

DIVERSITYWORKS

JANUARY 2016 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1

"For All of Us"



WILLIAM E. REFVEM, M.D.



FELICIA FLEMING MCCALL



LAURA WUKELA



CRAIG ADDISON

TRAILBLAZER REDEFINED
PUTTING "SELF" TO THE SIDE

NEW HOSPITAL CEO
SET TO BRING THE BEST SERVICE

RECOGNIZING ONE
WHO TRULY DESERVES

ACHIEVE FINANCIAL SUCCESS
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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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From the Editor's Heart

2015 TAKES A BOW; CURTAINS UP ON 2016

Israel Houghton released "Another Breakthrough", which says, in part: "Another/greater level, another/greater harvest, another moment/season ... for a breakthrough". And here's hoping that we made the best effort over the past year and are poised to give the coming year our personal best shot at success, peace, victory, wellness and eternal security.

As we mark our quarterly foci of MLK, Black History and Women's History in this edition, we count on our readers to enjoy fruit of our labors to find people, places and things that matter most when it comes to contributions that everyday folk can make. In preparing this document, I can't help but wonder (as I'm sure others do too) where the towns of Lynchburg, Conway, Kingstree, Manville Switch and such got their names. And if any readers want to enlighten me on their nomenclature history, holla.

Our sections brim over with good news of growth from new support systems in business, finance, health, education, spirituality and lifestyles. And our special pages are outright hot with contributed articles from community leaders in various walks and stages of life. It would be grand to reach out to those featured as subjects or authors of these unique articles, but more than that, if possible, to visit the named places like Jamestown or the African American Heritage Museum. We recommend consulting the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism or the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau for a more complete list of sites to visit and learn from.

Know that just as we expect more and better from the New Year, the same is expected of us from that time that we are spared. So gear up with attitude, purpose, education, anticipation and political will to forge the new day and new way in which we will be operating. It is a general election year, so be informed and savvy enough to cast your vote wisely for best outcomes.

Signs and Wonders to Watch This year...

The election is not the only headline making event to occur in the new year and our very future depends on many of these happenings. Some key grabbers include, in no particular order, the rollout of the first pill to prevent sunburn, China begins to build the longest undersea tunnel in the world, microchipping of all dogs in England, the international Lunar Observatory begins operations, grand opening of the first hotel in space, balloon trips up to 20 miles high, agricultural robots appearing on farms, three-person babies, new drug delivery methods for brain-related conditions, polymer banknotes introduced by the Bank of England, completion of the Panama Canal project, India's first manned space flight and its second unmanned lunar probe, the Juno probe arrives at Jupiter, the mining industry is highly automated, completion of the i5k project, and the list goes on.

We need to plunge ourselves into selflessness and thankfulness and inclusion. Then we can begin to see the breakthrough's higher level as those promises made become manifest.

Happy reading and Happy New Year. Let us hear from you all.

Bottoms Up,
Rennie



Rennie Lunn-McAllister
Executive Editor

HOW WE THINK NOW MATTERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



The future of workplace diversity is here, and it's not what you think. In fact, it's how you think.

While we've long known that gender, race, and cultural diversity create better organizations, the newest workplace frontier is all about our minds. According to a recent study by consulting and professional services company cultivating "diversity of thought" at your business can boost innovation and creative problem-solving.

People bring different cultures, backgrounds, and personalities to the table — and those differences shape how they think. Some people are analytical thinkers, while others thrive in creative zones. Some are meticulous planners, and others love spontaneity. By mixing up the types of thinkers in the workplace, companies can stimulate creativity, spur insight, and increase efficiency.

Varying the types of thinkers in a company also helps guard against "groupthink," a dangerous tendency in groups to focus first and foremost on group conformity, often at the expense of making good decisions.

A lot of organizations drive toward consensus, however that process is not the best way of doing modern business. Diversity of thought, or "thought diversity" is still an emerging field, but the authors expect it to grow, since new neurological technologies that assess how people think are beginning to hit the marketplace. In the meantime, here are five simple steps managers can take to increase the thought diversity in their companies:

Hire the unconventional candidate.

You've just interviewed three candidates; let's call them Jeff, Rose, and Spencer. When you asked all three the same 10 questions, Jeff answered seven right, Rose six, and Spencer only five. Naturally, you're inclined to hire Jeff and Rose. But then you notice that Spencer answered correctly all the questions that your two other candidates missed. In his book "The Difference," University of Michigan economist Scott Page uses precisely this scenario to illustrate how managers could vary their practices to hire for more thought diversity.

Page found that most companies would have hired Jeff and Rose — the two candidates with the highest scores. But the smarter move might be to higher Spencer, Page says, because he was able to answer questions the other two missed, suggesting he brings a different way of thinking to the table.

Know your team, and leverage their unique talents.

The first step any manager should take, is to assess the team. Who's a creative thinker? Mathematically inclined? Good with words? Strong managers know which particular skills their employees have, and use that knowledge to assign work that plays to specific employee's strengths. Having a staff of employees who each contribute in unique ways and maximizing the value of their individual talents will bolster the company as a whole.



Rephrase your questions to encourage honest feedback.

A common question for a boss to ask his team at the end of a presentation is: "What do you think?" Well, this question is a death knell for thought diversity. It's broad, vague, and often leaves the listeners wondering what, exactly, their boss wants to hear.

Instead, it's important for managers to ask clear, specific questions that are designed to elicit constructive criticism and diverse opinions. Rather than asking employees what they think, for example, a manager could ask something like, "What part of my proposal did you like the least?"

Encourage "reverse mentoring" on your team to get a mix of perspectives.

With new technology constantly rolling out, it's increasingly common to see younger workers teaching older ones how to use the new tools. This process of "reverse mentoring" helps younger employees feel like their ideas are

valued and provides a fresh perspective for more established office members. Managers can help encourage reverse mentorship among their teams, or company leaders can put a formal program in place.

Create a culture that is open to new ideas, and start with yourself.

Thought diversity is about how people think, and that's a reflection of who they are. If your employees don't feel comfortable being themselves in the office, then their varied ideas and ways of thinking won't come to the fore. It's important for managers not to stifle conversations or be close-minded to suggestions, even on their own ideas.

In today's society, companies should incorporate diversity into its mission, vision and values in order to provide the best and effectively manage staff. Understanding diversity means being aware of differences other than the obvious reasons like race, language and gender. Diversity refers to everything about people that makes us different including workstyles, ethics and values, education, and communication.

Diversity is all around us yet many organizations find it challenging to incorporate diversity in every day settings. This can be accomplished over time by promoting it.

Make Diversity a Team Effort

The number one way to promote diversity is by making diversity a team effort. It cannot be a one person commitment. All staff must understand the importance diversity is to the achievement of the strategic plan or mission, vision, and values.



"Be the Change You Want to See in the World"

This simply means you can't change the world unless you change yourself first. The best way to get your office staff to embrace diversity is to be an example they can follow. Diversity obviously begins with leadership within any organization. Employees tend to follow the example of those in charge.

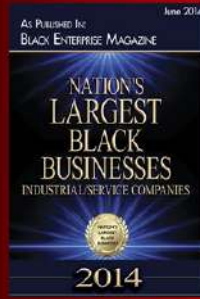


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NAA GENERAL MANAGER MOVES CLOSER TO MENTOR

by Anna Bowman



Mr. and Mrs. Donovan Morris

TIMMONSVILLE -- If one can tell just how exceptional someone is just by talking to them for a few minutes, then it is clearly understandable why Donovan Morris was tapped as the General Manager for North

American Assemblies, LLC. His enthusiasm is still evident since joining the company in September 2015. "I left a joint venture business in Detroit, MI to pursue an opportunity to learn from one of the best business minds I know," he said, as he refers to NAA's president and CEO, James R. Tolston, III.

In Morris' previous position, (where he was a part of a staff that was tasked to implement Production & Quality systems which assembled instrument panels for Ford Motor Company, resulting in an \$800 million dollar contract) he became familiar with the rigorous requirements of automotive manufacturing and systems implementation. With such a profound background in the assembly field, it's no wonder that he's now

at the helm as General Manager for NAA.

Morris, a Detroit native, is elated about his current position, and proudly states, "It's a great fit for me," no doubt Mr. Tolston, feels the same. In a strategic move to keep NAA competitive, Tolston recruited Morris as General Manager because of his exceptional knowledge and skills, which are two valuable components in business; both internally and externally.

As the General Manager, Morris has a broad, overall responsibility for the strategic planning and direction of NAA. "My duties include obtaining a hands on perspective of each and every assembly process and operation, which allows me to understand how each assembly works in conjunction with each other. And with his previous experience, he knows the important teamwork, "Working with team members to understand ways we can work together on continuous improvements efforts to streamline processes and associated cost. Additionally, working with our OEM supplier on new model programs, schedules and product quality. Learning from all parties on ways in which NAA can improve to ensure we exceed customer and internal expectations," said Morris.

North American Assemblies, located in Florence County, is a minority owned business

which assembles all-terrain vehicle components for Honda South Carolina. Tolston Holdings, the parent company of NAA, has been listed at number 58 in Black Enterprise Magazine's Top 100 African-American owned companies in America. While some might think that being a minority-owned business could be considered a disadvantage, Morris has one firm answer to those who might see NAA as only "minority-owned." He explains, "Mr. Tolston's vision is that we, (NAA), stand up on our own ability to perform and provide world class services that are second to none, by separating ourselves from the competition we stand alone poised for new opportunities and growth."

Morris, a graduate of Livingstone College in Salisbury, NC, is married to his wife of 24-years, Ann-Marie, who, like her husband, is able to master both a full-time job, while pursuing her MBA degree. The couple has two sons: Donovan, 23, a student at Wayne State University, and Malcolm, 21, who attends Schoolcraft College. A dedicated member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., Morris looks forward to joining his local area fraternity brothers as they engage in a variety of community events.

BIG GIVE PEE DEE GEARING UP FOR 2016 FUNDRAISER

Submitted by Libby Wiersema, Big Give Pee Dee Coordinator



The BIG GIVE Pee Dee

Live here. Give here. Grow here.

Nonprofits serving the Pee Dee can now apply to participate in Big Give Pee Dee 2016. Registration is open through February 1, 2016 or until 50 spaces are filled. Because of space limitations, interested nonprofits are encouraged to apply early at biggivepeedee.org.

Big Give Pee Dee is a region-wide, designated day of giving presented by Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, a nonprofit agency that supports the nonprofit sector in the seven counties of the Pee Dee. It is presented in conjunction with the annual national campaign, Give Local America, during which community foundations and nonprofits from across the nation partner to raise funds for worthwhile projects that keep the hearts of communities like ours beating strong beyond the holiday giving season.

The fundraiser will kick off at 12:01 a.m. May 3rd. It supports area nonprofits operating in Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg counties. For a minimum donation of \$25, most anyone can be a philanthropist on giving day.

“With a simple click of a mouse, donors visiting a central website on May 3rd can contribute to the local nonprofit or nonprofits of their choice,” said Sarah Shelley, executive director of Eastern Carolina Community Foundation. “No matter the size of your contribution, you can be a philanthropist who makes a difference in the community. Our job is to make it easy to donate through Big Give so everyone has the chance to help.”

Here’s how it works: Beginning at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday, May 3, 2016, donors can access a central website and support the local participating charities of their choice. Giving is safe and secure, and donors can track the progress of the event on the Big Give website. The 2015 event raised more than

\$70,000 during the 24-hour giving cycle. Nonprofits will once again be eligible for monetary prizes with \$500 awarded hourly to a participating nonprofit. Winners are chosen at random or meet specified milestones to win the prize. The public is invited to track the progress of their favorite charities on the Big Give leaderboard accessible through the website.

“People can have peace of mind knowing that their contributions stay right here in the Pee Dee to be used to help people living the Pee Dee,” said Shelley. “Also, it gives our hard-working nonprofits a chance to raise funds without investing all the labor and time that other kinds of fundraisers demand. It’s like a gift to the ‘worker bees’ in our community.”

For more information, visit Biggivepeedee.org, call Libby Wiersema at 843-472-7990 or email biggive@easterncarolinacf.org.



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LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR TWO ORGANIZATIONS

by Mallory Brayboy



Ashley Jacobs

LAKE CITY - Ashley Jacobs has had a “great” transition into Lake City as the new Executive Director of the Community Museum Society (CMS) and the Greater Lake City Community Development Office (CDO). The Aiken native holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Clemson University and a graduate degree from the University of South Carolina. Jacobs has worked in local government in South Carolina for 17 years, with the past nine years being spent as Deputy Administrator for Dorchester County. Her work in local government focused primarily on community and economic development and her work in

Lake City is a continuation on the career she knows and loves.

The Community Museum Society works to improve the arts and culture within the city. Its footprints are found in Artfields, The Historic Bean Market, the Farmer’s Market, and other programs. Prior to Jacob’s arrival CMS had no director. She has now been working on their budget, organizational processes and policies.

The Community Development Office is a brand new organization in the town. Jacobs’ main objectives for the office is creating a staff, creating a budget, and weighing out all of its programs to determine what direction should be taken. Jacobs enjoys working with like-minded individuals all on the same accord. “Everyone pretty much has the same goal. We all want to see Lake City be prosperous, be safe, and be a great place to live and work,” she says.

The CDO is in the process of creating a master plan for the downtown area that will establish the area as a center for business and culture. The plan includes ensuring adequate parking, efficient storm water drainage, and help to determine the best location for housing projects for residential infield. Most importantly, the plan will provide the best and highest use of each parcel of land. The CDO is also working on getting the city’s Florence-Darlington Technical Collegesite relocated to the downtown area. The presence of its students and faculty members would add to the strength of the city’s revamp.

Plans are being made to expand some of the programs of Artfields, the nine-day long art competition and festival held in the city. “As of now, all of the economic activity for Artfields is just during those nine days”, says Jacobs. They hope to expand Artists in Residency – training for artists – so they are here year round and bring that same level of economic activity. They are also looking at doing other types of competitions, including photography.

Exciting exhibitions are scheduled to come to the Jones Carter Gallery as well in 2016. From January 29 – March 5 the gallery will display Masterworks: the Artists of the South Carolina Cotton Trail. This is a regional multimedia exhibition in which members of the Cotton Trail have been challenged to submit the highest caliber of their work to the gallery for consideration. Work from Cuban-born artist Alexi Torres will be showcased June 11 – August 20. “His work is phenomenal and I think it will be a big draw,” says Jacobs.

Though they approach from different perspectives, the Community Development Office and the Community Museum Society share the same goals: Grow the economy, create new job opportunities, and diversify the tax space to make for a higher standard of living and a more affordable standard of living. “Lake City’s a wonderful place. It’s unlike any other small town in America. We’re doing things here that are just astonishing,” says Jacobs.

With great leadership and a community full of support, Lake City is bound to have an even more promising future.

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AFL SUPPORTS GSSM’S PROGRAMS AND CAMPS

Submitted by Lauren Shirley, PR & Marketing Coordinator



Rob Crowder, AFL CFO, Corie Culp, AFL Events & PR Manager, and Kim Bowman, CEO, GSSM Foundation and EVP Strategic Direction, GSSM

COLUMBIA - The South Carolina Governor’s School for Science & Mathematics (GSSM) received a \$15,000 investment from AFL in support of GSSM’s Business Leadership Network (BLN), the Townes Award Celebration and iTEAMSxtreme summer camp in Spartanburg County.

AFL will support GSSM’s BLN, which consists of nearly 200 businesses, organizations and individuals across the state

that annually support the school. Participation in the BLN helps to fund a variety of key initiatives, such as residential financial aid, classroom technology, science programming and new program development.

AFL’s donation will also support GSSM’s annual Townes event during which the Townes Award is presented to individuals, businesses or institutions who take aspirations of innovation and leadership to a higher level in areas of research, development, technology, public service and business in the Palmetto State. This year, the Townes Award will be presented to Milliken and Company on March 17, 2016 at the Daniel Island Club in Charleston.

Finally, AFL’s donation will help to fund iTEAMSxtreme, a day camp hosted in counties across South Carolina. The camp is geared to inspire rising seventh and eighth graders to pursue careers in the fields of computer science, technology and entrepreneurship through hands-on, team-based projects. This year, thanks to the support from AFL and other sponsors, GSSM will deliver iTEAMSxtreme at Carver Middle School in Spartanburg County June 27-30, 2016.

For more information about iTEAMSxtreme visit scgssm.org. “We are so grateful for this incredible show of support from AFL. The company has been a longtime supporter of GSSM,” said Kim Bowman, CEO, GSSM Foundation and EVP Strategic Direction, GSSM. “It’s investments like this that allow us to make a broader STEM impact.”



RUIZ SUPPORTS WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Submitted by Shanda Roary, Inventory Control Analyst at Ruiz Foods and Project Leader for Ruiz Foods



Simultaneously all across the country, on the second Saturday in December each year, wreaths are placed in National and State Veteran cemeteries. This event is to **Remember** the fallen, **Honor** those who serve and their families, and **Teach** our children the value of freedom. We have a duty to continually recognize that every Hero deserves a wreath to be placed

on their graveside. This is a project the Ruiz Foods team supported through a wonderful community initiative called **Ruiz Cares**. Here, team members can volunteer to work on local projects, get co-workers to help and the

company provides funds to support these worthy efforts. For this project we participated in the annual Wreaths Across America event at Florence National Cemetery on December 12, and had 27 volunteers, to include team member families, which totaled 67 volunteer hours and Ruiz Foods put \$500 towards the purchase of wreaths. The ceremony and laying of wreaths should make all of us appreciate our service men and women who are currently serving, those who have served, and the families who have lost loved ones in service. We need to always teach our children and be reminded as adults that our freedom was gained by service men and women that were willing to serve and protect us while paying the ultimate price themselves. We should always Remember, Honor, and Teach our children that: "Every day of Freedom is a day to Honor Service men, women, and veterans!"

HOBBY TURNS INTO PROFESSION

by Les Echols



For more than 20 years, Mary Linda Carolina had the unusual hobby of collecting, reading and studying annual IRS publications. As my knowledge of the subject grew; I naturally progressed to preparing my own taxes and those of my family and friends," she said. On October 1, 2000, she

started a homebased business. During her first year of operation, she served more than 40 clients with only word-of-mouth advertising.

"My business started as a result of my having made the choice to continue in the work force, rather than accept disability", said Ms. Carolina. SC Vocational Rehabilitation agreed to purchase the professional software that I needed to start this home-based business as an Income Tax Preparer and E-filer; offering Refund Anticipation Loans and audits. And thus, MLC Enterprises LLC (better known as Carolina Eckels Consulting) was born".

The mission of Carolina Eckels Consulting is "to create a clear path to success for veterans, economically disadvantaged individuals, minorities, women owned and small businesses". Carolina Eckels Consulting looks

to create positive inroads for individuals and small business by helping them keep their taxes in order. As standard operating procedure, they will review the client company's profile, accounting practices, goals, marketing, and history in effort to create a winning strategy for clients. "In addition, we will make companies aware of the licenses, insurance, compliance and other relevant registrations necessary for the support and empowerment of the business," she said.

Carolina Eckels' specialties include small business audits, small business development, and e-filing. Carolina Eckels has put together a highly skilled and educated management team to assist and grow the business. Along the way, they have gained a number of strategic partners, including the Small Business Association (SBA), and the Gould Incubator on the campus of Florence-Darlington Technical College. "I greatly appreciate the opportunity that is offered by Florence-Darlington Technical College, the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology (SiMT), and the Gould Business Incubator", Ms. Carolina said in an humble voice.



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HONORS SC'S ARBOR DAY WITH NEW TREE

Submitted by Russell Cox, Public Information Officer



The City of Hartsville's Arbor Day ceremony brought together elected officials and representatives of City staff and Arborworks Tree Company for the planting of a new Southern Sugar Maple in Pride Park. From left: Councilman Bob Braddock, Nick Johnson, Arnold Floyd, Lori Horton, Scott Nelson, James Clemons, Terrence Ford, Kevin Sam, Tyler Steen, Ricky Richardson, Councilwoman Adlena Graham, Councilwoman Teresa Mack, Stephen Wild, Jourmany Roderick, Leslie Neddham, Mayor Mel Pennington, and Charlie Harris.

HARTSVILLE – Members of City Council and City staff observed the City of Hartsville's Arbor Day on Dec. 10, 2015 with the planting of a new Southern Sugar Maple tree in Pride Park, located at 630 S. Sixth St.

Mayor Mel Pennington, joined by other Council members, thanked representatives from the Public Service Department and Arborworks Tree Company for their efforts in developing and maintaining Hartsville's trees.

"We want to thank all of you for taking part in this and helping us maintain our tree canopies all year long," he said. "You all are very important to us."

Pennington also presented the proclamation which named Dec. 10, 2015 as Arbor Day in the City of Hartsville. The proclamation highlighted the role of trees in reducing topsoil erosion, reducing utility costs and providing wildlife habitat in the community. It also drew attention to the value of trees as a renewable resource, in improving property values, in enhancing the economic vitality of business districts and in beautifying the city, noting that "trees, wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal."

The annual Arbor Day observance serves as one of the factors which has allowed the City of Hartsville to be named a Tree City USA for the last 29 years by the National Arbor Day Foundation, recognizing the City's efforts at investing in urban forestry.

During the ceremony, City Arborist Stephen Wild detailed the City's efforts toward earning a Tree City USA Growth Award, given to communities which demonstrate an advanced level of tree care. These local initiatives include replanting the crepe myrtles which were displaced by the downtown streetscaping project on South Fourth Street to Washington Street, partnering with Sonoco for the recycling of tree debris and partnering with Duke Energy and Trees for Tomorrow to remove trees and replace them with ones of appropriate size near power lines to help lessen the impacts of regular tree trimmings around the lines.



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NEW ROLE HAS HER OUTDISTANCING HER VERY SELF

Submitted by Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce



Sabrina M. Derry

DARLINGTON - Sabrina Derry has been busy in her new role as Executive Director of the Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce. It has been a little more than 90 days and she already brought in new members and hosted the 5th Annual Toast of Darlington. When Derry took on the role of Executive Director she had to hit the ground running. A new membership billing process was put in place prior to her arrival and she had to see it through. She also had to start contacting members and the community to get the Toast of Darlington

event in place. In addition, she had to prepare for council meetings in Darlington, Lamar and Society Hill. Derry said she was ready for the task and enjoyed working with the board members to get the job done.

Derry grew up in Darlington County and graduated from St. John's High School. She is excited to be working in Darlington to support the businesses and see the area move to the next level. "In this role I am responsible for doing whatever it takes to support our members. We do what we do every day because of our members," she said.

Derry spent the last 25+ years working at JPMorgan Chase. She worked in the Learning & Development area as a Mortgage Servicing Trainer and as an Instructional Designer. Those roles allowed her to acquire project management skills and become good at multi-tasking throughout the process. She is also a mother of two teenagers. "I had to travel often in my previous job and somehow manage to keep up with my children and their schedules," she told. She is married to Reginald Derry and they live in Florence.



In addition to the Toast of Darlington, the Chamber is responsible for the Annual Awards Banquet and Celebration (held at the Darlington Country Club in February), the Annual Golf Tournament (usually held in March or April) and Freedom Fest (held at the Darlington Raceway on the

4th of July). Derry is also preparing the 2016 calendar to include Lunch-n-Learn and Business After Hours for Chamber members. I am busy now preparing for the Annual Awards Banquet and Celebration. We will be presenting the following awards: Life Time Achievement, Citizen of the Year, Community Pride, Educator of the Year, Future Business Leader and Small Business. This is a big event for Darlington and we look forward to recognizing those Chamber members who contribute to the community and make a difference every day," she said.



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THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES "DANCING WITH THE STARS OF FLORENCE 2016"

Submitted by Debbie Hyler, Executive Director



On Tuesday, March 22, 2016, local celebrities and their professional dance partners will square-off at SiMT for a chance to win the coveted mirror ball trophy at the sixth annual DancingWith The Stars of Florence. The reception will begin at 6 pm and the competition at 7 pm. Guests will enjoy food, beverages, fellowship, and an opportunity to win a custom designed jewelry piece, donated by Lisa and Lex Matthews of Southern Jewelry Design. A Pairings Party will be held on January 7th to formally announce the dance couples. Each couple is able to reserve tables for their supporters and tables are typically sold out at the Pairings Party. If interested in purchasing tables or tickets, please contact one of the dancers listed below or Debbie Hyler @ (843) 662-9996 prior to January 7th. Pricing for tables

of eight guests begin at \$1,000 and individual tickets sell for \$75.

This year's celebrity dancers are:

- Adam Crosson – ReMAX Professionals
- Deb Davis – Assurant Specialty Property
- Dr. Bill Hazelwood – McLeod Critical Care Hospitalist
- Dr. Brian Naylor – McLeod Pediatric Associates
- Dr. Michael Foxworth – HopeHealth
- Dr. Supen Patel – Carolinas Rheumatology & Osteoporosis Center
- Dwayne Brockington – First Reliance Bank
- George Jebaily – Jebaily Law Firm
- Katie Wilcox – Pee Dee Electric Cooperative
- Pam Flowers – PGBA, LLC
- Ray Taylor – Toyota of Florence
- Tara Newton – Briggs Elementary

After February 1st, fans can vote online for their favorite couple(s) at www.FlorenceDancingWithTheStars.com for only \$10 per vote. The "People's Choice" mirror ball trophies will be awarded to the three couples raising the most votes. A panel of judges will name one couple "Technical Skills Winner" based on the contestants' overall skills. One couple will also be chosen as "Most Entertaining"

by the judges. Dancers receiving the largest number of online votes will be awarded the "Social Stars" trophy.

The School Foundation's board member Ed Love and local celebrity Audra Coble will serve as master and mistress of ceremonies. The 2015 celebrities will perform the opening act and the KFA Fierce team will provide special entertainment throughout the evening.

About The School Foundation

Founded in 2000, The School Foundation promotes educational excellence in Florence, SC School District 1 through grants for innovative learning and through high impact initiatives designed to prepare all students for success. To learn more about The School Foundation, visit its website at www.theschoolfoundation.org. To date, the foundation has provided more than \$1,091,356 in grants to FSD1 educators and is currently leading a school readiness awareness campaign focusing on preparing all children to enter kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed. The foundation also launched Start2Read, a program that distributes age appropriate books and reading tips in local businesses.



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DRIVE AWAY WITH UNITED WAY

Submitted by Rachel Baggett, Director of Marketing and Initiatives



One of the possible car models from Mike Reichenbach that can be won on display at the United Way of Florence County office.

This year, the United Way of Florence County is hoping that the residents of Florence County not only help drive up campaign donations, but also possibly drive away in a brand new car. As part of their 2015-2016 Annual Campaign and through a partnership with Mike Reichenbach, the United Way is giving away a twelve month lease to a brand new car.

United Way of Florence County's Annual Campaign is a community-wide fundraiser that helps raise donations for 17 local non-profits (called Community Partners) in Florence County. These Community Partners are held to a very high standard and receive funding because they have proven their ability to efficiently help meet critical needs here in our community through necessary programs. These programs provide very worthwhile services to include emergency safe shelters, home delivered meals to the elderly, therapy sessions for children with speech or hearing disorders, medical care to the indigent and working poor, advocacy/therapy for abused women and children, and much more. By donating to the campaign, you are making our community stronger and collectively helping United Way achieve its ultimate goal of changing lives for the better in Florence County.

The 17 Community Partners supported by the 2015-2016 United Way Campaign are American Red Cross, Boys & Girls Club, The CARE House, The Chrysalis Center of Circle Park, Civil Air Patrol, Florence Area Literacy Council, Florence County Disabilities & Special Needs, Florence Family YMCA, Girls Scouts, Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medicine FREE Clinic, Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault, Pee Dee Speech and Hearing Center, Salvation Army, and the Senior Citizens Association.

No amount is too small to contribute to the United Way Campaign, but in an effort to help drive up donations and be eligible to win the twelve month lease to the brand new car, individuals must donate at least \$100 to the United Way Campaign. For every \$100 that an individual donates, they will be given an entry into the drawing for the grand prize of the car as well as additional prizes such as a 46" HD Flat Screen TV with Xbox and Kinect, three night stay at the Sea Crest Oceanfront Resort in Myrtle Beach, and a Coleman Road Trip Propane Grill. The drawing for all the prizes will be held in May 2016.

Donating to the Annual Campaign is not the only way to help drive up donations. Each January, United Way kick off the New Year with their Burn and Learn's BIGGEST LOSER competition. This year, eighty LOSERS will take part in a ten week competition where they will receive fitness training from McLeod Health & Fitness, nutrition guidance, and moral support to achieve a healthier lifestyle and possibly win more than \$1,000 in cash and prizes. Individuals as well as companies can help support and encourage their favorite LOSERS by purchasing tax-deductible "Low-Fat Brownie Points" throughout the BIGGEST LOSER competition. All the proceeds received from purchases of "Low-Fat Brownie Points" will be added to the overall donations raised by United Way's Annual Campaign. It's a win-win for everybody because your purchase of brownie points will inadvertently help United Way's Community Partners drive change in our community!

You're in the Driver's Seat, You Hold the Keys... Let the Drive Begin! For more information or to become a United Way donor, call 843-662-2407 or visit www.uwflorence.org. Information on Florence's BIGGEST LOSER can be found at www.burnandlearnflorence.com.



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WHAT TO DO AFTER A HIT AND RUN



As with any collision, you must carefully document hit and run accidents for your insurance company and the police.

However, that can be a little tricky since one driver has taken off! Here are some dos and don'ts for handling the situation.

DO get as much information about the

driver, car and accident as possible, including:

- License plate number
- The other vehicle's make, model and color
- Description of damage to the other vehicle
- Which direction the other vehicle was headed
- Photos of the damage to your vehicle
- Location, time and cause of the accident

DON'T follow the fleeing driver. Leaving the scene of the accident could put you in a compromising position: You'll miss getting eyewitness accounts — and police could question who's really at fault. **DO** ask witnesses if they can supply additional information about the accident. If they give you or the police a statement, be sure to get their names and contact information. Witness information can be especially helpful if the hit and run occurred when you were not with your vehicle. Get more information about how to handle parking lot accidents.

DON'T wait to call the police or your insurance company to file a police report or an accident claim. The official accident report will help police look for the missing driver and will be useful when you file your accident claim.

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PERFORMING ARTS ENTREPRENEUR

Submitted by Shalandra Douglas



Just Peachy Dance Studio

My name is Shalandra Douglas but everybody calls me Peaches since birth. I am a 1999 graduate of Timmonsville High School and a 2004 graduate of Winthrop University with a BA in performing Arts and a minor in Entrepreneurship. I have been dancing for more than 20 years with technique in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, lyrical and hip hop dance. I taught dance in the public school system for one year at Bennettsville Middle School. I've also taught for several after school programs including the Boys and Girls club. I have

been married for seven years to Damian Douglas and we have 2 boys together Damian, 9, and Dallas, 6. I recently opened Peachy Dance Studio located at 2794 Pamplico Highway in Florence, the reason being that I felt there was a need for children of all races and ages to be inspired through creative movement. I want to make sure students have fun and live healthier lifestyles while also learning technique and the fundamentals of dance. I offer ballet, tap/hip hop & liturgical or praise dance. I will also be offering a hip hop aerobics every Monday to all adults after Jan. 4th. To enroll, just call the office at 843.661.4835 or the mobile number, 843.621.3936.



Shalandra Douglas



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A HEALTHY COMMUNITY IS BASE FOR ALL GOALS

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



Heart Walk 2015 City Team City of Florence

“A healthy community reflects a sense of mental and physical wellbeing and is the foundation for achieving all other goals” (Community Action Network, April, 2010). The beginning of a New Year is considered a time for resolutions and new beginnings. We’ll soon be bombarded with various diets and fitness plans that sometimes gain attention in a new year. Health and wellness seem to be a common theme across the nation starting at the federal level with First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move Fitness Initiative”. Many states have also followed her lead with similar programs. Why the interest in community wellness? The South Carolina Obesity Action plan reports that two out of three South Carolina adults and one out of three children are overweight or obese. Obesity has become a major contributor to chronic disease in our state.

The City of Florence shares this interest and recognizing its importance has promoted wellness with employees, providing an Employee Wellness program for more than 25 years. The program includes many benefits including monthly and annual health screenings, fitness programs, nutritional information, and an employee wellness clinic. The City has stepped up the program in recent years to emphasize physical activity and nutritional education for employees and their families. Why has the city chosen to make this investment? The obvious reasons are the reduction in health care costs, increased productivity, and fewer lost work hours. There is also evidence that a healthier employee has better job satisfaction and morale.

Now the City plans to take its wellness goals outside the walls of the City Center and advocate for a community wellness effort. How do we make this happen and why does it matter? We are motivated by a passion from the results we identify in our own program, and we recognize that an active lifestyle and healthy food options are essential. This motivation and recognition comes in part from leadership and direction provided by City Manager, Drew

Griffin. His service on community boards that are working diligently to address health concerns in our state provides awareness that impacts decision making. He currently serves on the Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMMSC) Board and the American Heart Association of the Pee Dee Board. These



Completing Race City of Florence

connections have provided more insight while offering resources that will assist in this endeavor.

The City is working with the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and other agencies to address the issue of obesity in our area. An Obesity Summit was held in Florence in December to allow agencies the opportunity to discuss the issue and develop solutions to this epidemic. The City of Florence recently enrolled youth from our community centers in the ESMMSC Healthy Young People Empowerment (HYPE) program. These young people will develop a program in our community to identify healthy eating and active living limitations and solutions. The HYPE group

will also address safe routes to school as part of their program.

A major emphasis in the city is Neighborhood Redevelopment. While the city currently provides recreational programming, community centers and walking trails, the Neighborhood Redevelopment program will identify additional locations to enhance physical activity within these neighborhoods.

Another focus of redevelopment is the addition of a food corridor accessible from neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. Areas of north and west Florence have been designated as a food desert because of limited access to affordable and nutritious food. The city is currently securing properties to create a corridor within walking distance of downtown. This corridor will provide a food hub with access to fresh fruits and vegetables from local farms for residents as well as local restaurant owners with a desire to provide farm to table menus for patrons. The food corridor will also offer opportunities for other local artisans.

The City hopes to continue community outreach through wellness activities such as the Flo-Town 5K. The Flo-Town 5K was the city’s first 5K run/walk event and was inspired from a “Couch to 5K” program sponsored by the Employee Wellness program. It allowed employee participants a 5K event following the completion of the nine-week program. We also opened the event up for community participation. This event provides an opportunity for introduction to the Florence Trail System and to get Florence moving! This year’s event is scheduled for April 23, 2016. Registration information is available at www.cityofflorence.com or www.facebook.com/FloTown5KRunWalk.

The City will remain steadfast in its determination to elevate the quality of life in our city and region. Recognizing that wellness is an essential component in this pursuit, we plan to continue addressing issues affecting the health of residents and collaborating with community partners to improve overall health for the Florence community.



Start Line of FloTown 5K 2015-1

DILLON'S WAGNER AT FOREFRONT OF CITY GROWTH

by Les Echols



City of Dillon Administration Building

DILLON - The motto of Dillon South Carolina has become "Your first stop in South Carolina". Indeed, Dillon has become a conduit for change and development. Home of former Federal Reserve chair Benjamin Bernanke, Dillon has faced challenges, but has turned a corner in terms of growth and economic development projects. No one represents Dillon better than its City Manager, Glen Wagner. His 27 years of service in local government speaks to his dedication to improving the local economy, and he has been at the forefront of Dillon county growth.

Glen Wagner was born and raised in the small town of Bennettsville SC. He graduated from Francis Marion University with a Bachelor of Science degree Political Science. Shortly thereafter, his career in local government began. Glen started his career with the City of Orangeburg, SC in 1987 as Director of Athletics in the Parks and Recreation Department. Glen served in that role until December of 1991. In January of 1992, he moved

into a new and exciting role. He was appointed the first Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Dillon. "Prior to this, the City offered no recreational activities for its citizens. My task was to start a full service department to offer programs for the youth, adults, and senior adults. During this time, I also helped with the design of the city's sports complex", said Wagner.

"In March 1996, I was appointed by City Council as interim City Manager and later appointed as City Manager" said Wagner. As City Manager, Wagner basically serves as the chief executive officer and head of the administrative branch and responsible to city council for properly administering all the city's affairs. "All city departments report to me" Wager clarified, "which includes Police, Fire, Water and Wastewater, Code Enforcement, Finance, Recreation, Street, Sanitation and Fleet". Aside from sports and recreation, Dillon also hosts a number of events in the community.

Several annual events and new projects have kept Mr. Wagner and Dillon officials very busy. Upgrades to the City of Dillon's Wastewater Plant, lift stations and adding additional 250,000 gallon elevated water tank alone will cost an estimated

\$3,000,000. The city has applied for grants and loans to help with the cost of these upgrades. Within the next 6 to 18 months these projects will be completed. "Dillon County Celebrates Main Street," is a two-day family-oriented event featuring street dances with music by big-name bands, cook-off contests, a car show, and entertainment by local talent. It is marketed as an old-fashioned street fair with something for every age and every taste. From a commerce standpoint, two major projects are on the horizon that will have an almost immediate impact. Dillon City Council met recently to discuss plans to build a hotel. The project is being seen as a huge economic development project for the city that will help bring in more tourism. Another project comes from Cypress Creek Renewables, a company that specializes in the ownership and development of long-term solar energy projects, has taken first steps toward investing \$10 million in a solar energy project in Dillon County.

Glen has been married for 25 years, has two children and one grandchild. "After 24 years of living and working in Dillon, my family and I call Dillon our home", he concludes.



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CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE IS A WAY OF HIS LIFE

by Les Echols



Sheriff Anthony Dennis

SUMTER - Sheriff Anthony Dennis is the true definition of longevity in the world of civil service. A 33-year veteran of the Sumter County Sheriff's Office, he began his career in 1982, and his career has followed a path of progression and positive impact. Sheriff Dennis provides leadership to more than 160 personnel, including 126 sworn deputies. He prides himself on being uniquely prepared to lead every aspect of his law enforcement team.

Upon his promotion to sergeant years ago, Dennis assumed duties as shift lieutenant of the Patrol Division, where he was responsible for managing seven officers. Subsequently, he assumed the responsibility as commander of the Narcotics Division where he had great impact on law enforcement and the residents of Sumter County. In April of 1996 Sheriff Dennis was promoted to Major of Operations. His promotion to Chief Deputy in September of 2000 was followed by his election to Sheriff in 2004 taking over the duties of Sheriff of Sumter County in January 2005. Sheriff Dennis is clear that it was his skillset and knowledge that earned him his position. "I was elected three times based on citizen confidence and I take my role very seriously", said Sheriff Dennis. "I know a precedent has been set, but that was not my goal. I don't want to be just the only African-American sheriff, but I also want to pave way for the next person".

Despite his success, Dennis maintains his small town mentality and humble spirit along with a strong passion for education. "I was born and raised Rembert, SC. When you grow up in a town all your life, you know a lot of people. It often helps that they know and trust you to get the job done", said Dennis. Sheriff Dennis was educated in Sumter School District Two, graduating from Hillcrest High School in 1976. The sheriff holds an Associate's Degree in Criminology from Central Carolina Technical College, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminology from Saint Leo College, and a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Troy University. Also, he is a graduate of the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, Mid and Upper Level Management through the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, the FBI National Academy, the 90th National Sheriff's Institute Executive Level Management School, He is chairperson of the Charlie Kubala Memorial Scholarship Fund and head of the Homeland Security Committee for Sumter County.

Along with being an active member of the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, where he serves as a Trustee, he is a member and serves on the boards of the BRAC Quality of Life Committee, Sumter County Children's Advocacy Center Board, Sumter County Greenhouse Board, Project Turn Around Board, South University Criminal Justice Program Advisory Board and Sumter School District Community Advisory Council.

When not in uniform, Sheriff Dennis is an adjunct professor at Morris College and Central Carolina Technical College in the criminal justice programs. His passion is teaching law enforcement right next to performing law enforcement duties. He is also a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. and a Master Mason with the Catchall

Masonic Lodge #425. "In my spare time, I exercise by walking 20 miles per week because if you are not fit, you cannot perform your duties" says Dennis.

Sheriff Dennis has created several countywide enhancement programs, including a Community Action Team and the Boys to Men and Girls to Women Conference. "God has given me the ability to make the community a better place. However, being healthy allows me to enjoy quality time with my family, positively influence my community, and leave a legacy of innovative leadership in the sheriff's office", concludes Sheriff Dennis.

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TAKING THE BUZZ WORD OUT OF BIAS

Submitted by Simma Lieberman, *The Inclusionist*



Simma Lieberman

Much has been written about bias; conscious, unconscious and institutional. While understanding bias is key to diversity and inclusion, too often, it's become a buzz word, "trend or flavor of the month," or an academic polemic.

In this article I talk about two key issues in bias as it relates to diversity and

inclusion.

1- Any program that includes bias training must go beyond simple recognition, and include accountability and transformation. .

2- Training alone doesn't bring about long-term change. You need to develop and implement an ongoing strategy for creating an inclusive culture that filters out bias in all areas. Transformation has to include people at every level in your organization.

Destructing Individual Unconscious and Conscious Bias

We have a filter in our brain that helps us interpret what we see and hear. It filters out information that is not threatening, not important and not in our perceived reality.

We form our biases based on our experiences, what we hear and what we see. Based on our biases we make assumptions, which result in actions, which can lead to exclusion, discrimination or avoidance.

We're not responsible for the messages we received growing up, but we are responsible for what we do once we become aware of the impact those messages have had on our thinking and actions today.

In addition, not all bias is unconscious. There is bias that is deliberate and conscious and there is the bias that leads people to stereotype others and believe they are right. When our bias is unconscious, we're not aware of our actions and the impact that we have on others. When our bias is conscious or deliberate, we are aware of our actions, but think we are justified

because of how we consciously feel about a whole group. It doesn't occur to us that we might be wrong.

If you think you either have no bias, know you may have unconscious bias, or that you stereotype people different than you, read on.

Suggested action:

Be conscious of your visceral reaction or any thoughts or judgments you have about the next 3 people you see. What story or impression immediately comes to mind before you give it second thought?

Notice their age, clothing, skin color, age and any other visible characteristics at the root of your bias and the first story you created.

Next create a different story about what they do and who they are. Seeing other possibilities will help filter out your biases and wrong assumptions about people.

Ex. You're an extroverted White woman at a large dinner party interacting in a discussion with different people sitting near you.

You're sitting next to a Black woman named Charlene who is not looking at you nor engaging in your discussion. You turn your back to Charlene and ignore her the rest of the evening.

After the dinner you approach the host and tell her that you know Charlene doesn't like White people because she wouldn't talk to you

The host who is also White informs you that Charlene is her best friend and is extremely shy in groups and does much better in direct one-on-one interaction, and that in fact the two of you share a love of spectator sports.

How could you have avoided making a wrong assumption about Charlene? What

was the basis for assuming she didn't like White people?

Seven Steps to Destruct Unconscious or Conscious Bias

1- Become aware and admit that we all have biases, even you.

2- Notice your initial thoughts when you are around people different from you

3- Think and ask yourself:

- Where did this particular bias originate?

- What's different today?

4- Determine whether you are forming an opinion based on an individual's actions, or because of a stereotype you have about the group you think they represent

5- If you have a bias about another person, be open to the possibility that you may be wrong, and be willing to accept evidence that is counter to your belief

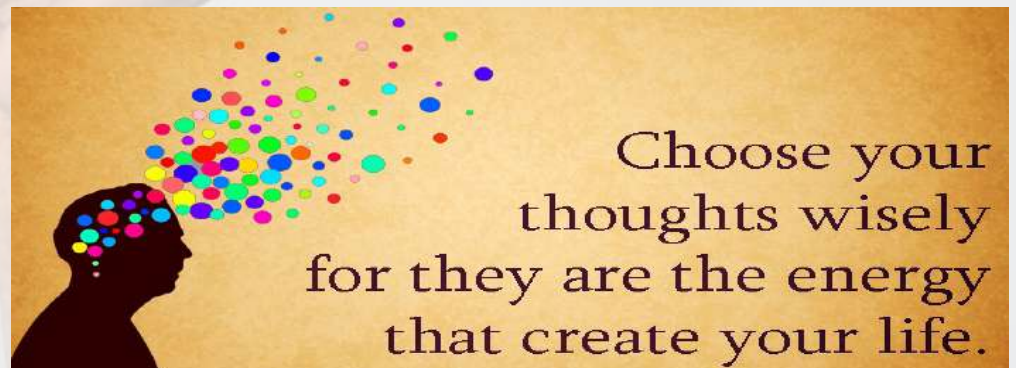
Be conscious of your biases before you act on them

6- Take advantage of opportunities to interact with people who are different for you. Look for areas of commonality.

7- Be aware of you biases about specific groups and think of people you know from those groups that don't fit that stereotype.

Examine those stereotypes and think back to where and when those stereotypes originated

List your own dimensions of diversity, race, color, ethnicity, age, etc. Think of messages you've heard about any of those dimensions, as well as any time someone has made a wrong assumption about you based on one of those dimensions. Doesn't it sound logical that if other people hold a stereotype or make a wrong assumption about you based on your diversity dimensions, that you might be wrong about them as well?



5 WAYS TO CREATE A POSITIVE WORKPLACE

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(Don't read into other people's action)

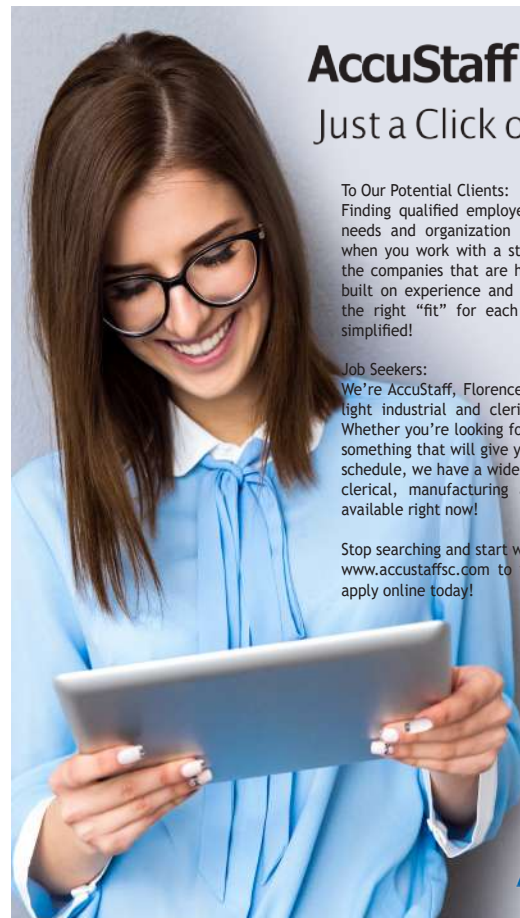
3

4 LOOK AT WHAT WORKS (There is always something good in every situation – find it)

2 PRACTICE GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT (Don't wait for someone else to share or help – do it first)

SPEAK WELL OF OTHERS
(And if you have nothing nice to say – Shut up!)

5 SHOW APPRECIATION (Say thank you more often)



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ALLOW WOMEN (MEN, ALSO) FOR WHOM THEY ARE CREATED TO BE

Submitted by Robin L. Lewis



We have only two genders represented on the earth. In all of Creation every species, except maybe the paramecium I viewed under the high school microscope, comes in pairs of male and female and from this place we relate, reproduce, and display the glorious original blueprint of God. Still amazed every time I read it, chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis show us God's original intent for mankind and the earth. Walk with me while we/I set the stage?

Everything to Gain

We read in Genesis 1 and 2 and see the curtain drawn back, watching it unfold like a beautiful mystery, the Spirit of God comes and hovers over the deep where there is disorder and darkness and speaks light right into existence with four words. We picture in our mind's eye all that happens as the waters are separated and dry land appears full of gold, oil, precious stones, minerals, and resources enough to last for all time. We see the planets and stars begin to twinkle and shine as they are placed on the backdrop of deepest space like luminaries for dividing day and night and to give us a way to mark days and years. The sun and moon are placed to give light to the earth, forever fixed and shining, providing photosynthesis for the coming vegetation that enters the stage next.

We watch as the trees and plants are spoken into being, fruit trees to majestic cedars and pines, the seed bearing plants, avocado to zucchini, all the way to the coral in the sea. Then things begin to move! Living sea creatures and fish fill the sea, flying birds fill the skies, and every movement is displaying God's handiwork and all are the first blessed by God's voice to be fruitful and multiply. The following day God's creative power is even more amazing as land walking animals appear, from cattle to rhinos to polar bears, to even the smallest beetle, and all proclaimed to be good. Every species planned for, provided for, and placed in a habitat and home. Lush abundance fills our vision as we look over all that has been created.

And then God does something unexpected. He discusses what comes next with Himself and

says, "Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the cattle and all the earth, and over every living thing on the earth." And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; rule and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:26-28) Then God looked over the finished creation, called it "very good", and then He celebrated!

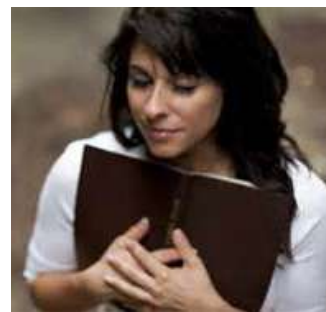
We look at the creation of place, time, and relationship in amazing detail, and we come to understand just how much the human race has been given and how grandiose is the common purpose the man and woman share. In the first 2 chapters of Genesis, they are given all they need and it's all interwoven inside their relationship with this Creator God. Placed inside the learning environment of a Garden, Adam and Eve find they are created to complement and need each other, God saying right out loud that "It's not good for the man to be alone." They are encouraged to enjoy life and are mentored by God as He comes to walk in the cool of the day. But we've lost the proper context of the outcome of this epic story. The way this story is passed down through time to us today becomes as different as the Gossip Game played in elementary school, edited, changed, and reshaped, for Eve has lost all sense of her original identity for us, and so has Adam.

Everything to Lose

So many preachers and teachers, so many husbands and wives, don't know the truth about this original couple. They each were created in God's image, displayed the beauty of God, and given the same assignment to steward all of Creation. In fact, it's only when both are together in unity of purpose and honor do they display God's image in the fullness that was intended. But with Eve's bite of fruit, we've forgotten the Lord's stunning assessment that it wasn't good for the man to be

alone. We've overlooked the verse that said "she gave some fruit to her husband who was there with her" (Genesis 3:6), and we reconcile poor Eve to the back row, the place of silence and shame, and many times the place of permissible abuse in society today. We promote Adam to a lofty place of hierarchy, to a position able to silence "that woman you gave me", and put him in a place of wrong burden and responsibility. And we wonder what is wrong.

Just as every race of people on the planet has a unique voice, purpose, and contribution to the others, so does each gender, male and female. We have witnessed in the last 150 years on our own soil the problems that result in silencing a race of people. Yet many times we still continue in hard worn paths of not recognizing the contributions of an entire gender, and remaining pervasively ignorant of God's definition of who we truly are and how much we each are valued in His eyes. Many argue and debate over certain verses that are extracted from the Bible that support their position without looking back to the Garden to understand God's original intent. We think we can take any verse out of its original context and use our modern day language to understand it. Yet we are reading an ancient Middle Eastern manuscript and must realize that specific passages were written to address specific issues with specific people, while we instead use them as blanket statements, and sometimes as gags, to silence half the human race.



I grew up deep inside a denomination that places women in the background, in the choir, or in the nursery, and greatly limits God's original intent for them. Women still aren't allowed to serve in key roles of leadership because of faulty interpretation of scripture. I grew up believing what had been taught and modeled for me and lived my life this way, all the time angry and resentful at God for His unbalanced plan. It wasn't until my 40's, after putting myself down for decades and allowing abuse in my own life, that I cried out for an explanation! I had lived with spiritual duct tape over my mouth and had sat still while well intentioned men and women, and some not-so-well-intentioned men and women, had placed it there, saying it was right and the best way to serve God in submission. I wasn't taught that submission is first mutual between men and

ALLOW THEM TO BE

women in all arenas of life, and ultimately is a picture of our individual submission and yielding to God Himself. I was never taught that just like in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that there is no God-given hierarchy in relationships between people. We are to serve and honor each other, no matter our background, race, or gender. Submission is first and foremost mutual, and those who lead are to lead by serving. When we lost the balance by the first couple's decision to do things their own way, relationship was severely damaged in all spheres of life from home, to church, to the marketplace. We confuse authority structure with individual value, ascribing higher value to those at the top. Authority structure is set to accomplish a purpose or mission, not a definition of a person's worth.

Many believers see "In the beginning" as Plan A and the New Testament and Jesus as Plan B, but that's not the case. God has always had the same plan for mankind and the earth in relationship with Him, and to share the powerful love of Heaven with every living person. After "the fall", not only was their intimacy, equality, and personal relationship damaged, but also their ability to advance in unity. They not only lost relationship with God, but also with each other. But God made Eve a promise, that One would come from her at the right time making restoration possible. That would be God's own Son, many centuries later.

Everything to Restore

Because of Jesus, we are now able to learn to walk in His authority as part of God's plan. This plan is not limited to a marriage relationship, but to all relationships between women and men. Eve is



still our blueprint for women today. From the Garden we learn that God created a partner for Adam in a relationship characterized by mutual love, honor, and respect. They were both given the

same assignment to expand the Kingdom of Heaven throughout the Garden, then across the earth. There was not a list of Eve's duties tacked up next to a list of Adam's on the Tree of Life. Responsibility was shared in the vast assignment they'd been given. Adam's poetic expression when he first saw her is far more than romantic; it contained words of honor, love, and appreciation to God! Yes, God had created the first relationship, but together they were also the first family, first Church, and first global venture!

The Hebrew word translated "helper" or "helpmeet" that describes Eve (Genesis 2:18) and

all women to come is the word 'ezer' (pronounced razor) and is a military term. God had not created a servant for Adam or a competitor, but one who would be his staunchest ally in the life of faith; one whose strengths would dove-tail with his own. An ezer is a theologian, created to know God and make Him known, and reproduce the likeness of God in others. They are disciples, mentors, and servant-warriors! The word 'ezer' is only used in one other context in the Old Testament to describe how the Spirit of God comes alongside the nation of Israel as a very strong helper. Adam needed Eve's gifts and strengths to fulfill his calling, and she needed his gifts and strengths as well. Partners in every endeavor, a team united and strong, they were called to promote the faithfulness of the other in a small circle of equality and blessing. They were the original A-Team.

When women and men give honor and space for each other to live in their strengths, gifts, and purpose in home, business, and the church, the power and influence of Heaven becomes visible. The Kingdom of Heaven is made up of men and women of different skin color, gifts, abilities, backgrounds, and anointings. It is just as wrong to discredit or limit someone because of a different heritage as it is to discredit or limit them because of their gender. There are many who believe they are right in doing so, but not according to God. His Word confirms itself throughout scripture time and again and shows us the way to live together.

As "In the beginning" where we watched the creation of all things, the beautiful order and even mystery that shrouded the globe, these have remained since time began. So why do we think God would suddenly have one gender silenced in any way? We have as evidence His world and every person in it who carries the same value in His eyes. With the beauty and detail of the backdrop of creation, how can the Father's heart be any less for His daughters than it is for His sons? Our answer depends on what we believe.

I endured an abusive marriage for many years because I believed I was supposed to submit. While trying to keep my family together, I also stayed because I was afraid God would be disappointed in me if I left. Every time I went to someone for counsel or prayer, they would remind me of scriptures relating to submission, the headship of the husband, verses about divorce, and one that instructs women not to leave because staying may "win him over to the Lord". Those well meaning people and ministers placed all the responsibility of the success or failure of my marriage on me and verbally diminished what was actually happening to me, all of which God had never done. I was allowing something to happen that the God I know had never intended - my own abuse and

the tearing down of who I am. Since that time, I have spent the last 15 years working with God to repair my life, heal my inner wounds, and restore my voice. I am learning to be the 'ezer' He created me to be.

My experience was not limited to the homefront. From men in the workplace, I tolerated verbal abuse, distrust, sexual advances, and a much lower pay for greater responsibility. I have stood by and watched as other women have been mistreated as well. The Church can also be a place of abuse for the weak. I have



witnessed Church leadership attempt with success to tell people what offering to give, what sins to confess, and even who to marry. This happens to both women and men; when one gender is marginalized, both genders suffer. If men are the ones filling every chair in the conference room, doing all the talking and making all the decisions, then they have placed themselves in a position God never intended, for they don't have the benefit of hearing the female perspective.

Everything in Him

God has never thrown out His original blueprint for women and men to bear His image together. To believe and accept it we must set aside our beliefs and traditions that conflict with truth and choose to agree with Him, setting in place what He intended. Paul echoed the atmosphere of the Garden with Galatians 3:28 (AMP), "There is [now no distinction in regard to salvation] neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you [who believe] are all one in Christ Jesus [no one can claim a spiritual superiority]."

There are many today praying for our nation and the world, but it first begins in each of us. We cannot seek God only for information in order to debate each other; we seek God so we can respond to what He reveals to us. The most important bit today comes straight from the beginning: knowing that each person has unique identity, amazing value, and one-of-a-kind purpose; that each voice is needed, and every race and both genders are appreciated for the way they display the image of God. Do you want your world to be a better place? Then let honor and respect for women and men begin with you.

Robin L. Lewis, founder of Sozo Life & Leadership, LLC, is a professional speaker, writer, and certified spiritual life coach. Email Robin about life coaching or to book her to speak at robinlewiswords@gmail.com. www.sozolifeleaders.com.



WHY COLLEGE TRANSFER MATTERS

Submitted by Dr. Shelly Fortin



Each year, 1.5 million students in this country enter community and technical colleges to begin postsecondary education. Most of these students do not see the community college as their end goal. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that more than 80% enter with the intention of earning a bachelor's degree. Unfortunately, five years after enrolling, only 25% have made it to the four-year campus and even fewer reach their goal of a bachelor's degree. Poor transfer outcomes impact students, two and four year colleges, and local and national priorities. With more than 40% of first time freshmen choosing community colleges as their starting point, it's time to look at the potential in the pipeline and develop strategies for tapping into it.

Transfer has long been integral to the community college mission but the path to the four-year degree has challenges. Students fail to bridge the gap because of obstacles that can be both administrative and cultural. A common disappointment for students is finding that many of their courses do not transfer smoothly to the university. One recent City University of New York study found that 1 in 7 community college students loses 90% of their credits in transfer to a four-year college. Only 4 in 7 were able to keep 90% or more of their credits. To shore up the pipeline, many states have proactively developed transfer articulation agreements. This is an important step but an often overlooked obstacle facing transfer students is environmental. The jump from community college to the four-year setting is more than a leap to higher-level course work; it is also a jump from one institutional culture to another.

Preparation for that cultural transition must begin early and continue through the transfer student's admission to the four year college. Some universities strive to ease the transition with transfer orientation courses and dedicated counselors, but for the majority of students, the services come too late. The critical points of intervention lie much closer to the beginning of each student's higher education journey.

Four-year colleges have much to gain by strengthening transfer ties. A great degree of attrition occurs during students' first year of college. On average, more than 25% do not return for their second year (ACT 2014). These are expensive losses. Upper-level classes still need to be taught for native students, and one clearly cost-effective solution is to fill vacant seats with transfer students at junior and senior levels. This has the extra benefit of adding a diversity of perspective to academic discourse, which will help to shape our future leaders.

Students also have a lot to gain by increased education levels. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that community college graduates earn an average of \$6,500 more annually than high school graduates. Bachelor's degree recipients average \$22,500 more than high school graduates. And the personal and social benefits cannot be overstated.

Economics, demographics and national economic priorities have all lined up to demand a stronger connection between community college transfer programs and four-year institutions. Minority populations are growing in America and the US Census projects that by the year 2045, white Americans will be in the minority. These demographic shifts could greatly affect educational attainment in America. Among 25-29 year olds, 41% of white Americans hold bachelor's degrees, compared to 22% of African Americans and 15% of Hispanic Americans (NCES 2015). As the country becomes more diverse, we must facilitate the attainment of bachelor's degrees at levels that are comparable across population subgroups. In order to meet the demands for educated talent as we move through the 21st century, larger numbers of minorities will have to earn bachelor's degrees in order to provide a workforce that will sustain national economic development.

The White House and Department of Education have set a goal to be the nation with the highest percentage of college educated citizens in the world by 2020. Community colleges will play a pivotal role. Approximately, 46% of our nation's undergraduates attend technical and community colleges. Just above 60% of both black and white students enroll in college soon after graduating from high school but the Georgetown Public Policy Institute found that minority students are much more likely to enter postsecondary education at the community college. With nearly half of all students and a disproportional percentage of minority students being educated in community colleges, raising national education attainment levels will require addressing the pipeline issues that have frustrated the baccalaureate intentions of community college students and focusing on increasing the graduation rates for minority students.

Students who do transfer tend to perform very well academically. The National Clearinghouse found that 62% of transfers, and 71% of students who transfer with an associate's degree go on to earn bachelor's degrees within four years. There is no question about the potential effectiveness of the transfer process. We simply need to strengthen the bridge. Transfer students have proven to be successful at all types of institutions including the most selective and elite colleges in the country. Good preparation can and does take place in the community college setting.

Students who begin at community colleges have the responsibility to ensure that their path leads to their ultimate goals. They need to ask lots of questions—not when they are getting ready to

transfer but as early as their first semester. Students need to plan with the end in mind, connecting early with advisors at the transfer institution and reviewing coursework each semester to be sure they are tracking with university program requirements. More than 70% of community college students transfer to public four year colleges and only 20% attend private institutions. There are opportunities and dedicated scholarships at many private colleges and students should never limit their options.

Four-year colleges can be more successful in enrolling transfer students by taking more time to connect and engage community college prospects. Specific strategies will vary by institution but the following general principles will inform designs to build stronger transfer programs.

First, community college students are more likely to be first-generation. First-generation college students are sometimes unaware of how college works. They may lack the benefit of college-related experiences and information in their homes because their parents never attended. It can be a context that too many of us take for granted.

Second, economic pressures have forced colleges to raise tuition, creating concerns about limited access. Over the past thirty years, tuition and fees have risen four times faster than the consumer price index (Bloomberg 2012). More affordable tuition can reduce the crushing student debt that now threatens the prosperity of a generation, making the community college a more attractive option.

Third, a grand initiative that has potential to affect enrollment at four-year universities is the Obama administration's push for free community college. The states of Oregon and Tennessee have already signed onto this initiative, and legislation has been introduced in the U.S. Congress. Free community college would offer students the chance to complete their first two years without cost, thereby limiting debt while still providing the opportunity to achieve the same degree as if they had entered the four-year institution as freshmen.

With 7.4 million credit students enrolled in 1,123 community colleges throughout the United States, there is unrealized potential for student success, institutional growth and economic development. As we seek to improve college completion, fill classrooms and execute the civic and social responsibilities of the higher education mission, it's time to take a closer look inside the community college because that's where the students are.

Dr. Shelley Fortin is CEO of Community College Transfer, LLC., a group that specializes in working with four-year colleges and universities to help them improve and execute successful transfer strategy. She has in excess of 25 years of experience as an enrollment expert, community college leader and higher education administrator.

JOB TRENDS MOLDED HIM

by Mallory Brayboy



T'mars McCallum

CONWAY - In high school, T'mars McCallum had plans of becoming a math teacher. His plans were shifted when the teacher cadet discovered Computer and Technology was a booming field. He followed his

passion and graduated from Francis Marion University in December 2000 with a Bachelors of Business Administration and Computer Information Systems Management. He is now the Assistant Chair and Professor of Information Technology at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Myrtle Beach.

McCallum, who is originally from Dillon, SC, worked as a claims analyst at Blue Cross Blue Shield for eleven years before transitioning to Horry-Georgetown Technical College. "It was a little nerve-wracking switching jobs and it took a lot of prayer and consideration", he said. McCallum began teaching at the school as an adjunct in Fall 2008 and this rekindled his love for education. After four years he obtained a full-time position at the school.

Most of McCallum's students are not the

traditional college student fresh out of high school. Many are individuals who have been out in the work force and may have been laid off from their jobs or individuals who want to pick up a new skill in order to obtain a new job. There are a number of Veterans as well. "Many students are not familiar with technology. There is a real challenge of finding balance between the pace of your lecture and your assignments", says McCallum. "With any student your success is determined by the amount of work that you put into the program and the goals that you set for yourself." The IT professor also deals with finding a balance between maintaining computer labs, maintaining hardware and software, advising students, and recruiting new students.

McCallum takes pride in the kinesthetic form of learning practiced at the school. "The majority of our classes have hands on experience for the students. They don't come in the class and learn strictly from a textbook", he says.

McCallum teaches a variety of courses ranging from introductory to advance. He also teaches a Senior Project course where students prepare a final presentation that is delivered in front of Senior Vice Presidents and Academic deans at the end of the semester. It is usually attended by family members and by students who plan to enroll in the course. "It just really brings together all of the knowledge they have gained while they've been a student here", says

McCallum. Presentations are incorporated into other classes before they get to that last semester to help aid in public speaking. Common careers of ITT professionals include help desk specialists, network administrators, entry-level programmers, and software developers.

McCallum is also the Campus Site Coordinator for Call Me Mister, a program designed to help educate more African American males to enter into the education profession, especially in elementary and middle schools. They've done a lot of recruiting to help find gentlemen interested in being teachers. This program access to young men who are currently teaching and have been teaching for a while. "A lot of things that teachers need to be prepared for - they can get from a lot of these experienced individuals", says McCallum. "The program helps not just AA students but all students have a better understanding of diversity."

Once they complete the education transfer program they are able to transfer to any college in South Carolina and enter into the education program. Horry-Georgetown Technical College has a 2+2 partnership with Coastal Carolina University where they are automatically entered into their professional program. Call Me Mister has seen a high success rate with several "Misters" have going on to become Teacher of the Year, Principals, or obtain their Ph.D.'s.



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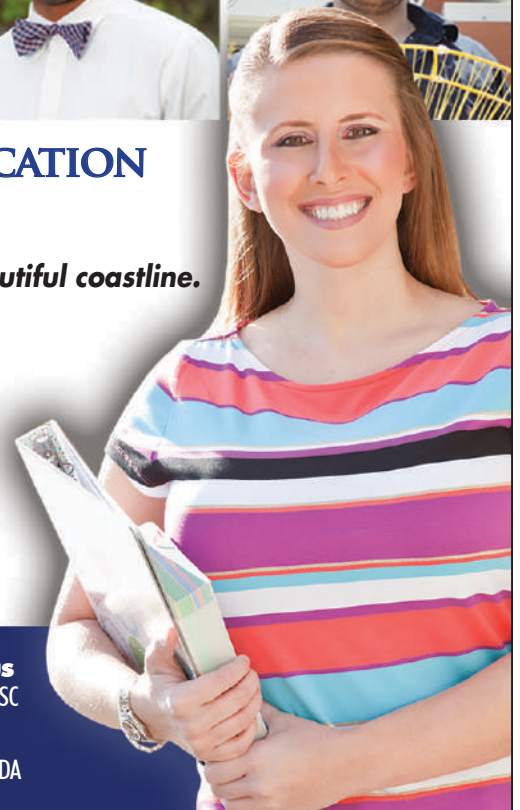
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SEEING IS BELIEVING: INSIDE THE REVOLUTIONARY WORLD OF ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING

Submitted by Naomi Sheehan



The machines inside the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology are capable of creating a wide range of products.

You've probably heard of 3-D printing. You may have seen videos of small plastic novelties produced by something resembling the inkjet printer sitting next to your computer. Have you ever wondered just exactly how it works, and what potential this innovation holds for everyday life?

Did you know that around 3-D printing – also called additive manufacturing – a whole world of industry and science has rapidly developed? GE Aerospace projects the field will expand by \$100 billion in the next decade. The process is so different than traditional manufacturing that it can sound farfetched. But it is revolutionizing everything from auto parts production and ship repair, to surgical operations and space exploration.

The Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology (SiMT) at Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) has been at the forefront of additive manufacturing for nearly a decade, and beginning this fall, the institute will offer three new courses to meet industry demand for graduates with cutting edge skills.

FDTC machine technology students are so sought-after that the college has seen 100 percent employment out of the program every year for the past 11 years, says Mark Roth, vice president over the additive manufacturing program.

"There are only five facilities in the country like the SiMT," Roth notes. "It's a real boon to the Pee Dee area. Most of our students go directly into industry."

"Now everyone is realizing what you can do with additive manufacturing, and everyone is jumping in. FDTC is the first school to offer a certificate in the state," says Roth.

"The field is growing everywhere, not just in our region," adds James Simmons, director of the additive manufacturing program. "Our department works with companies nationally and internationally, including in Spain, France, and Germany."
Layer by layer

So how does additive manufacturing work? "Seeing is believing," says Simmons, a leading authority in the region.

"Imagine I designed a potato," he suggests. "If you imagine the design process in the past, you think of a designer taking a block of wood

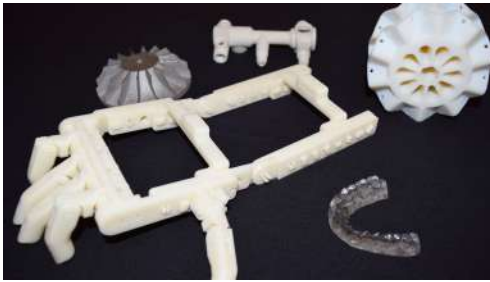
and cutting away pieces to carve a shape. They would carve the potato shape out of the block. "Additive manufacturing is 180 degrees different," he says. "We draw the potato on the computer, then slice that rendering into potato chips. The layers of chips, all stacked together, would consist of circles, with the one on the bottom the smallest, then the next one slightly bigger, and so on. We start with nothing and build from the ground up."

That's the "additive" concept – adding a substance layer by layer. The process is similar to printing a document, but the output is a 3-D product.

While seemingly more complicated, additive manufacturing can be much more efficient. "Traditionally, if you cut away metal, you have to turn it a lot to cut away," says Simmons. Every cut and turn take time and can introduce errors.

Additive manufacturing uses "freeform geometry," says Simmons. A complicated sculpture that could take days to produce in the traditional way could be built in a matter of minutes with the 3-D layering method.

State-of-the-art facilities



The Additive Manufacturing Center inside the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology continues to evolve with the industry's demands.

The SiMT resembles a medical laboratory more than a factory capable of producing industrial parts.

"You can eat off the floor in our machine shop," Vice President Roth jokes. "It's designed like a fish bowl so everyone can see the machines, and it's super clean. It's a knowledge-based field now."

He doesn't exaggerate. Classrooms are small and modern, offering video views of the machines at work in the lab. One classroom features 12 printers, one at each desk. Students make parts their very first day in class, and learn every technique in the field.

Students progress through three 16-week certificate programs that teach design using computer-aided drafting; how to be a lab technician to operate and repair machines; and project management that ties theory with application. The three certificates are tied in to an associate's degree in engineering.

"It's very hands-on," Roth explains. "You're going to know the process no matter what business hires you."

Retooling, and redefining

Agriculture might not be the first place you'd look for the application of such cutting-edge technology. The peach industry in Florence, however, has already been the recipient of additive manufacturing's advantages.

One long established peach farm in the area relies on equipment that was made decades ago, notes Roth. "It's such an old business that their newest machine was built in 1964. The companies that made these machines are long out of business, so they had no way to fix them when they'd break down," he says. "But now the peach producer can bring the pieces to us, and we can manufacture an exact replacement in an hour."

This technology was called stereolithography when it was first developed some three decades ago. "Like most technological advances, it took about 15 years to catch on," Roth explains. Computer innovations have converged with the 3-D printing world to open up new possibilities.

Like just about everything else, the machines have gotten smaller. This put 3-D printing into the realm of small business possibility. Got an idea for an invention? It can be built, layer by layer.

Bigger things are on the horizon, says Simmons. "There are large-scale machines that are capable of printing cars – in hours, not days."

Navy ships have been equipped with machines so they can replace parts without having supplies brought in by air.

"They're already doing that in space. NASA teamed with a company in South Carolina to develop methods to print tools in the International Space Station. Can you imagine how much it would cost to deliver supplies to astronauts? Now they can print a wrench in space."

"For big companies," says Roth, "these 'little things' add up to saving literally millions of dollars."

"This changes everything"

The "little things" can also save and improve lives.

"People hear about the technology and they think, 'that sounds expensive,'" Roth states. "But think of it this way: if a child loses an arm, he needs a \$20,000 prosthetic. He grows. A year later, that arm may be three inches too short.

"Now we can build that child a new arm each year for less than \$1,000, to 'grow' with him."

Medical applications know no bounds. In the SiMT lab, Simmons built an implant for kidney dialysis that will improve bloodflow for patients and prevent the need for amputations that are common consequences of the treatment.

"After starting dialysis, a patient normally has six years," Roth states.

"This changes everything."

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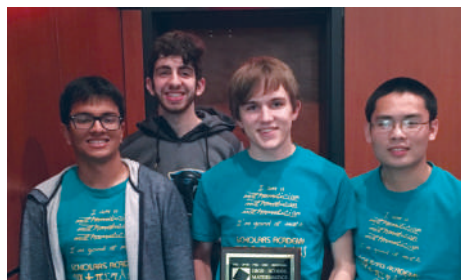


For more information contact FDTC's Dual Enrollment Office at 843-661-8120.

www.fdtc.edu

MULLINS HIGH, SCHOLARS ACADEMY, AND TRINITY-BYRNES WIN MATH TOURNAMENT

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



(L-R): Mullins High, Scholars Academy and Trinity-Byrnes

Teams from Mullins High School, Scholars Academy of Conway and Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School of Florence took top honors at the recent Pee Dee Regional High School Mathematics Tournament.

The tournament, sponsored by Francis Marion University, the Pee Dee Education Center, and Mu Alpha Theta Mathematics Honor Society, was held in Chapman Auditorium on the FMU campus.

The 39th annual event featured 354 students from 22 area schools within 8 counties. Participating schools were divided into Division I, II and III schools, based on school size or makeup. Each school's team participated in an individual exam. The four teams with the best overall exam scores advanced to a quiz bowl-style final round.

High schools participating included:

Carvers Bay, Central, Creek Bridge, Green Sea Floyds, Hannah-Pamplico, Hemingway, Johnsonville, Kingstree, Lee, Marion, and Mullins in Division I; Early College, Georgetown, Hartsville, Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology, Scholars Academy, South Florence, West Florence and Wilson in Division II; and Hartsville Home Educators, The King's Academy, and Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School in Division III.

All students participated in a written competition during the morning portion of the tournament in the areas of algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, and individual honors were awarded for work done there.

John Mastroberti of Scholars Academy recorded the highest individual result on the exam. Neil Dey of Wilson High School and Biraj Dahal of Scholars Academy took second

and third place, respectively.

Those receiving honorable mentions in the written competition were Mitchel Best, Francis "Tony" Bonadio, Ryan Moss, Lauren Schexnayder, Alex Tew and Jason Zhang of Scholars Academy; Yingie Cheng and Qiyn Dai of Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School; David Lu of West Florence High School; and Etash Kumar Guha, Jarrett Russell, Tyler Jackson and Zachary Zhao of Wilson High School.

In Division I, Mullins High School defeated Central High School (runner-up), and in Division II, Scholars Academy defeated Wilson High School (runner-up). In Division III schools, which included private schools and home school associations, Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School defeated Hartsville Home Educators (runner-up).

KEITH OVERJOYED WITH DREAM JOB

by Mallory Brayboy



Teresa Keith

CONWAY - Teresa Keith, General Education Instructor at Miller-Motte Technical College in Myrtle Beach, earned her B.S. in sociology from Francis Marion University. She then obtained Dual Master of Arts Degrees in Human Resources Development and Management and Leadership from Webster University.

Keith has been at the school for five years and says it was always her life goal to teach on the collegiate level.

She currently instructs the Career Development and Information Literacy courses at Miller-Motte. Other subjects she has covered in the past include sociology, psychology, and critical thinking. "When I saw that they had an opening here I jumped for it because I knew that was my calling. I have a passion to teach," says Keith.

Career Development is one of the first courses students take at the institution. Students learn everything from writing resumes and cover letters to proper interview techniques and hand-shaking. Guest speakers are incorporated into the learning process to further teach students the importance of honing their craft and presenting themselves as a professional. The Information Literacy course covers writing papers, proper research, and APA style citation. One important aspect the course covers is learning to use contained databases of information rather than relying on the internet as a reliable source. "Usually, the internet is third or fourth source – we don't know where it's coming from," emphasizes Keith. Miller-Motte currently uses Learn, a clean database of information that is usually second or first source.

As an educator, Keith describes her Pedagogy, or teaching style, as "eclectic". It integrates critical, creative, and practical thinking along with instructional methods that use visual, auditory, and kinesthetic forms of learning. "I try to make sure that I engage all of the student's senses so that they are learning," she says. Problem-solving is another area of emphasis for Keith. She strives to teach students to look at all options before making conclusions. "I think it makes a better decision-maker when you know what's out there," says Keith.

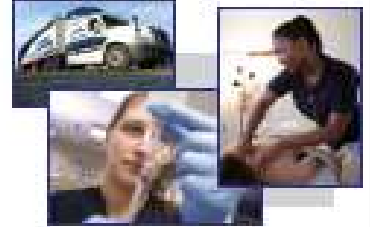
Keith believes that Miller-Motte will soon become a staple in Horry County. The institution is very active in the community, doing everything from Cancer Walks to hosting Career Fairs to even providing massages to employees and executives of coastal leadership. Recently, Miller-Motte has adapted Hybrid courses that allow students to take classes both online and in-class. Keith is currently assisting with the campus' Peer Mentor program headed by Kristen Cymbar. The program matches senior students with first term students to show them the ropes of the college. Other student programs at the school include Alpha-Beta-Kappa business organization and the Ambassadors program for upstanding students in their second or third term.

Teresa Keith has enjoyed her journey with Miller-Motte Technical College every step of the way and hopes to continue to grow with the company. Though she has faced some adversity throughout life, she is determined to get where she wants. "I plan to move forward from this point on. I plan to do a lot of other things as well." She has a passion for writing and plans to one day publish a book. Keith has also begun taking steps towards her doctorates degree in Educational Leadership as she eventually wants to become a program director, supervisor, or possibly dean on the collegiate level. "Education is my life. I think that it is wonderful. You can never stop learning," says Keith.

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GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Submitted by Lauren Shirley, PR & Marketing Coordinator



SOUTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL for Science & Mathematics

COLUMBIA - The South Carolina Governor's School for Science & Mathematics (GSSM) is accepting applications through February 1, 2016, for its Class of 2018. Online applications are available at www.scgssm.org/apply-now. One of only 12 of its kind in the nation, GSSM is a two-year, public, residential high school specializing in the advanced study of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Beyond its distinctive curriculum, GSSM offers unique learning opportunities including the nationally recognized Summer Program for Research Interns (SPRI), the Research Experience Scholars Program (RESP) and January Interim. These innovative programs provide students with mentored, graduate-level internships, international travel experiences and options to explore non-traditional courses. The School is also educating the next generation of entrepreneurs and business leaders through the BlueCross BlueShield Economics & Finance Institute and the next generation of engineers through the Duke Energy Engineering & Innovation Institute.

GSSM Applicants should be South Carolina residents, current high school sophomores (inquire about exceptions) and have at least 10.5 high school credits prior to the end of the 2015-2016 school year, including Geometry, Algebra I and II, English I and II, a social studies course and a lab science course. GSSM is highly selective, taking into consideration courses taken, grades, class rank, standardized test scores, teacher recommendations and extracurricular activities. The school considers not only aptitude, but also proven performance and demonstrated interest in science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics courses.

For more information on the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, visit www.scgssm.org, attend a SmartTalk information session or a Preview Day.

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WITTMANN-PRICE NAMED DEAN

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price

Francis Marion University President Dr. Fred Carter has appointed Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price as Dean of FMU's new School of Health Sciences.

The appointment -- effective immediately -- was based on a recommendation of the faculty.

Wittmann-Price is a veteran of nursing and nursing education, and is a widely published scholar on the subject of nursing education. She came to FMU in 2010 as chair of the Department of Nursing. She is a graduate of Felician College in Lodi, N.J.

and earned her doctorate from Widener University.

The newly created School of Health Sciences will officially begin operations on July 1, 2016. It is the third discrete academic school at FMU, joining the School of Business and School of Education. All other academic programs at the university are housed in the College of Liberal Arts. The School of Health Science will include FMU's undergraduate and graduate programs in nursing, and will be home to a variety of new graduate-level healthcare programs scheduled to come online in future years.



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PROFILE OF THE MARION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATE

Submitted by Dr. Dan Strickland



Dr. Dan Strickland, Superintendent

MARION - At the beginning of the school year, the Marion County School District leadership team developed the focus for the 2015-2016 year end. Within that focus and aligned with the South Carolina Department of Education is the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. This profile was developed by a team of business and educational partners working together to help prepare our students for success in college, a career and lifelong citizenship. Organized into three areas, the first being World Class Knowledge,

Marion County has adopted and is implementing the rigorous standards developed by South Carolina educators. The district is also involved with iSTEM, an instructional leadership experience for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) interested educators preparing to understand and implement engineering practices as identified in national and state standards documents. The training these teachers are receiving this year will be utilized next year as they implement STEM projects across the district.

The Marion County School District has been able to raise its four-year graduation rate for the last two years, moving it from 86% to 86.5% which is greater than the state average of 80.3% and the national average of 81%. A growing graduation rate combined with a declining dropout rate, down to 2.2 percent, is a combination that is keeping our students in school so they can earn their high school diploma. This type of success is a major factor in developing the skills and characteristics needed by our graduates. The district has increased the number of dual credit courses by partnering with the various institutions of higher learning in the area. As a result, students have the ability to finish high school college level credits toward a degree.

The second area, World Class Skills are being addressed in our curriculum and course offerings. Two new programs have been introduced this year. For our youngest of students a Montessori Pre-Kindergarten is being offered in the Mullins Early Childhood Center. This child-centered educational approach centers on the instinctual eagerness for knowledge brought by the child into a supportive and thoughtfully prepared learning environment. The approach values the human spirit and the development of the whole child – physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. For our older students Mechatronics is now a cluster at the Academy of Careers & Technology. This multidisciplinary field of engineering includes a combination of systems engineering,

mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, control engineering and computer engineering. The aim of the course is to unify these subjects. Both programs address World Class Skills as established in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

To address the third area of the Profile, Life and Career Characteristics, Marion County School District has partnered with the business community along with the Chambers of Commerce and created the program iImagine Work. This program is twofold, for it touches students by immersing them in an industry they are interested in and providing them an extended opportunity to experience the workplace expectations and see the skills required for different occupations. The program also links district staff with the economic development director Dr. Julie Norman. She has brought teachers into different industry settings so they can see first-hand the types of needs industry has so teachers can address noted deficiencies in their classrooms. High schools have added courses to focus on the new ACT WorkKeys program initiated by the state. WorkKeys is a series of tests that measure foundational and soft skills that target institutional needs. As part of ACT's Work Readiness System, ACT WorkKeys has helped millions of people in high schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies build their skills to increase global competitiveness and develop successful career pathways. Our students are also active in service clubs in the schools such as Beta Club, Future Business Leaders of America, HOSA: Future Health Professionals and Interact. Through these organizations the students are reaching out to the community to help address the many needs that all communities have while gaining a more global perspective.

The Profile of the Marion County Graduate is a work in progress. We have programs and opportunities that address world class knowledge, world class skills and the characteristics needed to be successful in life and career.

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate



World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

Approved by SCASA Superintendent's Roundtable and SC Chamber of Commerce.





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RICE, GAMBLE RECEIVE HONORARY DEGREES AT FMU COMMENCEMENT

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



Congressman Tom Rice

Congressman Tom Rice and long-time university employee Rannie Gamble received honorary degrees at Francis Marion University's fall commencement. FMU conferred degrees to some 300 graduates at the commencement.

Cong. Rice was elected to serve the newly formed 7th Congressional District of South Carolina in 2012. He won re-election in 2014. The 7th District, which was formed after South Carolina gained an additional congressional seat following the 2010 Census, includes all of Chesterfield, Dillon,

Georgetown, Horry, Marlboro and Marion counties, and parts of Florence and Lee counties.

Rice, a Republican, sits on the House Ways and Means Committee and on the Oversight, Social Security and Human Resources Subcommittees.

Prior to winning a congressional seat, Rice served as chair of the Horry County Council.

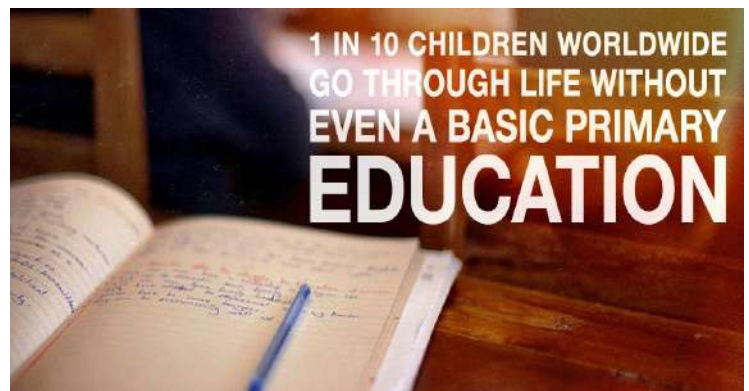
Rice was born in Charleston, and grew up in Myrtle Beach. He earned his master's degree in accounting and his juris doctor from the University of South Carolina. Rice began his professional career with Deloitte & Touche's Charlotte office. In 1985, Rice returned to Myrtle Beach to practice tax law with the Van Osdell Law Firm, and in 1997 he established his own practice, the Rice & MacDonald Law Firm. From 1994 until 2009, he was certified by the Supreme Court of South Carolina as a specialist in Tax Law, Estate Planning, and Probate Law. He's been included in Best Lawyers in America since 2006.



Rannie Gamble

Gamble, the administrative manager/senior administrative associate for the FMU Provost's Office, has been a fixture at FMU. She has served the university for more than 32 years. Gamble manages the general operations of the Provost's Office, working very closely with department chairs, deans, faculty and students. She also oversees preparations for commencement exercises, distinguished faculty recognitions and other annual campus events. She retired in December. Gamble earned the John J. Kispert Leadership Award in 2014 and the

Outstanding Staff Service Award in 2000 from FMU. She attended Florence-Darlington Technical College and FMU.



FLORENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE PARTNERS WITH DISCOVERY EDUCATION

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

Florence Florence School District One has announced a new partnership with Discovery Education, the leading provider of digital content and professional development for K-12 classrooms. Through this new collaboration, the district is empowering educators across all schools to create engaging modern learning environments with dynamic digital content from Discovery Education Streaming Plus, a comprehensive digital service supplementing instruction across all K-12 curricular areas. In addition, 36 educators and their administrators from eight elementary (Briggs, Delmae, Dewey Carter, Greenwood, McLaurin, Moore, North Vista, Savannah Grove) and middle school (Southside) will participate in Discovery Education's Digital Leader Corps. A comprehensive professional development system, Digital Leader Corps develops teacher-leaders to serve as change agents powering the district's digital transition.

This new partnership supports elements of Florence School District One's Technology/Device Pilot Implementation Plan for 2015-2016. Guiding the creation of modern digital learning environments in the district's 25 schools, this plan employs a variety of strategies, including a 1:1 digital device initiative; ubiquitous access to digital content and resources; redesigned classrooms; and ongoing, job-embedded professional development for educators to create engaging, relevant learning experiences that empower students to reach their full potential.

"Florence School District One is committed to developing highly motivated, successful, and responsible citizens of an ever-changing society," said Dr. Randy Bridges, Superintendent. "Our partnership with Discovery Education provides the digital instructional resources

and professional development that empower our educators to foster global learners who are prepared to succeed in college and careers." The Discovery Educator Network (DEN) will also support Florence School District One's educators in their efforts to transform students' learning experiences with digital media. A global community of education professionals, the DEN connects members across school systems and around the world through social media, virtual conferences, and in-person events, fostering valuable networking, idea sharing and inspiration. For more information about Discovery Education Streaming Plus, the Digital Leader Corps and other Discovery Education services, visit www.discoveryeducation.com.

About Discovery Education

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DARLINGTON HIGH GRAD BACK HOME REVAMPS BAND

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, DCSC Communications Specialist



Brendan Johnson, a 2009 graduate of Darlington High, returned to his alma mater this year as band director. He has more than double the band's size in the few months since his hiring. (photo by Barry Thompson Photography)

DARLINGTON – Brendan Johnson sat in his side-room office on a Tuesday, minutes after the Darlington High School (DHS) dismissal bell signaled the end of another school day. A large window offered him a sweeping view of the school's band room, which elevated from beyond his office, stadium-style. Instrument-wielding students flowed into the room, and Johnson tapped away at his laptop as he peered up at a projection board. He worked on updating the Marching Falcon Band's new website while delivering orders to band members amidst the bustle.

"I need you to sign this, son, and turn it back in," he said, handing a permission slip to one student.

"Please get started on rehearsal,"

he told a group as they passed through the double doors. "Everyone find a room and begin. We have to play the national anthem tomorrow."

It was a fitting scene, Johnson managing the various needs of the marching band while a hodgepodge of notes reverberated from the tuning of instruments. Such is the life of a band director. However, the seamless preparation for a routine rehearsal served as a reminder of just how far the DHS band had come since Johnson stepped on campus in mid-July. He arrived for summer camp to find his band had 35 student-members. While sitting in his office that Tuesday, he could count 81 on his active roster. Johnson more than doubled the band's size in 3 1/2 months, and he did so with focus.

"My main goal for this band is not just to develop the students musically, but to implement professional development, personal development and educational development," he said. "We're trying to build a well-oiled machine here."

Shortly after arriving at DHS, Johnson began a tenacious recruitment campaign, initially by distributing flashy posters. Then he launched a schedule of events for the year that featured competitions in which DHS had never participated, and he focused on opening one-on-one channels with parents. Existing members of the band pitched in, too.

"If you can get them here," he told them, "I can get them to stay."

Johnson wanted to expand the program significantly, and he sought to revitalize its foundation of tradition.

A DHS graduate, Johnson joined the Marching Falcon Band in 2004 as an eighth grader. He absorbed all he could under the direction of then-director Ernest Stackhouse, who now supervises band programs in Georgia.



The Darlington High School Marching Falcon Band performs during a home varsity football game this semester against Manning.

Johnson played tuba for the Falcons until he graduated in 2009. His former instrument can still be found in action at DHS. Johnson came to understand the precision and dedication necessary for a marching band to excel. A portrait hangs in his office of the 2008 Marching Falcon Band that boasted nearly 100 members. Marching opened a door to higher education for Johnson, and he left Darlington after graduation for Daytona Beach, FL. He enrolled at Bethune-Cookman University and joined the marching band.

"We played during halftime of a Super Bowl, played for the Miami Dolphins, the Jacksonville Jaguars," he said. "Bethune-Cookman opened me up to a lot of exposure and experiences."

While marching, Johnson earned a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education. The university eventually hired him to an administrative

position, where he oversaw initiatives and educational opportunities for male students. He accepted the offer to become the band director at DHS earlier this year. At 24 years old, Johnson returned to Darlington with all of the marching band and administrative experiences from his last 10 years.

"We have to develop a brand and a reputation," he said. "Right now, we don't have everybody's attention. We need a pilot light. I told the students that in order to light a heater, you must have a pilot light, and you don't ever turn that flame all the way off."

Johnson took his band on a trip to Charlotte, NC soon after school began to see the Queen City Battle of the Bands at American Legion



The Darlington High School marching band marches in the S.C. State University homecoming parade on Oct. 31, 2015.

Memorial Stadium. The competition was an experience for his students, Johnson said, like many of them had never seen. The event featured the likes of North Carolina A&T University, Alabama A&M University, Talladega College and, Johnson's favorite, Bethune-Cookman.

"To see those massive bands and to hear the sound – the sound is like

nothing you've heard in your life," he said. "If they play the tuba, there are 30 tubas on the field. If they play the flute, there are 30 flutes on the field. It really showed our kids expanded opportunities."

A month later, DHS traveled to Emporia, VA to compete in the Greenville County High School Band Competition. The only band from out-of-state, the Falcons finished first in their division. DHS went on to compete at the 11th Annual Dillon Battle of the Bands at Dillon High School in early October and, soon after, the Gotham City Band Competition at E.E. Smith High School in Fayetteville, NC. The crown jewel in Johnson's first semester at DHS may have been attending the S.C. State University Homecoming Parade on Oct. 31. It marked the first time in two years DHS played in the parade. The Falcons were even selected to perform on field during the S.C. State football game against Hampton University later in the day.

As for academics, Johnson implemented expectations at the school. The band holds study hall each Wednesday at the beginning of rehearsal. Sometimes the studying lasts an hour, sometimes it lasts most of rehearsal, depending on the students. More than 60 percent of his students made the A-B Honor Roll for the first quarter. As an exciting first semester of progress nears Christmas break, Johnson has no problem describing his ambitious goals for next year. He wants the band to grow to 125 students. He plans to reach that figure through expanding access. He will begin by teaching a second introductory band class at the high school. His assistant band director, Amanda Green, works at Darlington Middle School, which provides band classes for sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Johnson's dream down the road, though he knows it sounds like a stretch, is for a crowd of 200 students taking the field under the Marching Falcon banner.

"We can be the talk of South Carolina," he said. "We can be the talk of the Pee Dee. We have a great thing going on, a very great thing going on."

Johnson is working out the details for the DHS band to begin a concert series at local churches, and the band is doing as much fundraising as possible. He will continue to lean on those already a part of the band and promote interest throughout the school.

"We have a phenomenal booster club and phenomenal alumni," he said. "We'll open the door for whoever wants to come."

For more information about Johnson or the DHS Marching Falcon Band, please contact the DCSD Office of Communications at 843-398-2284.

AMPING UP EXPOSURE TO POSITIVE MALE ROLE MODELS

by Mallory Brayboy



Dr. Jerome Christia

CONWAY - Studies show that African-American male students receive more disciplinary actions than any other student in a classroom setting. Many believe that this results from a lack of diversity within the educational system rather than the actual student. Jerome Christia, Ph.D., of Coastal Carolina University, is one of them.

Christia heads the University's Call Me MISTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) program, a program designed to assist potential educators from disadvantaged communities in the education field and increase diversity within schools. "Looking very closely at the educational system, it was determined that the reason African-American boys fail so much is because they don't have those role models in the classroom. So their role models are elsewhere and the wrong role models — negative role models," says Christia. The idea of Call Me MISTER is to provide positive role models for both genders and all ethnicities.

Call Me MISTER began in South Carolina in 2000 and was implemented at Coastal Carolina University in 2010. Prior to Call Me MISTER, the University had only two African-American male education majors. They now have 19 "Misters" in addition to others who have successfully completed the MISTER program. "In South Carolina, less than 1 percent of the teaching population was African-American males for grades K-8. Since the inception of Call Me MISTER, that number has tripled," says Christia. "Though we're making strides, we still have a long way to go." Call Me MISTER is primarily a statewide initiative; six other institutions in different

states are involved in the program, as well.

Christia, who is originally from Aiken, S.C., entered the Navy after high school. After his enlistment ended, he relocated to Atlanta where he obtained his undergraduate degree in business management from Morehouse and his MBA in marketing from Georgia State University. Prior to Coastal Carolina University, he earned his doctorate in marketing from Oklahoma State University. Christia has now been at Coastal Carolina University for 15 years as a marketing professor and is enjoying it every step of the way.

"Coastal is a great institution that's steadily growing and continuously raising the bar," he says. The University has, in fact, doubled in enrollment from about 5,000 students to now more than 10,000 students since Christia's employment began.

Though teaching a full schedule of marketing classes, Christia is dedicated to Call Me MISTER because of its impactful benefits to society. "The African-American community has been suffering for years with a number of things such as institutionalized racism and reasons that we can improve ourselves as a community," says Christia. He believes that groups of like-minded individuals coming together to pave the way for future generations is vital. "Education is changing and evolving all the time. Unfortunately, in the meantime, a lot of kids are just falling by the wayside."

Christia hopes to see increased funding for Call Me MISTER in order to grow the program and make it more efficient. "We want to minimize the amount of time they spend working so they can focus on classes, getting certified and graduating," he says.

Christia says his favorite thing about being a marketing professor is finding out where students want to go in life and helping them get there. It is evident that this is not only his wish for his own students, but for students everywhere.



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FAIRY CAKES BUSINESS IS NO FAIRY TALE

by Anna Bowman



Thomasena Thomas

What little girl doesn't find herself at one time or another in the kitchen trying her hand at helping her mother with baking a scrumptious dessert? Well, teenager Thomasena Thomas is no different, however, not every little girl goes from licking cake mix from a spatula to owning her own pastry business before she graduates from high school. But Thomas isn't like other little girls, "I fell in love with cake baking when I was really young, around 10 years old," she said, "I learned how to cook and bake from my mother so I knew all the ground

work," she said.

Thomas has been in business since 2012, but didn't get "really" serious about her business until March of this year. "I've always loved cooking and baking," said the 17 year old business owner, adding, "when I saw that the Florence Career Center offered culinary classes, I was very excited to sharpen my skills, learn more and receive my certification! It was probably one of the best decisions I've ever made," said Thomas. She said that the Career Center offered her a lot of resources to expand her knowledge, both as a baker and as an entrepreneur. "I received my ServSafe and Prostart Certification through the Culinary Arts Class. Which has helped my business tremendously, and I would advise any and every one to take a Career Center class," Thomas said.

Now a senior at South Florence High School, Thomas started her business at age 14 by selling cupcakes. Her business has grown and she is truly a business owner because the teenager is responsible for state, county and business taxes – which she says is no problem, because her

business, FairyCakes, is turning a profit.

FairyCakes is a gourmet cupcake and confectionary company based in Florence, she said. The company is all about childhood memories and is inspired by Parisian Style. "My goals for FairyCakes is to inspire youth to find their purpose and passion in life and to pursue it. I love being an entrepreneur and creating something that people love, it's truly one of the best things on earth!" she stated. Thomas' achievements recently caught the attention of the Disney Dreamers Academy, which is sponsored by mega superstar Steve Harvey and Essence magazine for exceptional teenagers, ages 13-19, who are invited for a four day mentoring camp that teaches students how to succeed in school and after graduation. "The Disney Dreamers Academy "TRULY" changed my life," she proudly stated. Because of my experiences at the Academy, I got serious about FairyCakes. I learned so many valuable like skills, business skills and how to just be better in general."

With graduation only months away, Thomas has big plans for her immediate future, both as a business owner and a college freshman. I plan to attend Francis Marion so I can keep my clients here in Florence and be able to grow FairyCakes, while I advance my education. Thomas also stated that she hopes to start a nonprofit, called Passion & Pursuit, where she can teach baking and life skills classes to area youth. I feel blessed knowing that I get to do what I love, and I want to inspire others. Everyday is a journey of success, because you don't know what may come into your life, but you always see it as a blessing even the struggles teach me to learn and grow."

Customers can find her on FaceBook, Instagram, and @FairyCakesc. They can access her online store where customers can order delicious gourmet desserts. I have big plans for 2016, so I invite everyone to stay tuned with FairyCakes via social media," said Thomas. (Photo by Fred Sally)

BEAUTY IS HER BUSINESS!

by Anna Bowman



Jarrel Baccus

The date December 19, 2015 wasn't circled on the calendar in bright red ink, but it was etched in the heart and mind of JarrelBaccus, as she enthusiastically awaited to celebrate the first anniversary of owning her own business – Pinky Promise Nail Studio. The business, Pinky Promise Nail Studio, is the culmination of two great influences in the life of Baccus: the intersection of great parental insight and an educational facility that is prepared to offer excellent support in shaping the future of its students. "I attended the Florence Career Center at the advice of my parents because they knew

I had a love for the beauty industry and felt that the two-year cosmetology program, offered by FCC, would allow me to train for a promising career while still in high school." With their mission statement avowing to "Prepare students for employment and/or postsecondary education in order to become independent productive citizens," there's no wonder why Baccus' parents felt that their daughter would advance her career by attending the Florence Career Center.

Baccus can attest to the mission statement, "I would definitely recommend other high school students who are interested in the beauty industry to sign up for the course (cosmetology). The current instructor, Mrs. Patricia Byrd, is an awesome instructor and she's doing an 'excellent' job preparing students for a future career," said the former student.

Mrs. Patricia Byrd, cosmetology instructor, said, "The cosmetology program prepares the student for success by giving hands on experience; on Fridays we have client service day, this is when people from the community and students as well, can come to have (cosmetology) services done in the student salon. I also encourage the students to seek employment in a salon as a shampoo assistant. This will give the student salon experience and ensure them a job upon graduation," she said.

Celebrating her first anniversary, it comes as a surprise to Baccus

that she owns her own nail salon. "Growing up, I always wanted to be a psychologist," she said, even though she liked doing anything related to manicuring and polishing nails, she didn't see it as a full-time career – that is until she enrolled at FCC. "It was until about 3 years ago that I realized that I wanted to spend the rest of my life in the 'Nail Industry.' As far as wanting to be a salon owner goes, I never dreamt of owning my business until a year and a half ago."

The Wilson High graduate, said that the Florence Career Center allowed her to obtain the knowledge and skills to necessary to become a successful nail technician, but it was her parents who taught her as a youth, the necessary skills to become a successful business owner. "Opening a business is extremely hard, so is maintaining it! But my parents made sure I knew how to manage my finances, make sacrifices, and save money, in fact, I paid for the opening of my business without the aid of huge loans. I paid for my business out of pocket," she proudly stated.

The first day she opened her business she felt completely overjoyed, in fact she said, "That day and every day I walk into my studio, I'm overwhelmed by my blessings. She credit her extraordinary for her success, as well. "I was able to find the wonderful ladies of Pinky Promise through faith, prayer, and networking." Pinky Promise, which is located at 471 Quinby Plaza East, Quinby, SC, was created to offer clients the ultimate pampering experience. The nail studio offers basic manicures, gel polish manicures, full sets, and pedicures. The nail studio is open 9am-8pm, Monday-Saturday, and for additional information customers can call 843-379-6174. To view some of creative nail artistry by the staff of Pinky Promise, visit their Facebook and Instagram page at, Pinky Promise Nail Studio.



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Mr. Alphonso Bradley, Director

VILLAGE MOM TO ALL PEOPLES

by Rennie Lunn- McAllister



Darnell Byrd McPherson

First Steps Executive Director Darnell Byrd McPherson. An overachiever who has spent nearly all her lifetime in supervisory/social work/counseling/service roles and has pulled together a team of key players from assorted backgrounds that make early childhood outcomes more uniformly successful.

“True preparation for life’s journey begins at home. And as learning begins in the womb, we serve to augment and accelerate that journey by helping to develop happy and bright children while laying the foundation for their formal education through our vast programming at First Steps,” she said recently.

Collaboration from many entities is required for this special type of life launch to be effective. “We all – parents, educators, and public and private community advocates – have a role to play because we are all stakeholders and we must have the political will to educate ALL children, not just some. We need a shift in the thinking of the powers that be as well as those in the everyday walk of life. Just think: if Mary McLeod Bethune could build what she built or create a college from scratch, what could our children today do or build given the right set of skills? We need to embrace the brain science and, for example, bridge the 30 million word gap by infusing all children with language and social skills. It all starts in the home, where, as it stands, many young, single parents prevail today. And if we don’t help regain our moral compass, we will have a land of desolation and no vision and we all know where that will lead future generations,” she said.

Across Darlington County, and anywhere in rural America, McPherson says there are certain challenges that plague the inhabitants thereof. “If parents face issues of transportation, then their children do too. Without certain access, much like circulation flowing freely to a limb of the human body, a population, like that limb, can atrophy. Too in rural areas, (where poverty is oftentimes higher and land/home ownership is less likely) taxes are based accordingly and your education system and delivery is based on that tax base. So these economic drivers have the greatest impact on all outcomes,” she explained.

HARTSVILLE - There is a highly reputable place where, yes, age and socioeconomic discrimination exist and it is very okay. In fact, it is the order of the day, largely due to the adroit leadership of its Darlington County

That is why she works so passionately to focus on the “whole family” approach, incorporating in the organization’s curriculum features such as Parents as Teachers, Motherhead/Fatherhead, Parent Training/Community Engagement, Countdown to Kindergarten, BabyNet and First Steps 4K, Personal Responsibility and Parents Are First. First Steps, organized in 1999, serves children from pre-birth to 5 years old and their families who are at risk of not being ready for school. Statistically, there are 3,955 children in the county under age 5, 6,095 living in poverty, 39.2% living in households with incomes below the poverty level, 1 in 5 babies are born each year to a mother without a high school diploma, 50.4% living in single parent families, the county’s teen pregnancy rate is 44.3% and its repeat teen pregnancy rate is the fifth highest in South Carolina. Against this backdrop, First Steps’ 2014-15 annual report shows results of having served more than 570 families and more than 770 children, but with partners like the Byerly Foundation, United Way and the Duke Endowment, greater reach is a given.

“First Steps works for the children of Darlington County because all facets of their young lives are integrated into the development process. Together we offer a holistic approach to improving outcomes for children and their families. We believe in the two-generation approach to achieving school readiness. We have served thousands through a wide range of programs who were facing almost insurmountable odds before they would ever walk through the schoolhouse gate. That’s why I remind myself everyday and my team that great events may stem from works of no importance; however, nothing great will happen if we do not make all work important,” she told.

So to the questions of Family Strengthening? Check. Healthy Start? Check. Quality Child Care? Check. Early Education? Check. School Transition? Check. And the checklist goes on to include coverage of transparency and accountability, compassion, advocacy and empathy. “One key missing thing on our wish/needs list would be more sustainable funding to address current and other unmet needs,” she said.

She is well connected to both sources of volunteerism and funding and per chance down the pipeline they will come in larger numbers. The Boylan Haven Mather Academy and Southern Wesleyan University graduate is widely respected across the community as a distinguished leader and visionary who works tirelessly to build awareness of the realities of life and conditions faced by families and their children living in poverty. And for her faithfulness over the years, accolades from many divergent sources. She was recently named Humanitarian

of the Year by the Region IV Head Start Association for her work in championing early childhood education, parent services and community collaboration; was given the President’s Award by the Kiwanis Club of Hartsville for her outstanding club leadership (an organization formed almost 50 years ago, of which she has been elected the first African American female president); earned a Certificate of Achievement Award from Million March Against Child Abuse; Kiwanian of the Year from the club by the same name and many more. However, the organizations are not the only ones who think so highly of her.

“Darnell is a driving force not only at {our} workplace but all about. She leads by example and inspires other to follow. We respect her tenacity, passion and consider her “our fearless leader”. She is a team player and has the uncanny ability to bring together a diverse group of people to work towards one goal. She regularly brings community leaders in to create opportunities that build networks and bridgeworks to improve services and access to them and at the same time, digs at the root causes that create the problems we battle against every day in the first place. Articulate with such dynamic energy that motivates everyone in her presence to be a part of making a difference, she motivates us to work longer and harder. She studies everything and a closer examination she one day made led to her convening the Darlington County to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Task Force, the first and only group in Darlington County to address such an issue,” said Brenda Howell Ayers, the Parents Are First Project Director.

A little closer to home, Mrs. McPherson’s daughter Amani Rodriguez (who would know most about what the dynamo possesses to equip her to lead in this style as she and her siblings taught her a thing or two about motherhood) had this to say about her “phenomenal” mom: “Nurturing comes naturally her her. Compassion for others and a genuine passion for her work enables her to lead effectively. She is not doing this work for applause but because she really wants to make a difference and have a positive impact on the lives of others. No one can replace her.”

Only daughter of Lawton R. Byrd of Lamar and the late Doris J. Byrd, she is married to Joseph L. McPherson of North Charleston, SC.





...BUT ONE RACE... AND THAT IS THE HUMAN RACE.

One human race from which our villages come together to ensure justice for all of us, are at long last seeming to come together with common goals and similar strategies and louder voices and bigger sacrifices. Take a long look at all of these dynamics on the following pages in this special section for the betterment of our society.

There is but One Race, and that is The Human Race. This message was articulated very clearly by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Visionary who saw things from a different perspective. Almost Forty Years later, we now see those things, and we will strive to incorporate those things into our everyday lives in the knowledge of "Change Begins With Self"

America is a unique experience. While it is home for all who desire peace and prosperity, it is an awakening for others to the possibilities of positive change. Americans are a collective inheritance of cultural, ethnic and spiritual differences whose sum total epitomizes all that is good in the human experience. The key to America's strength is her shared differences. Her shared differences are what we applaud and celebrate. It is these differences that make us uniquely gifted, strong, and reflects the greatness of Collaborative Cohabitation. The common thread of The Whole of Humanity, is its' multicultural diversity. Accordingly we proudly announce our theme.

"The Color of Unity"/ Inclusive of all Races, Creeds, Nationalities and Religions

OH THE DAY WHEN RACE NO LONGER MATTERS

Submitted by Rev. Michelle Law Gordon



Major Michelle Law Gordon

"There is but one race, the Human race." I am perplexed by this statement. Although it's been more than 50 years since the delivery of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, this dream has still not been realized in the lives of people. Dr. King had a vision of a nation where people would be judged by the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin, yet in 2015, there is still a need for Equal Opportunity Laws, Affirmative Action and organizations such as the NAACP, United Negro College Fund and other organizations. If there's only one race, then why do these organizations still exist? Why are these laws still in place? Why is racism still so prevalent?

I am deeply disturbed that although the Emancipation Proclamation was signed more than 150 years ago freeing slaves, racism is still an integral part of our everyday lives. I am concerned about the possibility of us never overcoming the racial divisiveness that permeates this nation. Tensions continue, and it is a common trend to hear of incidents in this country where race is presented as a precipitating factor. Racism is a part of our everyday lives. Where we live, work, or go to school, our professions, our friends, our enemies, treatment in the healthcare industry and justice systems are all affected by our race. Over the years, we have been institutionalized with a philosophy that asserts that one race is the center of significance and the object of devotion, before which all others must kneel in submission. We've been led to

believethat our intelligence, aggression, lifespan, sexual behavior, philanthropy, birth rates, child care, work ethics, personal restraint, economic and business practices, family cohesion and even brain size are all relative to race."(Sussman, Robert W., The Myth of Race) We've been taught to tolerate, rather than appreciate one another. But tolerance has no power. It neither heals nor connects, it simply promotes division. It leads to indifference, but no level of understanding. Tolerance allows the barriers currently causing the divide to remain in place.

Yet, "there is but one race, the human race." The human race is comprised of various cultures, morals, values, ideas, philosophies, and the list can go on and on.



Rev. Michelle Law Gordon & her Husband Michael

But, what we have in common is that we are Americans. We are human beings. We are God's creation. When will we begin to operate as ONE in this great United States of America, the land of the free and home of the brave? There are movements sprouting up on every side: Black Lives Matter; Blue lives Matter, but do not ALL HUMAN LIVES matter. We are all created equally and I believe the solution is to begin to treat all Human beings equally. Let's eliminate racial profiling, stereotyping and the like.

The church speaks to the issues of the day with a fragmented voice. Churches continue to struggle to protect their turf, or enlarge their territories rather than unite for

the building of people and community. I'm not trying to impose my religious beliefs; I'm simply making an observation with regard to the role the religious community is taking in response to matters which pertain to race relations. Persons are bussed from their own communities all in the name of worship, only to return to find things either just as they left them or worse. Would it not make more sense for those who are providing the transportation to aid in the rebuilding of the communities rather than the drive-thru and drive by pick up service currently being provided? People need to be empowered. They don't need sympathy, they need empathy. They don't need a handout, they need a hand up. They don't need someone to buy them gym shoes, groceries or school supplies every week. What they need is someone to aid them in obtaining a job or getting into the necessary programs which will equip them with the skills needed to thrive rather than just survive. They need facilities in their communities that will serve as safe-havens for their children. They need a hand up.

We're traveling down a road of chaos rather than focusing on building a community. We've gotten so caught up in our religious beliefs and practices that we've forgotten about building relationships with one another and reconciling a nation. The cliché' is indeed true, "united we stand, divided we fall." We must bring an end to the divisiveness that is destroying us as a people and a nation. It's time for us to be the ONE(s) we were created to be. We cannot walk alone. We cannot turn back. We must walk together and talk together and not get weary. Then, and only then, will be able to defeat the enemy of racism and operate as one race, the Human race. Then, and only then, will Dr. King's dream become a reality.



REACHING FOR JUSTICE: WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS

Submitted by Bishop Michael A. Blue



Bishop Michael A. Blue

MARION - A just world is predicated upon a just world view. A “world view” is the ideological lens (perspective) through which a person or a people group perceives reality. A just world view is one in which each human being has worth, equal

worth. There is an implicit question in such a proposition, “From what is a person’s worth derived? That is, “What is the formula for the calculation of human worth?”

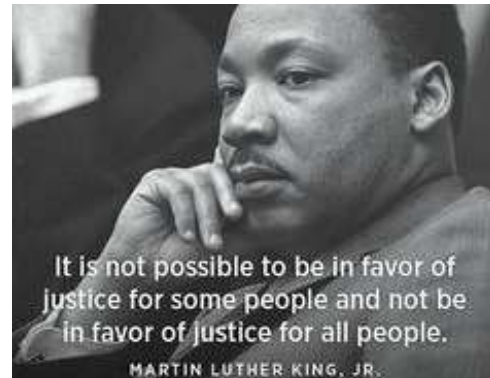
There are those who associate worth with gender. From ancient times unto the present, “male” was the preferred child-gender; often female children were discarded as having no more value than rubbish. At the least, if they were retained, they were regarded as little more than domesticated cattle, totally disenfranchised and dependent. Though in First World countries these practices are not as prevalent, and great positive strides have been made, the residual sense of female inferiority is not totally eradicated. The effects are seen everywhere... from strip clubs, to sex trafficking, to unfair corporate salary scales.

Then others correlate worth to social class. It is the noble family status to which one has been born, the neighborhood where he or she was raised: was it a gated community? Were there three or four car garages on the palatial homes? The prep school, the university in which one matriculates, the career that one successfully pursues, the dynasty into which one marries... in some mindsets, these are the marks of greatness! However, if one originated on the family farm, or in a sharecropper’s shack, or in the projects, then perhaps his or her worth is not as valid. Perhaps poverty, broken families, illiteracy, and criminality equate to “illegitimacy” unworthiness. Perhaps, in this case, pedigree + net worth = personal worth.

And of course, there is the age-old value conflict based upon ethnicity. Wars have been fought to prove the superiority of people of one color above another. Economies have been built upon the backs

of oppressed groups whose only indictment is that they happen to be ethnically distinct from the oppressors. Somehow skin pigmentation determines value. Distinctions such as hair texture, eye color, the contour of lips and length of nostrils have been adduced as contributing to – or taking from – a people’s worth. Even speech and language have been used to establish one group’s rank in contrast to another. Not only is this true between ethnic groups, this kind of conflict exists within ethnicities, as they strive to determine who among themselves has the greatest value.

Finally, and most fundamentally, human value has been prescribed by various belief systems. For example, those who espouse a certain religion find it necessary to “convert” others at the point of a sword, or else. Attempts to subjugate those who embrace philosophies divergent from one’s own have driven interpersonal and international



conflicts from antiquity until the present. Whether the beliefs are religious, e.g. monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic; or irreligious, e.g., atheistic, naturalistic, socialistic / communistic / totalitarian --- they all have had adherents who have maltreated non-followers, handling them un-justly, considering them to be of little to no worth.

There it is: justice has been deliberated, dispensed, or denied over the centuries based upon gender, class, ethnicity, and belief. Governmental justice, social justice, political justice, economic justice, religious justice... they have all been affected by “human worth” attitudes in these realms and related subcategories. Ironically, in the 21st Century --- despite its achievements in technology, medicine, mobility, media, and such --- the ancient battle for justice still rages because there is still no consensus regarding human worth.

One recent example, the affirmation “Black Lives Matter” and the counter-affirmations “All Lives Matter”, or “Blue Lives Matter” are actually all reiterations of the same assertion: “it is a human’s worth AS a human that demands just treatment”, regardless of ethnicity or social class. Yet the assertion’s basis has become debatable, an ideological uncertainty: who / what determines a human’s worth?

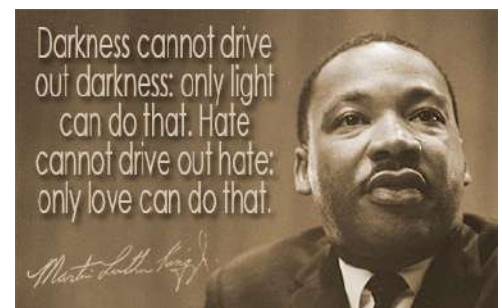
In other words, “WHY do _____ lives matter (Fill in the blank: Black, Blue, Women’s, Children’s, All)? Why do ANY human lives matter? How MUCH do they matter?” If the “why” can be determined, the “what” can be defended, by all logical and logistical means necessary.

Let’s look back at one of the founding documents of this Republic, The Declaration of Independence, which was the manifesto for the Thirteen Original Colonies.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

What is interesting is that “these truths” transcended these “truth-holders” because they themselves had a limited perception of the power of what they declared. Their perception must have been limited because when they used terms such as “men” evidently they did not consciously include any females, nor any ethnicities other than European / Caucasian / White. Actually, there were slave owners among these “truth-holders”. In a real sense, aspects of their lives contradicted “these truths”. But truth is transcendent, even beyond the ones who tell or “hold” it. The fact that they did not fully embrace truth does not mean they had not discovered truth.

And because truth IS transcendent, the Abolitionists of the 19th Century, the Women’s Suffrage, and the Civil Rights Leaders of the 20th Century were able to





...NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK...

appeal to “these truths” as the basis of their appeal for justice. And every time, their causes prevailed. They prevailed because Truth prevails. They prevailed, but not to an absolute extent. These noble laborers left some work undone – some through death, some because of unfaithful successors - and some of the momentum that had been gained was lost.

In our time, there is a new outcry for the refining of the application of justice. A new generation has embraced the cause; new issues and new versions of old issues have confronted present-day America and the world. Those with an earnest agenda that entails the equal treatment and equal dignity for all people, even when that means greater emphasis upon the demographic receiving greater maltreatment and lesser dignity: they are to be respected and commended. However, earnestness is not enough. There must be the assurance that the predicate and the parameters of this “earnest agenda” is “these truths”.

These truths, fully lived out, will ensure that no human must be denigrated (based

upon gender, ethnicity, or social class, or belief system) in order that other humans may be elevated – not the offended, nor the offenders. These truths demand that there be a differentiation between “what a person does” and “who a person is”, and that individuals be analyzed as individuals, not categorized as indicting a whole people-group. These truths will ensure that disagreements about belief will be handled in the arena of ideological debate and not ideologues debasing one another. To the extent that the new justice movements, along with the old ones, hold these truths, which are derived from The Truth, they (we – Americans) will prevail, and this Republic will repent, reform, and prosper. And as in the past, the entire world will consequently be better. However, to the extent that any movements attempt to establish justice apart from these truths, history bears witness that though they may gain political ascendancy, ultimately they will bring grievous harm to many, to this society, to those whom they seek to save, and to themselves.

“These truths” contain the formula for

calculating human worth:

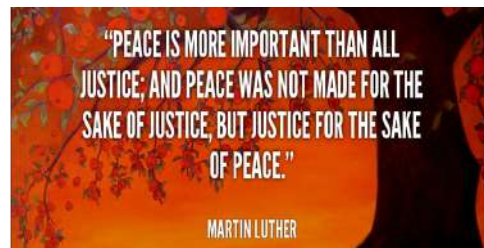
Anyone who bears the Imago Dei, the Image of the Eternal God, has value – equal value, eternal value: from the womb to the tomb and beyond.

A Belief in Justice

“There is neither Jew nor Greek (ethnic injustice), there is neither bond nor free (social class injustice), there is neither male nor female (gender injustice): for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 3:28

In our renewed quest for justice, we (Americans) still have these God-given truths. Our God-given assignment now is to HOLD them... freshly determining to “mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”



ONE FATHER’S VIEW OF SURE JUSTICE

by Chinel Boateng

*Justice ~ the process or result of using laws to fairly judge or punish crimes and criminals.

Does “Justice For All” mean ALL who are accused of a crime will receive a fair trial and due punishment if found guilty? What about the Alabama inmate who was freed after nearly 30 years on death row? **Where was his justice? The father of a young girl sentenced to two years in a correctional facility had this to say when asked if he thought justice had been served. “Justice WAS served in my daughter’s case. I truly don’t believe she would be alive today had she not been imprisoned.”

Here was a young girl from a loving Christian family, the father was hard working and raised his girls under strict rules. This wasn’t a broken home; there was no physical

or emotional abuse, just two loving parents trying to make a world for their daughters. “She didn’t run with a crowd” her father shared, “she was mostly solo and did her dirt alone. So, there was no “peer-pressure” to take the blame; she had a criminal mind of her own.”

Kleptomania was her disease. From stealing teacher’s pocketbooks from their desk, to stealing the latest Jordan sneakers from a department store, to stealing an entire wardrobe in broad daylight! These were the things that gave her a high; a natural rush. “Yeah, she got caught and locked up overnight a few times, but that was the name of her game; How much can you steal before getting caught?” her father explained. “It wasn’t that we couldn’t afford to buy her these things but, the word NO would trigger something inside her and on the war path she went. We knew what the ending results would be.” This cat and mouse chase went on for a few years with her receiving a simple slap on the wrist each time she was caught. Finally, the Judge had seen her in his courtroom for the last time!

“When the sentencing was handed down, I actually prayed for these results. I didn’t want another moment of living in fear. Fear that I would receive the call one day; the call that would change my life” – said this father of three. His life did change and so did hers. After being sentenced to serve two years, she did a 180 degree turn and turned to the Bible, as many prisoners do.

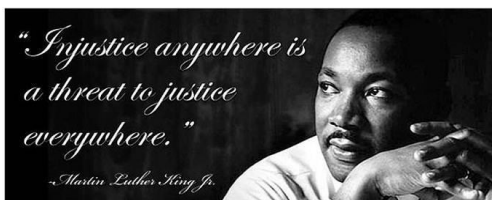
No parent should have to go through this type of tragedy alone; there needs to be a support system. When a friend’s son was later sentenced to five years in a North Carolina prison on drug charges, we were each other’s support system.

Today his daughter has completed her two-year sentence. She resides and works in Myrtle Beach South Carolina with her fiancé and her two children.

Justice may not have been served in Alabama 30 years ago; but for this father of three, justice saved his daughter’s life.

*<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

**<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/03/us/alabama-death-row-inmate/>





PALMER'S WARDEN JOYNER IS LIFTING THE ATMOSPHERE

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Warden Aaron Joyner

There are stereotypical wardens who carry a big stick and wear a haughty, belligerent attitude, and then there is Palmer Work Release Center Warden Aaron

Joyner, who is the very opposite of media portrayals.

“Our goal at Palmer is to ready our charges for transition back into the community after serving their sentence. We deploy a character-based program that showcases various positive traits instilled over time by example and repetition. And that actually applies to our staff as well as our inmates. Further, we reward that character development each month by having a ceremony during which the staff member (who recommended a certain offender for the award) and I present the honoree with a certificate highlighting the positive behavior demonstrated. Whether they’ve done a good job or simply a good deed, they get noticed,” he said, espousing his belief in fair and equal treatment toward inmates and staff. He also applauds his staff for their due diligence to the job everyday.

Ceremonial poetry, hymns and light refreshments divert participants’ attention for a moment that they are wards of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, however such programming is a value-added plus to their temporary stay. “On average, those housed here will be living out in the community longer than in here so we attempt to restore a sense of normalcy and self-worth through meaningful employment – our first mission. Earning money during the phase out term enables them to do just that -- earn money to maybe pay fines, child support or restitution, but most of all save some. And we enjoy good success on that level,” he said, pointing out that religious/visitation and volunteer services help out tremendously above institutional provisions.

“Taxpayers appreciate seeing their dollars at work when they observe a crew

working to keep communities clean and orderly. Our help and contributions reach far beyond these grounds; we help the community and I stress all the time about our getting it right for them (inmates) so they can in turn get it right when it’s their turn. We have lots of interaction with neighbors like United Way, American Cancer Society and my goodness the cities, towns, businesses and military entities we work with... through those interactions, these men see themselves as true neighbors in and to the places they work,” Joyner said.

A 27-year veteran of the SCDC, Joyner is a career CO who held various positions along the way while serving in the US Army Reserves for 24 years. A Georgia native who grew up in Marlboro County, he now serves as church deacon and lead guitarist at Beaver Dam Baptist in McColl. He, along with his wife, 11th grade son aspiring to attend Clemson and honor roll, best-all-around daughter reside in Chesterfield. Another daughter is a senior at the University of South Carolina and their eldest resides in North Carolina. A staunch believer in training and education, he, while at Kirkland Correctional Institute, helped implement a program through Columbia International University that enabled inmates to earn a two-year degree in Divinity. He also initiated “Playing It Right”, which helped inmates



learn to play guitar and learn music theory and read it.

He has said that he can relate to inmates at a more intimate level than other non-combat exposed correctional officers because as a soldier in three combat zones,

he, too, has recognized feelings of hopelessness. “I knew that I couldn’t give up because that is not where I wanted to



stay. By the same token, they can’t give up in here either just because that is where they are right now. I knew I would one day leave those battlefields and return to society and I tell them that they will too. Just because you are confined, your life does not stop,” he said, adding that prisons and pre-release centers are not warehouses for offenders, but a second chance to “get it right.”

Second chance programs, gainful employment, proactive job fairs increase the likelihood of seeing measurable success for the 225 inmates at Palmer (and all prison population anywhere) and Joyner says he is working with a scientific method to secure them with real life skills “so we can pinpoint ways to remove their reasons to come back. Our vision is actually working because we truly believe that you are a man, first. Not your rank, title or status. Man makes mistakes. Then the reality of spirituality over denomination kicks in, secondly and our program wherever we find ourselves to guide us through this life comes third. Inside or outside, we look forward to making the next day better because life goes on... one can still learn, teach, support a family... this (prison) is not a break from life; it is a continuation for some people’s lives, not the time to take a break. You’ve got to let life roll with the punches, you’ve got to transition because whether you have a life sentence or two days, you still have purpose. And then and only then can you steer others clear and let others grow with you and be productive.”

An integral part of former Gov. Mark Sanford’s State of the State Address in 2005, he was recognized as an outstanding SCDC employee and is often recognized as an exceptional department operative. No one wonders why.

WE ALL COMPRISE THE VILLAGE

Submitted by Laura Wukela



Laura Wukela

Each year, on the third Monday in January, our nation celebrates the Birthday of one of the most important and inspiring leaders in our Nation's history, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This national holiday honors a great

American who was a strong leader and a champion for equality, tolerance, peace, justice, and freedom. MLK Day is the first national holiday to honor an individual black American. It is a federal holiday for people from all races, religions, and backgrounds to celebrate the unique beauty and strong pride of our multiracial and multicultural America.

Dr. King stated: "We have the opportunity to make America a better Nation" and he gave his life to do just that. Through his nonviolent, respectful, yet stubborn refusal to accept the injustice of segregation, he forced the country, and the world, to recognize that we all share the right to be free from oppression and to have equal opportunity to pursue the American Dream. He was convinced that all people from all walks of life have something meaningful to contribute to building better communities. Dr. King believed in the value of service and he devoted his life to serving others.

The ancient, traditional proverb: "It takes a whole village..." exists in various forms in

many African languages. The basic premise of this philosophy is that each of us is obligated to one another. Each of us must work together and look out for one another. A community relies on its' individual members to contribute what they can to the betterment of the entire community at large and, indeed, the very foundation of our Nation is built one community at a time. Dr. King embraced this school of thought and eloquently expanded on the idea. Each year, on the third Monday in January, our nation celebrates the Birthday of one of the most important and inspiring leaders in our Nation's history, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This national holiday honors a great American who was a strong leader and a champion for equality, tolerance, peace, justice, and freedom. MLK Day is the first national holiday to honor an individual black American. It is a federal holiday for people from all races, religions, and backgrounds to celebrate the unique beauty and strong pride of our multiracial and multicultural America.

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United We Serve is our President's national call to service initiative. It urges all Americans to join together in working to provide solutions to the problems with which we are faced. President Obama calls upon us to take action, to serve, and to give back, in our own neighborhoods and communities in need. The MLK Day of Service is a part of the United We Serve initiative, and in 2016 it occurs on January 18. This is an opportunity for each of us to both honor the memory of Dr. King and to continue his legacy through our own service to others.

Dr. King said: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is 'What are you doing for others?'" Let's commemorate MLK Day by answering this question. Let us, each of us, do our part and contribute what we can to make our community a better place; thereby, upholding Dr. King's vision. Let's remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words of inspiration and let's work together on this day, and every day, for a better tomorrow for all.

REFLECTING ON MLK'S LEGACY WITH REVEREND ERNEST W. FRIERSON

by Stephanie Navarro



Rev. Ernest W. Frierson

SUMTER -- *Do you think it takes a village to raise a child?* I agree that it takes a village to raise a child. However, in this new fast-paced society that is wrapped up in themselves our children are tossed to the wayside. It

used to be that the mother and father raised the child, and that everyone else helped, but it started at home. Children must be raised with the message that they have to work hard for what they want. Desegregation, in my opinion, had a negative impact on our youth because it removed discipline in schools. You had white teachers uncomfortable disciplining black students and vice versa.

Is there hope? I always want to say there is hope because I'm a pastor. Yes, there are

people who refuse to let go of the past, but then there are people who want to work together. It's certainly not as bad as it used to be. We're not at zero, we're at maybe a 2. We're trying.

What is the answer? We have to be proactive. We can't wait for a traumatic event to happen in our community before we do something. We should engage our civil servants and public officials more in developing positive relationships especially in the rural context. We, men and women of the cloth, have to do a better job in getting the church back to being a powerful entity in the community again. Everyone seems to be in a comfort zone and we're too afraid to get out of it. We need to step up and have a dialogue. We need to create trust.

We need to be intentional. Everyone needs to stop talking about what they want to see and do something to make it happen. After a tragic incident such as the shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, people rallied together for the cause and what might be done but then you don't see a plan and you never see an evaluation tool or the end results.

We need to stop trying to think on a large scale, that's where we mess up. We need to start where we are, take it in small steps and then expand. What do you think MLK would think if he could see us now?

I think Dr. King would be terribly disappointed in us. Dr. King was a man of action. If our officials and leaders are making plans, then why aren't we seeing results? Dr. King spoke for all people who were oppressed, regardless of race. He wanted them to rise to a better way of life. He said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up." If we work together, intentionally, then "some day one day" will come to pass.

Rev. Ernest W. Frierson was born and reared in Sumter, SC. He is the pastor of Jeremiah and Mt. Seal United Methodist Churches in Hemingway, S.C. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, N.C. In his free time, he enjoys riding horses, fishing, engaging in challenging discourse, learning to play the bass guitar and singing.



DESCENDANT STILL EXECUTING FAMILY PLAN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

by Anna Bowman



Jereleen Hollimon Miller

MAYESVILLE – With a rich deep history of success flourishing through her bloodline, it’s no wonder that Jereleen Hollimon Miller has herself been included in the history of the town of Mayesville, alongside her famous great grand aunt. The small quaint town of about 1,000 residences, situated in Sumter County, is the birthplace of the legendary educator, Civil Rights Activist, known to the world as Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

Miller, who was voted in 2007 to represent her town as the first female mayor, recalls how her father would tell his children about their famous relative. “I can’t help but think back when I was a little girl, how my father, Washington Hollimon, would sit all of my siblings and I down around the fireplace, at night, telling us true stories about his Annie (Dr. Bethune). In his words, he would say, ‘she was much of a woman.’ How she could, as a young girl, picked cotton against any man or woman in the field. She could carry her own,” he would say proudly. “She just didn’t pick cotton, she became someone important in the world.” The stories of her great accomplishment gave my father such pride, said

Miller. He would smile from ear-to-ear when talking about his dear “Annie,” as he fondly called her. Throughout my childhood I would delight in the stories of this incredible woman with whom I shared the same bloodline.

Dr. Bethune, born, Mary Jane McLeod on July 10, 1875 in Mayesville, would go on to migrate to the state of Florida, and make Daytona Beach her new home. There, Dr. Bethune would begin to formulate her vision of educating young African-American girls in a private school setting that is known today at Bethune-Cookman University. Miller reminisced about her first visit to the campus, “My family and I have visited Bethune-Cookman University, a couple of times in my life, the first time being more than 30 years ago. I have



always wanted to visit the college and when I finally did, it was a dream come true. I felt like a kid the first time at Disney World, wide-eyed with great enthusiasm! I was spellbound to stand on the hallowed grounds that she once walked.” If this amazing feat wasn’t enough, Dr. Bethune is also remembered as a National Adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Black Cabinet, and because



of her commitment to improving the lives of African Americans, she became known as, “The First Lady of

The Struggle.” She also founded the National Council of Negro Women.

Jereleen Hollimon Miller, recently voted for her second term as mayor of Mayesville, has, along with her husband, Ed Miller, been instrumental in keeping the spirit of Dr. Bethune alive for future generations to be inspired. Founder of the first, “Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Birthday Festival, and the recipients of a SCDOT Beautification Enhancement Grant in the amount of \$400,000 to build the Dr. Bethune Nature Trail, and \$315,000 awarded by the state of SC in 1999 to construct the Dr. Bethune Learning Center, in the Town of Mayesville, which was completed in 2014. But her dedication to her great grand aunt, didn’t stop there, because, on January 3, 2013, due to the tireless efforts of Jereleen and Ed Miller, for the first time in South Carolina’s history, a license plate was issued in honor of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

Miller, a wife and mother, is also an accomplished writer of several motivational children books.

A SOUTHERN AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE VISIT

by Anna Bowman



Felicia Flemming-McCall

CHERAW -- Some might say that Felicia Flemming-McCall is the “Keeper of the Flame” that burns deeply inside of us all who wish we could have just a moment to visit the hallowed ground of our ancestors – to see the world through their eyes and just

touch an artifact of their era. Because of her love of African-American history, people can actually take a walk back in time by simply traveling to the Southern African American Heritage in Cheraw, and literally open a door to the past.

Her love for antiques began during her childhood. Flemming-McCall recalls, “I’ve been collecting since I was a child,” she said, adding, “One of my grandmothers loved antiques and was always giving me things when I was growing up,” she said. “A majority of the museum artifacts are from my personal collection and many are artifacts that belonged to my grandmother, given to me over the years. My artifacts are on loan to the museum. We also have artifacts on loan by individuals who support what we’re doing at the Heritage Center, as well as some donated artifacts since our opening,” said Flemming-McCall.

Prior to opening her museum, like so many people, Flemming-McCall followed in the footsteps of her family’s businesses; her father’s Flemming Funeral Homes, Inc., and her mother’s Unique

Florist, both in her hometown of Cheraw. Little did she know, but her parents’ businesses would become a catalyst for priceless information for her museum. It’s hard to believe, but she is celebrating her 20th anniversary of working alongside her family at Flemming Funeral Homes, Inc. As a graduate of Gupton-Jones College of Funeral Service in Atlanta, she’s been a licensed mortician for 19 years. In her profession, she assisted families with preparing obituaries for their loved ones and through this process she would discover the rich, deep history of families in Cheraw, Chesterfield, and Pageland. “I learned a wealth of history from the families we had served over the years and decided it was imperative that those stories and legacies were preserved for future generations, and on April 15 2010, I opened the Southern African American Heritage in Cheraw.”

Starting a museum was a huge task for Flemming-McCall, but she said, “I prayed about my decision because I knew that I was stepping on uncharted territory and I knew that talking about history, especially African-American history can be a sensitive subject matter. I decided to open a museum about African-American culture because, for one, I’m African-American, and secondly, for my two daughters to know the history and legacy of those who paved the way for them in the community that they reside.” But her vision for her museum is one of “inclusion” of all races. “I think sometimes we focus more on African-Americans who made contributions on a broader



scale and tend to negate the fact we had people in our community doing the same exact things. I’m in no way trying to take away from the other individuals who

are prominently known; for me it’s just as important to have that connection to the locals who made great strides right here in the community where I live today.”

The Southern African American Heritage, which is owned and operated by Flemming-McCall, is opened on Thursday and by appointment. The museum offers tours, which are also appointment based. “I have a dedicated volunteer staff,” she said, but she tries to personally serve as the guide during booked tours at the museum. In order to keep the doors open and support featured programs, we have an admittance fee of \$7 for adults and \$5 for children. We also have a souvenir shop that includes books, artwork, jewelry, and even toys, some items are from as far away as Africa. The museum is located at 125 Kershaw Street, Cheraw, SC. For additional information, or to book a tour, call 843-921-9989 or visit the website: www.southernaaheritagecenter.org, or Facebook.



NOTABLE ARCHITECT, NOTABLE DARLINGTONIAN

Submitted by Eastern SC Heritage Region staff, Jennie Pezé



DARLINGTON -- Lawrence Reese, a master builder and architect, made a lasting mark on Darlington around the turn of the twentieth century. Born in 1864 in neighboring Marlboro County, across the Pee Dee River, Reese moved to Darlington in his early 20s as a self-taught carpenter and entrepreneur.

His work as designer and builder is a significant contributing factor to the West Broad Street Historic District's listing on the National Register of Historic Places. We call it Reese's Row because he designed and built 14 of the 34 houses in the district. The elaborate Eastlake, Queen Anne, and other Victorian era architectural elements are evident in house after house along West Broad

Street.

Reese married and fathered eight children who lived to adulthood. As the family grew, they had to move to larger houses. The last family home built by Lawrence Reese was at 434 West Broad Street, just a few blocks outside of the historic district. That house, improved over the years, still retains the original structure and hardwood floors he laid. In addition to being a master carpenter, he was an entrepreneur who operated a small grocery store in his neighborhood, and he built caskets and provided a hearse for his undertaking business. Coincidentally, one of his most prominent houses is now a funeral home (Belk Funeral Home).

He died in 1915 (about age 51) of a heart attack and is buried in Darlington's first African American cemetery – Darlington Memorial Cemetery (est. 1890). That cemetery is also on the National Register of Historic Places (Avenue D and Friendship St., Darlington), and here are laid to rest quite a few more notable Darlingtonians.

To learn more look for the listing on the National Register of Historic Places, "West Broad Street District, Darlington, SC". <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/darlington/nrdarlington.htm>

Celebrating History Arthur W. "Man" Stanley



Darlington native Arthur Whitfield Stanley served the Darlington chapter of the NAACP as its president, a post he held for 40 years, and led the effort to desegregate the public school system in Darlington County through legal action. In addition, Stanley initiated a legal challenge to the discriminatory polling practices of the City of Darlington municipal elections. His efforts led

to the adoption of three single-member electoral districts and three at-large districts. He holds the distinction of being the first African American elected to a seat on Darlington City Council. Stanley received the Order of the Palmetto from S.C. Governor David Beasley, and the Arthur W. "Man" Stanley Gymnasium in Darlington was named in his honor.

Sites of Interest

Darlington Memorial Cemetery,
c. 1890, Avenue D and Friendship St

Edmund H. Deas House, c. 1915, Avenue E

West Broad Street Historic District,
featuring many late-19th to early 20th
century residences designed and built
by Lawrence Reese

St. James United Methodist Church,
c. 1866, 400 S. Main St.

Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church,
c. 1866/1935, 312 Pearl St.

Historical Museum of Ethnic Culture,
114 Coker St.

Henry "Dad" Brown Memorial Marker,
U.S. 52 and Brockington Road

The Darlington County Cultural Realism Center, 302 Pearl St., hosts an MLK Celebration weekend of events each year culminating in a Noon program on Monday, Jan. 18, 2016. Info: (843) 393-9762 or culturalrealismvision.com.



www.darlingtonSConline.com

"Reese's Row" West Broad Street Historic District



Known as "Reese's Row," the **West Broad Street Historic District** features 14 houses designed and built between c.1890 and 1910 by master carpenter Lawrence Reese (1864-1915). Most of the large, two-story homes feature elaborate Eastlake, Queen Anne, and other Victorian era architectural elements. In addition to these homes, the **SC Western Railway Station** was built by Reese. All are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Reese, who had no formal training in architecture, was a self-taught master craftsman and designer. His personal favorite of the houses he designed in Darlington is the **Belk Funeral Home**, built c.1900 as a residence for Abraham Hyman.

Born near Bennettsville, SC, Reese was the youngest son of nine children of Richard and Fannie Reese. Carpentry was the family trade of the Reese men. He came to Darlington when he was about 21, asking for the hand in marriage of **Lula Aiken**, a young Cherokee girl being raised by Dr. and Mrs. McGirt, a local physician and his wife. Proving his competence in construction by building a house specified by Dr. McGirt, Lawrence Reese was permitted to take Lula's hand.

Lawrence and Lula had eight children who lived to adulthood. The last family home built by Reese is at 434 West Broad Street. That house, improved over the years, still retains the original structure and hardwood floors laid by him. Reese died in 1915 of a heart attack, and his sons continued the family trade as carpenters and builders.



Lawrence Reese is credited with design and construction of this c. 1890 two-story home located at 368 Broad Street. (Courtesy of City of Darlington)



This is the only known image of Lawrence Reese. (Courtesy of Darlington Historical Commission)



Broad Street is shown as a dirt street in this early 20th century postcard, which features the Abraham Hyman House (Belk Funeral Home). (Courtesy of Darlington Historical Commission)



JAMESTOWN A GO TO PLACE FOR LOCAL HISTORY

by Anna Bowman



MARS BLUFF – South Carolina is rich in the history of African-Americans who lived through some of the most trying times in United States history. Most

of the stories are too horrible to share with the descendants of our ancestors, but rarely, there are those stories that are so important that to not share them is to deny future generations of their connection to their proud lineage. The descendants of Ervin James, a former slave, knows all about his extraordinary journey from slave to a proud visionary for his offspring.

The story of Ervin James is not only being told from generation to generation of his descendants, but his story is embedded in the history of South Carolina as an amazing commemoration to the testament of the human spirit. The incredible story tells how Ervin James, a former slave, purchased 246 acres in the Pee Dee region, dividing the land equally amongst his children, in the hope that his current and

future heirs would be able to live independently, free of debt or ownership by another man – what an advantageous dream for a man who began his life as “property.” He was courageous, bold, brave and ahead of his time.



The story of visionary Ervin James, reads a little like a novel of historical fiction, but to one of his off springs, Terry James, he knows that this is no fable. “When I was about five or seven years old my grandfather, (Rev. Tony James), would take my brother, Joseph James, Jr., my first cousin, George Smith, and me to Jamestown to visit and play, while he told us about some of the descendants that once occupied the land, he would also stop by the Jamestown cemetery to talk about our ancestors,” James said. It has been estimated that over 300 of Ervin James’ descendants were able to call Jamestown their home since its inception.

James, a photographer, has been able to

capture through the lens of his camera the craftsmanship of the remaining “original” cabins



that were constructed during Ervin James’ lifetime, and still serves as a visual testimony to a journey of self-respect and

independence, that continues to cascade through the James’ bloodline today, in the 21st century. In 2007, Ervin and Nora James’ ancestors, in an effort to keep the original Jamestown settlement in the family, created a 501 (c) 3, non-profit, Jamestown Foundation. In 2009, the James’ family created a three day event to celebrate their ancestors and to ensure that future generations would know about the sacrifices and bravery of a man of courage and vision by the name of Ervin James. The event is open to the public, so save the date for July 22-24, 2016 to visit 1114 Jamestown Road, Florence SC. For additional information about the Jamestown Foundation, visit the Facebook page

Women’s History Month

“Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service & Government

PLANNING AND HAPPENSTANCE CAN WORK TOGETHER

by Stephanie Navarro



Octavia Williams-Blake, At-Large City Council Member, Florence, SC

Serving as an At-Large Council Member for the City of Florence was not something Octavia Williams-Blake thought she would be doing. After growing up in Effingham and graduating from South Florence High School in 1991, Octavia

couldn’t wait to leave Florence. Twelve years later, she returned home to be near family and to start a family of her own. Octavia was shocked by what she found. “For me, it was as if nothing had changed,” explains Octavia. “My realtor got tired of me complaining! He finally looked at me one day and said, ‘instead of complaining, you should run for city council.’”

As Octavia considered the prospect, one fact tipped the scales: Florence had not had a female city council member since 1953. “To say we hadn’t elected a woman in 50 plus years, people couldn’t believe it,” says Octavia. “I couldn’t

believe it.” And, that wasn’t her only hurdle. In 2008, when Octavia first ran for city council, there were no members under 40 and an African-American had never won an at-large council seat. “I was told often that Florence would never vote in a black person for an at-large seat. For a person like me, that gives me more motivation,” explained Octavia, adding proudly that she received more votes than all the other candidates, including the Mayor, when she did win.

Now a second term, seven year veteran on City Council, Octavia has helped lead the revitalization of downtown Florence. “What I work towards every day is having high school seniors not be like me,” says Octavia. “As they graduate and ask themselves, ‘Where do I want to be?’ I want Florence to be on that list. I want it to be a place where you want to stay.” As chair of the Judiciary Committee, Octavia helped to revamp the judicial standards and create more diversity on the bench. “It was very important to me that we have female judges,” explains Octavia. “I think in the judiciary, when you’re often times dealing with children or teenagers, I think it’s important to have that compassionate,

female voice.” Octavia also introduced the legislation that led to the ordinance banning indoor smoking in restaurants, which she notes as her top achievement.

Since 2008 Florence has elected a second female, African-American member to the City Council. The impact of these changes goes well beyond the public offices held. Growing up, Octavia remembers seeing Maggie Glover, a South Carolina Senator representing the Pee Dee. “I remember her being African-American, female and elected, and I knew that was important,” says Octavia. “My daughter, however, thinks it’s completely normal that women would have a career and a family and serve in public office. She knows that you can do all of these things.” Octavia is the Associate Vice President of Employee & Occupational Health programs at McLeod Health She received her undergraduate degree from Columbia College and a law degree from the University of South Carolina. Octavia lives in Florence with her husband Charlie and daughter Hannah. In her free time Octavia enjoys going on Disney cruises and watching college football.

“Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service & Government

JUST ONE OF THE MANY WAYS WOMEN TRANSFORM OUR LIVES

by Stephanie Navarro



Natalie Zeigler

HARTSVILLE - The alleyways of downtown Hartsville, once menacing, are now bricked and lighted with inviting entrances. New parking lots, parks, store fronts and landscaping have all been expertly chosen to be at once sophisticated and charming. Over the past five years, Natalie Zeigler has worked to make the vision of a new and improved Hartsville a reality. “So many small towns are dying,” says Natalie. “We knew we needed to give it one last push and that’s what we’ve done. Our downtown has been completely transformed.”

Natalie is the City Manager for Hartsville. Reporting to both the Mayor and City Council, Natalie oversees 135 employees in the day-to-day operations of Hartsville. To be City Manager to a town of nearly 8,000 residents is no small feat for a female. In 1985, only 13% of City Manager positions in the United States were held by females. Thirty years later, that number has not changed. “There was a male

city manager that actually told all the females in my graduate program that there would never be female city managers in South Carolina,” says Ziegler. “It’s sort of a joke now because there are so many of us.”

Natalie acknowledges that many women before her have paved the way. “There have been a lot of women that have pushed the envelope,” says Natalie. “I’ve always admired all women in those positions.” In the 5th grade, Natalie created a scrapbook devoted to Ann Richards, who ran for governor of Texas. “I didn’t care about her politics,” explains Natalie. “I just saw a female running for governor and thought that was amazing.”

Admitting that politics can be brutal, Natalie believes she faces challenges in her job that her male counterparts do not. “It’s not a level playing field,” explains Natalie. “But it’s not something that defeats me. If anything, it makes me more determined.” Besides determination, Natalie’s support system serves as a key factor in her success. “I have my husband and my daughters,” says Natalie. “I have other managers, both male and female, in the state that I reach out to.” And, then, there’s

the people of Hartsville. For Natalie, it was the closeness to the people that led her into local government. “The people in Hartsville have come together to make things happen,” explains Natalie. “There’s a renewed sense of pride. There’s a new energy and vibe that’s really exciting.”

Visit www.hartsvillesc.gov to get excited about Hartsville tooor download the Hartsville app to your smart phone to get updates about upcoming events.

Natalie received her undergraduate degree in political science from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of South Carolina. She and her husband Jon have two young daughters, Ella and Claire. In her free time, Natalie enjoys working out with FiA (Females in Action) and binge watching any television shows featuring a strong female lead.



WOMEN’S CHANGING ROLES ALTERS OUR HISTORICAL LEARNING METHODS

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Jeronell White Bradley

Oh how the world of online and cyberspace has changed everything from leisure reading and studying to extensive research, yet there is still a need for do-it-yourself browsing and flipping pages and asking questions. That is where Jeronell White Bradley continues to make her indelible footprint through Florence-Darlington TEC’s (name) library after some 30 years.

As Director of Libraries, the Lamar native – with the help of students and colleagues – decides what readings and resources deserve top priority. “Currently, I am working on a strategic focus for the next five years so I am reading about libraries of the future and student trends on the use of libraries is changing with a need for more collaborative/social space,” she said. She manages two libraries and three satellite locations with a budget of more than \$450,000 and provides information that supports the instructional programs of the college to some 6,000 students. Surrounded by such voluminous material, Darlington County Water & Sewer Board member wades through the large selection task by applying

an old saying that asks “How do you eat an elephant? One piece at a time... with the invaluable help of to do lists, Outlook, sticky notes and a support system which includes her 95-year-old mom, daughter Angele and son Benjamin plus strong spiritual beliefs, internal stimuli and extended family.”

Some key improvements that the KemetShule board member has been instrumental in are automation of processes, loaning internet enabled devices and providing digital access to resources. “The libraries’ future is in automation that will facilitate the sharing of resources and the purchasing of equipment. The online education revolution has changed the way libraries deliver information to users,” she explained.

Soft spoken and sharp, the former S.C. Library Association Treasurer has had to learn some tough lessons in order to be effective and efficient on this job include listening, patience and placing herself mentally in other’s shoes. “Also, having a sense of humor to put the overly serious attitude in perspective helps. Then I target the negative management traits I saw in others and avoid being like them, while emulating the positive traits and using that style in my world.” How do events in her department affect other parts of the overall organization? “The library is part of the FDTC puzzle and when events are

staged in other pieces of the organization, we have to fulfill our role in order for the puzzle to be complete.

Being a second generation college graduate, the former schoolteacher said that fact lets her know that she has not come too far and has a long way to go. A founding board member of the (15-year-old) Sankofa festival, she explained that the “Kiswahili word means to go back and fetch, its symbol being a bird flying forward while looking back.”

As to the future of libraries, Bradley forecasts that “it may sound farfetched but libraries will be around. Even the google age, where everyone pushes buttons for information, has not eliminated libraries. It has just changed the way we do business.” Asked about ways libraries may be able to combat terrorism, she said she will add that to her ‘to do’ list on a sticky note and research it thoroughly.



“Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service & Government

ON THE BATTLEFIELD TO SEEK EQUALITY IN THIS DAY OF DIVISIVENESS

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Mia McLeod

COLUMBIA - No, The Hon. Mia McLeod is not mad. The state representative of SC House district 79 is not even angry. “Frankly, I’m just fed up with the double standards and

vote their ridiculous bills down every year isn’t working. For too long, our male-dominated legislature, which consists of many so-called “Christian Conservatives” has been able to use its bully pulpit to judge, criticize, punish, humiliate, condemn and impose its own view, beliefs and values on women... and the reality is that government has no business ‘governing’ these intimately personal and private decisions that should be between those who must make them and their God.”

As to the effect of the bill, if passed into law, on women who now already feel that they are being stripped of the power to do what they deem is best for their own bodies, McLeod says this: “The purpose of my bill is to initiate a different conversation, broaden the discussion and ideally engage the public so that together, we can bring this partisan political war on women to an end. Anytime double standards, hypocrisies and inequities exist that stifle or unduly target one gender only, those types of perceptions are inevitable. Ironically, the passage of my bill wouldn’t eliminate that perception or reality, but debating and discussing it will at least expose the absurdity of both... because women (and men) should have the right to make these deeply personal choices about their sexual and reproductive health”.

It is intentional that Rep. McLeod chose to propose these restrictions on ED versus vasectomies. “Because only women are capable of being pregnant, God has placed us in a category of our own... whether married or not, contraception considered/ used or not, dependency on government assistance or not... Men rarely seem judged

by the same standards and government appears to be obsessed with sexual responsibilities/rights of women only. So while I could’ve proposed equally ludicrous but comparable restrictions on vasectomies, my actions would not have impacted as many men or elicited the same emotions/ reactions that this has. And because conception isn’t possible in the natural sense if there is no erection, then if we are insist upon ‘governing’ any part of the process, we should ‘govern’ it all,” said the progressive thinker who once was a page where she now votes.

“People know that this war on women has to stop. And it is not just here in South Carolina. We must change this nation and world for the better and I plan to keep these issues on the public’s radar until my colleagues realize that women are capable of choosing the course of action that’s right for them without governmental interference. Now I know that this is a tall order for a state that unapologetically expends an astronomical amount of time and tax dollars annually to introduce and debate its anti abortion legislative agenda, add a few hoops and hurdles for women to jump through and investigate women’s health providers without cause,” she steamed.

Acknowledging that this bill is not likely to become law in our male-dominated legislature, Rep. McLeod says she is not aware of any opposition from physicians or any significant fiscal impact.

Shifting the comfort zone, she can be found on her blog or website, accessible through Miaforhouse.com

*Read bill in its entirety

hypocrisies that exist when it comes to ‘governing’ the sexual and reproductive health of women versus men,” she said recently.

And, oh, the disparities list grows as she, sponsor of South Carolina House Bill #4544,* goes on to say, “The provisions of my bill are intentionally comparable to the ridiculous requirements and restrictions placed on women who seek abortions. For instance, men (like women) would be required to wait 24 hours before getting a prescription drug to treat erectile dysfunction (ED). In addition, he would have to get a sworn affidavit from a sexual partner who can attest to his condition, see a sex therapist, undergo cardiac stress test to ensure that his heart is healthy enough for sex, and prove that he has been counseled on alternative lifestyle choice, including abstinence,” she quotes from her bill.

The recently announced candidate for Senate District 22 says that “while each requirement seems ludicrous on its face, so too, are similar requirements imposed annually by our male-dominated legislature on women in our state.”

And this trailblazing dynamo’s posture is not solely about either an attempt to attain equality or ‘tit for tat’. “Ideally, I look forward to a day when elected officials aren’t focused on abortion or erectile dysfunction. Our state has much bigger challenges ahead and our time would be much better served if we would focus on those. My bill is an attempt to initiate a different conversation – or at the very least broaden the discussion – to include men’s sexual and reproductive health because this seems to be the only way to get their attention. Asking politely and/or challenging them when we don’t have the numbers to



There is a woman at the beginning of all great things. ~ Alphonse De Lamartine

A SELF HELP EDWARD JONES ADVERTORIAL

by Stephanie Navarro



Janelle Townsley Walters

Janelle knows what it's like to watch a loved one struggle financially. When she was ten, her grandfather passed away. Her grandmother was 65 years old and had no idea how much they had saved. She didn't know how much she needed or how to make it grow and last. Janelle watched her grandmother struggle and wished it were different. Now, as a financial advisor at Edward Jones, Janelle can make a difference. "That's why I started this job,"

says Janelle. "I want to help people." For an hour every day, Janelle goes door-to-door letting people know how she can help. "I was surprised that so many people were willing to talk to me, but most people don't know how much they need to retire or their investment options. I can let them know that Edward Jones helps people plan for their long-term goals, whatever those might be," explains Janelle. Whether you're looking for assistance in planning for retirement, estates, college funds or life insurance, Janelle and her colleagues at Edward Jones will ensure you understand the options available to you and are confident in your financial decisions. Edwards Jones focuses on providing solutions for your financial goals, which is why they provide complimentary financial assessments. You do not have to watch your loved ones struggle financially or worry if you're covered for the future. So ask yourself, do you know how much you need to retire? If not, let Janelle help you today.

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THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S RETIREMENT DILEMMA



You've poured a lifetime of sweat, time, and capital into building your business. You've begun thinking about retirement, and your strategy is to sell your company for a good price, settle back, and enjoy a financially secure retirement. But, like many business owners, you've made the mistake of assuming this scenario will happen, and you haven't bothered to make any other retirement plans.

You need to be realistic.

What are the odds of a person showing up at the right time with cash in hand to buy the company for a fair price? For thousands of small business owners each year, no one steps forward. Perhaps the business is too specialized or is tied too closely to the owner's unique personality and skills. Or maybe possible buyers equate retirement sale with a distress sale and make only low-ball offers. Whatever the reason, many owners find that their company has suddenly become a white elephant that nobody wants.

Select and develop a successor.

That's why it's so important to prime a replacement—someone who will buy your company when you're ready to retire. Maybe this is a current co-owner (but be careful if he or she is about the same age as you, and planning to retire around the same time.) Or it's your son

or daughter active in the business, or a younger key employee. Business owners who successfully groom their own replacements leave nothing to chance. They realize that there's no room for error at the point of retirement.

Here are some steps you should take:

- Be cautious. Make sure your heir apparent is the right person in terms of temperament, personality, competence, and personal goals.
- Set up a probation period so you can terminate the relationship if you find that this person will not work out. During that period, keep everything informal, strictly verbal. Even when you go to a formal agreement, make sure it contains a termination provision.
- Offer incentives to ensure that your replacement stays until the baton is passed. An ambitious successor needs and deserves gradually increasing authority and benefits. Options include deferred compensation or the opportunity to acquire partial ownership prior to your retirement. This provides both parties with something to win by sticking to the agreement, and something to lose if it falls apart.
- Create a buy-sell agreement. With the help of your attorney, lock in who does and gets what, spelling out all details and caveats, including how to establish the final valuation of the business. This formal agreement protects everybody.
- Build in a funding mechanism. This is

crucial. No matter how good the terms of the buy/sell agreement, it will be worthless if the money is not there when needed to carry out the plan. Under one option, the successor may be able to purchase the company from ongoing profits. Other options include setting up a sinking fund or allowing the successor to simply borrow the money. These options may work but they leave much to chance. Instead, consider a funding vehicle that protects your family in the event of your disability or premature death, such as life and disability income insurance.*

- Have a Plan B. As a business owner, you know that very few things go exactly as planned. What if your business hits tough times or your successor dies, becomes disabled, or leaves because of a personality conflict? Or what if there simply is no heir apparent waiting in the wings? Sometimes, it's simply best to dismantle the business.

Whether or not you have a possible successor for your company, you should begin mapping out your retirement strategy today. Your insurance professional or your independent professional advisors can work with you to help you develop a sound business strategy.

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

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MANY INTERNAL BRANCHES

by Alicia C. Phillip



(LtoR) Andrew Kampiziones, Mindy Taylor, Tom Ewart, Charlene Lowery, Carol Adams, Jill Lewis, Barry O'Brien & Joan Billheimer. Absent – Darryl Davids, Dennis Ward, Jean Leatherman, Joan Pavy, Nancy Waring, Robby Hill, Rose Mary Parham, Sonia Keller, Wanda James & Brian Newman

First Reliance Bank was founded in 1999 in Florence, SC, with the goal of making a real difference in the community. It has accomplished that goal by building relationships with its customers based on trust, and currently serves the Florence, Lexington/Columbia and Charleston markets of South Carolina.

To date, First Reliance has received many accolades, including 2009 Lender of the Year by the South Carolina State Housing Authority; the only company named to The Top 25 Fastest Growing Companies TM list in South Carolina for four years; added to the Palmetto 25, a list of South Carolina's largest publicly held companies (2009); ranked first in market share for City of Florence (2009); voted the #1 bank in the Pee Dee in the Florence Morning News competition; ranked one of the Best Places to Work in South Carolina for ten consecutive years; and ranked in the top 20 banks in South Carolina based on asset size.

One major key to First Reliance's success, is its superior customer service. Its associates are dedicated to the bank's vision that "there's more to banking than just money," and they are the reason that First Reliance's customer satisfaction rating is at 95%; the highest in the industry.

Another crucial factor in First Reliance's success is its Business Development Board. The Board was created ten years ago by Joan Billheimer – Community Development Officer at First Reliance Bank – with the intent that its members would accomplish the following objectives: be an ambassador for First Reliance, be knowledgeable about First Reliance products and suggest new products, become a client, refer client opportunities, communicate new business opportunities within the community, provide input regarding the financial needs of the community, inform the bank of any local economic changes, communicate business best

practices that would assist First Reliance in its quest for intellectual growth, and act as a mentor for the leaders of First Reliance.

It was the goal that the Board would represent the diverse communities which the bank serves, and as such, the board is comprised of a group of 16 diverse individuals. Board members include: a retired psychologist, a CEO, a McDonald's franchisee, a professor, an executive director, a realtor, a vice president, a Dean, an attorney, an administrator, managers, an architect, and a CPA, among others. The members of the Board continue to exceed the objectives set by First Reliance.

First Reliance gives back to the community in several ways. The Bank donates more than 800 volunteer hours of service annually; donates approximately 1.5% of its net income to charity annually; promotes adoption awareness through its Reagan's Promise program; provides distinctive benefits to mothers through its Moms First program; offers an innovative, online banking experience to younger customers via its iMatter program; offers a Hometown Heroes program that provides special perks and benefits to community heroes (active and veteran military personnel, religious organization employees, employees of 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, fire and rescue personnel, law enforcement personnel, medical professionals, and teachers and school district employees); provides a superior level of service and recognition through its Better Life program; and its Check 'N Save program that gives customers the opportunity to establish, or re-establish a banking relationship, and better manage their money.

For more information on First Reliance Bank, please visit <https://www.firstreliance.com/>



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NEW BEGINNINGS IN 2016: 8 TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER YOU IN 2016

Submitted by Clinician Evelyn R. Coe, FNP/BC, DNP | HDPT Center LLC



DARLINGTON -- Hypertension and diabetes remain to be leading causes to early deaths, cardiovascular disease, and other illnesses. The Hypertension and Diabetes Prevention and Treatment (HDPT) Center LLC encourages our community to take charge of your health and feel good about it! Some of the health tips described below address more than hypertension and diabetes. This information does not replace the advice your individual health provider. Please consult with your primary care provider before making any changes to your individual care plan.

Clinician Evelyn R. Coe, HDPT Center provider, offers 8 Tips for a Healthier You in 2016:

1. Early Detection – If you or someone you may know is concerned about whether you are at risk of hypertension or diabetes, it is important to see a health care provider as soon as possible. Early detection is a sure way to address this concern and may just save your life or the life of another. If you already have a provider, be sure to discuss this with him/her during your next routine checkup. If you have not seen a provider in more than a year, it is best to schedule an appointment sooner than later.

2. Medication Compliance – When a clinician or health provider prescribes medication, it is imperative to follow their instructions (take your medication). The rising costs of prescriptions present a challenge to individuals who may not be able to afford them. However, many prescriptions may be dispensed in generic form (non-brand name). Be sure to discuss these options with your health care provider so that the cost of your medication does not prohibit compliance with the provider's instructions. As a provider, I am committed to ensuring my patients have access to affordable options when taking their

prescribed medication.

3. Report any difficulty with prescriptions immediately – Your provider only knows what is presented to him or her. It is absolutely necessary to report any difficulty you may experience after taking prescribed medication. Even when your prescription is filled, your local Pharmacist is more than willing to answer any questions prior to you taking newly prescribed medicine or even medicine you have taken in the past. Listening to your body (being aware of how you feel) is essential to maintaining your wellness. As soon as you feel anything out of the ordinary (other than what the Pharmacist or your provider has explained), the next step would be to call or stop in to see your provider. There is no such thing as a bad question – only the question you do not ask.

4. Monitor salt intake – Salt is like a southern staple. It is used in many of the foods we consume, particularly canned goods and soft drinks. However, elevated salt intake causes the body to retain fluid, therefore increasing your blood pressure. The Dash Diet (grains and nuts, etc.) is a good dieting option for people with high blood pressure.

5. Monitor blood sugars daily or as prescribed by your provider – If your blood sugars are not properly monitored, poor outcomes can be expected to occur. Uncontrolled blood sugars have been known to lead to diabetes-induced comas. Monitoring your sugars is crucial to managing diabetes and or detecting its onset.

6. Be mindful of empty carb foods – Empty carbs (carbohydrates) are carbs that provide little to no nutritional value. An example of empty carbs are dry or processed foods (such as chips or candy). Fruits and vegetables are better carbs to intake as they add greater nutritional value, and even multigrain and fresh produce.

7. Maintain proper exercise and a balanced diet – As noted, fresh fruit and vegetables are good carbohydrates and help aid in a balanced diet. Proper exercise goes hand in hand with a balanced diet. Prior to engaging in any form of exercise,

talk with your provider to identify any limitations you may have. Setting personal goals is a good way to start the year off right. But be realistic and do not compromise your long term health in the process.

8. Reduce stress – Often times we all may take on more than we can handle. Our bodies will let us know. Stress can compound any health issue. Maintain a safe outlet to relieve stress: take a walk, visit a museum or engage in other stress-free hobbies you enjoy. Meditation is a good example of a way to reduce stress.

There are many other ways to take charge of your health, but it all starts with you. As much as we all would love to remain in good health, the truth is that it takes work. As we get older, it becomes even more difficult to maintain our health. The more you do to identify issues earlier on, particularly with regard to hypertension and diabetes, the better chance you have – to live. There is no short cut to living a healthier life. It becomes your lifestyle.

We at the HDPT Center LLC would love to have the opportunity to treat you or your loved ones in 2016. To learn more information about us, you may visit us on the web at www.hdptcenter.com or call (843) 968-8333 to book an appointment. Take charge of your health and feel good about it.



Happy New Year from the Coe Family!

CELEBRATE BY TAKING CARE OF YOU!

Submitted by Stephanie H. Caffee, RN, BSN, Grants and Communications Manager



Along with celebrating the accomplishments of female leaders over history, March is also a time to highlight women's overall health. When was the last time you or the women close to you took proactive steps towards health and wellness? Too often women's health falls to the bottom of the totem pole when the demands of life call for attention.

HopeHealth recognizes and celebrates the achievements of women throughout history and today. We are honored to serve women and girls through primary care, preventive health and specialty services. We invite you to join us in one of the following services tailored to women's and girl's health.

Gynecological Services (Manning, Coming soon to Florence & Kingstree)

- Well-woman visits: Annual preventive care visit for adult women to obtain recommended preventive services (mammograms, cervical cancer screenings, preconception care)
- Counseling and screening for sexually transmitted infections
- Contraceptive methods and counseling
- Screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence
- Diabetes & Nutrition Center(Florence)
- Individual and group education
- Diabetes Management: Information & tools (lifestyle, insulin, medical management)
- Nutrition information and education
- Weight management
- Pre-diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cholesterol
- Our staff includes a nurse practitioner, diabetes educators, and dieticians
- Available Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm, call 843.664.3625
- CARE House (Florence)
- Child-friendly, community-oriented, advocacy center
- Support and Services to victims of child abuse, neglect, and witnesses of domestic violence
- Our staff, including licensed social workers, works along law enforcement and the judicial system to provide care to those that need it most, regardless of insurance status.
- Services available Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm, call 843.629.0236
- Embracing Care (Florence, Manning, Orangeburg & Aiken)
- For African American or Latina women age 18 or over
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- Mental Health Screening
- HIV Testing
- Hepatitis C Testing
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- One-on-One Counseling

For more information on all of these services and more, visit hope-health.org or call toll-free at 888.841.5855 to schedule an appointment today.



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



Alan Barrett, PA-C

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



Brinda Chokshi, MD

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



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WILLIAM E. REFVEM, M.D. JOINS CAROLINAS MEDICAL ALLIANCE - ORTHOPAEDICS

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



William E. Refvem, M.D.

Dr. William Refvem grew up in the San Francisco Bay area in California, where his dad was a building contractor and his mother was a schoolteacher. He graduated with honors from the University of California-Davis with a BS in Biochemistry. "I wasn't totally certain what I wanted to do with my life so I took a year off and worked as a carpenter for my dad, and at the same time, I worked as a youth pastor at a local church," he recalled. "I wanted to be a doctor, go into the ministry, or be a building contractor. I applied to Georgetown University School of Medicine in Washington, DC and was accepted, so that settled it for me. I'm a people person; I love solving problems and that's what medicine and being a doctor is all about."

While attending medical school, he joined the U.S. Air Force and completed his internship and residency at USAF Medical Center at Keesler Air Force Base (AFB) in Mississippi and Lackland AFB in Texas. He

was a flight surgeon at Beale AFB in California and served as an orthopaedic surgeon at Osan AFB in Korea and Travis AFB in CA. After his military career, Dr. Refvem and his family moved to Mt. Airy in North Carolina, where he practiced private medicine until relocating to Florence. "Moving to Florence was no culture shock to us," he said. "This is a big city compared to Mt. Airy."

It was during medical school that Dr. Refvem decided to enter the field of orthopaedics. "It's not life or death stuff, but instead it's about being able to function and do things. I enjoy helping my patients get back to living a healthier life. I replace hips; fix broken hips; knee replacements and other procedures. During my first surgery, I realized this was my calling. I was born for this."

He advises his patients to exercise daily. "As you get older, you lose strength and gain weight; it's part of life. Not only should you walk, but lift weights to keep your muscles working and your joints moving. The best exercise for the upper body is push-ups (even if they're done from the knees) and for the lower body, you should ride a bike or use a rowing machine. Your body needs to see moderate physical stress and exertion every

day, even if it's for only a few minutes."

Dr. Refvem and his wife, Joanna, have five grown children – one son and four daughters. During his off-time, Dr. Refvem enjoys swimming, biking and lifting weights. He plays the piano, guitar, and enjoys singing in church, and teaching Sunday school. In Mt. Airy, he played key boards in a rock and roll band (Soft-rock). He also rides a unicycle — keeping three of them in his garage.

Dr. Refvem is board certified in Orthopaedic Surgery. He is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance – Orthopaedics, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance and is a member of the medical staff of Carolinas Hospital System. He is accepting new patients.

To schedule an appointment, please call (843) 413-6835.



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GET TO "THE SOURCE"... BETTER CHOICES FOR OPTIMAL HEALTH

Submitted by Dr. Jennifer Evans



Dr. Jennifer Evans

The emergence of a new year gives us all an opportunity to make a fresh start. Oftentimes, we use this moment to make new health and fitness goals, lifestyle changes, and life enhancing decisions. I would like for 2016 to be a momentous year for each of you, both old and new patients! Whatever your desires are for making you a better you, I'm here to help! Many of you may be unaware of the vast benefits of chiropractic care and its ability to help achieve optimal health. Lets make 2016 your healthiest year yet! Allow me to be your health and wellness coach.. Together we will get you properly aligned in your body, mind, and soul!

A TESTIMONIAL...



Allene Glapion-Tellis

Relief does not begin to explain what Dr. Jennifer Evans of Eastern Carolina Medicine in Florence, SC gave me. I've been dealing with severe pain in my hips, lower-back and left knee for longer than I can remember. My legs would swell severely after any extended periods of either sitting or standing. Sleeping has been painful and difficult for so long, I'd just been resolved to live with a few hours of fitful sleep.

Then in about February of this year my right shoulder blade began to hurt really badly and my fingers started to go numb. I'd been to my general practitioner, who told me that my back pain was due to my weight and age and that the only way to get relief would be dropping 60 pounds and even that would only go so far. The doctor also gave me a three-month prescription for a muscle relaxer to treat the pain in my shoulder and numbness in my fingers, with the explanation that it was just tension.

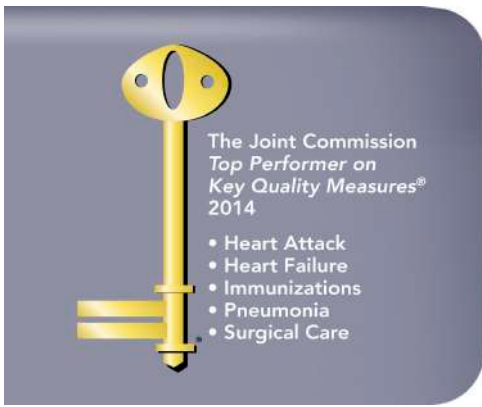
After three months of taking muscle relaxers with only a miniscule amount of relief, over ten years of lower back pain, almost four years of knee and hip pain, ended up in a neurologist office getting a nerve conduction study and MRI, still with no solution to my constant pain. I just couldn't take it anymore and decided to go

see Dr. Evans.

After all that time with pain, two visits are all it took for Dr. Evans to deliver what I can only explain as "a delicious absence of pain". I told Dr. Evans that I didn't even understand the amount of pain I was in, until it was gone. I'd never for one moment even considered that I'd have the kind of relief I now enjoy. Dr. Evans saved me from a life filled with chronic pain. Thankful is too small to explain what I am for her help, as soon as I think of a better word I'll be sure to tell her.

CHS EARNS 'TOP PERFORMER ON KEY QUALITY MEASURES®' RECOGNITION FROM THE JOINT COMMISSION

Submitted by Kim J. Geiger, Director of Marketing



Carolinas Hospital System announced today that it has been recognized as a 2014 Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® by The Joint Commission, the leading accreditor of health care organizations in the United States.

Carolinas Hospital System was recognized as part of The Joint Commission's 2015 annual report "America's Hospitals: Improving Quality and Safety," for attaining and sustaining excellence in accountability measure performance for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care and immunization. Carolinas Hospital System is one of only 1,043 hospitals (from a field of more than 3,300 eligible hospitals in the United States) to

achieve the 2014 Top Performer distinction.

The Top Performer program recognizes hospitals for improving performance on evidence-based interventions that increase the chances of healthy outcomes for patients with certain conditions. The performance measures included in the recognition program include heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care, children's asthma, inpatient psychiatric services, stroke, venous thromboembolism, perinatal care, immunization, tobacco treatment and substance use.

This is the third year Carolinas Hospital System has been recognized as a Top Performer. Carolinas Hospital System was recognized in 2012 and 2013 for its performance on accountability measure data for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care. To be a 2014 Top Performer, hospitals had to meet three performance criteria based on 2014 accountability measure data, including:

- Achieve cumulative performance of 95 percent or above across all reported accountability measures;
- Achieve performance of 95 percent or above on each and every reported accountability measure with at least 30 denominator cases; and
- Have at least one core measure set that had a composite rate of 95 percent or above, and within that measure set, achieve a performance rate of 95

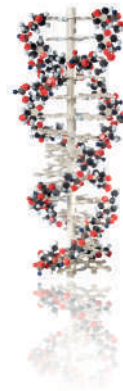
percent or above on all applicable individual accountability measures.

"Delivering the right treatment in the right way at the right time is a cornerstone of high-quality health care. I commend the efforts of Carolinas Hospital System for their excellent performance on the use of evidence-based interventions," said Mark R. Chassin, MD, FACP, MPP, MPH, president and CEO, The Joint Commission.

"We understand what matters most to patients at Carolinas Hospital System is the quality and safety of the care they receive. That is why we have made it a top priority to improve positive patient outcomes through evidence-based care processes," said Darcy Craven, CEO, Carolinas Hospital System. "Carolinas Hospital System is proud to be named a Top Performer as it recognizes the knowledge, teamwork and dedication of our entire hospital staff."

For more information about the Top Performer program, visit www.jointcommission.org/accreditation/top_performers.aspx.

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We Innovate Healthcare

FIVE SECRETS TO WEIGHT LOSS

Submitted by Dr. David Gittens



More than one-third (34.9% or 78.6 million) of U.S. adults are obese (JAMA). Obesity-related conditions include heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer, some of the leading causes of preventable death. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was \$147 billion in 2008 U.S. dollars; the medical costs for people who are obese were \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was \$147 billion in 2008 U.S. dollars; the medical costs for people who are obese were \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight. Obesity is higher among middle age adults, 40-59 years old (39.5%) than among younger adults, age 20-39 (30.3%) or adults over 60 or above (35.4%) adults.

Let's now look at the five secrets to weight loss.

#1. Low calorie and low fat diets don't work. A study in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, reveal that calorie intake alone was not sufficient to predict weight loss. Calories are the measurement of potential energy in food. If you take in more energy than you need the body will store it as fat.

#2. Hormones affect not only your weight, but also your sleep,

digestion, energy, blood pressure, metabolism and mood. The three glands whose hormones are most related to your weight are: Adrenal, Thyroid and Pancreas. If your hormones are out of balance it is impossible to lose weight.

#3. To be healthy you must only eat and drink those things that are healthy for your body. Stay away from junk food. The accumulation of stress, pollutants and lack of nutrients create "Free radicals" which damages cells. Fruits and vegetables are high in "Antioxidants" which destroys free radicals. Drink plenty of spring or filtered water (half your body weight in ounces) daily, to avoid the increasing quantity of contaminants found in surface and tap water.

#4. You must exercise to be healthy and lose weight. Exercise build muscle mass. Muscle cells are where metabolism occurs. Metabolism determines how fast or slow your body converts food to energy. The more muscle mass the more metabolic activity. Women have a 10% slower metabolic rate than men, that's why women have more problems with weight gain and are slower to lose weight.

#5. Get out of pain. One of the main reasons people choose not to be active is the amount of physical pain they are in. A report found that 89 percent of adult Americans "have some sort of pain on a monthly basis". If the cause of your pain is not apparent, such as arcent, it is most likely due to undetected nerve damage. Undetected nerve damage not only cause pain but can interfere with metabolism and digestion.

If you are serious about reducing your weight and the associate risk factors (Diabetes, Hypertension, Stroke) consider a Wellness Practice that look at every aspect related to your health in general, in order to design an individual program to restore your ideal weight and vitality.

Stop Chasing Symptoms and Get to the Root of the problem

High Blood Pressure **Heart Disease**
Depression **Diabetes**
Thyroid Issues **Allergies**
Chronic Fatigue **Anxiety**
Auto Immune Disease **Irritable Bowel**
Hormone Imbalances

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Poor Diet **Genetics**
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FROM HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER TO HOSPITAL STANDOUT

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



Linda Evonne Brogdon, M.D.

Dr. Linda Evonne Brogdon grew up in Bluefield, VA, the youngest of seven children. Her father worked in the coal mines of neighboring West Virginia, and her mother was a stay-at-home mom.

During her high school years, she volunteered as a

Candy Striper at a local hospital in Bluefield. It was during that time she decided to become a doctor. "I was good at math and science, and I enjoyed helping others, so I made up my mind to pursue a career in medicine," said Dr. Brogdon. Dr. Brogdon earned her undergraduate degree in Biological Anthropology and

Anatomy from Duke University and her master's degree in Exercise Physiology from Temple University in Philadelphia. She received her medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh and completed her residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Tennessee.

During her college years, her father passed away, and her mother moved in with her. "Since my earliest years, I can always remember my parents saying, 'Study hard, apply yourself and be somebody.' Each of my sisters and my brother has either a master's degree or a Ph.D."

Dr. Brogdon explained that although medical school was long and hard, she did have some fun along the way. She was a cheerleader for the Duke Blue Devils for two years, and one summer she traveled to South Africa and participated in an archeological dig. "I didn't unearth anything spectacular, but I did enjoy the experience," she said.

Dr. Brogdon recently moved to Florence and joined the staff at Phillips & Coker OBGYN. "I'm excited to get to work doing what I was trained to do," said Brogdon. She looks forward to the opportunity of meeting new patients in the area and helping them feel more comfortable in their gynecological care. She believes this is vital for keeping patients in optimal health and increasing their quality of life.

Dr. Brogdon is board certified in OB/GYN medicine and is associated with Phillips & Coker OB/GYN, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. She is a member of the medical staff of Carolinas Hospital System. The practice is located in The Women's Center on the main campus of Carolinas Hospital System. Dr. Brogdon is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call (843) 665-9581.



THIS DOCTOR PRACTICES WITH HIS WHOLE HEART

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



Abdallah Kamouh, MD

Dr. Abdallah Kamouh grew up in a small village called Barja, about 30 miles outside of Beirut, Lebanon in a house on the side of a mountain overlooking the Mediterranean. His mother was a homemaker and his father was a

teacher and a successful artist. "It was a beautiful area to grow up in," Dr. Kamouh recalled. "High up in the mountains, one could go snow skiing, and where I lived we were only a short walk to the seashore."

Although the beauty of the area and the many things to do are memorable to him, his fondest recollections are the summers he spent working at the village pharmacy. "The drugstore in Barja was owned by one of the smartest men in our village. He was the go-to person for advice, help, wisdom and, also, medicine," said Dr. Kamouh. "When school was out the summer I was 10-years-old, I began working with him

in the pharmacy. The next summer, I was back at the pharmacy and people would come in and ask for 'Dr. Kamouh'. I became familiar with all the medicines and it was during those summers that I realized what my calling in life was to be. I continued my summer job at the pharmacy until I began college."

He received his undergraduate degree in sciences from Lebanese University in Beirut. He graduated third in his class in Medical School and was licensed to practice medicine in Beirut. Dr. Kamouh completed a three-year residency at American University of Beirut, and that same year, he came to the United States for his Residency in Internal Medicine at University Hospitals of Cleveland at Case Western University. This was followed by a Fellowship in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplantation at the University of Minnesota; a Fellowship in Cardiovascular Medicine at the University of Buffalo, and a fellowship in Interventional Cardiology at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh. He joined the staff of Carolinas Hospital System in September.

"I have been working with patients and medicine since I was 10-years-old, and I have found the study of cardiology to be the most

rewarding medical specialty," he explained. "Many patients have extreme heart conditions, and some do not expect to survive. When we can offer them care that assists in their condition, it's like giving someone their life back. That's almost unbelievable to me."

Dr. Kamouh is married, and his wife, also a physician, is a Pathologist with a specialty in Oncology. They met at the American University in Beirut and have a five-year-old son. He has four brothers: one's a dentist; one works in computer science; one is an attorney and an officer in the army and his youngest brother is in college. His sister is a physician at Cornell-Hamet University Hospital in Qatar.

Dr. Kamouh and his family enjoy traveling, dining out and playing soccer with their son. He is fluent in French, Arabic and English.

Dr. Kamouh is board certified in Interventional Cardiology, Cardiovascular Disease, and Internal Medicine. He is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance – Cardiology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance, and is a member of the medical staff of Carolinas Hospital System. He is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, please call (843) 674-4787.

A NEW HOME FOR HOPEHEALTH IN FLORENCE

Submitted by Tiffany S. Straus, Director of Community Relations



Deena Hilton, COO and Dr. Ed Behling, Chief Medical Officer

After nearly 25 years of serving the Pee Dee, HopeHealth Florence will open the doors of its new patient-centered community health center located at 360 North Irby Street on February 1, 2016. The opening of HopeHealth's new center is the result of years of hard work and collaboration among city and state partners.

In 2012, the organization was awarded one of three capital grants awarded to South Carolina health centers by the Department of Health and Human Services. The original grant called for HopeHealth to expand the current location on Palmetto Street. In 2013, Mayor Wukela, along with other influential Florence leaders, approached HopeHealth about the possibility of moving the project to the former Bush Recycling grounds. The City of Florence, Congressman James E. Clyburn, and the Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation had already made significant contributions toward the cleanup of the property. The City generously offered to donate the property to HopeHealth, and the community health center broke ground in August 2014.

HopeHealth is one of 17 nonprofit, federally qualified health centers in South Carolina and provides quality and affordable health care services to individuals in Florence, Clarendon, and Williamsburg Counties.

A 'Suite' Vision

A new design concept to enhance patient centered medical care was birthed out of a desire to move away from traditional medical offices with large waiting rooms. Each suite comfortably hosts two medical providers and their support team of nurses, medical assistants, and front office staff dedicated exclusively to the care of their patients. A dedicated phone number will be designated for each physician in their suite, allowing patients to speak directly with someone they know. The suite design intentionally increases communication between staff and patients, enhancing understanding and trust while also improving efficiency.

Another goal with the design was to create a flow that could improve wait times. The intent is to move patients directly to an exam room as soon as registration is complete. There will be a monitor that plays health education messages in each exam room, and these messages will eventually be tailored to each patient based on demographics such as age, sex, and chronic disease diagnoses.

The nurse or medical assistant will complete the initial assessment, reason for visit, vitals, medication review, updated history, and any standing orders so that when the medical provider comes in, the only task of that provider is to engage with the patient.

With this physical layout, the team is in one location to better carry out the goals of the patient-centered medical home. The central location of the team also enhances both individual patient tracking, as well as population management.

Routine Behavioral Health

New trends in patient-centered health care include integrated behavioral health in the primary care setting. This meets the high demand of behavioral health needs of individuals, while also decreasing the stigma of receiving care at a traditional mental health provider. The new building design will incorporate the availability of a behaviorist in each suite. The medical provider will offer a personal introduction to a behaviorist at the end of the primary care visit. The behaviorist will then perform a routine mental health evaluation. Additional supportive care will be available to patients with behavioral health concerns regarding depression and anxiety and address the social and psychological impact of the patient's diagnosis.

Patient-Centered Care

The new suite design will further HopeHealth's goals of providing cutting edge, affordable health care to residents across the Pee Dee, which aligns perfectly with the Patient-Centered Medical Home model of care and the overall mission of community health centers.

A grand opening celebration is planned for the spring, which will give the community an opportunity to have a clear vision of the new patient experience that will be provided in the new center. For more information about HopeHealth, contact Director of Community Relations Tiffany Straus at tstraus@hope-health.org or 843-667-9414.

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FACE OF THE NEW MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI TASKER

by Mallory Brayboy



Craig Addison

Craig Addison, Food & Beverage Coordinator at The Hilton Garden Inn of Florence, was born in Florence but spent the majority of his youth in Baltimore, MD. He describes Baltimore as “a multi-cultural city of hard-working people.” He returned to Florence and finished high school. Upon graduation, Addison traveled the country and landed his first hotel position with the Marriot in Indiana. Here he worked ten years filling positions from Front Desk to Food & Beverage Manager to Banquet Manager.

Addison ventured off into other food venues and worked in retail for a short time, before relocating back to his hometown of Florence three years ago. He has now been the Food & Beverage Coordinator at The Hilton Garden Inn for the last 2½ years. “I always had a passion for food, but I never thought I’d have a career in it. They say sometimes your passion turns into your paycheck and I found that to be true,” says Addison.



Dungeness Crab Sandwich with Sweet Potato Fries

Addison says his favorite thing about the industry is meeting different people from all walks of life. He also finds joy in satisfying customers. “I love to see people walk away happy from something that I have provided for them,” he says. “It always gives you a good, warm feeling.” Working with and meeting a host of different individuals has sparked an interest in the Food & Beverage Coordinator. He hopes to offer event planning services in the near future that will handle the catering, location, décor, attire, and transportation for those looking to have exceptional events.

Customers of The Hilton Garden Inn are always guaranteed a delicious meal. A crowd favorite is their Crispy Salmon dish, a pan-seared and lacquered 6oz salmon filet, finished off in the oven with a sweet sesame sauce layered atop a bed of sautéed bokchoy, fresh green beans, and their jade rice.

Addison says he is a hands-on manager and helps the kitchen crew with techniques to make them better at what they do. He even touches the pots and pans at times. “When they get busy I do a little cooking myself,” chuckles Addison.

The hotel restaurant is not only open to hotel guests, but to the public as well. Breakfast begins daily at 6a.m. and dinner hours are 5-10p.m. with happy hour specials 5-7 Monday – Friday. Addison refers to the restaurant as Florence’s best-kept secret.



Lump Crab with Avocado

The in-house restaurant caters to outside events as well. Their bacon-wrapped chicken is a popular request during catered events. The restaurant provides food and beverage to events held in the hotel’s banquet hall as well. “We have a wonderful banquet hall and banquet staff,” says Addison. The banquet hall is often rented out for weddings, receptions, birthday parties, and more. This past holiday season was a busy time for the staff with an event being held almost every day.

“My experience here with Raldex has been grand. I couldn’t work for a better management company,” says Addison. “I love what I do here. I love the people that I work for.”



• The Garden Grille & Bar

Enjoy a daily cooked-to-order hot breakfast buffet or an evening meal prepared by our full-service restaurant, The Garden Grille & Bar. Dine in one of the many areas offered such as our outdoor dining terrace, Pavilion Lounge, or order room service and we’ll bring the meal to your room!

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• Restaurants/Lounges

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small thing on the surface but the relationship and impact they can have with the patient and family is immeasurable.

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When a person makes a commitment to volunteer with hospice, the first step is to get connected through a volunteer coordinator. The coordinator helps the new volunteer acquire the orientation and training required to allow him/her to get started in the field. The training is approximately six hours and is often broken into smaller segments for the convenience of the volunteer.

Not every volunteer in hospice works directly with patients, there are hundreds of ways a volunteer can be utilized in a hospice organization. Hospice sponsored education, events and service projects are just a few of the areas where a volunteer could have an impact. It is the coordinator's job to ensure each volunteer is positioned for success in his/her chosen role.

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FRATERNITY NEVER STOPS DELIVERING ON ITS FOUNDING PROMISE

by Les Echols



Alpha Beta Beta Chapter presents check to The Hartsville Boys and Girls Club

HARTSVILLE - Omega Psi Phi Fraternity is more than something college-aged males do to be a part of something. With its core principles of manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift, it is an organization that embodies and espouses comradery, manhood and service in every sense of the word. Becoming an Omega man is a proud accomplishment for members and has become synonymous with achievement and empowerment. Omega Psi Phi was the first black fraternity founded at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). It was founded November 17, 1911 by three students and a faculty member on the campus of Howard University. The organization gives young men a platform for positive achievement and empowerment. Omega Psi Phi is known for assisting youth that in many cases cannot attend college or even attend summer camp because of lack of finances. While

they cover a large spectrum, Alpha Beta Beta Chapter of Hartsville South Carolina maintains a pinpoint focus on these key areas of scholarship, education, philanthropy and political/civic engagement.

- The men of Alpha Beta Beta Chapter have diverse backgrounds and careers such as attorneys, doctors, military, accountants, educators, athletic coaches, and engineers.
- Support the Hartsville Boys and Girls Clubs by donating money and sponsoring kids to summer camp each year.
- Financially support the Hartsville Chapter of NAACP.
- Support the Darlington County School District through mentoring and an annual back to school bash which consist of partnering with the other fraternities and sororities in the Hartsville area.
- Sponsored the 6th District Council Meeting in the Hartsville area which created an enormous economic boost to the city and county.
- Support the St. Jude Children Hospital and the Smithsonian African-American Cultural Center on a national level.

Former chapter Basileus Donnell Camp has been a member of Omega Psi Phi since 1974, but joined Alpha Beta Beta chapter in 1998. Donnell learned the value of scholarship at an early age. A star athlete in high school, Donnell went to college focused on athletics, but was quickly encouraged through strong mentors to focus on academics and join an organization that

echoes that focus. His passion for Omega has kept him active in the fraternity for 40 years, and, throughout the years, he has seen all the positive the organization does. Each year since joining, Donnell has seen a significant increase in the quality and quantity of these helpful programs.

“We have essay contests, we have mentoring programs to improve SAT and ACT scores at no cost to the students. We also assist with college textbooks”, said Camp. “On a national level, we have an extensive history of growth and service, from Dr. Charles Drew to Congressman James Clyburn. We started as an African American fraternity, but the multicultural dynamics of today’s society has increased our status to be an inclusive organization focused on diversity and global service”, continued Camp. The chapter has events such as their annual Talent Hunt Program (February) Achievement Week Program (November). The Mardi Gras (March) and a golf tournament (June) that help to fund these programs.

Another aspect of teamwork that Omega Psi Phi is adamant about is their willingness to work with other fraternities and sororities. Many people don’t realize the effort put into being a united front and creating joint service ventures to benefit the community. “Our goal is to uplift the community and we can do that and accomplish more together,” Camp said with passion.



OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY, INC.

“Friendship is Essential To The Soul”



TALENT HUNT PROGRAM - (March 6, 2016) - provides exposure, encouragement and financial assistance to talented young people participating in the performing arts. Winners are awarded recognition and may be given college scholarships.



ALPHA BETA BETA MARDI GRAS - (March 11, 2016)- We present Mardi Gras Queens, also award cash prizes for first, second and third place for best costumes. It’s an Adult atmosphere, with live entertainment.



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ACHIEVEMENT WEEK - (November 13, 2016) - is observed each November and is designed to recognize those individuals at the local and international levels who have contributed to community uplift. A High School Essay Contest is to be held in conjunction with Achievement Week.

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JAZZ AND MORE ADDS FLAVOR TO DOWNTOWN NIGHTLIFE

by Mallory Brayboy

A love for music inspired Marvin Williams to open After Dark Jazz Café. Williams says he gets joy from singing but doesn't have the nerve to perform; he would rather just admire the talent. "I see jazz like a fine cigar. It's an acquired taste. A lot of it is instrumental. I love it," says the café owner.

After Dark Jazz café opened May 2015 in downtown Florence. The café features live jazz and neo-soul performances. It caters to the 25+ crowd. "I want to keep it for the more mature adult because they don't have too many places around here. They need someplace to hang out," says Williams.

The café threw its first day party in Fall 2015 and it was a great success. Williams plans to have more in the future. The Halloween Masquerade Ball was also a hit. "I didn't think that people would really get into it. I was surprised because everyone was in costume. We had a great time," says Williams. The party featured live music from the Fire & Desire band.

Aside from the café's usual activities, Williams would like to rent the space out to other groups and businesses. "The location, the atmosphere, and the ambiance are all a great place for parties," says Williams. McLeod Hospital recently hosted a shag dance lesson at the café. This is just one of the endless possibilities offered by the café.

Initially, After Dark Jazz Café held open mic nights and comedy nights weekly. Williams is always on the search for talented people to perform. "What I like to focus on is making sure we have good talent in here. No one can ever come in and say they had a bad experience," says Williams.

His biggest challenge so far has been the genre of music his café specializes in; jazz. Most people in the area are more comfortable with the r&b and rock music that is popular throughout the local nightlife scene. "A smaller town hasn't had as many options, so as business owners we have to help them learn how

to use the options that they have," says Williams. Williams wants people to be able to capitalize of the fun that can be had all in the same vicinity. "You can come shop, drink, eat, and party all within walking distance," says Williams.

"We as business owners can only do so much. We can provide a product but it's up to the community to decide on whether or not they want that product to stay around. William says he is not afraid to seek help from the community. He is looking for folks with good ideas and says he is open to a variety of things. Williams didn't come taking it for granted." I knew it was going to be hard work. I'm learning as I go. I'll make mistakes here and there. I'll adjust and hopefully I can get what the people want."

Future plans for the café include bringing in bigger acts, popularizing bands that frequent the stage, expanding the building, and consistency with the crowds.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Submitted by Chynaa Tomlin



Fifty years ago, communication was a lot different from what we are exposed to now. Most correspondence was done through snail mail (I, for instance, remember mostly writing letters to my grandmother until I was around 14), and while landline phones were around, not everyone had one. Since then, a plethora of strides have been taken to make communicating as effortless as possible. In only seconds, you can communicate with someone half way across the world. For instance, in 2011, the news of Osama Bin Laden's death spread like wildfire on social media twenty minutes before news outlets started covering it, and an entire hour before

President Obama held a press conference about it. In an hour and a half, there were more than 583,000 tweets about this one topic. Four years later, news spreads even faster.

Since the 1950s, digital communications has changed the way we do everything. You can talk to anyone, anywhere, anytime. News spreads like wildfire. Businesses heavily rely on social media to reach demographics that they couldn't reach before. People share their big moments in life to all of their friends and family at once. People can now easily make their hobbies their income (I admittedly shop on Etsy on the regular). Some chronicle their lives on blogs and social media outlets, and a handful of those even make money for it. We've all become in a sense more unified.

Why does this happen? Well for one, it seems like technology is more accessible than ever. In 2014:

- 98% of adults had digital TV in their homes
- 89% personally used a mobile phone
- 86% access the internet anywhere
- 53% used social media
- Adults estimated to have spent more than 20 hours online at home in a week, average
- 52% of companies use social media to connect and communicate with customers

Looking at these numbers, it's relatively easy to see that it's easy for our perceptions,

ideas, and even culture can be molded by technology. So as we continuously evolve from the snail mail and telegraph to text messages and Google hangouts, I am bringing about Digital Empowerment Mastermind: Empowerment Luncheon and Workshop, an independently organized event occurring in February 20, 2016 in Florence, SC.

As a young professional in the digital communication field, one of my goal has always been to provide educational and informative opportunities to her fellow peers that wasn't provided to me. Instead of looking outside to South Carolina to find women excelling in this field, I'm making it my goal to bring together 6 professional women in digital communications based in the state with careers ranging from web design and blogging to video production and online media to give talks that are idea-focused. They will also give personal insight on how they are excelling in their careers and advice and tips on standing out in their individual niche of digital communications.

Let's continue to grow and evolve with this world around us; there's no need to be left in the dust! Knowledge and opportunity can only make us better women and business leaders.

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SPREADING HIS GIFTS IN ALL SEASON(ING)S

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Nickol, Chef John King and Ms. Dot

If there would be one single thing that John F. King could change about the restaurant experience, surprisingly, it is cultural. “Not legislative, but customary.

Restaurants have gotten away from the family concept and in my mission here at Cooking@Rocky’s I want to return to that,” he said.

Executive Chef and Owner of the company by the same name – Cooking at Rocky’s – Chef John has some roots and wings grounded in the industry. Many of his mom’s blessings are falling upon him, however he has cultivated some for himself and his protégés yet to come. “What I love most about the restaurant industry is that I get to meet new people every single day and I like to see their faces when they are happy and appreciative of/for the food that I/we had just prepared for them.”

His most favorite dining memory is home based but from the public point of view, he was at the national convention of the American Culinary Federation for chefs, where he interacted with chefs from all over the world. This graduate of Johnson & Wales University loves to make people/customers feel good after having eaten dishes that he and he and his team have freshly prepared and he considers himself really fortunate to have his mom among his staff. “Above my schooling, I adore my immediate people, my love for people in general and my ability to serve,” he said.

In the repeat business for many years, he says he measures the success of a restaurant by the quality of its service. “Having repeat customers – along with the number of years they’ve been in service – is a pretty good reliable yardstick,” he told.

One of his proudest moments at work is when family pitched in. “When we opened Cooking at Rocky’s*, that grand opening was an awakening for the dream I had held for a while. My whole immediate family – mother, wife & children (three generations) – were interconnected in an entirely new different way!”

Now a frontrunner in the hotseat of Florence’s and South Carolina’s hospitality business, Chef John says he “never meets a stranger when they step in his place of business” at 2525 S. Cashua Drive. My staff and I learned a long time ago to treat every customer as they come in as a friend and as they exit as family,” he beamed.

Speaking of his staff, co-workers (including family), they say that “Chef John is best at food knowledge, then guest interaction” the latter of which they are charged with taking good care of.

Married to Nickol, they share two sons, and he rallies around his restaurant team which includes his mentor/mother Mrs. Dorothy King, known throughout the community from Francis Marion University’s cafeteria/cottage food services across decades. Now there is no dispute that the apple does not fall far from the tree. Breakfast/lunch/dinner is there for the asking.



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