence. The pop-up festival was a daylong, art inspired event that included vendors, workshops and a series of poetry readings.

The Saturday event served as an opportunity to find out who and where the local artists were and to engage them.

Brown is also strong about building diversity and inclusion through Soule'. "It's about building something with a sense of diversity, not just from a racial standpoint, but from a commerce standpoint. We need to be able to help the city's programs and events to look more like the city's population. Brown mentioned having a platform that is inclusive of all people on varying socio-economic levels that want to appreciate artists. "Being able to go see and appreciate in art should be an inclusive process. People should not feel excluded because an art or musically based event or program does not cater to their demographic. Downtown Florence is an epicenter with a rich history of music. Famous artists like Houston Person who helped mold an art culture that we look to cultivate with an art hub moving forward,"

concluded Brown.

A big part of the Soule' brand is being able to change how people look at art and how art can move the city forward. As Brown put it, for a city like Florence, there is a lot that has already been done, but in another sense, there is a lot of work to do. "How can we, as a collective, move the city



forward? We can creatively do things that are equivalent to other cities, but we have to sublimely educate the market on what fits the Florence market," said Brown. He, along with his new Soule' Café, is looking to develop sustainable programs and events that positively impact youth and community through the arts.

Soule' Café is located at 130 S. Irby St. in Florence.



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# Congratulations to our 2017 Palmetto Gold honorees!



With the announcement of the 2017 Palmetto Gold nurse awards, Carolinas Hospital System continues as the only hospital in the Pee Dee region to have nurses named recipients of the honor every year since the program's inception in 2002. Given by a coalition of South Carolina nursing organizations, the prestigious Palmetto Gold honors the best of the best in nursing.

*These four nurses make us proud today and every day.*

*Pictured (l-r): Tim Weaver, RN, BSN, Cardiac Cath Lab;  
Deborah Haliscak, RN, BS, Emergency Services;  
Ann North, RN, MSN, CIC, Infection Prevention;  
and Regina Stanley, RN, BSN, Flex Pool.*

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