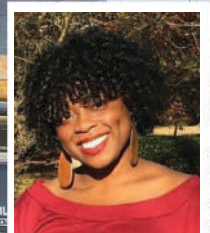


# DIVERSITYWORKS

OCTOBER 2017 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 4

"For All of Us"



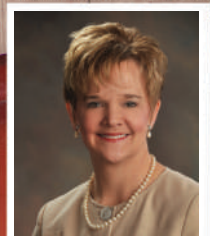
ERICKA BENNETT



DR. FRED CARTER



RONNIE DUNCAN



LINDA WEATHERFORD

**BAKED WITH FAMILY TRADITION**

**BENNETT NAMED DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

**FMU NURSING LANDS \$1.8 MILLION**

**INTRODUCING AGAPE HOSPICE'S CDO**

**WEATHERFORD NAMED WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT**

## FEATURING:

**Fred Ruiz, Co-Founder Ruiz Foods**

L to R: Matt Ruiz (Fred's youngest son), Travis Beck (Fred's grandson), Fred Ruiz and Tyler Beck (Fred's grandson).



# HONDA

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



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HopeHealth



Dr. T. Alissa Wartens  
FMU



Emmanuel Quaye, MD  
Magnolia Health Care, Inc.



College Team Up  
FDTC & Coker College



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## MISSION AND VISION

### OUR MISSION

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

### OUR VISION

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

Spanish Version

*Translated by: Yadira Santiago, MA*

### NUESTRA MISIÓN

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

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

### NUESTRA VISIÓN

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

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# FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

## YOUR HELP IS HERE!



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

Autumn is finally here, but what season of life are you experiencing right now? A season of unbelievable overflow and growth? A season in which you say times could not possibly get any worse? If it's your best, continue to seek excellence. If it's your worst, don't let go of your grip. Whichever you are facing, just know that we at Diversity Works Magazine© have help on the way.

All in all, it has been one heck of a year, in various ways. Threats of Hurricane Irma reminded our local community of the power outages we faced just a year ago when Hurricane Matthew ripped through South Carolina. But this time, we were stocked up on supplies and ready to weather the storm. As a nation, we recently faced the horrific mass shooting in Las Vegas, and that left many stunned and wondering how much worse this world can get. As a community, we are quite diversified, but it takes empathizing and placing ourselves in the shoes of others to help them see that things will get better. Just remember that we can, and shall, make it through the difficulties.

This issue's cover story highlights the co-founder of Ruiz Food Products, Fred Ruiz, a man who has overcome difficulties in business and has been keeping family tradition alive for generations. At the same time, he lets you know how important diversity and inclusion are to his company and its growth.

Other businesses you don't want to miss hearing from include Honda, United Way, the Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, as well as others. We have Robin Lewis bringing diversity in spirituality. And as always, find out which schools and colleges like FSD1, Claflin University, Florence-Darlington Tech, Francis Marion, etc., have special recognitions, programs, donations, partnerships, and more.

While we prepare to end the year with a bang, in this issue we take the time to acknowledge Breast Cancer Awareness Month, National Adoption Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, National Family Caregivers Month and National Disability Awareness Month. There are so many exciting events coming up in our area that will surely keep your mind off the trials. The HopeHealth AIDS Walk is coming to raise awareness. It's that time again, time to "GO NUTS" at the 14th Annual South Carolina Pecan Festival. This year, the stage is set to be the biggest year to date with new attractions, their biggest line-up of entertainment ever, and the return of some old favorites. The festival was also just named the best fall festival in South Carolina by Travel + Leisure. You must read on about the city of Dillon's seventh annual Holiday Goodness Bazaar returning. And don't forget about the city of Marion's 28th annual Holiday Prelude in December.

Financially, we check in with Anderson Brothers Bank, New York Life, and ArborOne. Learn more diversity and inclusion practices from Dr. Nika White, who asks if some addicts matter more than others. You'll be surprised at what this means and will be thoroughly impressed with her answer.

During the month of October, we celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month and celebrate workers who are overcoming challenges and are excelling on the job. We highlight the Florence County Disability and Special Needs Board that not only identifies the strengths of individuals with intellectual disabilities, but it also hires our disabled workers like the hardworking Steven Finch.

We give thanks to businesses in our community like HopeHealth, which was recently recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance for embodying characteristics necessary to offer clients highly coordinated patient-centered care. Also, read on to find out which insurance group Carolinas Hospital System is renewing its partnership

with to better serve patients. Then keep reading to get important health information, like the top five ways to regulate your blood sugar levels. And you will want to read Dr. Refvem's article on determining if hip replacement is the right way to go for treatment.

During the month of November, we also recognize National Family Caregivers, including New Generations Adult Day Care and Cynthia Benjamin. Benjamin was recently awarded Agape Hospice's recipient of the Fruit of the Spirit Award, and New Generations is the second largest adult daycare in South Carolina. For National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, meet several people who have dealt with cancer in their family, including those who have lost close relatives and even one who has fought and beat cancer. From Dr. Emmanuel Quaye, learn a "new thing" about breast cancer, which is about the benefits of probiotics. Then in celebrating National Adoption Month in November, we meet the Colcloughs, a couple that overcame a heartbreaking loss and conquered adoption.

You see, again we have your entire lifestyle covered. But if you aren't impressed yet, there's even more. And once you're done, we hope that you are overflowing with a renewed mindset that motivates you to continue on what is sure to be an amazing journey through life. Remember, deep within, you embody resilience, so let's proudly arise from the flames and ashes to soar once again, just like a phoenix would.

Enjoy!

## PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE



*Diana M. Murphy  
Publisher*

Over the past six years, every October has unearthed annual growth for Diversity Works Magazine©, for which we give thanks to God, our advertising partners/supporters and our entire community. We strive in bringing everyone together as one team, being all-inclusive, bringing out the best in each of us so that we can all achieve great things.

Finally, we have a way to supportively enhance the characteristics that make each of us unique individuals by appreciating each other and recognizing our differences, while understanding our similarities. We are seeing continuous progress through partnerships which strengthen the approach to career development, mentoring, recruiting and retentions along with community outreach.

Growing in and creating awareness of the need for greater diversity in organizations across South Carolina, we see former misty barriers clearing to reveal that people from different backgrounds really do bring a fresh perspective and we – through our publications and non-profit -- will continue to work hard, redirecting and bridging this creation toward the more positive change the Creator initially intended.

As we advance in promoting best practices in diversity and inclusion, we will focus on bringing the best people together for success of the individual, diverse organizations and our whole community as we are indeed stronger together.

Please take the time to read yet another great edition of Diversity Works Magazine© and as always to our team, thank you for all you do. I Appreciate You All...

*Diana M. Murphy  
CEO & Publisher*



## DRIVING INNOVATION AND BUSINESS GROWTH

# DRIVING GROWTH

it is necessary for them to innovate rapidly and also do it cost-effectively. This need has been there, but its significance has grown over the last few decades. Even during the period of recession, top leadership was focused on growth, and they believed technology to be the main enabler of innovation.

### Your Role as a Leader

Once the right skills, strategy and processes are in place to embrace new ideas and initiatives, there is an opportunity for the thought-leaders to leverage technology to enable innovation. The list technologies that have converged to drive innovation can be long, but summarizing, cloud computing, analytics, social networking, and mobile device based computing are the key fundamentals. These are the technologies that enable new ways to innovate, develop products, interact with crew and clients, team up, and manage data. The survey observed that firms showing remarkable results demonstrate greater mastery in leveraging these four digital technologies to innovate, plan, measure results and create value.

Excluding these, many other factors show unique impact when applied. Also, they are complementary in support of creating value and result. Still, to achieve the growth-driven innovation, the values need to be understood. For example, with social media, people can find others to collaborate and co-create with. Wireless devices enable access to the databases, to applications, and to numerous other purposes. Analytics help us to make action-derived meaning and presentation of all the data.

### Driving Innovation and Growth

There is a primary factor without which even the most innovative tech can't deliver high-value, and that is business strategy and goals. The airtight business plan and a crystal-clear vision of where you want to see the organization are a must, as these factors will help in defining and setting the context for the role development, research, and innovation will play in enabling profitable growth. It will also help to determine the type of innovation wanted and the way you need to organize to effect change.

Innovation can be manifested in multiple ways, but the type of innovation that is needed must be determined. Notably, there are three types of innovations based on industry goals and technology that need to be matched. The first consists of Incremental innovations that make small changes to a company's existing technologies and business models. Next, Breakthrough innovations that make significant changes to either the technology or business model, producing significant growth. And finally, Radical innovations, which take place more rarely, combine technology and business model innovation to create major new industries with exponential growth.

Companies need to set up their work culture around innovation and establish appropriate metrics and processes to integrate innovation into the corporate culture. For the organizations that were able to apply this research culture and establish the processes, what difference did they apply? Which types of skill sets are needed to drive it and are ultimately responsible in the company for innovation? How will the location of various teams be decided, and how will they collaborate? And finally, how can mechanisms and processes around innovation be defined?

### Getting started with innovation

First and foremost, it is necessary for companies to understand the ways to organize themselves around innovation, and define processes

In today's competitive global marketplace, firms need to be driving effective innovation in their services as well as products. Furthermore,

to get the best results from innovation. Initially, companies need to consider their strategic imperatives and ways to make a holistic transformation through process, structure and people.

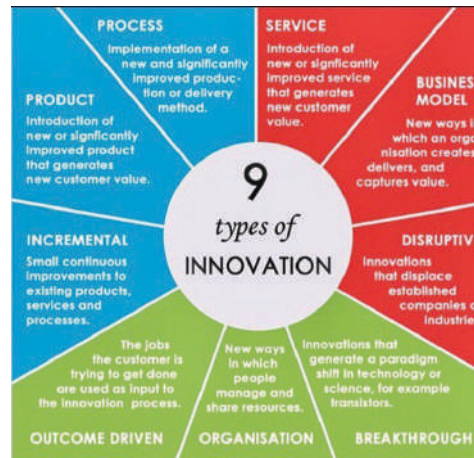
### Technoception: Innovations used for Innovating

The final step is to identify the innovations and latest technologies that are best suited to their unique circumstances. Companies that work to improve enterprise productivity need to reduce complexity and then drive a comparatively agile IT environment as this environment is an enabler for business growth, while using emerging technologies. Notably, social networks can be used to collaborate and communicate (internally as well as externally) and to co-create and generate ideas for solutions and service. Enabling a remote and mobile workforce that can collaborate regardless of time and location can also be done.

Companies can leverage analytics to derive value from connected data and get a comprehensive overview of information. Utilizing the cloud technology to optimize your IT is one of the technologies that is adapted widely for business growth. How companies would create and sustain appropriate executive commitment to execute the innovation program successfully will depend on the business goals and predictions market scenario, for any particular company.

Leaders want more innovation in their cultures. To compete, they know they can't play it safe – which requires employees to take chances and not be afraid to fail. Yet, most organizations subtly (or overtly) encourage safe behavior by rewarding straightforward successes and punishing failures. Employees get the signal quickly that taking work risks is just too high a personal risk for their careers.

It's no wonder that Gallup's research shows that only 13 percent of employees are engaged at work. If we're continuously told we need to be innovative and creative, yet we're limited in our ability to do so, dissatisfaction and stagnation set in.



### Set the example.

Leaders have enormous influence in setting the tone for how risk-taking will be tolerated and how failure will be managed. I know of one leader who kept a plaque on his wall of everyone who had tried and failed – spectacularly – in the pursuit of an audacious goal. Every executive saw the names when he or she interviewed

for the job and each time they came into the leader's office. The tone was clear: we value risk-taking and reward it.

### Communicate.

When new ideas are being formulated, they need to be communicated and celebrated. We often wait to see what happens before we make any announcements. In other words, we want to limit exposure to failure. The real learning is in the development phase as that's where the risk taking happens.

Leaders should have a set time in meetings for updates on innovation and to share what they see happening across the organization. This is also a good time to celebrate positive failure and to learn from it.

When innovation is rolled out as a cultural imperative, you can watch the eye rolls. It's much more powerful, and real, to begin implementing innovation trials that are shared and communicated with others.



# TREASURE YOUR COMMUNITY WITH UNITED WAY

Submitted by Rachel Baggett, Director of Marketing & Initiatives



The United Way of Florence County selected a pirate theme to go with this year's campaign tagline, "Treasure Your Community."

We all want to make our community a better place. However, change and growth cannot happen if we do not first learn to treasure our community. Here at the United Way of Florence County, we are working hard to help individuals treasure their community and, in turn, make Florence County a wonderful place to call home.

One of the ways we help you treasure your community is by allowing you to help those who are helping others. Each year, the United Way of Florence County partners with local non-profit agencies that are making a difference where it is needed the most. Often times, we consider these partner agencies as buried treasures because many individuals do not know what agencies or services are available in our community. After we partner with these agencies, our first goal is to let the community know who the agencies are and what the agencies do. By doing this, the public not only becomes aware of the needs of the community, but it also knows where to go for help should anyone ever need it.

Our 17 partner agencies for the 2017-2018 "Treasure Your Community" campaign year include:

- American Red Cross – Eastern SC Chapter
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pee Dee
- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee
- CARE House of the Pee Dee
- The Chrysalis Center of Circle Park
- Civil Air Patrol
- Florence Area Literacy Council
- Florence County Disabilities & Special Needs Board
- Florence Family YMCA

- Girl Scouts of Eastern South Carolina
- Lighthouse Ministries
- Mercy Medicine FREE Clinic
- Pee Dee Area Council Boy Scouts of America
- Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Assault
- Pee Dee Speech & Hearing Center
- The Salvation Army
- Senior Citizens Association of Florence County

Our second goal for our partner agencies is to help financially support them and their services. This is only possible when individuals like you give to the United Way. Through your donations, we can provide the community with life-changing services like shelter and therapy for victims of sexual or domestic abuse or provide emergency aid for families who have suffered a home fire. Without your donations, these agencies would have to reduce the amount of individuals they help, no longer offer certain services, or worse, shut their doors for good. To give you a better idea of just how impactful a donation to the United Way can be for your community, check out the results we were able to achieve with the donations made to our 2016-2017 campaign.

- 3,205 individuals received life-changing medical, dental, hearing, or therapy services
- 4,746 youths were provided with programs that develop character and leadership skills
- 91,844 meals were delivered to homebound senior citizens
- 4,230 individuals were provided with either a meal and/or a night's stay in a shelter
- 10,035 individuals received financial assistance to prevent eviction or keep utilities connected

For more information about the United Way or to make a donation, please call 843-662-2407 or visit our website at [www.uwflorence.org](http://www.uwflorence.org). You can also view this year's campaign video on our website to hear the stories of several individuals from the community who have been helped through donations made to the United Way campaign.



## Florence County Council

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

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

### Council Members

Kent C. Caudle, District 5 Chairman

Willard Dorriety, Jr., District 9 Vice Chairman

Reverend Waymon Mumford, District 7 Secretary/Chaplain

Jason M. Springs, District 1

Roger M. Poston, District 2

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# COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES



## Changing perspectives on D&I

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) promote capturing the best available talent and creating an environment in which diverse perspectives encourage innovation and improved decision making.

Externally, it focuses on understanding ethnic, cultural, religious and other differences to better capture market share.

Understanding about D&I has shifted within the United States from an early emphasis on reducing legal risk and accommodation to a broader view of enhancing differences for advantage.

In the U.S., we've evolved from being legislation- and compliance-focused and ensuring access to educational and work opportunities, to viewing diversity and inclusion as a competitive business advantage. Globally, customers have changed and companies need to adapt and serve a broader sector of clients and communities, or they will disappear from the marketplace. Businesses need to ask themselves, "Who is making the purchasing decisions? Do we understand their emerging needs?"

With globalization as a key driver for business success, coupled with seismic demographic change, being successful in D&I requires knowledge of differences outside of U.S. borders. We need to broaden our definitions of D&I, which has a very different meaning globally when compared to a U.S.-centric perspective. It's essential to look at diversity and inclusion through the lens of each country.

In addition to race, ethnicity, and gender (core elements of diversity in the United States), other factors such as age, socioeconomic status, educational background and religion may play a role in different countries that are equally, if not more, critical. Using Japan as an example, Gundling explains that with its "extremely low birthrate and a population that has

already begun to shrink, a defining diversity factor is generational. There is a major disparity between older and younger members of society that has an impact on consumer behaviors, workplace attitudes, teamwork, and appetite for risk taking."

Organizations thrive on leaders who have the capability of solving complex problems and recognizing opportunities. When people understand their own assumptions, mental maps and cultural dictates, they become more capable of understanding and including others' ideas. Only then can we incorporate new ways of thinking that lead us to the best business outcomes.

## Improve D&I initiatives

Polarity Management is a way to enhance D&I initiatives in organizations by framing complex issues that have two or more interdependent answers. When "either/or" frameworks do not apply (such as having a global mindset and being locally relevant, setting clear direction and being open to input from others), Polarity Management provides clarity. Examples of issues in which there is no "right" answer include:

- Centralization versus decentralization
- Individual versus team
- Stability versus change

This framework is useful in assessing the impact of potential solutions and corresponding unintended consequences if polarities are ignored. As an example, an organization that strives to be closer to customers streamlines decision-making by creating a decentralized structure, which then results in redundancy and limits economies of scale. In this example, the best solution will address these polarities effectively.

Polarity Management can help design D&I initiatives not only in terms of individual attitudes, but also to address more systemic issues such as strategy, people, systems, and talent management.



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## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

*Submitted by Honda of SC*

**TIMMONSVILLE-** Soichiro Honda, Honda's founder, once said, "Success represents one percent of your work which results from the 99 percent that is called failure."

A journey that Soichiro Honda launched decades ago, is now traveled by Honda associates at every Honda company around the world. That journey is called the NH Circle process.

NH Circles is the real-world application of the Honda Philosophy, which is based on respect for the unique abilities and contributions of each individual. NH Circles allow associates and their teammates to have an impact on the work they do. Ronda Gallagher, Associate Development Coordinator for Honda of South Carolina Mfg., Inc. (HSC) says, "It is widely believed throughout Honda that associates actively involved in the production of our products are in the best position to help processes evolve through innovation and teamwork."

### What is the meaning of "NH CIRCLE" and the symbol?

The meaning of "NH Circle" is having a keen awareness of the Now Honda, creating the New Honda in pursuit of the Next Honda.

In the NH Circle symbol, the joined N and H with three dots above the vertical elements represent three associates working closely together.



Steve Dillon, Jakea Burch, Evelyn Durant, Quinton Boykin, William Brown (Left to Right)

The C represents the open circle of continuous improvement. The color "blazing red" reflects the associate's desire to lead the way "carrying their own torch."



Darnell Seabrook, Rashan Underwood, Brandy Page, DeVanti LeGrant, Selwyn Rouse (Left to Right)

On Aug. 23 HSC hosted a run-off event in which two teams competed to showcase their NH Circle work.

The winner of the run off, "Mig Maters," will go to a North American NH Circle event to showcase his or her efforts with other Honda companies around the world.

This year's NH Circle event

Team Name	Theme
Mig Masters (WINNER)	Eliminate Weld Leads on the Floor / Increase Efficiency and Safety
Dollars & Sense	Cost Reduction by Accountability

is being held in Celaya Guanajuato, Mexico. Honda teams from around the globe will attend a week-long event to experience the food, people and overall culture before they present their themes. Often associates come back overwhelmed by the different cultures they are able to experience. However, for all their differences they find that they are all "Dream Builders" within the extended Honda team.

Honda believes in the Power of Dreams. But believing isn't enough. As Soichiro Honda said: "Action without philosophy is a lethal weapon; philosophy without action is worthless." Dreams enlighten, challenge and inspire associates, which fosters continuous improvement.



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# LINDA WEATHERFORD NAMED WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President



Linda Weatherford

**HARTSVILLE**—Linda Weatherford has been named the 2017 Woman of Achievement by the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce. Weatherford became SPC Credit Union’s first female CEO in January of 2016. Prior to CEO, she served as the director of Marketing and Business Development for SPC for 12 years. Since 1987, she has worked for credit unions in leadership roles and has been an advocate for the credit union movement, promoting the philosophy of

“people helping people.”

Weatherford achieved success in her career by devoting herself to leadership and developing the credit unions she served into competitive organizations. Travis Walters, chairman of the SPC Board of Directors, said, “In addition to her business competency, Linda possesses tremendous integrity, vision and faith in God. She is passionate about the credit union movement and how we can help others, especially the underserved in our communities.” Under her leadership as marketing director, SPC Credit Union’s Cares2Share program received the 2014 Duke Energy Citizenship and Service Award and the 2013 Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Award, which is coveted by credit unions across the nation.

“As a professional who believes in investing in others’ development, enriching the community, and balancing her personal and professional commitments, Linda Weatherford embodies the title of Woman of Achievement,” remarked Hartsville Chamber President Quinetta

Buterbaugh.

Weatherford serves on the board of the Carolinas Credit Union League (CCUL) as the board chairwoman, and the CCUL’s South Carolina Governmental Affairs Committee as the immediate past chairwoman. She has volunteered on behalf of numerous community organizations, including Darlington County Free Medical Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, Harvest Hope advisory board, House of Hope, The Humane Society and Animal Shelter, The Hartsville Soup Kitchen, Cornerstone Baptist Church Parking Lot Missions, McLeod Children’s Hospital and Children’s Miracle Network. She has been a contributor to the McLeod Cancer Center and supporter of Relay for Life. She was named the 2010 Darlington Professional Woman of the Year.

The Chamber presented the award during its first Women’s Leadership Symposium on Sept. 8. For more information about the Symposium, visit [www.hartsvillechamber.org](http://www.hartsvillechamber.org).

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



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# THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION HONORS HANESBRANDS INC. CEO GERALD EVANS JR.

Submitted by Debbie Hyler, Executive Director of the School Foundation



Gerald Evans Jr.

Gerald W. Evans Jr. was honored as Florence School District One's Distinguished Graduate at the 16th Annual School Foundation Celebration Gala held on Oct. 10.

Affectionately known by his high school classmates as "Bubba," Gerald graduated from South Florence High School in 1977. He earned his bachelor's degree in marketing and an MBA degree at the University of South Carolina. He began his career as a marketer for the

L'eggs hosiery brand, rejuvenated the Champion athleticwear brand, reinvented the company's global production operations across two hemispheres, and shepherded the company's other consumer powerhouse brands such as Hanes, Playtex, Bali, Maidenform, and Wonderbra as the company grew to become a Fortune 500 company. He now presides over the world's largest basic apparel company and has 34 years of experience in the apparel industry. He has held positions in marketing, sales and management and is noted for business excellence in a global economy.

Gerald and his wife, Lee, a graduate of Clemson University, have three grown children and live in Winston-Salem, N.C.

"Gerald Evans is the true definition of a leader," stated Debbie Hyler, executive director of The School Foundation. "From his roots in Florence, he has ascended to become a well-respected titan of industry, leading one of the largest apparel companies in the world with employees



in more than 40 countries on every inhabited continent. A true role model, he exemplifies the

importance of drive, vision, passion and humility as values for personal and professional success."

"The School Foundation spotlights the life and accomplishments of a successful Florence District One graduate and celebrates their successes each year at their annual gala," stated Jean Leatherman, chair of the foundation's fund development committee. "Managing over 70,000 employees is no small task, and Gerald's climb up the corporate ladder is very impressive. He is certainly a leader in his industry."

The School Foundation promotes educational excellence in Florence School District One through grants for innovative learning and through high impact initiatives designed to prepare all students for success. It is currently leading a school readiness awareness campaign focusing on preparing all children to enter kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed. Founded in 2000, it has funded \$1,355,377.90 in grants to educators in Florence School District One.



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# LEVERAGING HUMAN DIFFERENCE

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



Nika White

**GREENVILLE**-In the wake of what's happening in our world to potentially compromise the work of equity and inclusion that has been implemented, the time is now to become even more vigilant in educating ourselves on how to best value and manage human difference. Viewing diversity and inclusion as a leadership function is vital for well-functioning organizations. Years of experience have taught us that a diverse, inclusive workplace doesn't just organically occur. Yet, as we look to the future, we

recognize that huge demographic shifts are happening that impact society, requiring strategic diversity and intentional inclusion to be practiced at every level for optimal performance. To remain relevant, organizations must ensure their diversity and inclusion game is on and strong. To be passive about inclusion can be dangerous, and to ignore inclusion can be reckless. Matters of inclusion should be a c-suite level and board concern to set the tone for all corners of the organization. Now is the time to get in the game and be intentional about the work of inclusion.

Well intentions can be the greatest motivation to start a new initiative. But, sometimes plans fail to reach implementation because of misguided information. Diversity and inclusion is one of those initiatives often absent or lacking in effectiveness in organizations for a myriad of reasons. Most often the reason is the lack of "know how" or understanding of the value to the organization's mission.

Passion for organizational effectiveness and an inclusive society fuels my drive to help influencers understand the essentials of intentional inclusion leadership as paramount to successful organizations and thriving communities. This is why I am so honored that my company, Nika White Consulting, has been hired to plan and execute the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Summit for the Greenville Chamber of Commerce.

Plans for the **2017 Diversity and Inclusion Summit, LEVERAGING HUMAN DIFFERENCE: A Strategic Priority for Business Success & Community Prosperity** are underway. This Summit is scheduled for Oct. 17 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the TD Convention Center. This full day experience will engage business and community leaders across a wide range of private/public sectors and will consist of an opening plenary with keynote speaker, a luncheon with a keynote speaker and approximately 9 different workshops offered in between. The day will end with a **LEVERAGE. LAUNCH. LEAD** Networking Reception for all guests and speakers.

We have secured a dynamic roster of presenters who are all national and international experts skilled on a wide array of diversity strategies. This is a tremendous opportunity to learn from authorities who have years of experience. Viewing diversity and inclusion as a leadership function is vital for professional and personal development. The summit will address a variety of topics relevant to helping leaders more effectively manage and value human difference to create high performing organizations and thriving communities.

A full listing of session descriptions, speaker bios and registration information can be found online at [greenvillechamber.org](http://greenvillechamber.org).

If you are still not convinced that these types of efforts matter, consider that an effective diversity and inclusion strategy begins with believing that the outcomes are worth it. To believe in the results, one must first become educated on the benefits of inclusion, becoming knowledgeable on what it is and what it's not. Inclusion is not a program, it's a mindset. Programs get cancelled, but mindsets prevail. Inclusion is a strategy, philosophy, standard, expectation and a driver of business success.

I sound the alarm on this message every chance I get. Don't just take my word for it, but acknowledge the research from McKinsey, Catalyst and Deloitte and the likes who suggest that gender and ethnically diverse companies outperform their peers as measured by business, financials and talent outcomes.

I like to work with clients who believe that it is worth investing in their organizations to attract talent and yield high-performance results through strategic diversity and intentional inclusion. My clients understand that staying competitive in today's marketplace requires sustainable solutions to effectively engage diverse constituents. One of the greatest appreciations I have about being a diversity and inclusion practitioner is that after spending time learning the culture and practices, I can reveal to organizations insights about their work environment that employees may be thinking or experiencing but are reluctant to share because of perceived repercussions. Having a person of authority on diversity and inclusion to identify the opportunities and barriers can be helpful in creating sustainable efforts. It's not always easy to address less than ideal realities of an organization's culture that may hinder success, but it's essential to conduct an honest assessment to know where improvements are needed. An effective diversity and inclusion consultant recognizes the importance of earning clients' trust by confidently presenting data, offering solutions and encouragement to stay on course to reap rewards that come with strategic diversity and intentional inclusion.

If you are a diversity champion in your organization focus on what's right for the organization. You could very well be the difference needed to move your workplace from one that is passive about inclusion to one that strives to intentionally model inclusion.

## LEVERAGING HUMAN DIFFERENCE

### A STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS & COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

#### SUMMIT SPEAKERS & FACILITATORS



Dr. Atria Charles  
Breakfast Keynote



Bill Proudman  
Luncheon Keynote



Silas Carter



Dr. Stephanie Cooper-Lewter



Dr. Idella Glenn



Dr. Rebecca Heiss



Simma Lieberman



Kristin Meyer



Jonathan Parker



Darrick Paul



Dr. Myrlam Torres



Greenville Chamber  
**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SUMMIT**

**Viewing diversity and inclusion as a leadership function** is vital for professional and personal development. Years of experience have taught us that a diverse, inclusive workplace and society doesn't just happen, it requires intentionality and hard work.

Enhance your leadership by taking advantage of this opportunity to become more intentional in how diversity and inclusion is understood and practiced at both the individual and organizational level.

#### TOPICS THAT WILL BE ADDRESSED:

- Workplace Identity and Impact
- The Role of White Men in Equity & Inclusion
- Measuring Corporate Commitment through: Executive Leadership
- LGBTQ Inclusion: Finding Commonality in Our Multiple Identities
- Breakthrough Brain Science Approaches for Gender Inclusion & Advancing Women's Leadership
- Leading Bravely: Advancing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Navigating Four Generations in the Workplace
- Leading with Vision: Leveraging an Inclusion-minded C-Suite to Advance Profitability
- Art of the Conversation: Using Vocal Art to Advance Inclusion
- Latino Immigrants Making an Impact: Challenges & Opportunities

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For registration and full listing of session descriptions and speaker bios visit [greenvillechamber.org](http://greenvillechamber.org), or contact Nika White at 864-239-3727 or [nikawhiteconsulting@greenvillechamber.org](mailto:nikawhiteconsulting@greenvillechamber.org).

## BUSINESSES ARE TURNING OLD PROBLEMS INTO NEW OPPORTUNITIES



Problems, Problems, Problems – Wouldn't life be grand if we never had any problems? Everything would work perfectly, everyone would always get along and be happy, everything would be wonderful for everyone everywhere, and things would only get better as we live happily ever after.

The most commonly accepted method of solving problems is simply to remove the cause. But this method is not always as simple as it would seem. Determining the true cause of a problem can be a very complicated affair, and even if you get this right – removing the cause can just as easily create a whole new set of problems.

Wouldn't it be nice if a business could institute policies and procedures where problems would solve themselves, and the business would reap tremendous benefits in the process?

Today's business environment is characterized by excitement as much as it is by anxiety. As new technologies are constantly introduced into the workplace and transform how employees work, managers need to adjust in order to retain employees, streamline processes and stay competitive.

Companies of all sizes are looking for solutions that allow them to work and collaborate seamlessly from anywhere, transforming their businesses to be more efficient and mobile.

Many see such rapid change as particularly challenging for small to mid-sized businesses, where limits of capital, personnel and other resources may prevent them from being able to fully adapt to changes and implement fixes.

In fact, the opposite may be true. Because small to mid-sized businesses have less red tape to get through, they may be in a better position to become early adopters and outpace the competition. With an entrepreneurial spirit, they can turn these challenges into opportunities for growth. Here are five ways they are doing just that:

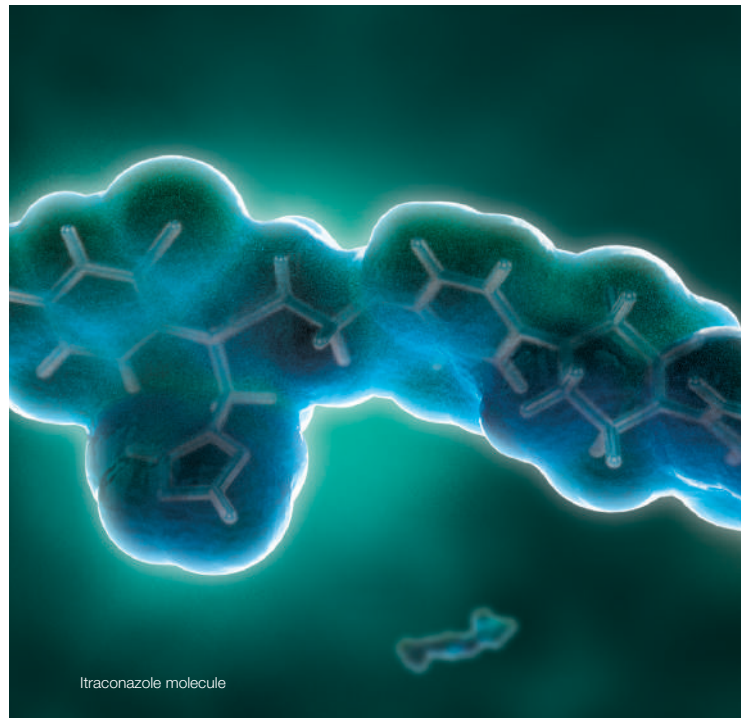
**1. Growing IT budget.** For all the promises that come with new software and hardware, there's also a price tag. Beyond implementing new technology, businesses need to grow their IT staff to ensure everything functions as it should.

**2. Keeping ahead of administrative tasks.** Providing an automated workflow, file sharing, remote desktop access and document signing is needed to coordinate with several people in a number of locations and not get bogged down by administrative work.

**3. Customer security and confidentiality.** Despite living in a digital age, many small and medium-sized businesses still rely on printed materials and faxes when working with clients. In fact, 72 percent of businesses agree that improved document processing would improve customer relations and increase their brand value.

**4. Generational differences.** It has often been said that there has never been a greater gap between generations than there is with millennial and older generations. Smart businesses use these differences to create a dynamic and diverse workplace. This is done through traditional mentoring programs in which older employees train younger ones on professional development, career advancement and numerous other soft and hard skills while the younger group can teach older workers how to efficiently use new technologies.

**5. Lack of space.** One of the biggest problems a growing business faces is in finding the space for an expanding staff, either in their home offices or in remote locations. By incorporating remote file sharing and workflow technology into their business plan, physical space has become less of an issue.



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# HYP GIVES TO HUMANE SOCIETY

Submitted by Quinetta M. Buterbaugh, President Hartsville Chamber



HYP board members deliver donation items to DCHS. From L to R: Matt Majka, Jordan Pupa, Alex Forrest

**HARTSVILLE**—The Hartsville Young Professionals (HYP) organization hosted an Ales and Tails donation drive event for the Darlington County Humane Society on Aug. 10 at Vintage Craft Beer and Wine Boutique. HYP members and the Hartsville community were invited to attend and donate an item or monetary donation of any size. Over \$1,000 was raised at the event, plus numerous items were collected. The donation drive is

one of the community service projects that HYP will put on this year.

A division of the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, Hartsville Young Professionals is an organization that strives to make Hartsville a better place for young professionals to live, work and play. Professional development, community service and social events are held throughout the year. For more information, visit [Hartsvilleeyp.org](http://Hartsvilleeyp.org).

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

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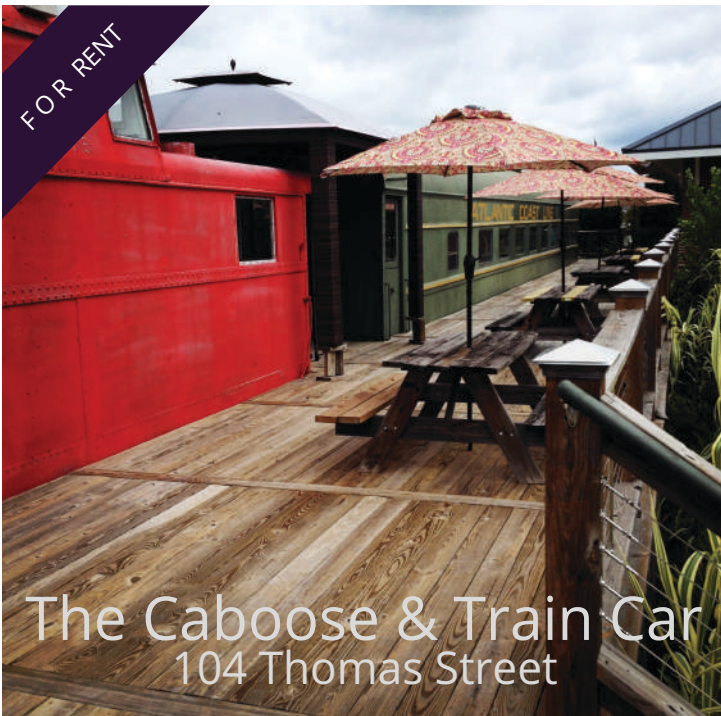
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# BENNETT NAMED DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Submitted by *Ericka Bennett, Director of Community Outreach*



*Ericka Bennett*

**LAKE CITY-** Ericka Bennett is a native of Sumter and a product of Sumter School District 17. After graduating from Francis Marion University with a Bachelor of Science in elementary education, Ericka began her teaching career in Timmonsville at Brockington Elementary School in Florence School District 4. While in Timmonsville, Bennett received her master's in divergent learning from Columbia College. After becoming the

2012 Brockington Teacher of the Year, Bennett was named as Florence School District Four's 2012-2013 Teacher of the Year.

In 2013, Bennett began teaching at Main Street Elementary School in Lake City. During her time there, she served in several capacities, including being the step team coach, a TEAM ONE mentor leader and the Science and Social Studies instructional coach.

Recently, Bennett accepted the role of Director of Community Outreach for the Lake City Creative Alliance. While it isn't a new entity within the Creative Alliance, it is one that is being developed to make a powerful impact in Lake City and surrounding areas. Lake City Community Outreach's mission is to make such an impact in the community that it empowers and encourage others to improve. Its goal is to develop a program that offers a range of charitable, human service, educational and community development activities and projects that will not only restore hope in residents, but also promote self-sufficiency. Currently, the Lake City Community Outreach Division has great plans for Lake City, some of which include the implementation of Home Works of America, the creation of Neighborhood Nooks, a Community Resource Center and a "Lit for Literacy" Jamboree.

Home Works of America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to show God's love by repairing the homes of homeowners in need, assisting youth in their development and empowering communities to care for their own members. Since 1996, Home Works has enabled more than 38,000 youth and adult volunteers to repair the homes of more than 2,600 elderly, disabled or veteran homeowners across South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia.

A typical homeowner assisted by Home Works of America is a 71-year-old, single African American woman, annually living on \$12,000. Home Works oversees various repair projects, ranging from the replacement of roofs to the construction of ramps, the gutting of

bathrooms, the repairing of ceilings and the painting of walls. In order to complete these projects free of charge to the homeowner, Home Works relies on the generous donations of corporations, churches and foundations, as well as "in-kind" donations by professionals who offer their services.

Neighborhood Nooks is a program aimed to boost literacy within the children of greater Lake City and surrounding areas by collaborating with community business owners and organizations to offer high interest and culturally sound reading material in child-friendly reading spaces. The first phase of the program is called "Barbers and Books." During this phase, books will be placed in barbershops around Lake City. Joe McGee of Joe's Barbershop, located at 100 West Main St., will become Lake City's first official Neighborhood Nook. It is their hope that, with encouragement from their barber, children will begin to view themselves as readers.

The Lake City Community Resource Center will soon become the hub for community outreach. With voucher-based clothing and food distributions as its immediate goal, the Community Resource Center will eventually develop into a nucleus for those in legitimate need of charity. It will become the one-stop shop for community needs and direction.

On Nov. 4 Lake City Community Outreach will sponsor the first "Lit for Literacy" Jamboree. The purpose of the Jamboree is to increase the value of literacy within the community by promoting the benefits of literacy in a culturally appealing manner. Aunt Pearl Sue, a Gullah storyteller from the Sea Islands of Beaufort will be the special guest. In addition to performances from Aunt Pearl Sue, the morning will start off with a walking book character parade and end with a literacy-focused hip hop competition. Participants could win up to a \$150 gift card from Barnes & Noble for first place, a \$100 Barnes & Noble gift card for second place, and a \$75 Barnes & Noble gift card for third place. During the carnival-like celebration of literacy, popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones will be available. There will be plenty of literacy-based games and activities for attendees to participate in--- from infant on up. Most importantly, every child that attends the jamboree will get to select a free book to take home.

With all of these projects, the collaboration of community members will be needed. In the words of Henry Ford, "If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." Therefore, organizations, churches and individuals will be asked to join movements for the community with a heart of collaboration for a greater cause--- helping humanity.



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# PREVENTING FEAR & TENSION IN THE RACE CONVERSATION

Submitted by Simma Lieberman



Simma Lieberman

As “The Inclusionist” my objective is always to bring people together. For the past year I’ve been recording conversations, co-facilitating webinars and most recently hosting a radio show on race and how to talk about it.

**Here are the three top concerns that people have shared:**

1- I’m afraid I may accidentally say something offensive that hurts other people. I don’t want someone to verbally attack me.

2- What if one of my friends or a family member says something that offends me--racist, sexist or homophobic? What do I say?

3- How do I stop myself from getting defensive or stop others from getting defensive?

**Do you or someone you know share these concerns? If you want to know what to do, read on.**

## It’s In Everyone

At some point, if you interact with people who are different, you are either going to hear or say something that is inappropriate, offensive or biased. Even if we are the most self-aware and well-intentioned, it happens.

**Educate Don’t Annihilate. It’s more important to get results than “be right.”**

## Giving feedback

You’re talking to a friend, co-worker or family member, and they say something that sounds racist or offensive about a group of people.

## What do you do?

**1- Stop the conversation, and take a deep breath.**

The reason for taking the breath is to help you to not respond emotionally. You want to sound calm and confident, but not aggressive, so you are heard.

**2- Ask the person what they mean and why they made that statement.**

Just asking why may make a person question their thought process and rethink their statement, or you may think differently after they share the context.

**3- Take another breath, step back and resist the urge to end the conversation.**

Explain why their words or actions were inappropriate or offensive to you. If their intent is positive, but they are unaware, educate them. Calling names and attacking does nothing. It only makes people defensive.

The calmer you are, the easier it will be for the other person to hear you, and not be defensive.



## Getting Feedback When You’re the Offender

How do you handle it when the situation is reversed, and

you’re the well-intentioned offender?

**Focus on the feedback**, and don’t use the other person’s emotions or how they give feedback as an excuse to not listen. The impact of what we say does not always equal our intent.

1- Take a breath before you respond. This will help prevent you from becoming defensive, or responding emotionally. It will also stop you from shutting down so you can hear the feedback.

2- If you understand why your comment was offensive, biased or inappropriate, apologize, state why you’re apologizing and move on.

3- If you’re not sure, don’t apologize right away or get defensive. Ask questions to understand why your comments might be offensive. Share your intention and your context, and listen to learn. The other person may have misheard or misunderstood you, or you may need to reset your mindset, check a bias or rethink a wrong assumption.

Everyone has to be open to learn, listen and have an open dialogue. Guilt, shame and blame waste time, energy and human resources. Understanding, education and finding ways to connect across differences builds relationships and increases collaboration, and everyone benefits.



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Back row (left to right) -- Charlie J. Blake, Jr. ; J. Greg Hendrick  
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# FIVE STEPS TO CREATING HAPPINESS IN YOUR WORKPLACE



Each workday, the average American spends 8.8 hours at work or on work-related activities, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That's even more time than people spend sleeping. And because we spend so much time at work, it's in your and your

employer's best interest to make a workplace the happiest environment it can be. Workplace comfort and happiness are highly impactful in retention and recruitment as well as an individual's productivity, satisfaction and ultimately, a company's or business's ROI. It's not just free snacks, pizza or bagel Fridays, big windows or colorful conference rooms and ping pong tables. In fact, there's a science behind what drives happiness in the workplace and what can be done to achieve it, through light, furniture, ergonomics and movement.

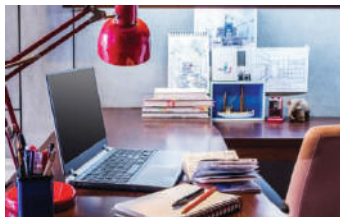
To ensure both employers and employees can create and maintain an ideal workplace environment, here are five tips to improve the happiness of your work environment:



## \* Bring order to the chaos.

If you have an important meeting coming up, or you're under a lot of stress, cleaning your workspace can help. A

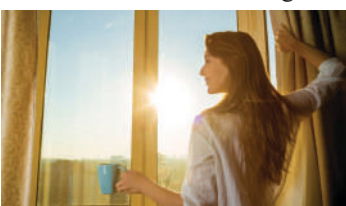
clean workspace allows you to arrive and immediately get to your most important task without wasting time. Plugging devices in to charge, color coding your files, even filling or cleaning your water bottle the night before can help. The more organized your workstation, the more organized you'll be to start your day. For employers, ensure your employees have streamlined and legible space. Workstations tailored to individual and group tasks help to promote legibility in the workplace, with clear indications of space designed to promote certain activities.



## \* Adjust your workspace to fit you.

Whether it's a height-adjustable work surface, an ergonomic chair or even a wrist base for your keyboard, simple comforts can have a monumental impact on your productivity. Take the time to adjust your workspace and posture

to fit your needs instead of "making do" month after month. And don't be afraid to ask your employer for solutions to help. The tools you need may already exist. You simply need to raise the question. For employers, be cognizant of employee needs in seating and the functionality of their space. Not all employees or tasks require the same template. Consider seating options that promote ergonomic health, desks and stands that compliment required privacy or sharing, and structure that encourages movement and healthy habits.



## \* Let in the light.

Everyone values the corner office or space closest to the window - and that's not coincidence, as natural light is proven to provide renewed energy and vitamin intake. If your workstation leaves you lacking

some sunlight, take a little time each day to find some natural light. A quick 15-minute trip to the office atrium or even a simple walk outside can leave you feeling rejuvenated. Make a quick coffee run or take your computer outside to catch up on emails. You won't regret it. As

an employer, it can be challenging to ensure daylight options, depending on real estate availability. If there is minimal natural light in the office, consider expanding to incorporate outdoor workstations, or simply



encourage remote work or brief breaks to increase sunlight exposure.

## \* Master your technology.

We all recognize and understand the frustrations faulty technology can bring. And

while you may have little input regarding the types of printers or computers your office uses or which the conference call provider is, improving your technical knowledge will lower your frustration and your anxiety. Take any training sessions offered by your IT department and/or watch available videos to learn how to use any given technology more efficiently. Run that system upgrade you've been putting off - provided you have IT approval. Your machine will run more smoothly, and so will you. For employers, it's critical to understand the day-to-day technologies that impact employee productivity and happiness, for both individual and group tasks. Ensure costs have been allocated to optimize technology and training in areas that are most impactful, and cut costs in areas of least impact (or perhaps frivolous add-ons that can be eliminated). Ensure employees understand training and troubleshooting that is available to them.



## \* Stand up for storage.

Adding storage solutions to your workspace is about more than simply clearing the clutter. It's about taking ownership of the area where you spend so much time. A natural place to put your personal belongings or hang your coat makes your workspace feel more like home.

As an employer, it's important to empower employees with the control over their workspaces. Oftentimes, organizational tools and tactics can provide this, from designated compartments, shelving, cabinets and drawers. Customizable organization and storage can be critical to feeling control over the workspace and happiness in the workplace.

Until the day you retire, your workplace will be an integral part of your life, so as a reminder, make it the happiest it can be.

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<p><b>AWARENESS</b></p>	<p> Live life mindfully</p>
<p><b>TRYING OUT</b></p>	<p> Keep learning new things</p>
<p><b>DIRECTION</b></p>	<p> Have goals to look forward to</p>
<p><b>RESILIENCE</b></p>	<p> Find ways to bounce back</p>
<p><b>EMOTIONS</b></p>	<p> Look for what's good</p>
<p><b>ACCEPTANCE</b></p>	<p> Be comfortable with who you are</p>
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## MEET THE PASTORS OF NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

by Anna Bowman



Co-Pastor Tonya Fulton & Pastor Wilbur Fulton

**KINGSTREE** – Three years ago, Pastor Wilbur Fulton and Co-Pastor Tonya Fulton opened the doors to New Covenant Christian Fellowship Ministries (NCCFM) in Kingstree.

Tonya Fulton's heart is filled with joy as she explains the church's mission in the community. "We have been given the most wonderful task of leading the greatest ministry in the world for three years and counting, 'The Place Where Eagles Gather!'" The mission that the Lord has given us originated in the community of Kingstree, but we are anticipating that it will spread abroad to other neighboring cities, also. Our mission is to 'Equip, Empower and Impact' the entire individual's mind, body and soul. Our mission is to also go in and help steer individuals into a lifestyle of stability and success through Jesus Christ."

Denise Leggette, a member of New Covenant Christian Fellowship Ministries, has attended for the past three years along with her children, and she loves how the ministry has impacted her life. "What makes NCCFM so much different from previous churches that I have attended is having the ability and mindset to worship him. Worshipping God for who he is, not just praising him for what he's done." Leggette also appreciates how the pastor and co-pastor lead by example. "They are role models," she said. "The way we see them in church is the same way they are everywhere. They love and care for everybody."

Tonya Fulton is so grateful to impact so many lives with their ministry. "Our ministry is unique because we are not concerned about reaching the individual's wallet, but instead reaching their hearts! We genuinely love every individual - whether we know them or not - and desire to see everyone 'live on purpose.' God is love, and we are representatives of him on earth. We desire to see people healed, delivered and set free."

She believes that a person's past shouldn't hinder them from turning to God and accepting his grace and mercy. "People don't need to be reminded of their sinful nature, but instead encouraged as to how they can receive true deliverance, peace and freedom. We believe in giving real hugs. Therefore, once you enter the sanctuary, someone is there to pass along this contagious and needful gesture to you!"

The Fultons are also stewards of goodwill within the Kingstree community. "We believe that our community is just as strong as our church because we are as strong as our families are. We are always anxious to show love to our communities by doing numerous things." They include the following:

- Food Bank/ Pantry (Monthly Feeding)
- Annual Back-To-School Bash
- Summer Lunch Enrichment Program
- Community Fun Day (Free food, games, bouncers, horse riding, etc.)
- Adopt a Family for Christmas

Pastor Wilbur Fulton is a native of Kingstree, and Co-Pastor Tonya Fulton is a native of Dillon. They are the parents of six amazing boys-- Wilbur, Brandon, Desmond, La-Shod, Ra'Shean and Joshua. Wilbur Fulton holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree, and he's currently employed by The Department of Social Services as a case manager. Tonya Fulton holds

a MBA and is currently employed by Williamsburg Technical College as an adjunct instructor.

We are proud to announce that Pastor Wilbur Fulton was the first individual in Kingstree to be presented "The Key to the City" on July 29 by Mayor Darren Tisdale.

You may contact our ministry in a few ways:

- Download our app: text NCCFM to 54244
- Email address: n2cfm1@ftc-i.net
- Phone: 843-382-5299
- Facebook: New Covenant Christian Fellowship Ministries

## VERSES FOR WHEN TROUBLES RISE

In a world that's swirling in difficult times with destruction, fear and uncertainty all around, when we find ourselves facing huge battles and struggles, we need true hope and peace to carry us through. And no matter how hard we may look, we can't find it in this world or in material possessions that can be so easily lost and swept away in a flood or fire. We can't find it even in the people we most love in this life. Real hope and lasting peace can only be found in Christ. And he hasn't left us here to fend for ourselves, not ever. God gives us his word, and his holy spirit, to carry us through. He still speaks to us today through his powerful scriptures. As believers, he reminds us that we are strengthened by his very spirit within us day by day.

Yet, even when we know this is true, sometimes the troubles we face take us by surprise. We find ourselves up against storms we didn't even see coming. We struggle through setbacks and loss of so much we hold dear. And it's often then, when life is shaken and rattled to the core, that God has our attention. And we have the most potential to gain deeper faith, greater perseverance, and watch God at work doing miracles all around. If you find yourself there today, take courage. He promises that he is close, and he is fighting for you today...

**Isaiah 43:2** --- God reminds us that he will be with us no matter what we walk through in this life. And he says "when" we do, not "if," for in this world we know we will face difficult times. But our hope is not in this world, it's secure in Christ.

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, the flames will not set you ablaze" (Isaiah 43:2).

**Psalms 46:1-2** ---- God is our safe place, our shelter. He alone is the place we can run to when we face difficult circumstances. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." (Psalm 46:1-2)

**Isaiah 41:10** ---- God promises his help and strength. He promises his presence with us. He reminds us that he holds us in his hands, which is the safest place to be when troubles rise.

"So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

**Matthew 12:28-30** --- Jesus himself is our peace. It cannot be found in this world, in things, or even in the people we love most. He invites us to come to him, and he will give us rest.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 12:28-30).



# HEAVEN, HELP US!— FEELING FEAR WHILE BRAVELY FACING LIFE'S STORMS

by Robin Lewis



**HEMINGWAY-**Storms come. As I write this article, all the weather forecasters are doing their best to predict where Hurricane Irma will make landfall. If you are reading this, you already know the

end of the story of Irma, the largest hurricane on record. This storm frightened millions and left a wake of stunned families, some whose homes have been destroyed.

Storms like this one are frightening to say the least. We watched recently as Hurricane Harvey tore into the shores of Texas, leaving neighborhoods flooded and shelters overflowing with people, some who were rescued had nothing left but the clothes on their backs. As we watched, all some could say was, "Heaven, help us!"

Other storms come into our lives that are just as scary. Upheavals with names like foreclosure, cancer, job loss, hunger or abuse can seem just as big as a hurricane. And if it's not happening to you, it may be someone close to you who is experiencing a storm. That can be just as difficult to watch as it is to walk through.

As believers in God, how are we to respond when storms come? When crises erupt in our lives, what are we to do? The Bible says we are not to fear, so what are we supposed to be feeling?

Many people run with their emotions in full swing by overreacting, melting down, denying reality, or jumping towards bad choices like drugs or alcohol or, yes, even suicide to cope with the current crisis. A friend said she was in the grocery store buying food and water in preparation for the approaching hurricane and overheard a man telling a group of people, "Why are you freaking out? You all go to church! Why are you so afraid? You're supposed to be people of faith!" Sometimes even believers don't believe.



Others who have walked with the Lord through previous hardships and found God to be faithful are able to respond with a different level of spiritual and emotional maturity. Their faith has become anchored in the confidence of God's presence and the personal

experience that he had indeed helped them through previous storms. They've learned to anchor themselves there and speak words of faith with wisdom as a guide instead of allowing their emotions to make choices for them.

The way we walk through the whirlwinds of our lives will be the result of the way we live in our daily lives. The habits of prayer, focus on God, and accountability make for strength in troubled times. Those who feed their spirits on God's truth will always be stronger and ready to lead than those who feed their flesh with its emotional "roller coaster reactions."

In the movie "Tomorrow Land," the main character says, "You have to feed the right wolf. You either feed darkness and despair or light and hope. Whichever one you feed will grow stronger."

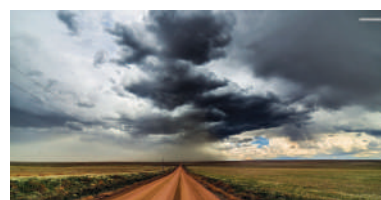
Being anchored in God during a crisis doesn't mean you won't experience fear but that you remember you have a choice. You can learn to refuse to allow fear to control you or make decisions for you. My coaching clients have heard me say that courage is what you feel when you've decided that fear is not going to stop you.



the same road. There was a woman in my group who was known for saying, "Feel the fear and do it anyway!" Meaning, yes, you will feel fear, but when you know what to do, do it.

The Bible is full of stories about real people who walked with God but had times of fear. These stories tell of how God used difficult situations to challenge, stretch and strengthen them in their faith. Faith is like a muscle. If it's never exercised, it won't grow.

Remember the story in Exodus 14 about the parting of the Red Sea? Moses was leading the Israelites away from slavery in Egypt and into the desert. They came to the edge of the Red Sea and realized that Pharaoh's army was chasing after them. The principles in this story help us discover how to walk through our storms in faith. We can remember that even if the sea is before us, the enemy is breathing down our necks and the desert is surrounding us, that God works in ways we cannot imagine. We can be assured that if we seek him, He will either silence the storm or make a way through it.



Everyone will have times of not understanding why certain things happen in their lives. While God doesn't cause evil to happen to us, there will be seasons when we get no explanation of why God allowed

certain events to take place. Vance Havner writes, "God marks across some of our days, 'Will explain later.'" Especially then, we must look to him to regain peace and composure, for he alone is God.

Robert J. Morgan, author of "The Red Sea Rules," writes, "No sea is deeper than the ocean of his love. There is no army stronger than his hosts, no force greater than his throne of grace, and no enemy who can overcome his direct or indirect work in our lives. God will always make a way even if he must split the sea to do it."

Meditate on verses like these before the next "Irma" hits your life, even before you cry out, "Heaven, help us!" For when you anchor the word of God within your heart, you can know that he hears and that he is working on your behalf.

"When you pray, keep alert and be thankful. Be sure to pray that God will make a way" (Colossians 4:2-3).

"I, the Lord, will even make a way in the wilderness and cause rivers to flow in the desert" (Isaiah 43:19).

"The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything" (Philippians 4:5-6).

"Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught. And always be thankful" (Colossians 2:7).

Visualize God's presence with you. See him there in the middle of the uproar right next to you. When we daily focus our eyes on God, we will be able to focus our life on him in every storm that comes. And even though we may feel afraid, with heaven helping us, we will be able to face our storms with mature faith, true bravery, and confidence in the Lord.

Robin Lewis is a professional speaker, writer, and certified life coach. For more info, contact Robin at [robinlewislife@gmail.com](mailto:robinlewislife@gmail.com) and visit her website at [www.RobinLewisLife.com](http://www.RobinLewisLife.com). "Experience life the way it was meant to be lived...Abundant!" (John 10:10)

## FMU SCHOOL OF ED SELECTED FOR NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Articles submitted by FMU



Francis Marion University's School of Education is one of just four teacher education programs in the country selected to participate in a ground breaking, new instructional program for teachers, funded by a \$724,159 grant from the ECMC Foundation through the prestigious Buck Institute for Education (BIE).

The project is called "Out of the Gate" because it is intended to give brand new teachers the ability to use Project-Based Learning (PBL), a high-level teaching skill, right from the beginning of their career – that is, right out of the gate.

The program will train School of Education faculty members, K-12 cooperating teachers and pre-service (student) teachers to implement PBL in their classrooms, and eventually, to teach their colleagues how to implement PBL.

Project-Based Learning is a cutting edge teaching methodology in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem or challenge. It is widely believed that PBL prepares students for college and career by integrating the mastery of academic content with the development of key competencies, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and effective communication in real-world contexts.

Traditionally, only teachers already in the classroom have received PBL training from BIE. The grant will fund the expansion of that instruction to include student teachers.

BIE's four partner colleges in the project are Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio; Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Mich.; University of Mary in Bismarck, N.D.; and Francis Marion University. The partnership will cover three years in order to provide a cohesive experience for faculty members, K-12 cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers.

Because the program is a pilot program, it also includes a study of the efficacy of the program, particularly in schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged students. All the universities partnering with BIE on the project are working with high-need schools and districts, where students come from low-income, disadvantaged backgrounds.

In FMU's case, the training will begin with a cohort of teachers from Florence School District 3 (FSD3-Lake City). FMU officials expect about 20 teachers from FSD3 to participate along with 10-12 student teachers from FMU and at least three members of the School of Education faculty.

FMU's program is expected to begin in the spring of 2018. Once the initial cohort completes the instruction, its members will be available to teach others.

Dr. Tracy Meetze-Holcombe, dean of the FMU School of Education, says the new teacher education program is a perfect partnership for the FMU School of Education, since the School of Education has already embraced PBL at the graduate level.

"Now we're going to bring this to our student teachers, and to our partners already in the schools, and that's very exciting," says Meetze-Holcombe. "Obviously we already believe strongly in the ability of Project-Based Learning to enhance teaching and impact students. We're proud to be part of a national initiative to further this strategy."

Kyle Miller, senior program manager for the ECMC Foundation,

says Project-Based Learning is an excellent match for schools facing demographic disadvantage.

"While deeper learning (like PBL) has been shown to be effective for students of all backgrounds, instructional practices like Project Based Learning are especially effective for students from underserved backgrounds," says Miller. "ECMC Foundation is thrilled to partner with the Buck Institute for Education in the Out of the Gate initiative. Providing this type of training to pre-service teachers before they step foot into a classroom will ensure that more students in high-need schools benefit from learning through PBL."

Each team in Project Out of the Gate begins the experience by participating in a project as learners. Teacher-trainees then work with faculty members and cooperating teachers in partner districts to practice implementing PBL.

Francis Marion University is a four-year public university. It offers undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

Francis Marion University's School of Education is a leading producer of teachers and educators in the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina and beyond. It's home to two Centers of Excellence for teacher advancement, manages the largest Teacher Cadet program in South Carolina, and is a site for the South Carolina Teaching Fellows program. The School of Education offers both undergraduate and master's degree programs.

Buck Institute for Education is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping teachers to prepare students for successful lives by helping them to adopt Project Based Learning. BIE's vision is for all students – no matter where they live or their background – to have access to high quality PBL so they deepen their learning and achieve success in college, career, and life.

The Los Angeles-based ECMC Foundation's mission is to inspire and facilitate improvements that affect educational outcomes – especially among underserved populations – through evidence-based innovation. The Foundation makes investments in three focus areas: Teacher and Leader Development, College Success and Career Readiness.

## FMU NAMES "HEART OF THE PEE DEE" SCHOLARS

Francis Marion University has named ten students from South Carolina Heart of the Pee Dee Scholars. These students have been awarded a free education at the university beginning this fall. The Heart of the Pee Dee Scholarship covers up to the full cost of tuition after all other scholarships and grants have been applied.

The recipients were selected by area guidance counselors who attended the annual fall guidance counselor breakfast hosted by FMU. The scholarship is awarded to deserving students who might not otherwise be able to attend college. It is renewable for up to four years as long as the student maintains at least a 3.0 grade point average.

Those who received the scholarship are: Kamren Davis, Mullins High School, Mullins; Taylor Deleon, Ashley Ridge High School, Summerville; Jonathan Ellison, South Florence High School, Florence; Chelsey Gaddy, Latta High School, Latta; Kamryn Gainey, Emmanuel Christian School, Society Hill; Delonte Hough, Mayo High School for Math, Science & Technology, Darlington; Amber Jenerette, Early College High School, Little River; Amber Keefe, Lake City High School, Coward; Jaleea Smith, Timmons ville Comprehensive High School, Timmons ville; and Hillary Walls, Cheraw High School, Cheraw.



# FRANCIS MARION NURSING LANDS \$1.8 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT

Submitted by FMU



Francis Marion Nursing Students

nursing workforce diversity.

The four-year grant will provide tuition support for 100 students and will also fund a variety of initiatives by the FMU Department of Nursing designed to support those students on their path to a BSN degree from the university.

The HRSA workforce diversity program is designed to increase nursing education opportunities for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including racial and ethnic minorities who are underrepresented among registered nurses. HRSA has previously documented that while diversity is increasing in the nursing workforce, minorities still lag. Total minority participation remains below 20 percent.

FMU has long had a diverse population in its acclaimed nursing department but will seek to improve that performance by providing wide-ranging support for minority students. That will include financial support, assigning graduate student mentors to students beginning their freshman year, special freshman-level “university life” courses just for pre-nursing students, and additional academic help through FMU’s Center for Academic Success and Achievement. The new grant is the fourth HRSA grant FMU has landed since 2016.

Francis Marion University’s School of Health Sciences is the recipient of a \$1.8 million grant from the federal government’s Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), aimed at promoting

Dr. Ruth Wittmann-Price, dean of the School of Health Sciences, says the latest grant addresses an important community need while at the same time continuing the momentum for FMU’s nursing programs.

“We’re thrilled to receive another HRSA grant and to continue our role in shaping the nursing workforce in the years to come,” says Wittmann-Price. “Our programs, and our impact on the community, continue to grow. We’re proud of what we’ve done, but the future is really exciting.”



Dr. Fred Carter

FMU President Dr. Fred Carter says health services have become integral to the university because of their importance to the community. “There’s no contribution we could make to the community that’s more important than ensuring its health,” says Carter. “What Ruth and her staff have done to further this mission is astonishing. It will have a positive impact on both the community, and our university, for years to come.”

FMU is the only entity of any kind in South Carolina to receive a grant through the workforce diversity program. Other universities nationwide that were part of the grant include the University of Alabama, Arizona University, the University of Massachusetts, Duke, the University of North Carolina and Marquette.

In the past two years, the School of Health Sciences and the Department of Nursing have received four federal grants totaling more than \$4 million. All are aimed at either improving access to healthcare for the community, access to healthcare education for disadvantaged or underserved populations, or both.

# ANTICIPATION

Studying the mutually beneficial relationship between the Azteca ant and Cecropia tree isn’t what **Aaron Robinson** (’17) had in mind when he came to Francis Marion four years ago, but then that was before he’d been to FMU’s Wildsumaco Biological Research Station in Ecuador or spent time with the faculty in the university’s highly regarded Department of Biology.

Time passes and now **Robinson** is on his way to grad school in entomology, where he’ll pursue his newfound love of the Azteca and its symbiotic partner. A trip to Wildsumaco, and the guidance of FMU faculty, who opened his mind to the excitement of real scientific research, put him there.

“Those guys (in Biology) were great,” says **Robinson**. “But the professors here are all easy to find, easy to talk to. You show a little interest in their class and they’ll show a lot of interest in you. It (FMU) is what college is all about.”

Great Stories Start Here

Francis Marion University  
[fmarion.edu/myFMUstory](http://fmarion.edu/myFMUstory)



**THOMAS RECOGNIZED BY SCSBA**

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Maureen Thomas

**DARLINGTON**–Maureen Thomas, vice chairwoman of the Darlington County Board of Education, earned recognition by the South Carolina School Boards Association (SCSBA) for achievement in the association’s 2016–17 Boardmanship Institute.

SCSBA Boardmanship Institute, established in 1982, offers a year-round training curriculum to help board members develop skills and stay abreast of state and national education issues. Workshops focus

on school law, advocacy and legislation, improving board operations, leadership for improving student achievement, and other timely topics.

Board members can achieve up to six levels of recognition by earning points that are accrued annually from July through June for participation in statewide conferences and training provided onsite in their district.

Thomas reached Level Two by earning 40 points within one year. Level Two recipients receive a certificate and a silver pen.

Statewide, SCSBA recognized 147 school board members for reaching one of the six levels for the 2016-17 year with certificates of achievement and a lapel pin designating their level of accomplishment in the institute.

Each year, about 80 percent of board members statewide attend at least one training session.

SCSBA is the statewide professional organization serving as a source of information, training and advocacy for the state’s 81 school district boards, county boards and state special schools.

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  - Beliefs
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  - Know purpose of higher education
  - Seek challenging experiences
  - Use available resources
  - Make well-informed decisions
  - Develop regard for lifelong learning
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# MARION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BELIEVES IN BETTER

Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea, Superintendent



Dr. Kandace Bethea

**MARION** - The Marion County School District has embraced the 2017 – 2018 school year theme: Believe In Better. With the knowledge that we have dedicated teachers and talented students, the district has initiated several new programs and services focused on creating even better opportunities. A newly created Early College program is being hosted at Mullins High School, where district high school freshman are being offered the opportunity to attend a program where students fulfill their high school requirements by taking dual credit classes offered by Florence-

Darlington Technical College. Dual credit is just as it sounds, a course that provides a unit of credit for high school and a unit of credit toward an associate degree from FDTC. When this charter group of freshmen finishes high school in 2021 they will be awarded two degrees, a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree as well as a jumpstart on their path for success after leaving high school.

The district's elementary students have a newly consolidated gifted and talented program. The Exceptional Children Exceptional Learning (ExCEL) program changes the concept of having an Itinerant teacher travel to schools and pull the children from their classes, to having students bused one day a week to another school where they are joined with other students in the same grade for a day of exceptional instruction. This type of deliver allows the teacher an opportunity to better prepare activities for the students. She has a classroom filled with supplies for students to use during lessons, supplies that weren't feasible to transport from school to school. With more students involved, the interaction is increased, and the results are a richer

learning environment.

Because the district "Believes In Better," there are several other pilot programs, such as the Leader in Me at one of the elementary schools. Entering into the first of a five year commitment, teachers and staff have been trained in a transformation process to teach 21st century leadership and life skills to the students. The concept is to create a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader. The premise behind the Leader in Me program is Franklyn Covey's, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," and the program is aligned with academic standards so students learn the skills needed for academic success in any setting. With Classroom management and school climate on the list of priorities, the district is also piloting the "Capturing Kids' Hearts" in two schools. A successful program in classrooms across the nation, this process is about creating high-achieving centers of learning by strengthening students' connectedness to others through enhancing healthy bonds with their teachers and establishing collaborative agreements of acceptable behavior. It's all about building relationships using an immersive and participatory experience. These new endeavors join The Academy of Early Learning, another new program which consolidated all of the three and four year olds under one roof. This program now has an opportunity to deliver services to teachers and students in a more effective and efficient way.

The myriad of initiatives being put in place this school year are directly correlated with the district's purpose, which is to educate, prepare and inspire students to be productive citizens in a changing global society.



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

Marion County School District's 2017-2018 Initiatives

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

[www.marion.k12.sc.us](http://www.marion.k12.sc.us)



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## CLAFLIN RANKED 8TH IN ANNUAL POLL

*Submitted by J. Craig Cotton, Director of Public Relations, Office of Communications & Marketing*



**ORANGEBURG** - Clafin University continues to garner national recognition for excellence in higher education. In its most recent poll, College Choice ranks Clafin eighth among the 25 Best Colleges in South Carolina. College Choice is a leading online authority in college and university rankings and resources.

Clafin University is the only historically black college or university (HBCU) listed

in the ranking.

College Choice uses data related to academic quality – including test scores and student-to-faculty ratios to develop its rankings. Student body diversity, tuition and fees, and return on investment and the expected early career income for graduates are other variables. Data used by College Choice is provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, “U.S. News & World Report,” and Payscale.

“Clafin’s ranking among the top colleges and universities in South Carolina is indicative of the University’s commitment to producing visionary leaders with global perspectives and our emergence as a leading 21st Century institution of higher education,” said President Henry N. Tisdale. “It also reflects the University’s world-class faculty, supportive and loyal alumni, and compassionate administrators.”

For 17 consecutive years, Clafin has received national recognition as a leading liberal arts and a “Top Tier” university by prestigious print and online publications, including “U.S. News and World Report,” “Forbes,” “Washington Monthly.” Clafin was selected 2015 HBCU of the Year by “HBCU Digest” and “Forbes” recently named Clafin

the top HBCU in alumni annual giving percentage. The University’s 47 percent alumni annual giving percentage ranks among national leaders at all colleges and universities. Black “Southern Belle” Magazine ranked Clafin as a “Heavenly Campus” for preserving the attractiveness and historical nature of the campus.

Founded in 1869, Clafin is the oldest HBCU in the state of South Carolina. The University is affiliated with The United Methodist Church. Clafin was chartered and continues to provide educational excellence and to prepare students without regard to gender, race, religion or ethnic origin.

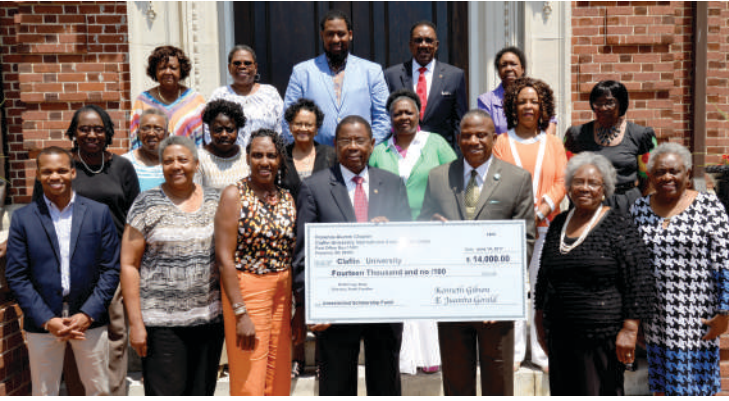
To view the entire College Choice ranking, visit <http://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-in-south-carolina/>





# FLORENCE ALUMNI CHAPTER DONATES \$14,000 TO CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY

Submitted by J. Craig Cotton, Director of Public Relations, Office of Communications & Marketing



Top Row, from left: Ruby Grace McCutcheon, Zelda Lee, Jordon Jefferson, Rev. Whittaker Middleton, and Dr. Iris Bomar

Middle Row, from left: Earline McClary, Radline Tate, Madeline Thompson, Shirley McPherson, Dianne Eagleton, Lamoris Eagleton, and Ida Gaddy

Bottom Row, from left: Derrick Quarles, Juanita Gerald, Vanessa Ellison, Clafin President Henry N. Tisdale, Bishop Kenneth Gibson, Hester Cooper Smith, and Peggy Farmer

The Florence Alumni Chapter of the Clafin University International Alumni Association presented a check for \$14,000 to the University last month to increase scholarship support for deserving students.

The gift was from proceeds of the chapter's signature event, "An Evening with Clafin Alumni," an annual dinner and dance that was held in February and coordinated by Hester Cooper-Smith. Each alumni chapter is responsible for conducting a signature event to raise a minimum of \$10,000 to support scholarships.

"We thank you for all you do to support your alma mater," said Tisdale. "Students need all the financial assistance available. It takes contributions like what you are making today to drive the academic engine to achieve and maintain the excellence we strive for at Clafin."

More than a dozen members of the Florence Alumni Chapter made the trip to Clafin to tour the campus and participate in the presentation. "We have alumni from the 1950s up to the 2000s here today and our chapter is committed to the cause of raising funds to send students to Clafin," said Chapter President Reverend Kenneth Gibson. "We had great attendance at the 'An Evening with Clafin Alumni,' and our membership has really grown. We are already looking for a larger venue for next year's event."

The Clafin experience has truly been a family affair for Gibson, who earned a bachelor's degree in religion and philosophy. His son, brother and sister also earned degrees at Clafin.

"Your support makes all of the difference in the world," said Rev. Whittaker V. Middleton, vice president for institutional advancement. "Each year, we challenge our alumni chapters to set a fundraising goal and we are extremely pleased when we hear you've reached that goal."

Clafin's alumni giving percentage of 52 percent is the highest at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and it ranks among the leaders at all of the nation's colleges and universities.

## A+ ADVICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL YEAR



The first days of school are filled with excitement and pangs of anxiety, but it doesn't take long for high school and college students to fall into a routine. Adjusting to the new reality of school can be difficult, but it's the steps students

take now that determine their success throughout the school year.

To make sure your child has a successful school year, consider these smart tips. This advice can help you have a great academic experience from now all the way through spring.

### 1. Eat and sleep well every day

Healthy habits allow the body and mind to be prepared to learn each day. Teenagers (14-17) should get eight to 10 hours each night, and young adults (18-25) should get seven to nine hours of sleep, according to the National Sleep Foundation. On top of adequate rest, make sure to eat wholesome meals starting with a daily breakfast to ensure a hungry stomach is never a distraction in class.

### 2. Choose the right technology

Advanced classes require note taking, research and more, making a trustworthy laptop a student essential. Stay on budget with the portable LG gram notebook available in 13-, 14- and 15-inch options. With 15 hours of battery on a full charge, students can leave the charger at home, making this ultrabook the perfect fit for students on the go. Featuring Intel's 7th generation i5 processor and plenty of storage, it's extremely versatile. You can change the display from "Reader mode" to "Movie mode," which offers versatility for students who plan to use the device for a variety of content.

### 3. Don't let backpacks weigh you down

High school and college students too often are buzzing through campus with incredibly heavy backpacks. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that a backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of your child's body weight. Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back. Select light technology when possible, like the LG gram, the lightest laptop available in its class at just over two pounds.

### 4. Learn smart study habits

How students study influences how well they do in school. Procrastination and last-minute cramming are not effective. The more your child can adopt smart study habits, the better he or she will do in class, plus stress levels will likely decrease. Set times each day to study, preferably, not too late at night. Create a quiet, comfortable space free from distractions. If possible, turn the smartphone off, or leave it in another room.

### 5. Reach out for help and available resources

An underutilized resource at high schools and colleges across the country is teacher assistance outside class time. Most professors (and even teacher assistants at colleges) have office hours each week where they help students. If students are struggling or just want to reiterate the material, this is the right opportunity. Swing by the office in person, shoot them an email or set up a video meeting. They are there to help.

### 6. Strike a balance

There are a lot of demands put on young adults these days. Work, extracurricular activities, classes, study time, exercising, socializing, family time and more make for busy days and nights. It's important to find a balance and set priorities to avoid burnout. Parents can assist children in determining how much they can handle by having an open and honest discussion. Make adjustments as necessary for a happy, healthy school year.

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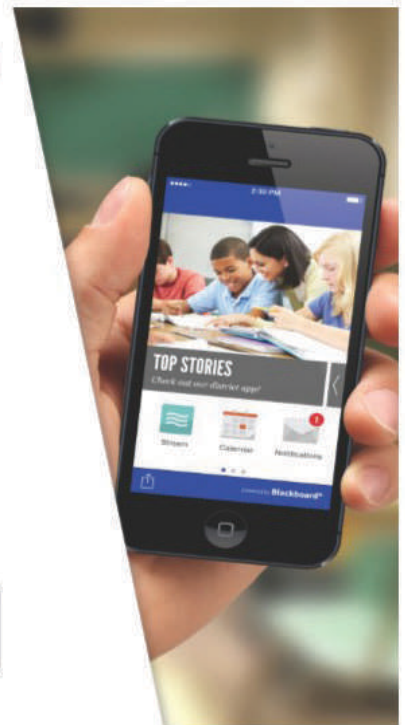
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# FSD1 ONE OF TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SC TO OFFER CODING PROGRAM

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



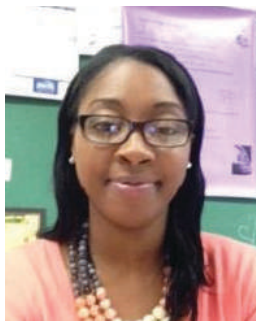
Cynthia Harrison

Florence educators are making headway in preparing its students for jobs of the future. Research indicates that software application developers, computer user support specialists, computer systems analysts and web developers are all jobs that show projected growth, and they all require knowledge of coding.

Florence School District One is one of two school districts in South Carolina offering coding courses at its three high schools this year. The only other district offering coding to high schools in South Carolina is in Lexington County.

Florence One officials explain that coding is what makes it possible to create computer software, apps and websites. The computer browser, OS the app on a mobile phone, Facebook, and websites – are all made by coding.<sup>1</sup>

Stephanie Rogers-Samuel, Florence Career Center; Cynthia Harrison, West Florence; and Tasha Davis, Wilson are computer instructors who have been tapped to teach the first level of four coding courses now offered in Florence One. For the past few years, each of the teachers has been teaching Florence One's computer science courses, such as Exploring Computer Science, Digital Multi-Media, Web Design, and Dual Credit Courses with Florence-Darlington Technical College. They all have a combined total of 20 years in Florence One.



Tasha Davis



Stephanie Rogers-Samuel

"Coding is programming a computer to solve problems and to take responsible risks," said Tasha Davis. Davis added that as a prerequisite, students must have completed Algebra I and/or must be recommended by a teacher to take the course. "It will also help if the students who take coding have analytical skills," she added.

Coding is the new literacy," said Cynthia Harrison. "I am excited about teaching the coding course because it will help to stimulate students' critical thinking as well as team-working skills." It (coding) is where our future is headed."

"Coding teaches students how to deal with real-life problems. It is also a career-related course that will appeal to students' interests, particularly, the gaming app. It also teaches students different ways to solve problems," said Stephanie Rogers-Samuel.

In addition to their expertise as computer science teachers, Rogers-Samuel, Harrison and Davis all received professional development and preparation this summer through Discovery Education. The initiative came about through guidance from Florence One's Director of Secondary Education Dr. Kelvin Wymbs.

In the coding program, a course is designed each year for freshmen, sophomore, and junior year students at the high school level with an internship experience required for the senior year. The internship is planned through Florence One's Instructional Technology Department, as well as with partnerships with local computer technology firms of Hill-South, ACS Technologies and possibly others.

## 1. Coding terminology

a. A browser is a program with a graphical user interface for displaying HTML files, used to navigate the World Wide Web.

b. An operating system (OS) is system software that manages computer hardware and software resources and provides common services for computer programs. All computer programs, excluding firmware, require an operating system to function.

c. App -Apps are similar to the applications installed from a CD. They are like the desktop software programs installed on computer, except that they are used on the web directly within your browser. Sometimes they can even be shortcuts to websites.

# FMU'S WARTERS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ACE FELLOWSHIP AT UNC-WILMINGTON

Submitted by FMU



Dr. T. Alissa Wartars

Francis Marion University's Dr. T. Alissa Wartars has been awarded a prestigious American Council on Education (ACE) fellowship for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Wartars, associate provost for Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management at FMU and a professor of Political Science, is one of 46 fellows selected nationwide to participate in the ACE program. ACE Fellows spend the year working at other higher education institutions — in Wartars' case at the University of North Carolina Wilmington — for an academic year in order to gain both experience and insight into higher education administration. Fellows subsequently return to their home institutions.

Wartars will spend 12 non-consecutive weeks at UNC Wilmington, garnering an understanding of how the administration at another university operates. Her time as an ACE Fellow will culminate in a capstone project that she will present near the end of the academic year.

On a day-to-day basis, Wartars will participate in senior staff functions at UNC-Wilmington as though she were a full-time member of the administration.

Wartars says the opportunity to engage with another administration will serve her well since she's only worked at one university. She was employed by FMU immediately after graduating with her doctorate from

the University of Tennessee.

[Francis Marion] "has been a wonderful opportunity and a fantastic academic opportunity for me," Wartars says, "but I just haven't see how other institutions operate. This is just going to make me a better administrator."

Wartars will delve into a number UNC-Wilmington's administrative areas, including enrollment, succession planning and student success initiatives.

UNC-Wilmington is a public university, but it's substantially larger than Francis Marion. Wartars says that difference, and others, will provide new experiences and lessons that she hopes can be applied to Francis Marion.

"They're a larger institution, so I'll be able to learn a lot from that, especially from their student success initiatives," she says. "We've started (the Center for Academic Success and Advisement) here, which is a fantastic new initiative, but I'll be able to learn about other initiatives that are used for student success."

Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen institutional and leadership capacity in American higher education by identifying and preparing faculty and staff for senior positions in college and university administration.

Wartars is the second FMU professor to take part in the program in the past three years.

# CCU'S FIRST DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICER

by Ta'Meeka Epps



Travis E. Overton

**CONWAY** - Coastal Carolina University (CCU) in Conway, just minutes away from the popular tourist destination of Myrtle Beach, is a public institution that is making diversity and inclusion a priority in conjunction with its core values of tradition, integrity and excellence. Though diversity can sometimes be a difficult topic to discuss, CCU isn't backing down from the challenge of creating a diversity and inclusion officer position. Travis Overton, vice president for executive initiatives and chief of staff, believes embracing diversity and accepting the importance of inclusion is part of excellent service and is a way to improve the community and environment in which we all live.

"That is the commitment that we all must have. The challenge is to figure out how we can make the environment we are a part of better," said Overton, who has served CCU in a number of roles over the past 10 years, including coordinator of Greek Life and director of student conduct. In 2012, he became dean of students, and in 2017, he carried his experience from all of those previous positions into his current role as vice president for executive initiatives and chief of staff.

Service for Overton is second nature because of the care and concern his mother showed him early in his life. He was able to see and feel care from a parental/authority figure on such a scale that translated into a desire and passion to want to provide the same to college students.

"The goal is to have students graduate with a degree, not just attend Coastal Carolina University," he said. He is focused on the ways the university community can continuously develop and grow by exploring every opportunity to promote an environment of mutual respect and support, which enhances the lives of all the students.

Overton is always operating in the mode of continuous improvement on a global scale and with the goal of creating a safe educational environment

where all individuals feel welcome. That's easier said than done. Coastal's campus is a naturally diverse one; its variety of popular academic programs like marine science and intelligence and national security studies attract students from all over the United States and the world. In fact, nearly half of CCU's undergraduate student population is from outside of the state of South Carolina, due in large part to its participation in the Academic Common Market tuition savings program and its location.

As an administrator of a college campus with a student population of more than 10,000, Overton is well aware of the challenge of educating incoming students on the culture of the community, their role in the community and how they can contribute to the community. And CCU's culture, he says, is without a doubt one of acceptance and inclusion.

Coastal Carolina is home to the LIFETM program, a postsecondary and transition program for young adults who have mild to moderate intellectual or developmental disabilities. And departments on campus like Multicultural Student Services, the Center for Global Engagement, and Accessibility and Disability Services ensure that everyone who steps on campus, regardless of background, feels welcome and valued.

Just consider centers like the Jackson Family Center for Ethics and Values and other groups that regularly get together to host open forums and discussions on topics like diversity, federal policy, religion, gender and more. It's events like these, Overton believes, that make it possible for people to understand one another and seek constant change to better themselves.

"The way to effect change is to be the change," he said. "Operate on as much opportunity as you can to help things get better and to help things develop and grow. Even when you do not know the exact answer to bring about growth, your role is to inquire, to ask the right questions and to listen to the answers so the information gained can be used to figure out the best way to effect change."

For more information about Coastal Carolina University, visit [www.coastal.edu](http://www.coastal.edu).

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## 5 WAYS TO RE-ENGAGE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS



For Christine Wilkins, now 16, freshman year of high school was an ordeal. The same students who bullied her in middle school were at her new high school. Just approaching the school entry filled her with angst. One day, instead of going in, she turned around and went home.

“The idea of walking through those gates gave me so much anxiety,” she says.

Wilkins hated school. Unable to focus or dedicate herself to her schoolwork, she made C’s, D’s and F’s. Eventually, she stopped going to school and dropped out.

### Tackling the dropout issue

There are many reasons students drop out of high school. Poverty, pregnancy, homelessness, bullying or just losing interest are some of the many issues that cause students to skip a day of class, a week and eventually drop out altogether.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, missing just three weeks of school is enough to threaten a student’s chance to graduate. What can be done to help these students? As each person is a complex individual, there is no single solution that can reach the multitude of different students.

This is why Learn4Life, a nonprofit dropout recovery program, takes a dynamic approach to reengage students. The average student who enrolls in Learn4Life has been out of school for 11.4 weeks. Through different methods, such as personalized learning, mentoring and job skills training, the program has been highly successful in reengaging dropouts and keeping them in school.

### These are the five effective ways they reach out to these students:



1. Dealing with issues outside of the classroom. Whether it’s counseling to help students come to terms with issues they’re facing or a mentoring program that builds confidence, helping students deal with non-academic issues is a way to give them the stability they need to succeed.

2. Meeting students where they are. Not every student is at the same emotional, academic or mental level as their peers. Through one-on-one attention, personalized learning and academic planning, students can get help where they most need it. This personalized approach is designed to find a solution that’s best for the individual.


3. Removing obstacles to learning. Sometimes it’s something as simple as not having proper transportation or childcare that prevents a student from returning to complete their education. Giving student’s flexible schedules helps with transportation, and access to teachers or mentors at different hours of the day can make a big difference in their ability to learn.

4. Making them feel safe. It’s an unfortunate fact that schools are not always the safe environment they ought to be. Creating a respectful and safe place to learn is essential for removing social anxieties and fears that can hinder learning.

5. Helping them see a future. Through job skills training programs, students can prepare for a future beyond a diploma. As a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner, Learn4Life offers courses in work-readiness skills, career exploration, writing cover letters and resumes, completing applications and interviewing.

Currently, Wilkins attends school and is getting all A’s and B’s in her schoolwork and has a full-time internship. At the end of the internship, she will receive certificates in customer service and Microsoft Office.

“I’m dedicated because I’m getting knowledge and experience for a life outside of school,” she says.







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*Mr. Alphonso Bradley, Director*



## DUKE ENERGY GIVES \$50,000 TO FDTC

Articles submitted by FDTC



Duke Energy donates \$50,000 for FDTC's ReBOOST FastTrack program

The Duke Energy Foundation presented Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) with a \$50,000 check on July 14 for its ReBOOST FastTrack program.

The program is a certified nursing assistant (CNA) curriculum that allows

students to earn stackable certificates after completing a one-semester foundational certificate.

“Florence-Darlington Technical College truly values and appreciates the partnership of the Duke Energy Foundation in making the ReBOOST FastTrack program a success in the Pee Dee,” Executive Director of the FDTC Educational Foundation Jill Lewis said. “This investment not only benefits individual students but also entire families and communities.”

Mindy Taylor, Government and Community Relations manager for Duke Energy, presented the check to FDTC President Dr. Ben Dillard, associate vice president of Health Sciences, Maureen Dever-Bumba and other leaders of the college.

This grant from the Duke Energy Foundation will assist low-income students in the program who have exhausted all other forms of financial aid in paying for textbooks, curricular aides, uniforms and other fees.

ReBoost FastTrack has three programs of study that are linked together by the foundational CNA certification. The programs include Certified Nursing Assistant, Advanced Nursing Assistant and Cardiac Care/Patient Care Technician.

Healthcare is one of the largest industries in the Pee Dee Region. The ReBoost FastTrack program at FDTC meets healthcare employers' need for licensed and certified employees while also offering students a robust career opportunity.

## FDTC AND COKER COLLEGE TEAM UP



Florence-Darlington Technical College President Dr. Ben Dillard (left) and Coker College President Dr. Robert Wyatt (right) pose for a quick photo with each of the schools' mascot.

Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) and Coker College teamed up with the signing of a bridge partnership agreement on June 27. This Bridge Program will make it easier for FDTC students to transfer to Coker College and earn their four-year degree.

FDTC President Dr. Ben Dillard and Coker President Dr. Robert Wyatt signed the agreement in the 5000 Building on FDTC's main campus. Leaders from both colleges were also in attendance.

Students who are accepted into the program will receive dual admission, dual advisement and dual student development opportunities from both colleges. The Bridge Program agreement marks the first time that the two institutions have come together to form a partnership.

“This is yet another example of how FDTC collaborates with its neighboring institutions of higher learning toward enhancing opportunities for the citizens of Pee Dee region,” said Dr. Suresh Tiwari, vice president for Academic Affairs.

FDTC students who apply to the Bridge Program will complete developmental and other required coursework at Coker towards a baccalaureate program.

Benefits for Bridge Program Participants:

- FDTC students may attend Coker College athletic and cultural events

at no cost.

- Coker College will provide an academic advisor that will provide academic information as well as course selection to students in the Bridge Program.
- The application fee will be waived for Bridge Program participants when they apply for admission to Coker College.
- FDTC students may transfer a maximum of 76 semester hours with a grade of C or better to Coker College. A list of transferable courses is posted on [coker.edu/bridgeprogram](http://coker.edu/bridgeprogram).
- Bridge Program participants will attend an orientation program on the Coker College campus prior to the beginning of their initial attendance.

## AUTOMOTIVE STUDENTS GUESTS AT DARLINGTON RACEWAY



NBC Sports analyst Steve Letarte speaks with Florence-Darlington Technical College students at Richard Petty Motorsports' No. 43 team hauler.

Fifteen Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) Automotive Technology students were guests of STP and enjoyed an experience of a lifetime during the Bojangles' Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway on Sept. 3.

While at the track “Too Tough To Tame,” FDTC Auto Tech students toured the legendary track and learned

firsthand how NASCAR teams operate on a race weekend. The experience was all courtesy of STP, a longtime partner of Richard Petty Motorsports.

“It was a privilege to host students from Florence-Darlington Technical College at Darlington Raceway,” said Katina Wall, marketing director for STP. “There are automotive aficionados and future DIY-era in every community where NASCAR races. Their desire to learn more about the technological aspect of the sport, as well as future career options, is something STP is both happy to fulfill and enjoy seeing.”

Former crew chief and NBC Sports analyst Steve Letarte greeted the students when they arrived at Richard Petty Motorsports' No. 43 team hauler. Letarte took the students inside the hauler and explained the process of how the team works on a race weekend. Afterwards, he gave a guided tour of NASCAR's technical inspection in the garage area. Students followed a race team through the technical inspection process and saw just how perfect the cars had to be before they hit the high banks of Darlington Raceway.

“This opportunity was a dream come true for Florence-Darlington Technical College's Automotive Technology students,” said FDTC Public Information Specialist Hunter Thomas. “The college can't thank STP and Richard Petty Motorsports enough for this wonderful experience. For the students to get a private tour by Daytona 500 winning crew chief Steve Letarte is just priceless. The knowledge that Letarte has of the sport is just unparalleled.”

Following the garage tour, FDTC students experienced an up close and personal view of the NASCAR driver/crew chief meeting that's held prior to every event. All of NASCAR's superstars were gathered in one place as students stood by and learned about the various procedures that drivers go through during competition. Students then walked outside of the tunnel and attended an appearance by Richard Petty at the STP display area. At the end of the day, students enjoyed the 68th running of the Bojangles' Southern 500 from the grandstands.



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## BOYD TO SERVE AS ACTING SUPERINTENDENT

Submitted by Audrey Childers, Public Information Officer



Dr. Bill Boyd

**DARLINGTON**—The Darlington County Board of Education recently accepted the resignation of Superintendent Dr. Eddie Ingram, who has been named superintendent for the Berkeley County School District. Though Ingram's resignation was effective Aug. 20, he began his transition immediately and took leave for his remaining time with the Darlington County School District (DCSD).

The Board also announced that Dr. Willie "Bill" Boyd Sr., the district's associate superintendent, will serve as acting superintendent, effective immediately, until such time as the Board has identified an interim superintendent for the District.

"The Board of Education is pleased Dr. Boyd has agreed to step into the leadership role during this crucial time of transition," said Jamie Morphis, chairman of the Darlington County Board of Education. "His experience and knowledge will be invaluable as we move

forward."

Boyd has worked in the Darlington County School District for nearly 50 years, including 25 years in district administration. He previously served the district as a teacher, assistant principal, principal at multiple schools, transportation director, assistant to the superintendent, assistant superintendent for administration, and his current role as associate superintendent.

"I appreciate the confidence of the board to allow me to step in during this time. We have a very capable staff in place, and we will rely on that experience as we prepare for a new school year," said Boyd. "We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Ingram. He brought many great ideas to the district, and we will build on those successes. Our focus will continue to be on every child, every day. We want the community to know we give 110 percent each day we are here."

Boyd serves on the Florence-Darlington Technical College Board of Directors, as well as the McLeod Health Board of Trustees and the First Church of God Board of Trustees. He is a U.S. Army veteran. He is married to Patricia White Boyd, and they have four children.

## DCSD FOOD SERVICES EMPLOYEES COMPLETE 2ND YEAR OF CULINARY TRAINING

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Hartsville Middle School hosting the weeklong intensive training for DCSD's Food Services employees. Each of the district's 19 cafeterias had representatives attend the training.

**HARTSVILLE**—For the second year in a row, Food Services employees from the Darlington County School District (DCSD) completed an intensive food preparation and nutrition training course this summer.

Culinary Partners, a nonprofit that specializes in training school food service workers, led the way in the kitchen. Culinary Chef Instructor Tim Page, along with other trainers, joined Executive Director Eileen Staples at Hartsville Middle School for the week long course.

"We get the employees engaged.

We realize that it is very important to have healthier kids," Staples said. "We need to help kids learn that healthy foods can taste good. We want to use more spices, lower sodium and more whole grains to create healthier meals."

The goal of the training is to help the food services employees prepare highly nutritious and tasty meals while following all federal and state guidelines.



Food Services employees with the Darlington County School District complete classroom training with representatives of Clemson Extension this summer. The training focused on understanding nutrition, efficient operation of a cafeteria and marketing.

Page, who has been teaching high school students in Spartanburg for 13 years, said he thoroughly enjoys the training and watching the employees improve. "It's a lot of fun. It gives them a nice energy bump heading into the school year," Page said. "It's also very important. You're not going to have healthier children

with wishful thinking. Engagement is important."

The week not only included one-on-one instruction with culinary chefs, but the employees also spent two days in the classroom. Clemson Extension led that portion of the training, focusing heavily on understanding nutrition, efficient operation of a cafeteria and marketing.



During the training with Culinary Partners, DCSD employees got the chance to learn new recipes that combined nutrition with tastiness.



For the second consecutive year, Food Services employees with the Darlington County School District got the chance to participate in five days of intensive culinary training. The course featured culinary chef instructors and representatives of Clemson Extension.

kitchen.

DCSD's director of Food Services, Pamela Vaughan, said employees were so excited about the training last year, they were jumping at the opportunity. "It is wonderful training," Vaughan said. "They love it. We tried to get someone from every school like last year."

Staples said the employees always enjoy the knife skills instruction, as well as learning about using herbs and spices. "I wish we could do a whole week on just those," she said.

One of the most important pieces of the week for Page is the growth he sees in the employees. "It's exciting. I enjoy seeing their confidence grow regarding how to prepare food properly and safely," Page said. "Some of them go from nervous to confident. It's important to see that change."

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided funding for the training through a Team Nutrition Grant. The South Carolina Department of Education worked in conjunction with the USDA to distribute funding to Culinary Partners, according to Staples. DCSD donated all food prepared during the week's training to a local soup







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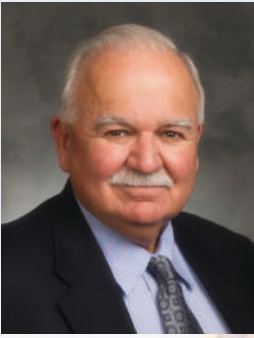




# Diversity Spotlight

## BAKED WITH FAMILY TRADITION, GARNISHED WITH EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Fred Ruiz

**DINUBA, CA** - Imagine going from being the only cook of your family's frozen food-processing company, making 40 pounds of food in an eight-hour shift, to having a 3600-member team as well as four manufacturing facilities, and ultimately producing 40 pounds of food every six seconds. But to understand how Ruiz Food Products became the successful manufacturer of frozen Mexican foods that it is today, it's important to delve deeper into Co-Founder Fred Ruiz's upbringing and the challenges that the Ruiz family and team overcame while on their trek to the top.

"I am Mexican-American. My dad, Louis, was born in Mexico and came to America at about the age of three. My mom, Rose, was born in America and raised in Mexico, returning to America as a young girl. I was born in the Los Angeles area of California. We moved to Tulare, California, when I was nine. As a child, mealtime was amazing because my mom was such a fantastic cook. Everything was made from scratch with many of her recipes originating from her mother and aunts...so many family favorites, including cheese enchiladas, burritos, tamales, and more."

"The idea to begin selling Grandma Rosie's delicious foods was my dad's and, I'm proud to say, he was a real entrepreneur all his life, always coming up with ideas...from selling feather dusters door-to-door as a kid in Los Angeles to selling spices and delivering groceries to rural farm families as a young man. My dad was always trying out new business ideas. In fact, I thought the tortilla-making business that he started with his brothers was the business I would pursue when I graduated from junior college, but it wasn't meant to be. Dad and his brothers had invented the first automatic tortilla production belt, and business was doing very well. But my dad disagreed with some of the business decisions his brothers wanted to make, so he decided to pursue other interests."



Fred Ruiz, accepting a gift to Ruiz Foods from Governor Henry McMaster to commemorate the Florence, SC Expansion event

"While I was in junior college, I was married and we were raising our first child," recalled Ruiz. "My Dad came to me and asked if I wanted to go into business with him, use Mom's Mexican food recipes, and make and sell frozen Mexican food. I was honored my Dad would ask me, and I was ready to get to work and support my family, so I eagerly said 'yes.' I was in charge of manufacturing, and Dad was responsible for making sales calls in the mornings and delivering our frozen Mexican food

in the afternoon. It was hard work but very exciting and full of challenges. I was proud to be a partner of our very own family-owned company."

But like any company in its beginning stages, the Ruiz family had its tests. "The challenge was taking my mom's family recipe and keeping the flavor profile after increasing the size of the batch. My mom was a salesperson at a local shoe store in Tulare, California. I can remember making a batch of enchilada sauce, knowing something was missing, taking a small cup of it over to the shoe store and waiting behind the back room curtain until Mom didn't have a customer. She'd then take a quick taste and tell me what it was missing--garlic, cumin, sometimes even oregano--and I'd go back to our small factory and add the ingredients. As I said earlier, Mom was an amazing cook. Cooking is it quickly became an art and a science. Imagine increasing a recipe from a five-gallon pot to a 10,000-pound cooking vessel."

According to Ruiz, decades ago, the company didn't do a lot of consumer research. "It wasn't a matter of asking, 'What does the consumer prefer?' We

had my mom's great recipes, and so we simply decided to offer what we knew would be uncomplicated to prepare yet delicious and easy: enchiladas and burritos. We first sold them in locally owned 'mom and pop' grocery stores throughout the Central San Joaquin Valley (California). As we grew, we began to reach out to retail grocery chains. My dad was our salesman in the mornings and our delivery man in the afternoons. We began to hire team members (that's what we call our employees). Today it is very different. We work hard to establish a relationship with each customer--from Costco to Wal-mart, Food Lion and Piggly Wiggly to Bi-Lo and Harris Teeter. We conduct research on a regular basis, and because our team members have such diverse backgrounds, we learn a lot from them as well."

"As the variety and popularity of our products continues to increase from the west to east coast, so does the need for production capacity. After building a manufacturing facility in Dinuba, CA, in 1990 and expanding it several years later, we acquired a facility in Denison, Texas. Then we began our due diligence process to determine what would be available on the East Coast. After learning about the availability of the Florence manufacturing facility, we felt strong we had found the East Coast location that would meet our growing needs. The icing on the cake was the Florence community itself...very mindful of where our other plants are located. The business community is welcoming. The residents are part of a strong work force. It was a perfect match for our company."

Fred Ruiz knows that business owners constantly face challenges. But the management team at Ruiz Foods prefers to see challenges as opportunities--opportunities to look for new solutions. According to Ruiz, that's because "it's a better, smarter, business approach." Thankfully, Ruiz would offer any individual interested in starting a new business or on the brink of giving up because of challenges the following advice:

- (1) be sure to have a business plan no matter the size of the company.
- (2) not only be ready to work hard but be ready to work smart as well.
- (3) always surround yourself with people who have the experience that can benefit your business.

Grounded in tradition, the Ruiz family involvement in the company continues



Members of the third and fourth Ruiz family generation learning from Fred as he examines several El Monterey brand products

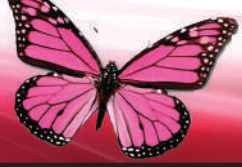
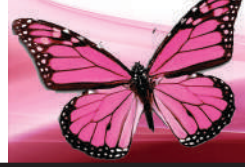
L to R: Matt Ruiz (Fred's youngest son), Travis Beck (Fred's grandson), Fred Ruiz, Tyler Ruiz (Fred's grandson). We thought this would be a good cover as Fred talks about the company being family-owned and the next generations. The son and the two grandsons work at Ruiz Foods on a daily basis.

for each generation. "We are a family-owned company and, currently, members of the third Ruiz Family generation are very involved. Kim Ruiz Beck, my elder daughter is chairman of Ruiz Foods. One of my sons, Matt, also works for the company and is a member of the board of directors. My two other children are not involved in day-to-day activities but as owners, are also working to guide the company for future Ruiz family members. A few members of the fourth Ruiz family generation, namely, two of my grandsons, Tyler and Travis, are

involved on a day-to-day basis. Other younger fourth generation Ruiz Family members, while still going to school, are learning about the company during specifically planned meetings."

"As Ruiz Foods continues to grow, I believe diversity at every level remains one of the keys to our success, and I encourage diversity in most everything we do," stated Ruiz. "Our future shows great promise and, I believe, is very exciting. We continue to grow. We continue to innovate and create new products. We continue to stay true to our commitment to quality, good value and great taste in what we make."





## IT IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH...

Submitted by Emmanuel Quaye, MD, Medical Director



Emmanuel Quaye, MD  
Medical Director

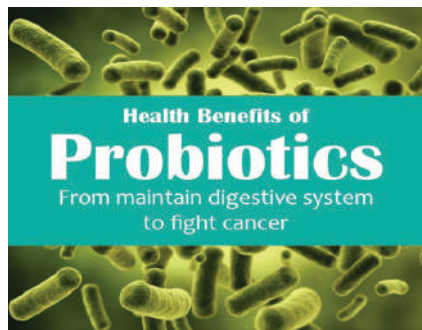
...and there's one new thing you should know about breast cancer: PROBIOTICS!

The lifetime risk for breast cancer among women is one in eight. That means one out of eight women will have breast cancer in their lifetime. That is a significant lifetime risk. Because so many women get it, breast cancer is quite reasonably a topic that generates a bit of discussion and interest in research and funding. Because of this same high risk, many women make the decision to have prophylactic mastectomies to avoid getting the disease.

This is especially true for women who have a family history or a proven genetic risk for breast cancer. But if current research findings on possible causes and prevention are held to be true, the outlook for breast cancer will change for the better.

Breast cancer is quite an enigmatic disease. Despite the strong focus on genetics, less than one in 10 of all breast cancers are due to genetics. The vast majority of breast cancers have no genetic connection. That means most breast cancers are due to environmental factors, which if identified, we might be able to influence to reduce the risk. Age and diet are risk factors for breast cancer, but we do not know the cause of breast cancer in about 70 percent of people who get it. These cancers with no known cause are called sporadic cancers, and they represent an area that is ripe for research.

There are billions of bacteria that inhabit our bodies and interact with our bodies and are known collectively as the microbiome.



The person on whose body they inhabit is the host. The microbiome interacts with the host through the collective DNA of all the bacteria and the byproducts of bacterial metabolism. The interaction between the microbiome and the host is symbiotic and results in benefit for both the host and microbiome. Sometimes, the relationship

turns sour, and the interaction between host and microbiome could lead to disease. There are some real disease-causing bacteria mixed with friendly bacteria. What really makes the microbiome safe and beneficial are the proportions of individual species of bacteria (and yeast) that exist in the host. The types and proportions of bacteria in a specific host are the host's bacterial profile. Different bacterial profiles can exist in different parts of the host, such as the upper airway and sinuses, the gut, and yes, the breasts.

Since these bacteria were first described about 150 years ago, researchers have been growing the knowledge base on how they influence human health. It has already been established that changes in the microbiome play a role in human diseases such as obesity, diabetes and colon cancer. In the last several years, research has intensified on the role that bacterial populations play in human health and various diseases, including breast cancer. In 2016, researchers from Ontario, Canada reported their findings on the role of the bacterial profile in the breast tissue of women on the development of breast cancer, benign tumors of the breast, or no breast disease. In this study, the researchers collected breast tissue from women undergoing surgery. The women were in three groups. The first group consisted of women who had breast cancer. The second group of women who had benign tumors, and the third group consisted of women who had no disease

of the breast but were having cosmetic surgery (breast enhancement or reduction). For the women who had cancers or benign tumors, the researchers collected samples from the normal tissue close to the tumors.

The results showed in the tissues collected from women with breast cancer the presence of certain bacteria that are known to cause DNA damage, a necessary first step in the development of cancer. These were E. coli (certain strains) and Staphylococcus epidermidis. On the other hand, women who had no breast disease were found to have higher numbers of Lactobacillus and Streptococcus, two bacteria that have been shown to protect against cancer. This was not surprising because similar results have been shown in people with colon cancer (stool) as well as oral cancers (saliva). In addition, "Orally administered Lactobacillus species have been shown to be protective in animal models of breast cancer."

Interesting stuff, isn't it? First, the researchers have shown that there are bacteria in some parts of the body (breasts) where we wouldn't think bacteria exist. And then they have shown that not all the bacteria automatically cause disease. Other research has shown that some bacteria actually protect against disease. In their conclusion, the authors note that their study "raises important questions as to the role of the breast microbiota in breast cancer development or prevention, and whether bacteria could be harnessed for interventions to help prevent disease onset."

What does that mean to a patient who may be worried about getting breast cancer?

Although the research is not conclusive at this time, the findings are exciting. Since Probiotics (beneficial bacteria) were discovered 150 years ago, scientists have known that they play a role in wellness and health promotion. Populations where people consume large amounts of fermented foods such as yogurt, which contain Probiotics, have been shown to live long. Moreover, an imbalance of bacteria, known as dysbiosis, has been shown to play a role in most chronic diseases from mental disorders, heart disease, neurologic diseases and autoimmune disease. And as we mentioned earlier, disease-causing bacteria (rather than disease preventing and health promoting bacteria) have been found in stool of colon cancer patients and in saliva of oral cancer patients.

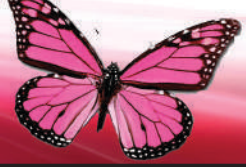
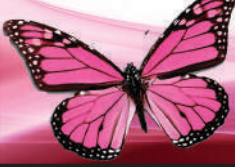


For people with concerns about breast cancer, the message is "Probiotics!" Yes, Probiotics. If you have never heard about Probiotics, start now with this article, ask your doctor, search for it on the Internet, and ask your local health food store for

information. You are also at liberty to call our office. If you know about Probiotics, and you want more information, you may call our office. The information about the benefits of Probiotics is extensive, and Probiotics should be included as part of any health plan. We recommend Probiotics because Probiotics have been shown to have a positive impact on longevity AND prevent breast cancer in animal models of the disease, AND Probiotics are safe.

Wishing you good breast health,  
Emmanuel Quaye, MD, Medical Director  
Magnolia Health Care, Inc.  
843-432-2502





## BEATING THE BREAST CANCER ODDS

by Anna Bowman



Angie Jackson and her husband, Gerald

**DILLON-** Angie Jackson vividly recalls the moment she found out that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. “The first thing I thought about when my surgeon called with the news was that this was it for me, and I was going to die!” It goes without saying she was devastated to learn of the diagnosis, especially since she was a very health-conscious person. “I’m a teacher, and I always get my

yearly physical and mammogram at the end of the school year. But in January or February I began to feel some type of “lumpiness” in my right breast, a couple of little pellet-like lumps that worried me a little, but I didn’t think it was anything to be alarmed about,” she recalled. In fact she stayed true to her regular routine, and in May she discussed her concerns with her doctor. After a mammogram and ultra sound, cancer was detected.

In June 2015, Angie was diagnosed with Stage 0 breast cancer, ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). The tumor was contained in the duct and had not spread to her lymph node. “It’s amazing,” she recalls, “how everything can change with just one phone call, and suddenly you’re thrown into a world that you never even knew existed,” she said. Adding to her fears were two thoughts that continuously occupied her mind: “My life would never be the same,” and “Every person I had ever heard about who had breast cancer died!”

Throughout her ordeal, her husband was her strength. “My husband was my rock through it all!” she proudly stated. “My family was wonderful and supported me wholeheartedly, but sometimes I could see the fear in their eyes,” she acknowledged. She also admits that she had the usual question, “Why did God let this happen to me?” But she quickly realized, “I felt his presence and saw his hand in everything that happened. I am so blessed.”

And then came the moment when she realized she had to inform her employer. “I am a special education teacher at Dillon High School.



It was odd having to go to my administration and fellow workers and tell them what had happened when the new school year started. I didn’t necessarily want to keep it secret or anything, but I didn’t really enjoy having to recount the experience of my diagnosis and surgeries. I found a world of prayerful care and support from everyone in my school and district. I

appreciated that so much, and I was able to plan my treatments after school so I didn’t miss any days. My students were very protective and concerned about me. They were always quick to carry my stuff and help me out,” she fondly remembered.

Angie was right about one thing: her life will never be the same after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She realized just how blessed she was to have caught the cancer so early, and to have been able to get through her ordeal with only a few scars and an experience that has changed the way she thinks about and responds to people who are struggling with cancer. Two years later, Angie is not only surviving but thriving as well. Today, she is a member of Toni’s Tigers at Carolina Hospital, a support group for people with breast cancer. “They are the best people in the world, and I am so glad to be a part of them. Toni McGiboney has such a ‘burden’ for her patients, and she is a wonderful source of support. We all love her so much.”

“I would tell anyone who has just been diagnosed that it is not the end...God is bigger than cancer. I only knew of people who had lost the battle to cancer before my diagnosis. I think about what I have been through, and how blessed I am, every day. I will never be the same. I have a long prayer list of people who are still fighting, and I pray for them every day,” she stated.

Angie and her husband Gerald have two children and four grandchildren and reside in Dillon.







## BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR, 37 YEARS STRONG!

by Anna Bowman



Lillie Bell Packer most recent picture

Faith in God has always played a very important part in the life of Lillie Bell Packer. Being diagnosed with breast cancer didn't alter her faith but strengthened her belief in God and his awesome grace. In 1979, when Packer was diagnosed with breast cancer, there were no pink ribbons or a Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation shining a light on the devastation of the disease. Thankfully for Packer, everything and, more importantly, everyone she needed to help guide her safely through her journey was in place. She was blessed with the best doctors,

nurses, a wonderful husband, a great family and God.

Like so many women, Packer went for a mammograph at the request of her doctor. Unfortunately, the results were inconclusive, and she was asked to return for a second mammograph, only to be told that she would have to return once again, this time for a biopsy. The results came back: "It's breast cancer," her doctor confirmed. Then he gave her two options: to have surgery or not to have surgery. Then he quickly informed her that without the surgery, her life would be cut short.



After receiving the news, Packer and her family were devastated. "I was shaken but realized that I had a very important decision to make about my health," she said. "I asked God to guide me to the right decision." Packer decided to have her left breast removed. "After my mastectomy, I didn't need radiation or chemo therapy. I didn't get gravely ill during my recovery, which was a blessing," she said. "I was blessed with extraordinary love and support from my husband, daughter and sons, and mother. In fact, my mother came to live with us in order to nurse me back to

health," she proudly said. She was also amazed by the outpouring support she received from her immediate family members, church members and friends.

For 34 years, Packer would be one of the many women across America who had beaten the odds and bravely survive breast cancer. That was until 2013, when she was once again diagnosed with breast cancer. "Something was detected in my mammogram, so I had my right breast removed." But this time, Packer would have to endure chemotherapy and the side effects of the treatment. "The first time I

didn't need chemotherapy, but this time I had to take chemo. My hair came out in lumps and inside the palms of my hands turned completely dark." But even with all of the side effects of the chemo, Packer was still grateful. "The chemotherapy treatments, didn't affect my job. I had days when I had to take chemo on my long days for eight hours and short days when I had to be in treatment for three hours at a time. I was blessed that the chemo didn't make me sick."

Her faith continued to be her guiding force then too. "This time everything what so different," she said. Her children were now adults, and her beloved husband of 50 years, Spencer Packer Jr., was deceased. Her faith grew stronger, and she pressed on with help from her children, family, friends, and her church family, Trinity Baptist Church, in Florence. She also found solace in joining other cancer survivors. Packer is a member of the Breast Cancer Support Group, Toni's Tigers at Carolinas Hospital System in Florence. "I look forward to seeing everyone when we meet once a month on Tuesdays," said Packer. She quickly added, "Being around people who understand not only what

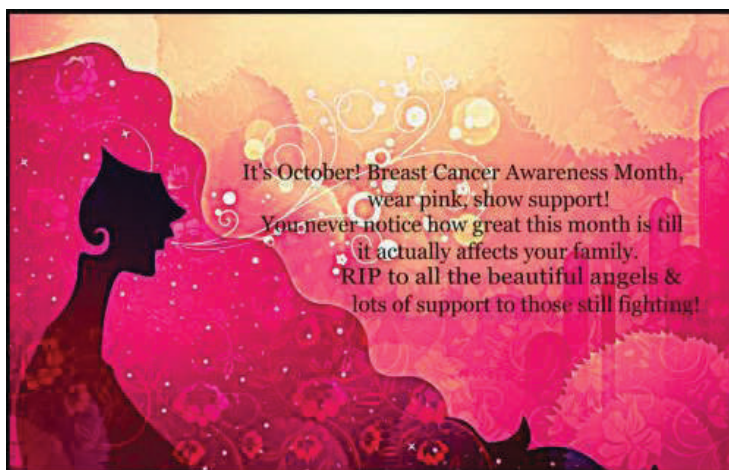


Lillie Bell Packer earlier years

you're feeling, but how you feel from the treatments or ailments associated with having cancer is a welcomed refuge." She thoroughly enjoys the way in which the instructor, Toni, helps to "strengthen" each member of the support group.

Today, 37 years later, Packer is a breast cancer survivor who enjoys life to its fullest. "I love being with my children and grandchildren and going to church to hear great preaching and singing." She encourages other breast cancer survivors to join a support group as well. She also offers these words of encouragement for anyone newly

diagnosed with breast cancer or surviving breast cancer: "Pray and ask God for guidance, and don't ever say you're going to die! I'm a living testament to surviving with breast cancer!"







# Breast Cancer Awareness

## THROUGH FAITH AND FAMILY, I SURVIVED

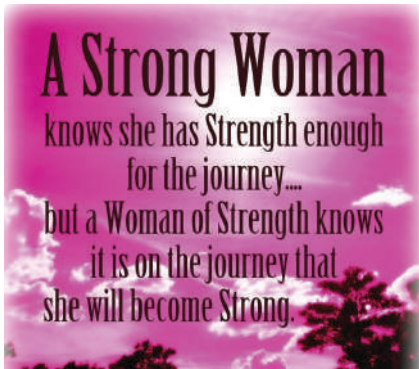
by Anna Bowman



Husband Teddy, Robin, and daughter Elyse

Robin Horne could remember 19 years ago when her very dear friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. Once she found out, she said, "I strove to provide her and her family with as much support as possible," because learning about her friend's breast cancer was "too" close to home. Today, since learning of her friend's diagnosis, Robin, herself, is a two-time breast cancer survivor.

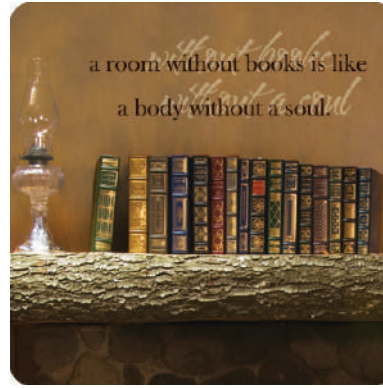
The first time Horne was diagnosed in 2015 with infiltrated ductile carcinoma was ironically, September 11th. The second time, she was diagnosed with localized malignant nodule. Like so many women, she first detected a lump while doing a self-examination during her shower, which alerted her to seek medical attention. "The second lump was detected by Dr. Ziad Skaff during a routine six-month check-up, and he sent me for an ultrasound and ultrasound guided biopsy and a PET scan." After her second diagnosis, she became especially concerned about her daughter, Elyse N. Horne's, risk factor for having breast cancer in the future.



Horne's family and friends were extremely supportive and accommodating. "My husband, Teddy, was especially supportive, and he became my primary caretaker!" she said as she beamed with loving pride. Horne was also thankful for the extremely wonderful and caring role her friends played in her family's life

during this time. "Friends were also extremely important because they were available to take some of the pressure off of my family! And my employer offered me full support, as well, and I was able to keep my job."

For Horne, her faith provided a great deal of strength for her



throughout her various stages of healing. "I don't know how anyone can face something so life-changing without faith and spiritual devotions. Prayer is a powerful blessing," she said. "My Highland Park UMC family was crucial to my recovery."

Horne strongly believes and advocates the power of positive thinking and being proactive. "Don't let the disease consume you!" These are words

Horne would tell anyone newly diagnosed with breast cancer. Additionally, she would hope that they would be proactive and have a very positive outlook and maintain a strong relationship with God, family and friends.

A part of being proactive is reaching out and interacting with other cancer survivors for support. This is why Horne is a proud member of Toni's Tiger and enjoys talking to and bonding with other cancer survivors. She also donates to Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society.

Horne, a proud two-time survivor, said that she realized that many things in life are not nearly as important as they initially seem, and by far, the most important things in her life are her relationship with God, her family and friends, and the people that she may be able to provide support. "I try to maintain a positive, loving attitude and provide the best example of a survivor I can, and I hope that I've provided a small amount of inspiration to someone in need!"

Robin loves to share with everyone one of her favorite quotes: "A room without books, is as a body without a soul," (Cicero).

Robin Horne and her husband Teddy are the proud parents of a daughter, Elyse N. Horne, and they all reside in Florence.





# Domestic Violence Awareness

## MOVING FROM A PLACE OF DESOLATION TO A NEW, SAFE DESTINATION

by Ta'Meeka Epps



Domestic abuse is a pattern of behavior, which involves violence or mental abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting, such as in marriage or cohabitation. Domestic abuse can take place in any type of relationship, affect anyone one of age and can include violence against children in the family. Domestic abuse can take a number of forms including, but not limited to, physical, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual abuse. The abuse can range from subtle subliminal shots to coercive forms, even marital rape.

Domestic abuse occurs when the abuser believes that abuse is acceptable, justified, or unlikely to be reported. Very few people recognize themselves as abusers or victims because they may consider their experiences as family disputes that went too far. Awareness, perception, definition and reporting domestic violence differs widely for each individual and situation. The abuse may have a long damaging effect on all involved, including children.

Victims of domestic abuse may be trapped in domestic violent situations through isolation, power and control, lack of financial resources, fear, shame, or to protect children. As a result of abuse, victims may experience physical disabilities, chronic health problems, mental illness, limited finances, drug/alcohol abuse and poor ability to create healthy relationships.

When victims are able to find the strength to leave their abusers after living their own personal nightmares, where do they turn for help? When family and/or friends are not an option, where does home become for them when they decide enough is enough?



The Naomi Project, Inc. is the only operation of its kind in the Pee Dee area. The project's core mission is to change the lives of families going through domestic abuse after choosing not to return to the abuser.

The vision of The Naomi Project is to reach into the lives

of hurting women and children who are homeless and victims of domestic abuse, who have been dropped and abandoned by the system and change their lives from the place of desolation to the place of destiny. It provides victims and their children with long-term housing that is safe and void of verbal, physical, psychological and sexual abuse. In addition, The Naomi Project seeks to help victims develop independence through emotional and psychological healing and obtaining educational and financial stability.

The Naomi Project is a Godsend to one of the residences. Another residence believes it is a blessing for her and her children. Both residents--one a single, elderly female and the other a single mother of three--experienced abuse at the hands of the one who promised to provide protection and had to make the decision between being homeless or continuing to be abused.

Their stories, though different, read the same, and their only chance for survival was to find the strength to get out of the abusive situation and begin the work of healing. The process to healing is a long and hard one: "It's like a baby learning to walk after crawling for so long,

and one day you just get up and stand because you don't want your knees to be scarred anymore," recalls one resident. "It's a very hard process, which has taught me to love myself and prove to myself I am stronger than I thought I was," recalls the single mother.

Surviving domestic abuse looks like "not being afraid to change," exclaimed the single mother. "Change was the best thing for me. I never wanted my children to see me in any of the situations we went through because, unfortunately, they went through the abuse as well. Survival means getting up everyday even when you don't want to and put in the work to change your situation and change yourself. The work starts with forgiving yourself and stopping the cycle. It is a process,



but one that I have been determined to get through."

Surviving domestic abuse looks like "a very hard process," stated the other resident. "When you go through the abuse, your body gets numb and you don't want to feel anything. So how do you get up to start? I had to pray and ask God to give me the strength, and one day my tears became tears of joy. I stopped blaming myself for how my abuser treated me, and I started to let go of all the pain."

Overcoming the hell of abuse takes a lot out of you while replacing all you lost with more goodness than your spirit can hold. Education, exposure and experience beyond the abuse equips the victims to become survivors and advocates for themselves and for others who are going

through what they have gone through. With their new found strength and the resources available to them through The Naomi Project, their future is destined to be greater than their past.

The Naomi Project helps the residents to become self

sufficient as they regain their independence. For one resident, her independence has led her to enroll in college working towards her associate degree, something she had never fathomed prior to being placed in The Naomi Project. The single mother has secured employment, saved to purchase a vehicle and is looking forward to the start of the new year when she will provide a home for herself and her children.

The Naomi Project has helped the residents build their self-esteem, confidence and self respect while teaching life skills they will use long after leaving the transitional program.

The Naomi Project is committed to educating the community about abuse. If you are a victim of domestic abuse or would like to help The Naomi Project with its missions and goals of helping those affected by domestic abuse, please visit the website [www.naomiproject.com](http://www.naomiproject.com) and/or contact the Project via e-mail ([naomiproject06@sc.rr.com](mailto:naomiproject06@sc.rr.com)) or by phone at 843-615-1548.

# Domestic Violence Awareness

## BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Submitted by Joyce Ford, Executive Director



Joyce Ford

The Naomi Project's mission is to change the lives of families going through domestic abuse after choosing not to return to the abuser. Unfortunately, there are many families that go through domestic abuse and need a way out but are unable to support themselves. In order to achieve support, we need advocates who speak for the cause or policies that we believe in and who use actions to help end domestic abuse situations.

The following are goals of advocacy for victims of domestic abuse:

- Your job is to empower her.
- Convey to the women that it is not their fault, and she is not alone.
- Providing safety and shelter to abused women and their children.
- Helping victims develop "safety plans."
- Provide support and assistance to abused women so they can make decisions about the options that are available to them.
- Respect differences and avoid assumptions. Advocates may themselves believe certain myths about domestic abuse and should attempt to be aware of any assumptions they might be making. Further, women experience violence in different ways, and advocates should try to be aware of ways in which women may face additional barriers or have specific needs.
- Keep all information about an abused woman strictly confidential. Confidentiality is essential not only to promote a relationship of trust, but also to avoid endangering the women. If her abuser discovers that she has sought assistance or may be planning to leave, she may be in serious danger.
- Empower women with the ability to make significant changes and solve problems.
- Increase a victim's ability to make a successful transition from a battering environment to independence.
- Connect the victims--both in the short- and long-term--with community resources that provide support, encouragement and assistance.

- Provide information, support, and upon request act as liaison between the victims and the criminal justice system.
  - Provide information and assistance--including temporary and long-term housing, employment training (or re-training) and placement, and childcare--to victims who leave abusive environments.
  - Provide information and referrals to community resource agencies, including public assistance, child protective agencies, public and mental health agencies, social services and schools.
  - You will be trained to listen.
  - You can give her the opportunity to express her feelings and validate them. At the same time you can assure her that many of the feelings she is experiencing at that moment may change, and she can take charge with time. She will also be able to review the situation in a less numbing way.
  - You will help her decide what she wants and not take over for her.
  - You can reassure her that you don't view her as helpless and that during this difficult time it's hard to assert herself, and that's OKAY.
  - You refer her to resources she knows are reliable and with which she is familiar. Information provided with referrals can be as specific as the best time to call, who to talk to, and what information she will need to provide.
  - You discuss and rehearse the plan of action, assist in preparation of all necessary documents or requests for assistance, and help rethink plans of action if she fails or if circumstances change.
  - You must bear in mind that each woman is the victim of this type of abuse primarily because she is a woman, that the culture effectively supports the right to control women, and the barriers to her freedom are many. (Be not surprised if she isn't able to free herself at this time; be delighted and amazed when she does.)
- If you or someone you know are interested in becoming an advocate please feel free to contact me, Joyce Ford, at 843-615-1548.



## PEE DEE COALITION'S IMMIGRANT OUTREACH ADVOCATE PROGRAM

by Anna Bowman



Ana Hancock-Andonie

Ana Hancock-Andonie never guessed that volunteering as an interpreter for the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault in 2004 would result in her become a staff member of the agency in 2005. After the South Carolina Attorney General Office implemented a Rural Domestic Violence Initiative, which centralized criminal domestic violence (CDV) courts, she welcomed the idea of becoming an advocate for the agency. She works to

help the Hispanic Community under a grant from the South Carolina Attorney General Office as a certified interpreter and translator for the State of South Carolina. She works with agencies like the Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of Social Services, and Court Administration.

In her position as immigration advocate, Hancock-Andonie, who arrived in America in 2011 from her native country of Honduras, is able to help women with applications for specific immigration services such as T-Visa, U-Visa and I-360 self-petition. She explains the

difference in each of the programs. "The T-Visa is a type of visa allowing certain victims of human trafficking and immediate family members to remain and work temporarily in the United States, typically if they agree to assist law enforcement in testifying against the perpetrators. The U-Visa is a non-immigrant visa for victims of crimes (and their immediate family members) who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse and are willing to assist law enforcement and government officials in the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity. The I-360 self-petition is covered by the VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) provisions in the INA that allow certain spouses, children, and parents of U.S. citizens and certain spouses and children of permanent residents (Green Card holders) to file a petition for themselves, without the abuser's knowledge. These services are unique

to the immigrant victim," she said.

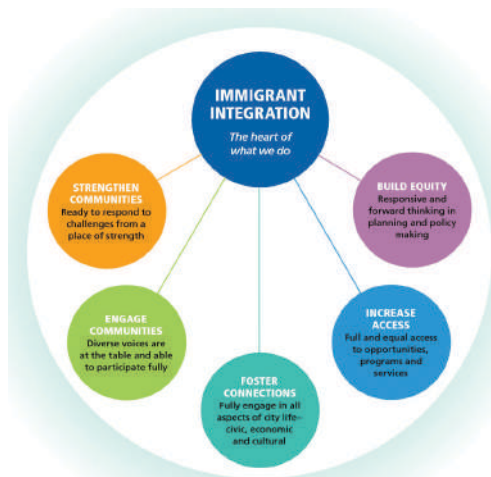
According to Hancock-Andonie, "the major problem areas that cause victims to seek our services are domestic





# Domestic Violence Awareness

## PEE DEE COALITION'S IMMIGRANT OUTREACH ADVOCATE PROGRAM CONT'D



violence, sexual assault, and family abuse. These victims are determined to break the cycle of violence, despite the fact that they face difficulties specific to their particular situation. These difficulties can include the language barrier, religious pressures, severe traditions, or other barriers placed on an individual by their

community.” It’s important that the public understand that immigration advocates work with, and assist women, from all continents, and can offer services and give appropriate intervention to a victim, based on their personal situation.

One of the misconceptions of the program is that the Immigration Advocate’s main interaction with victims is that of the interpreter, but nothing could be further from the truth. “Advocacy is more than just being bilingual,” said Hancock-Andonie. “We look at the whole reality of individuals, their culture, their values, their beliefs, their families and supporting the decisions they make.” She goes on to explain, “Our agency is highly trained advocates, bilingual and bi-cultural, accompanying individuals and their families through their journey, following their lead, and supporting their goals and choices. We meet individuals where they feel comfortable, go at their pace and, most importantly, we listen.”

For women and children fleeing domestic violence, the Pee Dee Coalition offers emergency shelter. It also provides a transitional shelter

for up to 18 months for women and children who need a longer stay to establish independence and self-sufficiency, regardless of their citizenship status. Advocates understand how the court system and the social services system works, and are familiar with other useful community resources. The lack of understanding English proficiency can prevent victims from adequately knowing what types of resources are available to help them leave their abusive relationships.

“In addition to providing them with good information, we can often accompany them to court, police station or social services, providing them with both practical and emotional support. Our actions seek to promote their autonomy, informing them about their rights and helping them to integrate with the country.”

Hancock-Andonie stated that “a majority of women find out about our services due to our community education programs, as well as our website and social media presence. Additionally, referrals from outside agencies, such as law enforcement, court systems, the Department of Social Services, and educational institutions assist in informing victims of our services.”

For additional information about the Immigrant Outreach Advocate services, please contact the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault at 843-669-4600, or visit the website: [www.peedeecoalition.org](http://www.peedeecoalition.org).



## PEE DEE COALITION'S ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

by Anna Bowman



Allen McBride

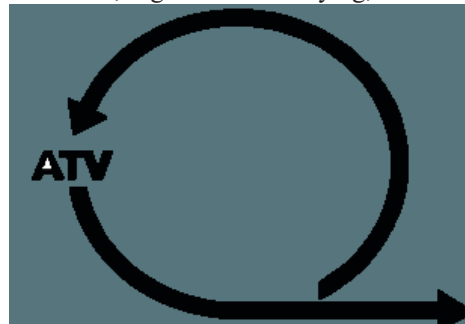
Violence Policy Center. In order for individuals to overcome their “demons,” they must be willing to accept that fact that they indeed have a problem that could not only be dangerous but also deadly. In order to be proactive, the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault implemented the Alternatives to Violence Program to target some of the re-occurring behaviors that result in violence.

The Pee Dee Coalition established the Alternative to Violence Program (ATV) in 1995 in an attempt to teach alternatives to the anger, rage, frustration, fear, isolation and desperation, which are parts of an abusive relationship, according to Allen McBride, ATV program coordinator. The program is available for both men and women. Of the 183 clients seen by the program since January of 2017, 30 clients involved in the program were women. Eliminating violent behavior

It has been said, “As a man thinks in his heart, so shall he be,” but what if that man or woman, has a heart filled with anger and violence? No one wants to be in the direct path of a person who can’t control his or her temper, or worst, resorts to physical violence. In recent years, South Carolina was ranked as worst in the nation for deadly violence against women, according to a 2015 report by the

by enabling abusers to identify alternate ways of dealing with their emotions without resulting to violence is the goal of the program.

There are two ways in which participants may seek assistance from the program: voluntarily or by being referred by the judicial system. The latter comes with some very stiff consequences for failing to complete the program or for not following the protocol of the program. Participants assigned by the judicial system are governed by several options: pay a fine up to \$5,000; serve 90 days in jail, or participate in Domestic Violence Intervention, which includes 26 weeks of group psycho education counseling (\$690). If a participant fails the program, the other two options are at the discretion of the court. Therefore, it goes without saying, that there is a “hefty” cost for not completing the program.



Besides referrals from the judicial system, the program also receives referrals from the Department of Social Services. These participants have had incidents of violence occurring and witnessed by minor children. The

# Domestic Violence Awareness

## PEE DEE COALITION'S ALTERNATIVES CONT'D

children are sometimes placed in foster care, and the parents are granted reunion with the child when they complete the ATV program. The results of a 2012 study on the ATV program, which studied 271 participants from July 2011 through June 2012, showed an impressive 80 percent of the participants were involved in a successful relationship, in comparison to nearly 19 percent recidivism rate of repeat offenders.

Even though domestic violence can occur at any age, McBride states that most participants fall in the range of ages from 35-45 years old. According to McBride, there are many variables that might influence why people chose violence to solve situations of conflict. Family culture is one reason. Children repeat what they see occur in their family environment. People also find themselves in certain predicaments that lead them to feel that there's no other way out of it other than to lash out at the first threat that they conceive as one which may not be a threat at all.

McBride acknowledges that every relationship has conflict and arguments, but not every relationship has abuse. Many couples fight in fair and non-abusive ways. Many couples ignore the abuse because

at first it does not occur frequently. However, whatever the reason for any type of abuse, be it occasional or an everyday experience, the ATV program provides participants with the tools and coping strategies intended to encourage all participants to develop healthy relationships based on mutual respect and support. The core services that the Pee Dee Coalition's ATV program utilizes to assist participants are:

- Assessment
- 26-week group sessions
- Criminal justice/legal coordination
- Case tracking
- Information and referral
- Community education and training

McBride believes that the ATV program can help all who are in need of their services. He feels that the services offered are beneficial to everyone. For more information about the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault's Alternative To Violence program, please call Allen McBride at 843-673-2008.

## CARRYING HER MOTHER'S LEGACY

by Anna Bowman



Brandy Simmons - (Deceased Mother)

**BENNETTSVILLE** - It's never easy losing a parent at an early age, especially a mother. But, the only thing that could possibly come close to being as detrimental, is to lose your mother to domestic violence at the hands of your own father. Toni White was only 15 years old when this horrific scenario became her reality. After years of abuse, her beloved mother, Brandy Simmons, 33, would succumb to a blow from a man who vowed to love her "till death we do part," not at all the fairytale

ending she dreamt of when she said, "I do," to the man of her dreams.

It's hard to comprehend, but the harsh reality is that while White, her mother, and younger brother were living in an abusive household, "none of my family members had a clue that my mother was being abused," she said. In fact, she said, "When this tragedy occurred, it was a total shock to everyone. Even my peers at school would say to me, 'your parents seemed perfect.'" White and her younger brother, Vander, who was seven years old at the time, saw the abuse their entire lives. "When the fighting began to occur more often and more aggressive, my father started to abuse me as well. There were many times when our mother talked about leaving our father, but never did," she solemnly recalled.

"After our mother's passing, my brother and I were raised by our grandmother. White describes her as an 'amazing woman' who saw that they had counseling after the tragedy. "I don't know how our lives would have turned out without her love and guidance," she said with so much love and respect. "After the tragedy, I immediately drove myself into a 'strong' and 'defensive' mode towards everything in life. I went through a phase where I felt that I was getting close to anyone, I would immediately push them away, and it caused me to lose amazing people that I once had in my life. As of today, dating/falling in love is extremely hard for me. Knowing that my father, who only served two years of a four-year sentence, was someone that I loved with all of my heart, crushed my entire world and had no remorse, it really damages relationships that I try to build. It makes me ask myself, 'Who can I trust?'" She said that she has forgiven her father but will not have a relationship with him.



Toni White

Last year, after moving into her own place, White realized that for the past four years she thought she was healed, but not being surrounded by people constantly forced her to face the depression that was embedded in her subconscious. "I realized that I had been avoiding the situation. From that point, I started making myself think about the incident and accepting what happened." She also stated, "I'm a work in progress, but I'm much better now!"

Today, White, 23, is a nursing student at Watts School of Nursing Duke Health System, and her brother, Vander Louis Simmons, 16, is a high school junior who enjoys playing both basketball and football and plans to attend college to become a computer engineer. "My mother was a registered nurse, she graduated from Mercy School of Nursing, and I love following in her footsteps and carrying on her legacy in a career she truly loved." She hopes to create the Brandy Simmons Foundation in the immediate future in honor of her mother.

White realizes that people often say that their family business is no one else's business, but she cautions everyone that if your family business includes someone being abused, please reach out and seek help. It could literally be the difference between life and death.

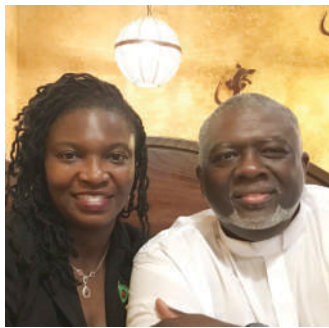




# Domestic Violence Awareness

## IT HURTS ME TO SEE YOU HURT

Submitted by Eric Robinson



Jennifer Robinson Guiles alongside her loving and supportive husband Eric

Families are units that are there to help us, protect us, encourage us and love us through the pearls and perils in our lives. Good family members seek to make us feel safe from those things in our worlds that pose threats and cause pain. But what we often forget to understand is that we cannot be everywhere we want to be with our family member(s), and the evils of this world can hurt those to whom we are closest. Victims of violence need a support system, but

because variances of violence are wrought with social opinions, victims are often isolated and ostracized. They no longer feel as though sharing their experience(s) will help them to cope with pain. It is important for survivors to know that someone is there for them. Though victims of violence seek much comfort from their trauma, they also tend to lash out at those closest to them. Those people who they depend on for protection and comfort can also be the ones who seem farthest away. These people are often described as “secondary survivors.”

### Awareness...



October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month...

...but every day of every month of every year is a good day to help someone get free from domestic violence because it happens every day of every month of every year... and it's probably happening to someone you know. *Speak out today.*



According to domesticshelters.org, “Secondary survivors are people who are likely to be affected by relational abuse or isolation, so, close friends and relatives of a survivor: someone who will suffer because the survivor is suffering; someone who regularly talks and socializes with the survivor, which means they may likely be cut out of the survivor’s life when the abuser becomes controlling. They may not always be directly abused with threats or verbal abuse, though this can happen. They experience quite a bit of pain because their friend is in pain.” A metaphor to use as illustration for the disconnect between primary survivor and secondary is watching a train wreck and not being able to do anything except offer assistance. Unless someone has been a victim of violence, it is challenging to identify with what some who have been a victim have faced and will have to face on their path to healing.”

Secondary victims have the desire to assist their friend or family member, which is commendable, but without knowing how to assist it is challenging. Also stated by domesticshelters.org, “Often, secondary survivors feel so conflicted. They want to help their friend leave their abusive partner, but their friend isn’t ready yet. And they also don’t want to continue to expose themselves to abusive behavior, or it pains them to hear their friend talk about abuse and staying in the relationship. Advocate for someone to take whatever steps they need to take in order to ensure their own personal safety and wellbeing. I also think it’s important to let your friend know you’ll be there for them. Leaving an abusive relationship is so dangerous, and often connections have been severed so a survivor has few people to rely on. You can make it clear,

‘If you need anything, let me know. I really mean that.’ But if you also have to reduce contact to keep your sanity, do it. Most secondary survivors feel drained trying to affect a certain outcome.” Secondary victim/survivors must know that their care and concern is much needed and much appreciated. Because victims are conflicted, being able to identify and communicate what they are feeling is hard to share.

Eric Robinson knows firsthand the barriers that come with being a secondary survivor. He has been married to sexual abuse survivor, Jennifer Guiles Robinson, for 23 years. Eric first learned of Jennifer’s experience months after they began dating in 1992. Eric Robinson stated, “After she told me what happened to her, I didn’t know what to say. I felt bad for her and wanted to see if there was anything I could do to help bring peace to her situation.”

During their first few years of marriage, there was not a lot of trust because victims lose trust for people because of assault. She was angry, and communication was either hard or nonexistent. She maintained a mode of distrust and insecurity, which posed challenges for their marriage. Because they did not know that the troubles in their marriage were based on her personal issues as a victim, other issues in their marriage seemed magnified. Eric was troubled and did not understand until Jennifer received therapy that revealed that their underlying problems were based her traumatic experiences. In 2003, Jennifer began counseling sessions to be able to learn coping mechanisms to handle the stress and struggles of being a sexual abuse victim. During one of her sessions, her therapist suggested that Eric attend one of more of the sessions, not only as support, but to be able to listen to what the sessions were about.

“To be able to sit in on her counseling sessions and listen to the therapist explain Jennifer’s experience was enlightening,” Eric stated. For years prior to her getting therapy, I did not know how to address her feelings, and often I did not know if our marriage could withstand all that we were going through. Her therapist helped me to understand that what she had been through took away her innocence, her power, her stability, and her lack of trust for me was rooted in not being able to trust anyone. I was and still am her biggest supporter and cheerleader. I watched Jennifer achieve goals she set for herself post-therapy, and I am very proud of her. She is a wonderful wife, mother, and friend, and I support her on her journey. When she started Empowered to Heal, I helped her with whatever I could because I knew how important it was for her to follow her dream of helping others get past the pain of sexual violence.”

Eric Robinson is a job counselor at Vocational Rehabilitation in Florence and pastors Brown Chapel AME Church in Conway.





## WHEN SERVING OTHERS BECOMES SECOND NATURE

by Ta' Meeka Epps

**HARTSVILLE** - October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). NDEAM is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2017 is "Inclusion Drives Innovation." It is imperative that individuals of all abilities have access to good, safe jobs that help supplement their quality of living.

Including different perspectives in problem-solving situations will bring about better solutions, so hiring diverse strengths in all aspects of the work force will only increase competition while continuing to drive innovation. When you include someone, you are showing him or her they are valued, respected and supported while focusing on his or her needs. The right conditions must be in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential.

Diversity is shown in its full glory when we can respect and value differences and individuality while being inclusive. During NDEAM it is important to spotlight the local agencies doing their part to help foster a more inclusive workforce, one where each individual is recognized for his or her abilities every day of every month. One such agency in the Pee Dee Region is the Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board (DCDSNB).

The mission of the organization is to enhance lives, while developing abilities and promoting the independence of people with disabilities. Under the leadership of Executive Director Ruth Blocker, for the last 12 years the agency has consistently achieved its mission by establishing sound relationships and cooperative arrangements with other organizations and community groups.



Ruth Blocker

As executive director, Blocker reports to a nine-member board of directors that ensures she successfully accomplishes her responsibilities of managing the day-to-day administration and operation of the entire agency. The agency employs approximately 125 employees between two Intermediate Care Facilities, eight Community Training Homes and one Day Program/Sheltered Workshop in Darlington County. It is Blocker's responsibility to provide accountability and compliance with all licensing and regulatory requirements. She provides leadership on developing programs and organizational and financial plans while maintaining a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field of disabilities.

When asked why she serves, Blocker's response was simple: "This is a job I absolutely love. I love the challenges, but most of all, the successes. I am a true advocate for people with disabilities and special needs and try to make decisions each day which will have a positive impact on their lives."

Blocker is a mother of a young adult son with special needs. She has walked the walk and talked the talk and understands we are all one step away from being "differently abled" to provide for ourselves, whether through birth or an accident occurring later in life.

Serving is second nature to Blocker and The Darlington County Disability and Special Needs Board. Today, the DCDSNB serves 579 individuals with an annual budget of over \$5 million, subsidized mostly by state and federal (including Medicaid) funding. DCDSNB believes that people with disabilities are a vital part of the community, and it strives to provide them with the training and skills necessary for their personal success in all areas of their lives. All persons have the right to choose where and how they learn, live, work, play and socialize. DCDSNB provides choices to enhance the lives of the individuals it serves.

The individuals served must be eligible by DDSN standards to receive residential placement. Once eligibility is established, their situation must be critical or priority (in danger of being homeless, with an aging caregiver in failing health, in an abusive or neglectful situation, etc.). Then they will be placed on the list for residential placement; if they meet the criteria of not being able to live alone, needing 24-hour supervision, etc. Once placed on the list, the case manager reaches out to other service providers for the actual placement of individuals.

The process from beginning to end would be fruitless without the individuals the organization is designed to serve. Eddie Zimmerman and Patricia Wingate are two individuals who receive services from DCDSNB. Both individuals are employed within the communities they call home putting the 2017 theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month into action. The spotlight of the individuals, one male and one female, shows the positive impact inclusion has on the individual and the community in which they are apart.



Eddie Zimmerman

Zimmerman is a very independent male living in a community training home with three other men. He takes responsibility for most of his daily needs without assistance. He is friendly and enjoys helping people. Zimmerman has been employed with Bi-Lo of Hartsville for over 20 years. When asked how does it feel to be employed, he responded, "It feels good. I wanted to be employed to make money so I could put it in the bank and save. I wanted to buy my own furniture, pay rent and my cell phone bills." Like any other person Zimmerman

wanted to earn a living wage to provide for himself while being included in the community that he lives.

Zimmerman is a positive and upbeat gentleman and wanted the readers to know he is a handsome guy who enjoys going out, watching cowboy movies and spending time with his family especially during the holidays.



Patricia Wingate

The female spotlight, Patricia Wingate, lives with three other women in a community training home. She works on the lawn crew and is a very hard worker. She is friendly and takes pride in having her room clean and organized while helping others. Wingate is very happy to be employed: "It feels good to have a job. I am able to make money and save it to buy hair accessories and fingernail polish," she stated. She enjoys cleaning the house, so she takes pride in doing a great job at work and at her place of residence. She loves to read the bible and is very close with

her brother George.

Both individuals are thriving and living a well-balanced life geared to help them reach their greatest potential while allowing them to share all they have to offer with their communities. For more information on the Darlington County Disability and Special Needs Board and its initiatives please visit [www.dcdsbn.org](http://www.dcdsbn.org).







## FLORENCE COUNTY DSNB BLESSES OUR DISABLED WITH EMPLOYMENT

by Anna Bowman



Stephen Fincher

Stephen Fincher is smart, well-mannered and a hardworking young man, and he takes pride in his job at the Pee Dee Thrift Shop. Every employee hopes that their employer would have kind words of praise for their work, and for Stephen, it's no different. And with the help of the Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board (DSNB) he's able to be an exemplary employee regardless of his disabilities.

For people with intellectual disabilities, being able to receive training that allows them to become gainfully employed is a true blessing. Having an organization like the Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board affords them a fair playing field, which results in individuals with special needs like Stephen to be blessed with a full and productive life.

From its modest beginning in 1981, as the Lake City Area Citizens for the Mentally Handicapped, the agency served 18 people with special needs. Today, known as the Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board, it provides services and supports over 1,200 people.

Dawn Johnson, who became the executive director in 2008, is thrilled with Fincher's job performance. "He takes pride in his job," she proudly announced. "He displays a strong work ethic and really wants to work. Stephen was chosen for his current job over a number of other applicants. During the interview process, he was able to share his strengths and how his skills would contribute to the job that needed to be completed. We are very proud of all of his accomplishments and look forward to his future," she said.

For people with intellectual disabilities, being

Johnson explains how the Florence County DSNB helps to place individuals with disabilities on various jobs: "We are focused on 'Employment First,' and assume everyone wants to work," she said. "Our job coach works one-on-one with individuals to identify their strengths, preferences and interests in employment." Once the job coach has completed the initial assessment, he or she supports individuals throughout the process of looking for

employment to include: writing a resume, interview process, on the job training and more." But this is just the first step. The next step depends on a working relationship with employers. The job coach works with employers to cultivate the expectation that individuals with disabilities can make a positive contribution in the workplace. The job coach helps employers understand the benefits of hiring people with disabilities along with supporting them to address any issues or concerns. Johnson is quick to make the point that "people with disabilities have a strong work ethic, are dependable, and focused on doing a good job. These are just a few of many attributes that a person with disabilities can bring to the workplace."

There are no limits to the possibilities of the types of jobs that people with disabilities can do, according to Johnson. "We support people employed throughout Florence County in a variety of positions

such as retail, restaurants, grocery stores, local recreation departments along with our document destruction business, Palmetto Secure Document Destruction." But some individuals with special needs benefit from more specialized training, and this is where the agency's Day Support Services becomes a very important part of their successful work experience.

"Our day centers offer various opportunities for individuals in training and work settings. We develop social and independent skills so individuals can achieve more independence. By doing actual work, individuals earn wages and are able to improve their work skills. The ultimate goal of work centers is to train and prepare individuals for employment in the community."

Day Support Services offered are:

- Center Based Training: Provides work skills in an environment to enhance independence and productive lives; may receive wages.
- Enclaves: Provides training and work on a job site (Industry or Business) with opportunities and possibilities that lead to competitive employment.
- Mobile Work Crews: Work in the community doing lawn management and janitorial work.
- Supportive Employment: Services are primarily geared to community connections for finding and keeping employment.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Johnson noted that Stephen Fincher is a shining example of the agency's commitment to achieving this concept.

The Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board provides services to over 1,200 people with intellectual disabilities, autism and head and spinal cord injuries. "We provide early intervention to children age 0-3 and then transition to case management services. We follow people throughout their lives helping to identify their needs and locate appropriate services and supports, to include, day and residential services," said Johnson.

If your loved one is age 0-3 and you are interested in Early Intervention Services, please contact your BabyNet/First Steps office at 1-877-621-0865 to make the referral. Once eligible for services, you will have the option of choosing Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board as your provider for case management or early intervention services.

Anyone interested in applying for services for themselves or a loved one who is age 3 or older, there are two ways to apply: by phone or online. Click [www.ddsn.sc.gov/apply](http://www.ddsn.sc.gov/apply) to begin the referral process online. To apply by phone, please call 1-800-289-7012 and you will be connected with someone who will gather basic information in order to screen you for services. If your screening is accepted, you will be offered a choice of Intake providers that serve your area. We hope you will consider choosing Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board to provide this valuable service to you.

To learn more about the services of the Florence County Disabilities and Special Needs Board, visit the website: <https://www.fcdsn.org>.





## PUTTING "SMILES" ON THE FACES OF DISABLED WORKERS

by Mallory Brayboy



*Michael Keith, Executive Director in the workforce.*

**MARION** - National Disability Employment Awareness Month has been celebrated in October since 1945, beginning with only one week and later expanding to the entire month. This national campaign raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Along with this recognition, organizations across our state are working diligently everyday to ensure disabled individuals receive a fair shot at achieving their dreams

course, among other courses. "We are looking for special people with big hearts who want a rewarding career," says Keith. "Our role is to be a good trainer and instructor to help them develop the skills necessary to live their life to the fullest, but our most important role that can have the most impact is to be a friend to them as well as a good example." The agency has two activity centers that serve as the primary vessels for disabled individuals to receive the skills training needed to live and work in their communities. These centers, located in Marion on M.L.K. Blvd and in Dillon on Highway 34, serve approximately 155 people. Seeing individuals progress and transform their lives motivates Keith and his team everyday. One example in particular is of an individual with intellectual disabilities who came into the agency several years ago with very challenging behaviors. Over time, with the help of persistent staff intervention, this person gained the coping skills and work skills to get a job in the community, and today they live in their own apartment with minimum assistance from the agency. "Not that long ago, the norm would have been to put these types of individuals in institutions barricaded from society," says Keith. "Today we have many people we serve that live and work in the community just like anyone else. They have hopes and dreams just like we do. It really is special when we see those hopes and dreams come true."



*Staff training intervention class*

Michael Keith is the executive director of the Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs. Board members are appointed by the governor of South Carolina, and health, safety and accountability are "Job One" for the agency. "Our mission is to support, motivate and improve lives everyday! In other words, we SMILE, and we hope our efforts create SMILES on the faces of our consumers and all those who support us in what we do," says Keith. A native of the Pee Dee, he has been with the organization for 25 years, serving as executive director for the past 14 years. "I enjoy working for an agency that cares so much for the people we serve and provides opportunities for them and their families to enjoy their lives in their communities," he says.

Keith, an alumnus of Francis Marion University, grew up in the small town of Society Hill and has lived in Florence for the past 35 years with his wife and two daughters. Along with a business degree, he is also a graduate of the Non-Profit Leadership Institute. As the board's executive director, Keith cites his main duties as providing the leadership and example necessary to meet the goals of each person the agency serves and ultimately its goals. In addition, Keith ensures that the policies and procedures, as well as the direction, set by the board of directors is carried out. As a government funded agency, the board makes an intentional effort to use its resources wisely and to do the best quality work possible with the allotted funding. However, the agency still experiences an occasional lack of funding, forcing the board to consider other measures.

But through creativity and community support, it perseveres through these difficult times. "We are very proud of our commitment to excellence in the field of Disabilities and Special Needs," Keith says. The agency is currently a 5-Star agency with the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, which is the highest designation a provider of services can achieve. To attain this an agency must score above 90 percent on all contract compliance and licensing reviews.

Staff members, who must be at least 18, have earned a high school diploma and possess a current driver's license, are provided in-depth training that includes general orientation, CPR, First Aid, fire safety, a defensive driving course through the National Safety Council, a crisis management course (MANDT), and a medication administration tech

course, among other courses. "We are looking for special people with big hearts who want a rewarding career," says Keith. "Our role is to be a good trainer and instructor to help them develop the skills necessary to live their life to the fullest, but our most important role that can have the most impact is to be a friend to them as well as a good example."

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*Staff working on consumer skills in activity center*

The board is looking for opportunities with area businesses to become partners in their efforts to employ the disabled. Employment would mean more interaction with people in the community. "This can be a great advantage to people with intellectual disabilities because they tend to rise to fit in as well as emulate their co-workers," says Keith. He also noted how several area business people and managers count the disabled as some of their best and most dependable workers. All in all, it is a much better situation for people with intellectual disabilities to be integrated into their communities as much as possible.

According to Keith, the board of directors voted to cancel their sub-minimum status with the Department of Labor in 2016. This move means that the agency now pays its disabled individuals at minimum wage or higher. "The focus used to be on sheltered workshops and obtaining contract work with area businesses. That model could cause people to remain in sheltered workshops because they are needed to make sure the work contracts are met. Therefore, they may never get hired on a community job," explains Keith. The focus is now on "Employment First." This initiative means that those coming into the system must be assessed, and an attempt must be made to place them on jobs in the community. If this falls short, they then attend an activity center to obtain the skills needed to one day gain employment.

The Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs is one of the best ranked in the state. Not only are those being aided reaping the benefits of this, but Keith is also. "Every day is a joy. If I have a day where I may be feeling down, all I have to do is go and talk to the people we serve. They have a special happiness all their own that lifts others." His goal for the agency is to be the best quality provider of services for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs. "We will continue to improve each day in all that we do; in so doing we will make the lives of the people we serve better in every way!"





# Adoption Month



## THE COLCLOUGHS ON CHANGING THE WORLD THROUGH ADOPTION

by Les Echols



The Colclough Family from left to right: Sean, Richard, David, Madison, Mackenzie and Melanie.

November is National Adoption Month, which marks the recognition of an important aspect of society that impacts many family units. During this month, people are encouraged to focus on outreach and education centered on adoption and the adoption process. This month, Diversity Works Magazine© turns its focus

“I always believed in God, but after my son passed, it forced me to live out my faith. It challenged me to put my faith to action,” she said.

After deciding to move to Sumter in Sept. 11 of 2015, Melanie and David put in an offer on a house, which they closed on six months to the day, on Mar. 11, 2016. The couple was ready to make the next step toward building their family. In July 2016, the couple applied to adopt through Adoption Advocates in Greenville. “The process moved fast,” said Melanie emotionally. “Having served in the Guardian ad Litem capacity, I was familiar with the process, but we had to rush to get things set for school, the children’s rooms, toys, and clothes.”

to the adoption of children in foster care.

To say that David and Melanie Colclough are childhood sweethearts is a vast understatement. Melanie is an executive director and David a tech analyst for Verizon Wireless. The two have known each other since the age of seven and reconnected in 2008. They married in 2011 and have now built a strong family unit through adoption. The process was emotional and, at times, harrowing. But through strong faith and commitment to the dream of having a family, they are proud parents of four beautiful children whom they have adopted.

Within two months, the children were in the home. Then on Mar. 10, (six months after they had the children in the home), the adoption was made final. Sean, 4; Richard, 5; McKenzie and Madison, 6, were now officially members of the Colclough family. When asked why adoption is important, Melanie Colclough replied, “People often wonder what they can do to change the world. I can’t think of a better way to positively affect the world than to care for, love on, and give a child a home that doesn’t have one. It’s such a selfless act of kindness and love. It’s one of the hardest but most significant things you will ever do with your life.”

When the couple first reconnected, they realized an interesting wish that they both had in common: the fact that they both wanted nine children. With both being open to adoption, the possibility was there, and in 2011, Melanie and David conceived a child. Unfortunately, the couple suffered a devastating loss when they lost Gabriel in March of 2012. The couple immediately sought spiritual guidance, and it was their collective, unabashed faith and belief that brought them closer together.

Through belief, guidance and working together, David and Melanie Colclough not only conquered what was an incredibly heartbreaking situation, but they also did so humbly. Melanie often reiterates her faith and how impactful their belief was in the process. “Challenging times and grief can either draw you closer to God, or you can let it tear you to pieces. We decided to trust God through the pain and be open to whatever his will was for us. It opened the door to ministry, peace, joy, and then to receiving our four beautiful children. Life doesn’t look exactly the way we envisioned, but I cannot imagine my life any better than it is now,” concluded Melanie.

Melanie spoke on the strengthening of her faith through the tragedy:

## CONSIDER BECOMING A FOSTER OR ADOPTIVE PARENT TODAY

by Les Echols



Tomeika Martin, MS, HS-BCP

**COLUMBIA** - Justice Works Behavioral Care is one of many organizations Diversity Works Magazine© is highlighting during National Adoption Month. Justice Works has a Therapeutic Foster Care Program with a primary focus on helping fill the gap of finding foster homes for children who have been abused and/or neglected. It is responsible for recruiting, licensing foster homes and placing children in them. Some of the children placed within the foster homes are eligible for adoption, so Justice Works collaborates with referring agencies and foster families to assist

the need and how they can become a part of the solution. Because of the lack of education, there is a lot of stigma tied to fostering or becoming an adoptive parent. We must educate first by understanding the stigma and addressing it by supporting and guiding those families through the process,” continued Martin.

with the adoption process. During the licensing process, Justice Works seeks both temporary and permanent homes for foster children. We caught up with Tomeika Martin, South Carolina executive director for Justice Works Behavioral Care, to find out more about their extensive work in the realm of foster care and adoption.

Martin has worked within the child welfare system for over 20 years, and she has a diverse background in foster care, behavioral mental health and community-based services. She has worked for both government and non-profit agencies in managing and directing programs and services for children and families. Her educational background includes a bachelor’s degree in social work and a master’s degree in human services with a concentration in community counseling psychology. Martin also serves on the South Carolina Citizens review panel. This panel conducts reviews and evaluations of the Department of Social Services (DSS) policies and practices for Child Protective Services in the state of South Carolina.

“National Adoption Awareness month is important because it’s an opportunity for us to bring awareness to the community about the need for more permanent families for children and youth in our foster care system” stressed Martin. She also emphasized that it is equally imperative to share with potential foster/adopted families how they can become a part of the solution by opening their heart and home to the most vulnerable children by becoming an adopted or foster parent. “I think one of the ways to increase our focus and outreach and education on adoption is by making an ongoing continuous effort to educate our community about

Martin is passionate about her work and the potential for securing homes for foster children. “The State needs help finding a permanent home for children in South Carolina. I would advise anyone who has ever thought about fostering or adopting to talk to someone about the process. Talk to other foster or adoptive families. There are many local agencies you can contact about becoming a foster parent and/or adoptive family, including the Department of Social Services. If you don’t want to commit to adoption, you can always consider becoming a foster parent. I’ve seen, firsthand, the gifts and rewards that a foster child can bring to a family through adoption and/or fostering,” Martin concluded.

# Appreciating Our Caregivers

## PROVIDING THE BEST CARE FOR SOMEONE TRANSITIONING

by Ta' Meeka Epps



Earlene Robinson

The spirit of hospice volunteering and being a caregiver is born from a genuine desire to give comfort, peace, and care to patients and families during the end of life. Hospice volunteers and caregivers have a tremendous impact on the lives of the patients that they serve, the hospice team which they are a part, and the families and friends of the terminally ill. Understanding the role, the ways in which volunteers serve, and the impact that volunteering has on the lives of the patient, the patient's family, and the volunteer, is invaluable when one is nearing the

end of life.

November is National Family Caregivers Month. It is recognized because caregivers frequently go without financial compensation for their many hours of love, attention and energy. Thus, the month of November is dedicated to celebrating "those who give of themselves to be there for their family, friends, and neighbors in challenging times."

The theme for National Family Caregivers Month November 2017 is "Caregiving Around the Clock." Caregiving can be, and more often than not is, a 24-hour a day, seven days a week, job. Caring for someone around the clock may crowd out other important areas of living and may not leave room for you to prepare for the needed rush to the hospital in the late night.

Caregivers may be partners, family members, or close friends. Most often, they are not trained for the caregiver job. Many times, they are the lifeline of the person with a terminal illness.

Caregivers have many roles. These roles change as the patient's needs change during and after treatment. A caregiver has a huge influence, both positive and negative, on how the patient deals with his or her illness. The caregiver's encouragement can help the patient stick with a demanding treatment plan and take other steps to get well, like eating healthy meals or getting enough rest.

Earlene Robinson is a long-time McLeod Hospice Volunteer who was her husband's caregiver before they both transitioned, and she has been volunteering at Hospice ever since. In 1987 when her first husband was diagnosed with bone cancer, it was easy

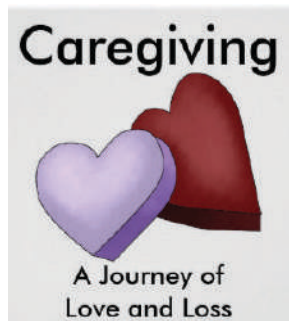
for her to say "I will care for him however hard" even when she knew there was pain she could not cure.

Robinson had been married to her husband for 34 years before the diagnosis of bone cancer and stated, "When you love someone as much as I loved my husband, you don't mind taking care of them all throughout the day and the night. You get up and do what you have to do for the one you love." The three years from her husband's diagnosis in 1987 to his transition in 1990 inspired her to become a volunteer for Hospice/Caregiver Services.

In April of 1990 Robinson started her work with McLeod, and after completing the two-week training she was placed in the field. Field work consisted of her building a rapport with numerous patients, their families and friends. The end of life experience affects each individual differently. However, the caregiver's main responsibility is to make time the most comfortable and to be compassionate while providing a sense of normality for all parties.

Building the relationship changes the dynamic from caregiver and patients to family. As a caregiver you support the patients and their loved ones. You possess a spirit of compassion and understanding towards those who are on the end-of-life journey. You have the ability to listen and be comfortable in moments of silence.

Robinson's passion for people and her desire to care and love deeply would find her saying "I do" for a second time in 2000 to a husband who, when they started to court, had been diagnosed with bone cancer. Once again she would be the caregiver for the one she loved, and once again it was easy for her to do what needed to be done. "I have been through. I have traveled the road unknown and now know what they are going through and what they are feeling. I was the best person to care for my husband," stated Robinson.



Robinson saw her husband transition in June 2016. While she continues to serve those preparing to make the same transition, she is no longer a caregiver. When asked "why" she replied, "It became too hard to see my loved ones my family make the transition so I decided I would best serve at the front desk, greeting the patients, talking with the family members, calming them down with a hug, ensuring them God is always there. Everything will be just fine. All we need to do is pray."

## AGAPÉ HOSPICE PRESENTS FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT AWARD

Submitted By Agape Hospice



Cynthia Benjamin being handed the Spirit Award

Cynthia Benjamin of Hartsville was presented with the "Fruit of the Spirit" Award by Agapé Hospice of the Pee Dee (covering Florence, Darlington, Lee, Chesterfield and Marlboro counties) in June at the Darlington Country Club.

Just over a year ago Cynthia Benjamin, a life-long Hartsville resident, became caught up inside a healthcare crisis when her husband Calvin fell in front of their home on the very morning of a scheduled doctor's appointment for an issue he was having with balance. Unfortunately, the fall caused a serious injury that left Calvin paralyzed from the neck down. That morning, Cynthia's life changed forever and in her own words, "Everything went haywire." For the next couple of weeks Calvin was seen by multiple specialists throughout the region and eventually ended up in a long-term care nursing and rehabilitation facility in Virginia.

Benjamin, from day one of the crisis, did not leave Calvin's side and attributed her belief that Calvin would recover to her unshakeable faith in God.

Misty Otey, an RN and case manager with the Complex Care Team at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, met the Benjamin's for the first time in March of 2016. According to Otey, the Benjamin's had one primary goal: to return to their Hartsville home to be close to their family and friends.

Otey stated, "Unfortunately, due to insurance issues, we were unable to locate a hospital, rehab or nursing facility which could accept him in transfer. Each time we would come to them with the disappointing news, Mr. Benjamin would still greet us with a smile."

The Benjamins understood their journey was coming to an end as Calvin's condition deteriorated and, along with his decline, there was a heightened desperation to return home. Calvin Benjamin wanted

I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self indulgent. Caring for myself is an act of survival.

Audre Lord







# Appreciating Our Caregivers



## AGAPÉ HOSPICE PRESENTS CONT'D



Cynthia Benjamin's Family along with the Agapé Hospice Family

to go home, so that he could "go home" to the Lord. The Benjamins made the decision to return home on hospice and would withdraw from the ventilator when the family was ready.

Despite the painful realization for Cynthia that Calvin Benjamin was not going to get better, she continued to be gracious and appreciative of everybody helping them with their struggle to return home.

Otely recounted, "On July 6, 2016, I was fortunate enough to be put in contact with Agapé Hospice. When it seemed all hope was lost, there they were, willing to go the distance to help this family."

Calvin Benjamin died in peace, surrounded by his friends and family just one week after returning to Hartsville.

The Benjamins' story is a story of inspiration, a story of a healthcare system where people can get trapped and fall through cracks and a story of hope, the kind of hope based in faith and determination. In Cynthia Benjamin's mind, there was never a question of where she should be or what she should be doing. Her husband was helpless, and she would be by his side until he no longer needed her care.

Cynthia Benjamin inspired every healthcare worker she came in contact with through her graciousness, attentiveness and determination to attend to her husband's needs and provided a remarkable glimpse into what true love and devotion looks like.

Cynthia Benjamin was presented with the "Fruit of the Spirit" award by Agapé Hospice for her unwavering dedication as a caregiver. For more information about Agapé Hospice, visit [AgapeHospice.com](http://AgapeHospice.com) or call 1-800-411-AGAPÉ (2427).

## RECOGNIZING THE 2ND LARGEST ADULT DAYCARE IN SC

by Kim Williams



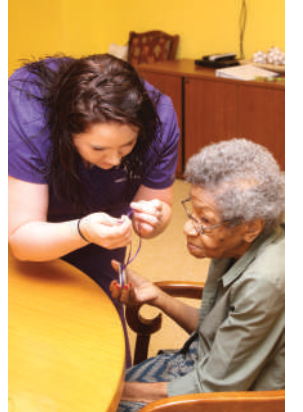
Johnny Belissary

Johnny Belissary, administrator of the New Generations Adult Day Care, shared from his heart as he told his story. His mother and sister first opened New Generations 20 years ago while he was busy practicing law. About 12 years ago, however, Johnny's mother asked him to join her in this venture. Although he loved law, when he thought of the hugs from people with special needs, he knew that there was really no comparison, so he chose to leave his job as an attorney. He now finds himself involved in the day to day activities at the day care, as well as

many community involvements, including serving on the board of directors for South Carolina, Alzheimer's Ambassador to Congressman Tom Rice, and as a panelist on the Institute of Medicine and Public Health's Taskforce dealing with issues affecting our state's seniors.

New Generations is the second largest adult day care in the state of South Carolina, and we are fortunate enough to have it right here locally. The day care is separated into a few sections to provide the best environment for its participants. There is a special needs building that serves participants with autism as well as those who are high functioning and ones with more profound needs. New Generations also has a more mature section, where participants are known as VIPs.

Belissary knows what it is like to care for others because he had two brothers with special needs. He understands the honor that he is given when a family puts



Brandy Goings, CNA and Leila Brown work on project

their trust in allowing their loved ones to come to the daycare. When dealing with a participant with Alzheimer's, it can be challenging. At times there may be some bad behavior and some downing. The staff works together with proper activities to keep participants engaged while showing compassion in all they do.



Solomon Barr, Bennie Wilson and Hallie Josey, CNA discussing world events.

There are about 120-130 participants, with close to 50 employees on an average day at the day care. The participants and their loved ones become like family to the staff of New Generations because of the relationship that develops. Not only is this a safe and fun environment for the participant, but it

is also a resource for the full time caregivers, allowing them to get some much-needed rest. Nurses help set doctor appointments and ensure that medications are administered in a timely manner. New Generations Adult Day Care is open from 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., over four hours more than most similar services, to allow the maximum amount of support to those that need it.



Group Exercises

Belissary shared with me some of the biggest challenges that they face, which are funding and awareness. The daycare has eight buses that operate in Florence. Unfortunately, sometimes they break down, which leads to issues such as repair and scheduling conflicts. One would think state funding would help. However, South Carolina only ranks 45 out of 50 states for funding. These are staggering facts that need to be recognized and addressed at our community, state, and national levels, especially during this time. November is a month to recognize National Family Caregivers. While there are so many out there giving their all to help the ones they love, we need to be present and support them in any way that we can.





# Appreciating Our Caregivers

## PROVIDING IN-HOME SERVICES TO KEEP CLIENTS COMFORTABLE

by Anna Bowman



David Coker, Owner, his wife Julie and three daughters, Kate, Morgan and Anna

Comfort Keepers is locally owned and operated by David Coker, who was born and raised in Florence. He and his wife, Julie, are the parents of three beautiful daughters. Coker proudly expressed his gratitude to his hometown for embracing his choice to open a Comfort Keeper's franchise in Florence in 2003. "It has been a great experience ever since, providing quality care for so many seniors and others throughout the Pee Dee and being one of the few businesses I know of where you are fortunate enough to get "thank you" cards from your clients. Florence has been great to us, and we have serviced thousands of clients in the Pee Dee area. Comfort Keepers now has 600+ franchise offices nationwide, and we handle the Florence, Sumter and Columbia markets, with Florence always being one of the top 20 offices in the network."

In 2003, Coker's grandmother had a stroke. In order to ensure that she was properly cared for, his mother and her sister were constantly running back and forth to assist with nursing their beloved mother back to health. However, with all the back and forth, they soon realized that they needed a break. Having firsthand knowledge of what his mother and aunt were going through, Coker began researching a company called "Comfort Keepers." Impressed by the research, he travelled to Ohio to tour the facilities, and in April of the same year, he opened a Comfort Keepers in Florence. This year the franchise is celebrating 14 years of dependable service for the senior population.

Craig Goss, the marketing and community relations manager for the past 12 years, said Comfort Keepers provides assistance with household services, such as light housekeeping and meal preparation, and personal care assistance, such as

bathing and grooming. "We offer our clients a wide range of companionship services, including conversation, walks, errands (including transportation), as well as assistance with hobbies and other interests. By providing the right mix of in-home senior care services, we are able to help seniors maintain independence while enhancing their quality of life. We definitely offer short-term care to assist families through emergency situations. There is not a minimum, and we are happy to work with families to assist them through unexpected illnesses or injuries."



comforts."

As the marketing and community relations manager, Goss has the responsibility to educate clients, their family members, medical professionals and the community about the company's Non-Medical In-home care services. "Anyone can refer someone to Comfort Keepers for services; it does not require a doctor's order. We work with each individual family to accommodate their needs and budget. We offer private pay hourly rates and also accept Long Term Care insurance. We also work with the VA, Medicaid waiver programs, Workers Comp and Vantage Point Vouchers."

"The first step is to simply call to discuss more details about how we can help you or your loved one manage their daily life at home." The Florence office provides non-medical in-home care services for the entire Pee Dee Area. "We employ highly trained CNA's and PCA's to care for our clients. We have three offices, which are located in Florence, Sumter and Columbia," said Goss. "Julie Green is our marketing representative for the Sumter and Columbia areas; she has been with Comfort Keepers for the past eight years."

Comfort Keeper, has great working relationships with area hospitals, hospices, home health agencies, social workers, nursing homes, rehab facilities and the community in general. "We receive referrals on a weekly basis from a variety of professionals including financial planners, worker's compensation companies and long-term care insurance companies as well," said Goss.

Without hesitation, Goss sincerely believes that Comfort Keepers is the best choice for in-home care for many reasons. "We value our caregivers and offer many ways to recognize them for their services. We are a licensed home healthcare company. We do extensive background checks and screenings to ensure we hire the best qualified caregivers."

For a free in-home consultation call 843-656-1056. The in-home visit will include information about the company's Caregiver Services, Payment Options and Long-Term Plans to maintain the clients' care at home.

"We have on-call services after hours and weekends to address these needs." Goss added, "Our main goal is for families to trust us to care for their loved ones daily. We realize it's a big decision when choosing in-home care for yourself or a loved one. We provide a customized plan of care, supervision and most of all, 'compassion' to care for our

clients."



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# Saluting Our Veterans

## CELEBRATE VETERANS DAY EVERY DAY

by Les Echols



Veterans Day is intended to honor and thank all military personnel who served the United States in all wars, particularly living veterans. It is marked by parades and church services and in many places the American flag is hung at half mast. A period of silence lasting two minutes may be held at 11 a.m. Some schools are closed on Veterans Day while others do not close but choose to mark the occasion with special assemblies or other activities.

Veterans Day is officially observed on Nov. 11. However, if it falls on a week day, many communities hold their celebrations on the weekend closest to this date. This is to enable more people to attend and participate in the events. Federal government offices are closed on Nov. 11. If Veterans Day falls on a Saturday, they are closed on Friday, Nov. 10. If Veterans Day falls on a Sunday, they are closed on Monday, Nov. 12. State and local governments, schools and non-governmental businesses are not required to close and may decide to remain open or closed. Public transit systems may follow a regular or holiday schedule.

This month, Diversity Works Magazine© will be seeking to honor and give thanks to all the men and women who have served and are serving in the US Armed Forces. These individuals are willing to share



John Galloway

their story with us from their time serving in and working with the US Armed Forces.

When Retired US Navy Chief Petty Officer John Galloway went into the US Navy in 1966, he did so to improve his quality of life, but it also taught him about manhood and becoming a provider. A devoted husband and father of five girls, John stated proudly, "My service and the experiences from it affected my life by providing me the opportunity to grow-up and become a provider. It afforded me the chance to travel and see things and places I never would have gone had it not

been for the service."

Family played a big role in Galloway's decision, having chosen the Navy partly because his father was a Navy veteran who spent the last year of WWII in the navy. His older brothers also served and joined the Army and went to Vietnam. Galloway has strong conviction about veterans and their role as civilians and in the community. "Veterans offer a wealth of knowledge gained by service to country. They provide employers with extensive training gained in service and the motivation that the military instills in its personnel. Most veterans are active in all functions of the communities they live in and enjoy providing a helping hand," he said. A graduate of Wilson High school in Florence, Galloway is a perfect example of veterans serving society after the military and serving on various ministries at Central Missionary Baptist Church, along with serving his fellow veterans in his role with Florence County Veterans Affairs. "It is a great honor to work with others at the Florence County Veterans Affairs Office assisting veterans and their families," he continued. "Having an opportunity to give back to those who have fought and gave their lives for this country, is truly a blessing."

VA Representative Julia McCullough and Deputy VA Officer Teresa Lane spend a lot of time working with veterans in their respective



Julia McCullough



Teresa Lane

positions. McCullough started in 1986 and assists with VA in many services, including processing paperwork, and needs assessments. When asked why Veterans Day is important, McCullough stressed that, not just Veterans Day but every day, she can serve a veteran is a proud and important day.

Lane started in 1989 and has always respected and supported all veterans, many of whom gave the ultimate sacrifice. "They need respect, and we are here for them," she said. "I love serving veterans; this job has been fulfilling and rewarding making a difference in the lives of those who fought for our country."

Jim Millsap also came from a military family with his stepfather having served as an Air Force drill instructor at Ft. Jackson. Once Millsap was 17, he followed in his footsteps to serve our country in the US Air Force. "I was ready to go...the armed services are my family, I lived a military life." Millsap served the country in Vietnam war and came out shortly after it was over.



Jim Millsap celebrates his wife's birthday

Not only did he serve his initial tour, but he also went on to serve the South Carolina reserves while becoming a Deputy in Flagstaff and later a chief of police. Although facing significant health issues stemming from exposure to Agent Orange, Millsap is adamant about the good treatment that the military has given and still gives him. "I am a lifetime member of Disabled American Veterans, and I have recently been notified that I am 100 percent disabled. The VA Hospital is great, and I think they sometimes get a bad rap.

The process is sometimes slow, but it is effective."

While Veterans Day is a day that must always be a reminder of our veterans, it is not simply a day to recognize people who have served in the armed forces. It is a time to reflect on and to celebrate their past and present achievements and, in many cases, their continued community service long after the military.





**JOE COX JOINS ANDERSON BROTHERS BANK AS VP COMMERCIAL LENDER**

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



Joe Cox

**MULLINS** – Anderson Brothers Bank has announced the addition of Joe Cox as our newest VP Commercial Lender for Horry County and will be located in our office at 2651 Church St., Conway. Cox’s responsibilities include working with prospective businesses and community leaders to generate new banking and loan business for Anderson Brothers Bank.

Joe has a bachelor’s degree in Economics from Clemson University and is a graduate of the South Carolina School of Banking. He has worked with CresCom Bank over

the last two years and HCSB for eight years prior.

“Joe has an excellent reputation as knowledgeable, experienced and reliable banker in Conway and throughout Horry County,” said Richard Carroll VP City Executive Officer of Anderson Brothers Bank. “With over 33 years of banking experience, he has a proven ability to assist clients with all their financial service needs. Joe will make a significant impact in our continued growth in the Conway and surrounding markets.”

**ABB BLOOD DRIVE IN MULLINS A SUCCESS**



**MULLINS**-The Blood Drive hosted at Anderson Brothers Bank Conference Center in Mullins had a good turn out by community residents. Jessica Graham Elliott, HR/BSA administrative assistant, was very instrumental in making this blood drive a success by coordinating and setting appointments. Many in the Mullins and Marion community came out to donate to this important and needed cause.

The American Red Cross is known best for blood drives and its response to huge disasters, much like the recent flooding in

Texas and what our local communities experienced last year. Every year, the Red Cross is there for hurricane, earthquake, and other disaster victims, including families forced from their homes by floodwaters or a fire. The American Red Cross helps people in emergencies... whether it’s half a million disaster victims or one sick child who needs blood.

**ABB SPONSORS MARION AND DILLON COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DINNER**



Anderson Brothers Bank was the proud sponsor of the third annual “Law Enforcement Appreciation Dinner” for the law enforcement officers of Marion and Dillon County

held on in Aug. The event was held at Buckhead Ranch located at 1127 Haymount Rd., Latta. Over 100 guests enjoyed an evening of good dining, conversation and networking with the different city police, County Sheriff, highway patrol and Department of Natural Resources officers that cover both counties.



Rodney Berry, Dillon County Administrator spoke to the group and expressed his gratitude to JB Pittman, general manager of Buckhead Ranch, for providing the great venue along with Anderson Brothers Bank for sponsoring and the volunteers for preparing the food.

“This event gives us the chance to thank all the law enforcement for all they do and putting their lives on the line every day,” said Johnny Floyd, vice president for the Marion/Dillon County Regional Executive of Anderson Brothers Bank. “This is just a small way of showing them we support and appreciate the service they provide.”



**ANDERSON BROTHERS BANK**

**About Anderson Brothers Bank**

Anderson Brothers Bank is a full service community bank offering a complete range of competitive loan services and deposit products. Founded in 1933, this family-owned bank blends the elements of traditional personal service, local market awareness, and advanced technology to meet the financial needs of its customers.

Anderson Brothers Bank offers 22 branches conveniently located in 16 communities throughout the Pee Dee Coastal and Low Country regions of South Carolina. The bank’s main office is located at 101 North Main St., P.O. Box 310 in Mullins. For additional information about Anderson Brothers Bank, call 843-464-6271 or visit [ABBank.com](http://ABBank.com).

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

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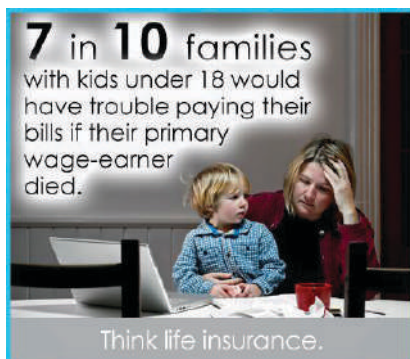
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# FIVE REASONS YOUNG FAMILIES NEED LIFE INSURANCE NOW



When it comes to money matters, young parents who are just starting out have a lot to juggle: they may be paying off student debt and saving for their first home, all while raising kids. But it's also a time when young families may be the most financially vulnerable should the unexpected strike. To ensure that they have financial protection when they need it

most, purchasing a life insurance policy should be top of mind.

Here are five reasons why young families need life insurance:

**1. You just never know.** While it's not the most pleasant thing to ponder, an emergency situation could quickly put your family's finances under water. In fact, nearly half of Americans don't have enough savings to take care of a \$400 emergency response. And when you're starting out, not having protection in case something happens to a family's breadwinner is even scarier.<sup>1</sup>

**2. The earlier you opt in, the more affordable it is.** Because age is one of the factors that affects the cost of your premium, the younger you are when you purchase a policy, the less you'll be paying each year.<sup>2</sup>

**3. It's not as expensive as you think.** If you're on a budget and are convinced you can't afford life insurance, consider term life insurance. It guarantees protection for a set amount of time. Since it's not designed to last a lifetime, the annual premiums are considerably lower.<sup>3</sup>

**4. It lets you concentrate on other goals.** Once you have the peace of mind and financial protection that life insurance grants you, you may feel secure enough to fund long-term goals, like buying a home, saving for your nest egg, or going back to school.

**5. You can always upgrade at a later date.** Don't let the fear of making the wrong decision deter you from purchasing a policy now. The policy you purchase today isn't intended to be set in stone. As your family's needs change, you have the option of making upgrades.

We know it's not easy for young families to make their life insurance needs a priority, given all their competing financial obligations. However, life insurance is a vehicle for protection that is not only affordable, but can also help families save money and can ultimately propel them toward reaching both their immediate and far-reaching goals.

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

<sup>1</sup>Neal Gabler, "The Secret Shame of Middle-Class Americans," The Atlantic, May 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/05/my-secret-shame/476415/>

<sup>2</sup>Tara Siegel Bernard, "Life Insurance Buyer's Guide: What Type, How Much and Who Will Benefit," The New York Times, Feb. 19, 2016.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/20/your-money/life-insurance-buyers-guide-what-type-how-much-and-who-will-benefit.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/20/your-money/life-insurance-buyers-guide-what-type-how-much-and-who-will-benefit.html?_r=0)

<sup>3</sup>"Parents' Guide to Every Kind of Insurance," Consumer Reports, February 2013. <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2013/02/parents-guide-to-every-kind-of-insurance/index.htm>

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## ARBORONE FARM CREDIT BOARD REMAINS UNCHANGED

Submitted by Kate Nobles, Marketing Coordinator



James "Mickey" Ward has served for 11 years as the chairman of the Board of Directors of ArborOne Farm Credit. Ward looks

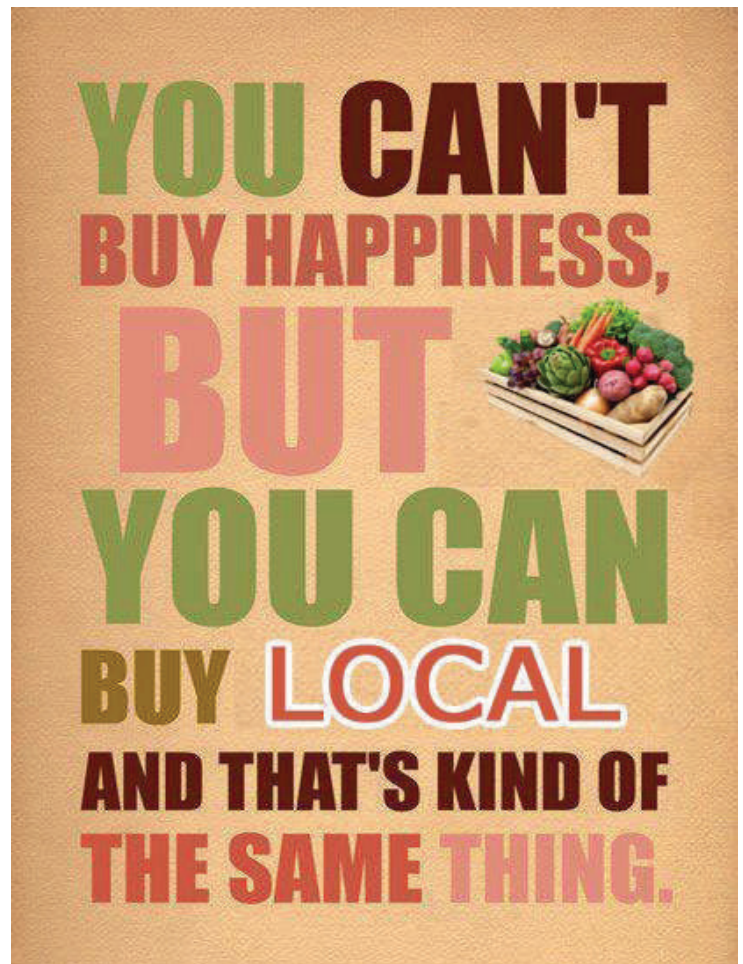
forward to continuing to serve as a very active board member. After much thoughtful consideration, he determined that the succession of another board member to serve in the capacity of the Chairman was appropriate. The board, management team, and staff at ArborOne Farm Credit thank Ward for his generous and valuable service as Chairman and look forward to continuing to work with him in the years ahead.

At its annual organizational meeting in August, the Board of ArborOne Farm Credit elected William "DuPree" Atkinson as chairman and John "Lee" Newman as vice-chairman. Congratulations to Atkinson and Newman.

DuPree Atkinson is from Marion County and has served on the ArborOne Farm Credit Board since 1999 and was most recently re-elected in 2013 for a six-year term. He also serves as chairman of the Compensation Committee and as a member of the Audit Committee. Atkinson has been farming for 38 years, and his operation includes tobacco, corn, peanuts, small grain, horse hay, strawberries, asparagus, soybeans and beef cattle. He serves on the S.C. Farm Bureau Board of Directors, the S.C. Tobacco Board, the S.C. Peanut Board, and as President of Pee Dee Peanut, LLC, a peanut buying station in Marion County. Atkinson and his wife, Cecilia, are members of Macedonia United Methodist Church in Mullins.

Lee Newman is from Sumter County and has served on the ArborOne Farm Credit Board since 2008 and was re-elected in 2014 for a six-year term. He also serves as vice-chairman of the Credit Committee and as a member of the Governance Committee. Newman has been farming for 36 years, and his operation includes tobacco, corn, soybeans, cotton, peanuts, and turkey brooder and grow-out houses for Prestage Farms. Newman serves as a board member for Sumter County Farm Bureau, is a member of the Sumter County Young Farmers, and serves on the Sumter County Soil and Water Conservation Board. Newman and his wife, Tina, are members of Graham Baptist Church in Sumter.

ArborOne Farm Credit serves the financing needs of farmers and rural residents in Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter and Williamsburg counties. Its board of directors consists of eight directors: six directors who are elected by the stockholders and two directors appointed by the Board. The directors of ArborOne Farm Credit are individuals personally and actively involved in the agricultural community.



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## SEEKING A SMALL BUSINESS LOAN?



Small businesses still struggle to obtain credit. Nearly half of those that applied for credit in 2016 didn't get all the funding they sought, and 17 percent of those who didn't apply for financing skipped it because they didn't think they could get what they needed. However, a

growing number of small businesses are turning to alternative sources of financing.

The process for accessing and receiving funding can be slow and cumbersome, and alternative forms of lending are greatly helping to improve the availability of financing for small business owners. Ensuring that the financial system is more inclusive and addresses the needs of small business owners who may have been previously underserved by traditional lenders is paramount.

Studies have shown steadily increasing numbers of small businesses, with annual revenues of less than \$1 million, seeking financing through non-traditional sources such as online lenders. In 2014, just 18 percent applied to online lenders, while in 2016, 21 percent did. As the alternative lending industry continues to grow, small business owners should keep five points in mind when evaluating loan offers:

### Total payback amount of a loan



Knowing how much a loan is going to cost isn't always easy. For a small business owner, being able to see exactly how much you will need to repay and accounting for that in your budget is crucial,

and you should always look for transparency. **Total payback** amount is the dollar value that represents all costs, so business owners know exactly what they will owe over the life of the loan. Businesses should look for this when they assess loan offers. Assessing offers solely on other metrics like APR may not always provide a fair or easy comparison.

### Repayment Method

The ease of repayment is also important to consider, and there are some unique options available to small businesses looking for flexibility when it comes to repayment. Businesses also have the opportunity to repay early and without penalty at any time before the end of the loan term.

### Speed

Traditional small business loans can take weeks to process from the time you collect all the paperwork to apply to the time you actually get approved, to when you see the money in your account. Yet, according to the surveys, the majority of small businesses that applied for credit in 2016 did so in situations where time was a factor. Sixty-four percent wanted to expand their business or take advantage of a new opportunity, and 45 percent needed the money to cover operating expenses.

### Affordability

Business owners may know how much they need but may be less aware of what size loan they can afford. It's important to accept a loan offer that your business can repay within a reasonable time period while also helping it grow.

### Trust

Before applying for credit from any lender, it's important to do your research. Know how they present their offers, look for transparency and flexibility that puts the borrower first, and understand customer satisfaction and lender dependability. Working with a trusted brand is important to many small business owners and should be to you as well.



# The strength of a team with a single focus – you.



Pictured: Mary Smith – Bishopville Retail Market Manager, NMLS #675548; Martha Skinner – Florence Retail Market Manager, NMLS #664019; Kathy Nigro – Wilson Hall Retail Market Manager, NMLS #711168; Jean Witt – Manning Retail Market Manager, NMLS #642971



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## DO SOME ADDICTS MATTER MORE THAN OTHERS?

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



Dr. Nika White

**GREENVILLE** - Opioid addiction is being called the deadliest drug crisis in American history. **But is it really?** Or is it just getting an intense level of attention and sympathy because it's a drug that predominantly impacts whites?

The constant stream of stories about lives –entire communities – broken by opioid addiction is heartbreaking. You can't deny that. **But it does make me think about the last time we faced a rising drug epidemic in the 1980s.** It's

troubling to recall that back then, particularly in minority communities, crack addiction was represented as a shameful, criminal issue. Looking at the ways in which the two crises have been packaged, there is an obvious bias.

**This** YouTube compilation of 1980s news footage (Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHQQOagQKYk>) illustrates my point. When we see minorities, most of the time they're being arrested. Their drug use is shown as menacing. Compare that to **this recent** coverage (Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4LV0tBZncl--warning>; it's hard to watch). You'll hear the word "heartbreaking" within the first minute. I believe that's completely true, but what message does this disparity send to minorities who remember how accusatory the stories were when the subjects looked like them? What message does that send to whites?



### Why the Difference?

When a problem like opioid addiction is treated like a health epidemic as opposed to a criminal menace, there's more support for addressing it aggressively. It just begs the question: Why was there not a similar response of compassion and urgency when drug addiction grabbed hold of African-American communities?

**Why was the media-driven conversation so completely different when the population that**

**was most directly impacted by it different?**

These questions present an opportunity to examine how society often has an all-hands-on-deck response when the **afflicted population is most likely white and more well-off.** On the other hand, there's vastly more shaming when a non-white community is afflicted. The blame shifts to the victims. Blacks and **Native Americans**, for example, have endured stereotypes that fault individuals or their entire subculture for their problems.

### How to Respond More Equitably

I don't think people set out to be unfair. We are influenced by an unconscious bias. When we look at a certain population and its issues, we need to first examine the frame we're using. How can we practice more mindfulness when we're making decisions about how to respond to problems like drug use? Then, we need to go even deeper than that to examine our motivations. **Sometimes we're more motivated to move mountains to deal with issues affecting a specific population when that population looks a certain way.**

A recent discussion in my **Intentional Inclusionist** Facebook group featured a program that strengthens connections between children and their incarcerated fathers. To my surprise, many respondents thought it better to keep the kids away from their dads. I wondered why people didn't have more support for intact families. Is it only because mostly minority individuals are impacted? **I encouraged a response that is less judgmental and more focused on the ultimate good for all involved.**

That's what we need to do when it comes to opioid addiction. That's what should happen whenever the uglier side of life creeps up and calls for a societal response.

### Why Should We Bother?

We must tackle these thorny issues if we're committed to equity and dealing with inequality. Many times, those who can generate the most noise about an issue – get all those hands on the deck –are people of influence who then can help create change. **That might be you.**

The lack of equity is what divides our communities and our country and keeps race relations difficult. People notice when they're not afforded the same level of attention or respect by those with the means and resources to help. Who wouldn't question that? **Sending some groups the signal that they don't matter as much breeds a culture among people who start to believe it's true.** We're perpetuating this cycle and don't even realize it.

### The Business Case

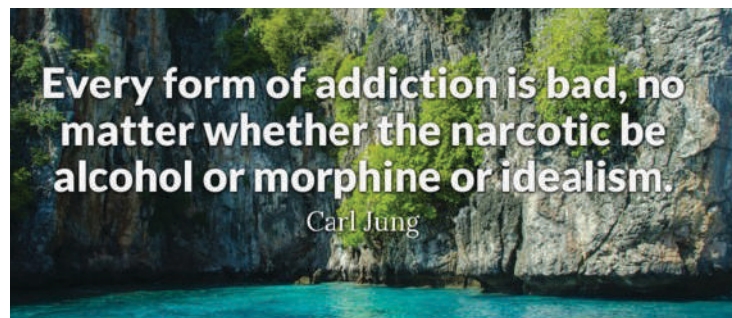
I'm reminded of what Marcus Shaw, senior director of business development of Management Leadership for Tomorrow, said at the Greenville Chamber of Commerce ACE Leadership Symposium. He said **it's hard for someone to show up at their best when they always have to question whether or not they belong, or will be accepted, or are valued.** That means those of us in leadership roles need to know how biases impact our colleagues and employees and look for solutions.

As we've seen with the opioid issue, some people who fall into addiction are family members or coworkers. For them, it's going to be hard to show up at their best if the conditions aren't right for them to get the support they need. It's even worse when it's obvious that people who don't look like them can get the help they need – substantive help that can turn lives around.

Previously, conviction for drug-related crimes locked people out of the job market. Today, companies are willing to consider looking past some criminal history as opioid addiction disproportionately affects their workforce. That's wonderful news, but let's not forget to be flexible and supportive when problems strike in minority communities. **Ask why there is – or is not – enough passion or aggression generated to resolve an issue.** A demoralized workforce is simply bad for business.

### Powerful Change

It's not easy to think outside of the messages actively promoted in politics and the media. **But, imagine the power of a new thought process to lead you to new conclusions. Even more, think about how that could impact the messages you receive and send and ultimately the lives of others.**



# CHS AND UNITEDHEALTHCARE RENEW NETWORK RELATIONSHIP

Submitted by Carolinas Hospital System



Carolinas Hospital System and UnitedHealthcare have reached an agreement on a new, multi-year contract to

ensure Florence residents enrolled in UnitedHealthcare commercial and Medicare Advantage health plans continue to have in-network access to the hospital system's facilities and physicians.

This renewed relationship provides nearly 10,500 members access to the Carolinas Hospital System physicians and other health care providers who share UnitedHealthcare's commitment to improving access to quality care, enhancing clinical outcomes, lowering costs of care and creating an exceptional patient experience.

"Carolinas Hospital System and UnitedHealthcare have a great history of working together to enhance and improve access to critical health services for more of our patients," said Gary Malaer, CEO of Carolinas Hospital System. "We appreciate our renewed relationship, and look forward to working with UnitedHealthcare to continue serving our community and having a positive impact for its members who live and work in our service area."

"Carolinas Hospital System is an important community provider and offers the people served by UnitedHealthcare and their families' greater choice and access to quality, cost-effective care," said Garland Scott, CEO of UnitedHealthcare of South Carolina. "We appreciate collaborative relationships with these care providers who are committed to improving the quality and cost of care."

About Carolinas Hospital System

Carolinas Hospital System is a leading regional acute care facility, comprised of 396 beds, more than 1,500 employees and nearly 250 physicians representing all major specialties dedicated to serving the healthcare needs of the citizens of Northeastern South Carolina. Carolinas offers acute care, diagnostic services, women's health, orthopaedic services, cancer care, cardiac services, general and laparoscopic surgery, rehabilitation, emergency/trauma care, community health services and more. The hospital's Chest Pain Center is first in the region to be accredited and one of only 15 in the state to achieve this distinction.

Carolinas Hospital System prides itself on exceeding the expectations of its patients while delivering compassionate, quality care. For more information, please visit [CarolinasHospital.com](http://CarolinasHospital.com).

About UnitedHealthcare

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the healthcare experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers, military service members, retirees and their families, and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with more than 1 million physicians and care professionals and 6,000 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company. For more information, visit UnitedHealthcare at [www.uhc.com](http://www.uhc.com) or follow @myUHC on Twitter.

CONTACT: Angela Richmond, UnitedHealthcare 770-300-3426, email: [angela\\_richmond@uhc.com](mailto:angela_richmond@uhc.com) Kim Geiger, Carolinas Hospital System 843-674-2613, email: [kgeiger2@carolinashospital.com](mailto:kgeiger2@carolinashospital.com)



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# BACK TO BASICS

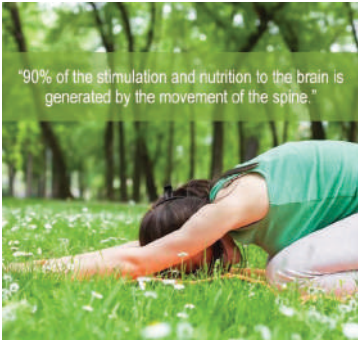
Submitted by Dr. Jennifer Evans, Chiropractic Physician



Dr. Jennifer Evans

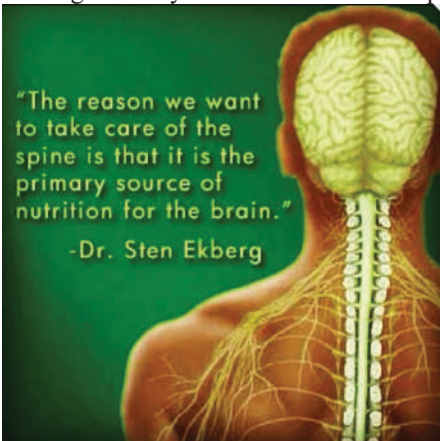
When defining “basics” as it relates to the topic of health, wellness, and medicine, one may say that “basic healthcare” incorporates the “fundamental” foundation to preserve life. The most “basic” or the primary principle of chiropractic is this: the human body is a highly intelligent and fully capable organism that possesses the inborn ability to heal and sustain life. This ability is termed “innate intelligence.”

For instance, some of the most phenomenal, and perhaps miraculous, aspects of life can occur without any intervention whatsoever. A mother’s body can and has delivered a child through its innate processes without any outside assistance. The body can kill off a virus by raising its core temperature. A cut can heal by repairing the damaged tissues, and broken bones can mend by laying down new bone to heal itself. While in extremely hot conditions, the body will sweat to cool down and, contrarily, in conditions that are too cold, the body will shiver to generate heat. The heart beats, and the lung expands all as an automatic process, no assistance required. Even in the complexity of conception, this innate intelligence is responsible for the intricate development of a multicellular organism from a single-celled organism after the joining of the sperm and egg. Think about this. How does the body know which cells, organs, tissues, and structures to develop into during this process? And how does



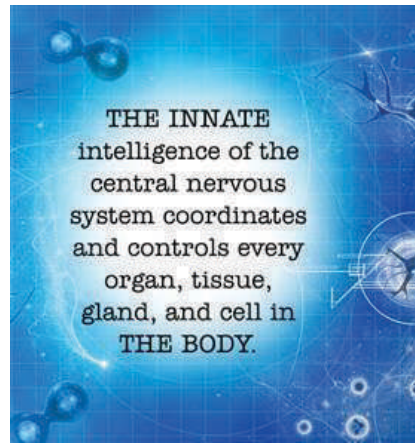
it know when and where to develop the heart, brain, lungs, eyes, stomach, bones, ligaments, etc. all in their respective places in order to function appropriately? There is no surgical intervention, medication, or outside instructions necessary for this develop to occur.

Interestingly enough, during this development, the components that form in the early stages are the brain, spinal cord, and nerves—the nervous system. These structures are vital for the body to communicate in order to perform tasks to preserve, heal, and develop properly. Practically every nerve from the body goes to the spinal cord and passes up the spinal column to the brain and then reroutes back down to the body to input and output information in order to function and communicate with one another. When there is an interruption of this communication process, improper or lack of function results. This improper function can then be equated to the body’s lack or inability to heal itself, thus resulting in disease and other conditions. As this process continues uncorrected, the body adapts and compensates, causing the body to become more susceptible to breakdown in many



aspect because it’s not healing, developing, and reforming properly.

One hundred twenty-two years ago, Dr. David D. Palmer performed the very first chiropractic adjustment, which aided in the restoring of hearing for Harvey Lilliard. This particular event became known as the “Birth of Chiropractic.” Afterwards, the holistic practice of “Chiropractic” became



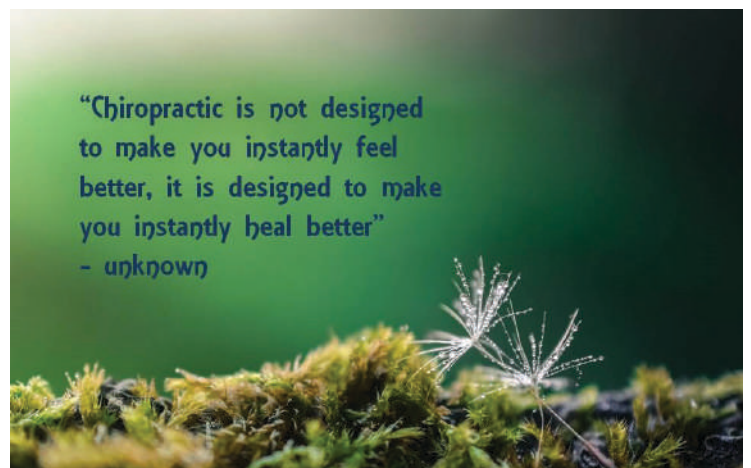
increasingly popular in the aid and medical management of many conditions and ailments including, but not limited to: back pain, headaches, neck pain, sports and auto injury, degenerative conditions, fibromyalgia, radicular pain, pediatric and pregnancy care, just to name a few.

My personal philosophy and approach as a chiropractor is a “whole person” approach. My mission is to look for the underlying causes of the condition, disease, discomfort

and/or pain, as opposed to just treating the symptoms. With knowledge and respect to the body’s innate intelligence as explained above, my duty is to locate and remove any interference to the nervous system network and restore communication. This may include realigning the bones that make up the spinal column or various joints in the body to eliminate compression or irritation to the nerves or surrounding soft tissues. In conjunction to this realignment, my treatment protocol must also investigate any other imbalances: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially and/or spiritually.

Although many times this may require referral or co-management, I personally believe that the “whole person” approach must address mind, body, and soul. In fact, many illnesses and conditions typically arise when there are some outside stressors or forces introduced to the body whether it be physical--traumas, misalignments, tension, toxins, unhealthy foods, or harsh drugs (pushed or prescribed) or mental--negative thoughts, stress, depression etc. The mind, body, and soul are all interconnected and have a tremendous affect on one another. It is important to maintain a balance between all three for optimal health. For example, when we are stressed what happens to our blood pressure and/or respiration? Stressful situations can cause negative thoughts, which can lead to physical ailments and/or illnesses and vice versa.

My goal as a chiropractor is to aid with the body’s responsibility to thrive and function optimally by being a conduit removing interference to nervous system so that the body can communicate and innate intelligence can be expressed. This isn’t a complicated approach at all. In its most “basic” sense, optimal health occurs when all cells and parts of our bodies are functioning perfectly, exactly the way that they were designed to. Optimal health is accomplished by treating and feeding our bodies with choices and lifestyles that are healthy nourishing rather than unhealthy and destructive. The same “intelligence” that formed you is also able to heal and sustain you, as long as it is not interfered with.



# CHS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS TO THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Submitted by Carolinas Hospital System



Todd Hightower

Carolinas Hospital System is pleased to announce three new additions to the facility's leadership team.

Todd Hightower joins our leadership team as the vice president of Physician Practices. Hightower has 22 years experience in the healthcare industry. He received his bachelor's of business administration and his bachelor's of accounting from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Prior to joining Carolinas Hospital System, he served as vice president of Physician Services at Highlands Health System in Prestonsburg, Kentucky.

Kenneth Lewis joins our leadership team as the director of Laboratory Services. Lewis has more than 16 years of experience in laboratory sciences and management. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in medical technology from Coker College and his master's of public health from Florida International University. Prior to joining Carolinas Hospital System, Lewis served as senior technical consultant for



Kenneth Lewis



Mack Simmons

Alere, a leader in rapid diagnostics, in Princeton, New Jersey.

Mack Simmons joins our leadership team as the director of Environmental Services. Simmons has more than 20 years of experience in environmental services and leadership. He received his associate of business management from Southern Ohio College in Cincinnati, Ohio. Prior to joining Carolinas Hospital System, Simmons served as executive director of Environmental/Linen/Security Services for

Sparks Regional Medical Center in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Munroe Regional Medical Center in Ocala, Florida.

Please join us in welcoming them to our hospital and to the greater Florence community.



## TAKING CARE OF TUMMY TROUBLE

Submitted by Roger Polsky, NP-C, MSN



Roger Polsky

Oh, that aching belly! We've all experienced discomfort from eating too much or the occasional gas and constipation. Most of the time, your tummy trouble can be attributed to something simple, like stress or your diet. But it's important to know the symptoms that signal a potentially more serious health situation that warrants a call to the doctor – or a trip to the emergency room.

### Pain, Pain, Go Away

Most stomach pain can be alleviated with at-home remedies: a heating pad, a warm

bath, acetaminophen or over-the-counter antacids. If your stomach pain is due to excess intestinal gas or constipation, fiber supplements, over-the-counter laxatives and drinking plenty of water will relieve the pain. A heating pad applied to the affected area may also provide relief. If you decide to try over-the-counter pain relievers, stick to acetaminophen (such as Tylenol). Avoid aspirin or ibuprofen, which can contribute to bleeding and worsen your pain.

If you think your stomach pain may be due to excess stomach acid, eat bland foods – such as bread or crackers – which can absorb some of the acid and won't further irritate your tender stomach. Ginger is a natural remedy used to treat stomach pain and nausea, available in many forms including fresh ginger, ginger ale, ginger tea and lozenges. If heartburn or indigestion is the culprit of your pain, avoid citrus; fried, greasy or high-fat foods; tomato products; caffeine; alcohol; or carbonated beverages. If antacids don't provide relief, an H2 blocker (Tagament, Pepcid or Zantac) is a stronger method. However, if these medications worsen your pain, contact your doctor immediately.

Sometimes, stomach pain is a prelude to food poisoning or intestinal flu. If this is the case, your body will rid itself of the toxins naturally, through vomiting or diarrhea. Drinking plenty of water and clear fluids will help prevent dehydration during the process.

### When to Call the Doctor

Sometimes, stomach pain can be serious. Don't ignore the pain if

it comes on suddenly, is intense or long-lasting, or resists home treatment methods. Stomach pain is also a common denominator in many serious conditions: gallstones, an ulcer or appendicitis – all of which require prompt medical attention and treatment.

You should seek immediate medical help, call 911 or proceed to the emergency room if your stomach ache is accompanied by any of the following symptoms: a belly that is rigid, hard and tender to the touch; chest, neck or shoulder pain; pain in your shoulder blades with nausea; sudden, sharp abdominal pain; blood in your stool or you are vomiting blood; or you are unable to make a bowel movement.

Non-emergency stomach pain symptoms that warrant a call to your doctor – but not a trip to the emergency room – include abdominal pain that lasts one week or more; bloating that lasts more than two days; chest pain; a burning sensation during urination, or frequent urination; diarrhea for more than five days for an adult or more than two days for a child; vomiting for more than 12 hours (child); a fever of more than 100 degrees F; prolonged loss of appetite or unexplained weight loss. For infants under three months of age who develop diarrhea or vomiting, contact your pediatrician immediately.

Your doctor will ask a variety of questions to try to pinpoint the cause of your pain. If no medical emergency exists, your doctor may order one or more of the following tests: a barium enema; upper GI and small bowel series; blood, urine and stool tests; endoscopy of the upper GI (gastrointestinal) tract; or ultrasound or x-rays of your abdomen.

Most stomach pain can be prevented by making healthy lifestyle choices: eat frequent, small meals that are balanced and high in fiber – including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables; drink plenty of water; exercise regularly; eat your last meal of the day at least two hours before bedtime; and get plenty of rest.

### About the Author:

Roger Polsky is a certified nurse practitioner. He is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance - Gastroenterology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is accepting new patients. Please call 843-674-1530 to schedule an appointment or visit [CMAGastroenterology.com](http://CMAGastroenterology.com)

Sources: The National Institutes of Health, [nlm.nih.gov](http://nlm.nih.gov); The Mayo Clinic, [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com); WebMD, [webmd.com](http://webmd.com)



## HELPING IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth



Jess Kemmler, PharmD, checks the supply of pills in the Parata Max automated robotic dispenser. The Parata Max is designed to help pharmacies efficiently label, count, sort, and cap prescriptions. Dr. Kemmler is a pharmacist at Long's Drugs located inside the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence.

Throughout the nation, federally-qualified health centers like HopeHealth strive to improve the health of our communities by providing primary care services in underserved areas. Funding for these centers is provided through a variety of sources that include medical billing to private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, grants, and the federal 340B Drug Pricing Program.

The 340B Drug Pricing Program was established in 1992 to help provide healthcare services in underserved communities. Eligible health care organizations can use the program to purchase specific prescription drugs at significantly discounted prices directly from pharmaceutical companies. These discounts are set through an agreement between the pharmaceutical companies that wish to be a part of the Medicaid and Medicare Part B programs and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Indirectly, patients benefit from the services the health organization offers because of the 340B program. Savings generated from the discounted pricing are returned to the health organization where the prescription was written and can be used by the organization to continue providing and expanding services, to increase patient capacity, to add patient programs, etc. The partnership also helps the health organization provide local pharmacy services in more convenient locations. At HopeHealth, more than 30 such partnerships help provide services to 37,000-plus patients in Aiken, Clarendon, Florence, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg counties.



Michael "Rock" Ouzts, PharmD, is the owner of Anderson Pharmacy in Manning, SC

Long's Drugs is one of those partners. With more than 20 locations in several states, as well as one inside the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence, it provides pharmacy services in areas convenient for patients while helping HopeHealth provide health care to others.

"340B allows us to offer discounts to eligible patients," said Jessica Barnwell, pharmacist with Long's. "In return, patients that use the 340B pharmacy, whether insured or uninsured, give back by helping

HopeHealth provide for more customers."

Essentially, the program has no direct impact on the individual filling the prescription, explained Stephen Orander, HopeHealth director of pharmacy. Any person with a prescription can have it filled at the pharmacy of his or her choice. Those pharmacies participating in the 340B program fill the same prescriptions for the customer as a non-participating pharmacy. The difference is that prescriptions filled at participating pharmacies – whether local, independently-operated or national chain locations –enable "covered entities to stretch scarce federal resources as far as possible, reaching more eligible patients and providing more comprehensive services," according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Pharmacies in the 340B Program are contracted with federally-qualified health centers as partnered dispensaries, said Orander, who spent more than 40 years in retail pharmacy and now helps strengthen the bonds between HopeHealth, their pharmaceutical partners and patients.

"The pharmacies fill the prescriptions, and we pay them a fee," he explained. "Then, we order and replenish the inventory at the 340B drug pricing cost. The difference between that and what the insurance company reimburses is what provides monies to support the health organizations."

"Ultimately, the goal is to improve patient compliance and partnership communications," said Orander.

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## WORLD AIDS DAY 2017

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth



Ruby Graham (left) & Scottie Rivera participate in AIDS Walk 2016. This year, the 20th annual AIDS Walk will be held Dec. 12.

More than 35 million people globally have died from HIV-related causes since it was first recognized in June 1981 and AIDS was named in September 1982. An AIDS diagnosis in the 1980s was a prognosis for death. For many it also meant rejection from and abandonment by their

communities and families.

To combat the fear and stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day and was established in 1988 with a three-fold goal: to unite communities, to celebrate and support people living with HIV/AIDS, and to honor those who have lost their lives to the disease. World AIDS Day is now held Dec. 1 each year, and a red ribbon has become the symbol of solidarity and awareness around the cause. HopeHealth invites you to join millions around the world this December and "Put a Ribbon On It."

In addition to our annual red-ribbon campaign, HopeHealth organizes awareness events to increase the dialogue about HIV and AIDS, decrease stigma, and provide support to individuals living with the disease. Join HopeHealth at Central United Methodist Church in Florence on Dec. 2, as we celebrate our 20th annual AIDS Walk in recognition of World AIDS Day. To sign up to walk, sponsor an individual walker or team, or to join a walking team for AIDS Walk 2017, contact [scogdill@hope-health.org](mailto:scogdill@hope-health.org).

Other HopeHealth events recognizing World AIDS Day include our third annual TruthIz: Spoken Word & Poetry Slam, an open-mic night in downtown Orangeburg, and the second Art & Music Showcase in Aiken, a free music and art showcase open to all local artists and musicians. For details on these events, contact Shiheda Furse at [sfurse@hope-health.org](mailto:sfurse@hope-health.org).

Today, the development of rapid HIV testing allows for fast, accurate HIV-status test results. Improvements in medicines used to treat HIV/AIDS means an HIV-positive patient who is compliant with their treatment plan can expect to live a typical life span.

Even though treatment for HIV/AIDS has come so far, access and awareness remain hurdles for many communities and patients like the more than 1,000 individuals currently being served at HopeHealth centers in Florence, Aiken and Orangeburg. Our HIV centers work closely with our community health programs to allow for coordinated care across specialties, including pain management, substance abuse, dental care, mental health, and primary care.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), southern states have the highest number of people living with HIV and account for 44 percent of all people living with HIV in the US. Nationwide, more than 1.2 million in the U.S. are living with HIV infection and, of those, one in eight, or 150,000, don't know they have the virus. In South Carolina, where 20.7 people per 100,000 are living with HIV, the lifetime risk of being diagnosed with HIV ranks 10th in the nation (Columbia ranked 15th and Charleston ranked 22nd in the nation for highest infection rates per capita in 2013. San Francisco ranked 21).



## INSIDE THE OPIOID CRISIS

Submitted by David A. Gittens, DC



Public health officials have called the current opioid epidemic the worst drug crisis in American history, killing more than 33,000 people in 2015. Overdose deaths were nearly equal to the number of deaths from car crashes. In 2015, for the first time, deaths from

heroin alone surpassed gun homicides.

And there's no sign it's letting up, a team of New York Times reporters found as they examined the epidemic on the ground in states across the country. From New England to "safe injection" areas in the Pacific Northwest, communities are searching for a way out of a problem that can feel inescapable. Here are two stories:

### "I couldn't manage the pain"

I graduated magna cum laude from law school. After motor vehicle accident, I was prescribed hydrocodone and eventually ended up on OxyContin, Percocet, Xanax, Soma. Eventually, I couldn't manage the pain because it was worse, and I went on disability. I lost my wife, friends and job. — Sean, 43, California

### "I started stealing from my family"

I started taking painkillers when I was 19. I went to the dentist one day for a toothache and was prescribed Vicodin. After that first one, I was hooked. Then one day a friend introduced me to heroin. I started stealing from my family, and they pressed charges on me. I thank God every day because I'm alive today. — Carla Goff, Shelby, Ohio

The sad part to this entire crisis is that it can all be avoided. The vast majority of the symptoms that are treated with opioids can and should be treated with "Drug Free Pain Management Techniques" like Acupuncture, Cold Laser, Pulsing Magnetic Fields, Micro current and Chiropractic.

**REMEMBER** an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So before starting on drugs that can lead to addiction, give us a call, **GITTENS HEALTH AND WELLNESS** at 843-678-9394.

## HOPEHEALTH EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth

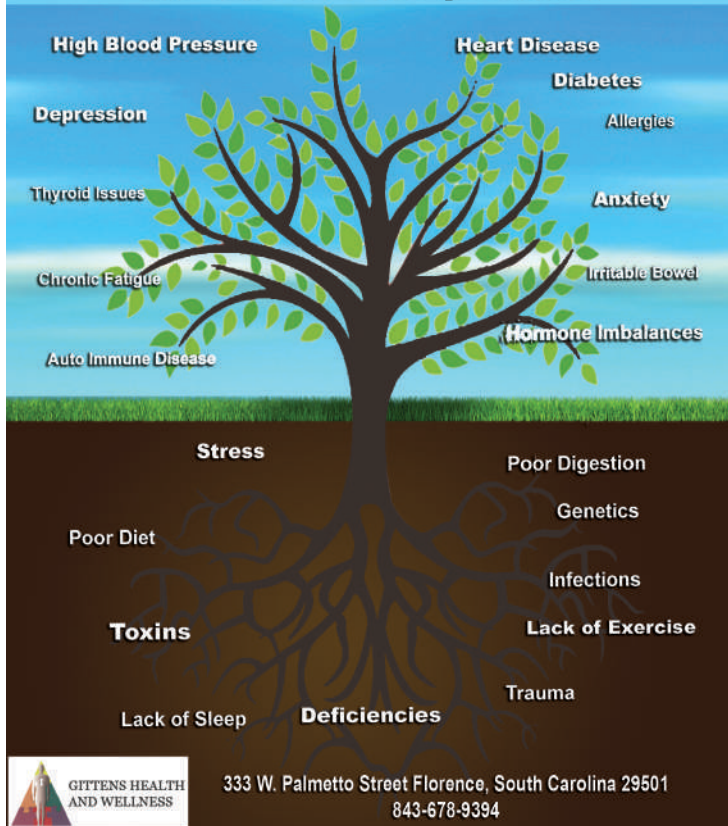


The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recently announced that the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence has received NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition Level 3 for using evidence-based, patient-centered processes that focus on highly coordinated care and long-term, participative relationships. Level 3 is the highest possible PCMH certification.

The NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home is a model of primary care that combines teamwork and information technology to improve care, patients' experience of care and reduce costs. Medical homes foster ongoing partnerships between patients and their personal clinicians, instead of approaching care as the sum of episodic office visits. Each patient's care is overseen by clinician-led care teams that coordinate treatment across the health care system. Research shows that medical homes can lead to higher quality and lower costs, and improve patient and provider reported experiences of care.

To earn recognition, which is valid for three years, HopeHealth demonstrated the ability to meet the program's key elements, including embodying characteristics of the medical home. NCQA standards align with the joint principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home established with the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Osteopathic Association.

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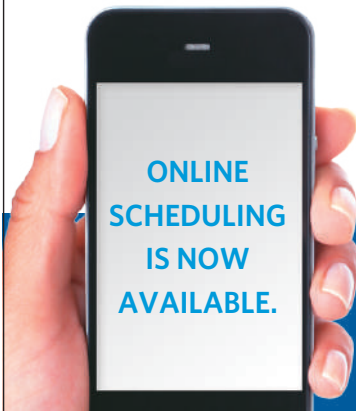


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## A MORE MINDFUL MAMMOGRAM

Submitted by Carolinas Hospital System

Use these tips to make your next screening easier:

- Mammograms can detect breast cancer in the earliest, most treatable stages. That's why the American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends women of average risk should begin yearly mammograms at age 45.
- However, the initial discomfort of a mammogram may discourage some women from taking time out each year or this extremely important test.

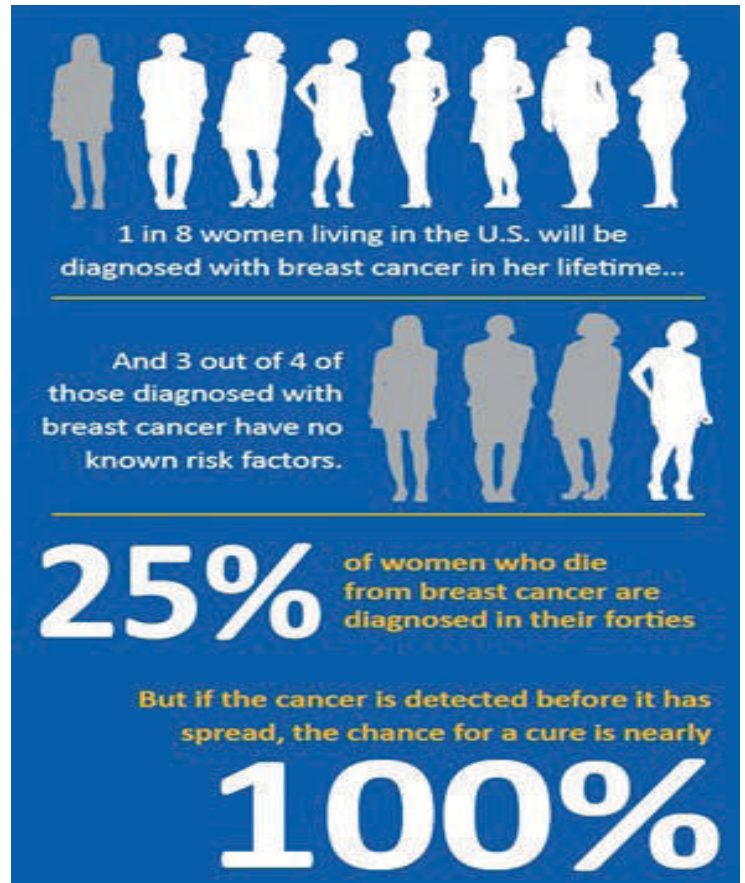
To make your next mammogram easier, follow these tips:

- **Don't wear deodorant.** Deodorants and other powders can show up as white spots on a mammogram, and that might prompt your doctor to call you in for a second test.
- **Schedule Smart.** The week before your period, your breasts can be swollen and tender – leading to an uncomfortable mammogram and poor-quality pictures. Avoid scheduling mammograms during this week.
- **Leave the dresses on the hanger.** If you wear a dress, you will have to remove it entirely during the mammogram. Wearing a shirt and either a skirt or pants makes your appointment easier.
- **Consider medication.** Over-the-counter pain relievers (such as aspirin or acetaminophen) may relieve soreness when taken before a mammogram. Talk to your doctor before taking any medications.

Finally, remember that breast compression during a mammogram lasts only a few seconds – and those few seconds are worth the peace of mind.

During the month of October, Carolinas Hospital System Women's Imaging Services is extending its hours, on Thursdays from 8a.m. to 7p.m. For more information, visit [CarolinasMammography.com](http://CarolinasMammography.com), or schedule your mammogram today by calling 843-674-4525.

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## THE DANGERS OF DIABETES

Submitted by Dr. C. Culleton, MD



John C. Culleton, MD

Diabetes affects nearly 30 million people in the United States – a stunning 10 percent of the overall population. And recent research reveals that diabetes is now the third leading cause of death, not the seventh, as was previously thought. Perhaps the most concerning statistic is that one in four persons living with diabetes is unaware that they have the disease.

The American Diabetes Association sponsors Diabetes Alert Day to serve as an annual wake-up call. The organization wants to remind Americans about the seriousness

and prevalence of diabetes, particularly when the disease is left undiagnosed or untreated. This year, Diabetes Alert Day was March 28.

“The incidence of type 2 diabetes in this country has tripled in the last twenty years,” said Dr. Culleton, endocrinologist. “The adoption of sugary diets and sedentary lifestyles has caused the disease to reach epidemic proportions. On the positive side, this condition doesn't have to be a death sentence. It may be avoidable, and even reversible, with serious lifestyle changes.”

Researchers estimate that, if current trends continue, one in three Americans will have diabetes by the year 2050. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to kidney failure, limb amputations, blindness, and even death. Early diagnosis and treatment is critical to preventing irreversible damage to your health and longevity, so awareness and access to care are the key areas of focus.

Here are the top five ways to keep blood sugar at healthy levels and to keep type 2 diabetes from impacting you and your loved ones:

**1. Get more physical activity.** You don't have to run marathons for physical activity to add years to your life. Just 30 minutes of intentional activity, at least five times per week, can make a huge difference for insulin resistance. A mix of aerobic, heart-pumping activity with some resistance training is the best plan.

**2. Get plenty of fiber.** Fiber has many benefits, including improving blood sugar management. Sources of fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains and nuts.

**3. Choose whole grains.** Make sure at least half of your grain intake is whole grains. Whole grains are prepared as close to the source from the Earth as possible. Look for labels that say “whole grains,” and opt for organic when possible.

**4. Lose a little weight.** Losing even five or 10 pounds appears to have an impact on reducing blood sugar levels and insulin resistance. Don't focus on huge goals – celebrate the small wins!

**5. Skip the fad diets.** Yo-yo dieting and fad diets are hard on the heart, the mind, and your organs. Just make good, whole food choices 80 percent of the time, and your body will work the way it was designed.

If you have a family history of diabetes, you are at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes yourself. Also, the condition is more common in African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders. Above-average body weight increases diabetes risk for people of all backgrounds.

Only your doctor can tell for sure if you are diabetic or pre-diabetic. As part of your annual health physical, be sure to talk to your doctor about the results of your fasting blood sugar and A1C tests. If your numbers are heading in the wrong direction, you can act quickly to get back on the right track.

If you need assistance in diagnosing or managing your metabolic health, talk to your primary care physician. Your primary care physician may refer you to an endocrinologist. If you need a primary care physician, visit [CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com](http://CarolinasMedicalAlliance.com) to schedule an appointment on-line or call 843-661-DOCS.

John C. Culleton, MD, is board certified in Endocrinology and is associated with Carolinas Endocrinology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is a member of the medical staff of Carolinas Hospital System. For more information visit [CarolinasEndocrinology.com](http://CarolinasEndocrinology.com)



# DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

by Tu'Meeka Epps



Dr. Edward "Ty" Collier

Dr. Edward "Ty" Collier.

Collier's duties include adult and pediatric services for outpatient rehab, for patients admitted to the hospital, as well as for those who transition to the sub-acute rehab unit. Ultimately, Collier is responsible not only for the team members in multiple locations and practice settings, but also for providing the highest quality of care for patients in the community.



Volunteer work at Shaw expo

with a bachelor's degree in exercise science and a minor in psychology in 2008, he enrolled in graduate school and obtained his doctorate degree in physical therapy from USC in 2011. He began his physical therapy career in the outpatient centers at Palmetto Health Baptist and Richland.

**SUMTER** - Palmetto Health Tuomey in Sumter provides a full range of health care services for Sumter, Lee and Clarendon counties. The Tuomey campus represents the largest, most comprehensive and specialized outpatient rehab clinic in the tri-county area. Outpatient Rehab's 24-member team represents physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and administrative staff, while the inpatient team of 15 provides those same therapies. Serving as the manager of Rehab Services for Palmetto Health Tuomey is

The goal is to remain the provider of choice for all residents in the service area while upholding the organization's vision: "To be remembered for providing the care and compassion for patients that we would want for our families and ourselves."

Collier has been employed in the healthcare field and specifically for Palmetto Health for 11 years. After graduating from the University of South Carolina (USC) - Columbia



to strengthen and sustain a Palmetto Health culture of inclusion for team members, patients and the community served, aligned with team member engagement, the Palmetto Health Experience and patient service. He hopes to simplify the message in order to better develop a culture of inclusion.



Charitable event "Feed My Starving Children"

Collier is currently pursuing a master's in business administration from the Darla Moore School of Business at USC. He has an expected graduation date of December 2018.

Collier works in various roles for Palmetto Health. He also leads the Tuomey campus Diversity Advisory Council. As leader of the council, he focuses on two main goals for this team:

Inclusion means that the entire team should strive to make every team member, patient, and guest feel **VISIBLE, VALUED** and **RESPECTED** regardless of his or her situation or circumstances.

Through leadership, commitment, involvement, recruiting, retaining and advancing diverse talent and through education and training, the Palmetto Health Tuomey Diversity Team will build upon a cultural of inclusion. Its goals will be achieved through communications; garnering employee involvement; tracking diversity performance accountability; community involvement; economic inclusion/ supplier diversity; and marketing to diverse customers and diverse consumers.

Collier wants to ensure his team embraces the whole person and responds to emotional, spiritual and cultural concerns as well as the physical needs of all patients, displaying sensitivity and respect for others' cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and uniqueness. By doing so, the team will treat all people with respect and care, genuinely recognizing all are worthy of honor.

Collier and the Palmetto Health Rehabilitation Care Center love their community and are here to support them. They are fully committed to providing a uniquely personal experience and improving the quality of life for all residents in the area. The Palmetto Health Tuomey centers are committed to providing the most comprehensive care for patients of all ages in both the inpatient and outpatient rehab settings. They are the only providers in Sumter offering a full range of specialized rehab services, including physical, occupational and speech therapy services. Collier and the team want their rehab clinics to be the first thought for patients who are seeking high-quality care.

The Outpatient Clinic for Palmetto Health Tuomey, located at 1215 Alice Dr., can be reached at 803-774-5201. The Acute Care Clinic and Sub-Acute Rehab are located at 129 N. Washington St., Sumter.

For more information on the services provided, visit [www.PalmettoHealth.org](http://www.PalmettoHealth.org).



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## IS TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT RIGHT FOR YOU?

Submitted by Dr. William E. Refvem, M.D.



William E Refvem, MD

Total hip replacement, also known as hip arthroplasty, can be an effective treatment option for patients with unresponsive chronic hip pain.

The hip is the largest ball-and-socket joint in the body. It plays a key role in mobility, and if it becomes damaged, it can significantly impact quality of life, making it painful or difficult to walk, stand and sit.

There is no age limit on the procedure. The average age of a total hip replacement recipient is between 50 and 80, according to the American Academy

of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS). That is likely due to the fact that the three most common causes of deteriorating hip functionality—rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and hip fracture—are closely associated with advanced age.

Factors influencing the longevity of hip replacements include the materials used in the prosthesis, the amount of ongoing wear and tear on the joint, and the way the new joint is attached to the bone.

### Anterior Hip Replacement

One of the least invasive surgical options is Anterior Hip Replacement. With the Anterior approach, the surgeon will access the hip joint from the front of the hip, allowing the hip joint to be replaced without detachment of the muscle. This technique leaves the important muscles for hip function undisturbed, therefore, minimizing pain and a shorter recovery time after surgery. Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.

Dr. William E. Refvem, M.D., orthopedic surgeon and medical director of The Center for Advanced Joint and Spine Care at Carolinas Hospital

System, is proud to offer anterior hip replacements to his patients, using leading-edge equipment. Board Certified in orthopedic surgery, Refvem has more than 30 years of experience helping patients overcome orthopedic issues.

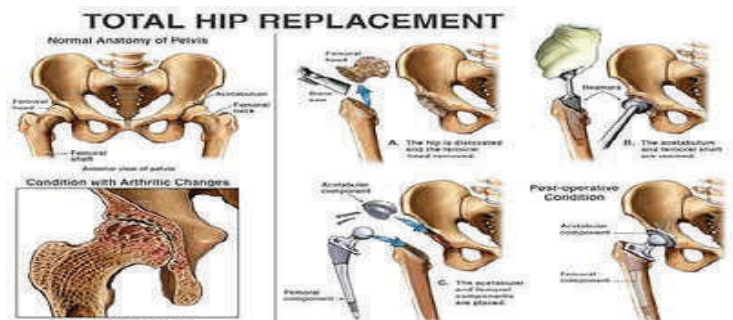
Dr. Refvem is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call his office at 843-413-6835. You may also request an appointment at [CMAOrthopedics.com](http://CMAOrthopedics.com)

Dr. Refvem is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance - Orthopaedics, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System.

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Sources: [orthoinfo.aaos.org](http://orthoinfo.aaos.org), [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov), [arthritisresearchchuk.org](http://arthritisresearchchuk.org), [rsna.org](http://rsna.org), [nhs.uk](http://nhs.uk), [nlm.nih.gov](http://nlm.nih.gov), [aaos.org](http://aaos.org), [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)  
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## INTRODUCING AGAPE HOSPICE'S CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER

By Ta'Meeka Epps



Ronnie Duncan

**COLUMBIA** - Maintaining or improving quality of life for someone whose illness, disease or condition is unlikely to be cured is the goal of the medical care offered by hospice. Agape Hospice is located throughout the state of South Carolina with the headquarters located in Columbia. Agape Hospice was started in 1999, by Scott Middleton, who has a passion for seniors and those who are in the journey of transitioning. Agape's leadership team consists of forward thinking and compassionate

hearts: Theresa Younis, CEO; Dee Dee Henderson, COO; Ronnie Duncan, chief diversity officer; and a host of others.

Duncan and the staff truly believe that Agape operates as the Greek word represents "unconditional love," and that's what they seek to give on a daily basis. Agape employs some of the greatest, most caring people who work to ensure the mission is met every day and they are all grateful for the opportunity to serve. As chief diversity officer for Agape Hospice, Duncan sets out to create an inclusive environment for employees through recruitment efforts, training sessions and activity planning.



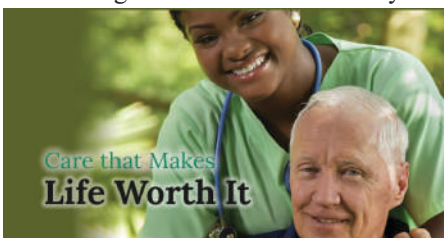
"One thing about being the chief diversity officer is the view of what I'd call a helicopter perspective. You truly see things from a different vantage point. To some, it's an advantage. To others, it's a disadvantage. To me, it's an opportunity to look for the betterment in the circumstance. There's one constant fact about this world, and that is we are all created with a diverse

makeup. The interesting perspective and most challenging perspective is putting all those pieces together and making them work in harmony," stated Duncan.

The main goal for Duncan is figuring out, within the organization, who plays what instrument and then allowing them the opportunity to display their talents. The next goal is to determine what song fits within the context of style of expression for Agape. Lastly, finding as many opportunities for Agape Hospice to allow others to hear us play together in harmony for the sake of diversity and inclusion while fulfilling the mission of the agency.

One of the fastest growing initiatives is the makeup of our country and how rapidly the landscape of race, ethnicity and culture of expression is changing and will continue to change. Whether we like it or not, the world is changing, which means in the healthcare industry, hospice included the cultural value of the way people choose to die, and who they allow to care for them as they die also changes. We will have to change and look like the newly formed world but not always in race or ethnicity but in values and respect.

"Being in the healthcare industry and especially dealing with the end of life journey for patients and their families is an honor, and I personally count it as a privilege to serve them," stated Duncan. "Serving is a calling from God, to care for those who are in need at that moment.



Strange thing about life is you never know when it will be your turn and you'll be in need of support," added Duncan. "God says in his word in Matthew 25:31-46, specifically verse 40, 'Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

Making the determination and prognosis that a patient is nearing the end of life is never easy. Sharing a terminal prognosis with the patient and family is even more difficult. Agape understands how challenging it can be to transition from trying to extend someone's life to helping them maintain a quality of life for as long as possible. Agape Hospice provides a loving, faith-based environment that offers compassionate end of life care to individuals and their families. Duncan and Agape's staff understand the challenges that come with having a loved one with a terminal illness, and they are here to help.

Ronnie Duncan is simple, yet complex, caring, fair, and loving. He seeks to search for the betterment of mankind, and upon not finding it, he waits in grace. He is married with two adult children. He is a consecrated Bishop in the Lord Church, and has been in ministry for 17 years as a mentor, coach and leader. He's a certified grief counselor. He established a nonprofit called iSupportU, which is a support system for people dealing with difficult life changes. Duncan also created a Life and Leadership Development system called "THREAD" which helps people gain a greater understanding about themselves and others.

For more information on Agape Hospice and the services offered, visit their website at [www.agapehospice.com](http://www.agapehospice.com).



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# TABITHA JAMES: EXEMPLIFYING THAT POSITIVITY IS POSSIBLE

by Anna Bowman



Tabitha James

**MYRTLE BEACH** - Tabitha James believes strongly in being a meaningful inspiration to every individual she comes in contact with throughout her life. She recently expanded her territory to inspire thousands upon thousands of people by writing her first book titled, "Not. Posted: S.E.A.S.O.N.S. of the Untold," a motivational memoir developed with the purpose to empower people to never be ashamed of their untold stories.

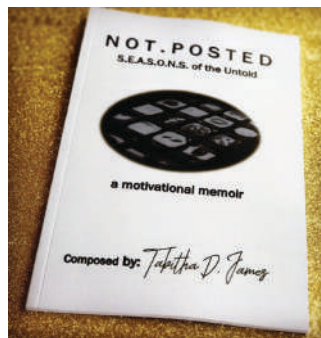
Throughout her book, James includes intentional comparisons and methodology to ensure readers from various backgrounds can relate and make connections to the chapters. The author also included some untold stories from her own personal life that have shaped her success.

A native of Lake View, James realizes that so many of us share so much information details on social media. However, it's what's "not posted" that so many people need to deal with in their lives. "The memoir exemplifies how no matter what negative energy comes your way or obstacles that seem unbearable, positivity is possible. It is not what happens, how it happens or when it happens. What matters is how we respond, when we respond and the nature of the response that makes all the difference." She said, "In my opinion from observation, research and life experience, the number one thing that holds people back is fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of how people will receive them, fear of failure, just fear of multiple things." She hopes that her book will allow people to face their fear and become their authentic self.

Helping others find their authentic self is a passion of James, who

credits her upbringing with shaping her platform for success. "Growing up, my parents, grandparents, and favorite aunt, along with other family members, pushed me towards greatness." She said leadership became second nature as a result of her upbringing and early introduction to responsibility.

James recently graduated with a Master of Education degree from Florida Atlantic University. But while pursuing her undergraduate degree from Coastal Carolina University, James noticed others saw her outstanding ability to inspire individuals and encouraged her to take on leadership roles on the campus. She was also afforded opportunities to expand her leadership role as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.



She wants everyone to explore his or her leadership abilities, especially females. In 2014, Tabitha created, 1 Am She, a company developed to serve as a catalyst for female empowerment, engagement and support. "The company is going strong," she proudly announced, "hosting conferences, retreats and being present at events nationally." She's also proud of the fact that her

company has kept a strong online presence for engagement.

Readers can purchase her book directly from her website, [www.tabithadjames.com](http://www.tabithadjames.com) or via Amazon, Barnes and Noble or GoodReads. She also welcomes readers to contact her via her social media to discuss her book. She can be found on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter via @tinytab. YouTube, Soundcloud and Periscope via 1 AmShe.

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## PETS HELP SENIORS STAY HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER



A French novelist once said, “Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet.” Pets provide meaningful social support for owners, and they can be especially beneficial for

seniors. Ample research shows pet ownership delivers physical and mental health benefits for seniors, regardless of whether they’re living on their own or in a senior living community.

However, many older Americans still mistakenly believe moving into a senior living community means they’ll have to leave their pets behind. In fact, the fear they’ll have to give up a beloved pet is among the top emotional reasons seniors don’t want to move into senior living. In an informal survey, seniors ranked losing a pet as emotionally jarring as having to leave their familiar homes and possessions.

Senior living communities are all about supporting the physical health and mental well-being of residents. For many senior citizens, pets are an important part of their lives. It makes sense to preserve the bond between pet and senior owner whenever possible.

### Physical benefits

Pet ownership benefits senior citizens in multiple ways, research shows. Older people who own dogs are likely to spend 22 additional minutes walking at a moderately intense pace each day. Published in BioMed Central, the study also found dog owners took more than 2,700 more steps per day than non-owners.

Multiple studies have also concluded that pet ownership can help lower blood pressure, contribute to improved cardiovascular health and reduce cholesterol.

### Mental health

Interacting with pets also has many mental health benefits, especially for seniors. Spending time with pets can help relieve anxiety

and increase brain levels of the feel-good neurochemicals serotonin and dopamine. Pets can help relieve depression and feelings of loneliness.

The online journal Current Gerontology and Geriatrics Research reports multiple studies indicate dementia patients who interact with animals become more social, are less agitated and have fewer behavioral issues.

### Pets in senior living settings

For too long, some senior living communities didn’t recognize the value of allowing residents to bring their pets with them. That has definitely changed.

For seniors looking for a community that will accept their pets, suggests a few questions to ask:

- \* What is your pet policy and what type of animal do you consider a pet? Generally, small dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, rats, hamsters, fish, turtles and other small companion animals qualify for pet policies.
- \* What is your pet health policy? Typically, senior living communities that accept small pets will want them to be current on all vaccinations and have regular exams by a licensed veterinarian.
- \* What, if any, kind of training do you require pets to have? Requiring dogs to be house-trained and cats to be litter-trained is standard.
- \* Do you offer any assistance with pet-related tasks? Most communities will require residents be able to care for pets themselves, including feeding, walking, potty needs and health needs.

Moving into a senior living community is a big change, one that most residents find positive. They gain freedom from home maintenance tasks and household chores, a socially rewarding environment, and as-needed support for healthcare and daily care. As long as seniors are still able to care for their pets, there’s no reason they shouldn’t be allowed to bring their best friends with them to their new homes.

An advertisement for The Rehab Center at Morrell. The background is a photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a grey cardigan over a blue shirt, using a silver walker. He is smiling and looking towards a young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing teal scrubs and a stethoscope. She is also smiling and looking at him. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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## DIVERSITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



“Diversity” relates to individuals and groups with different socioeconomic backgrounds and physical capabilities who engage in a variety of languages from multiple countries. People of all ages, genders, races,

ethnicities and sexual orientations will experience some form of the hospitality industry at some point in their lives -- either as guests or as employees.

### Significance

Diversity occurring in hospitality affords a number of significant benefits. Exposure to cultural exchanges among hospitality workers and guests offers increased opportunities to develop a vital tourism industry, especially in light of business globalization. Consequently, employers and their associates are able to readily understand and accept the idea of equal employment opportunity, overcoming ingrained stereotypical concepts.

### Benefits of a Diverse Workforce

There are concrete business advantages to be gained with a diverse workforce. According to research performed by multiculturalism, associated implications of inclusion has been linked to affording companies a competitive advantage, promoting an upbeat reputation among potential employees and encouraging more creativity and effective problem-solving among workers. Additionally, the study found that a culturally diverse employee base more easily interacts with guests from various backgrounds, providing an important component in first-class guest service.

### Diversity Management

Diversity awareness and training are appearing more frequently as part of employee development programs in hospitality venues. The emphasis is on instilling within the hospitality industry a commitment to recruiting and retaining employees with diverse backgrounds.

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# HOLIDAY GOODNESS BAZAAR RETURNING

Submitted by Bridget Elvington, Special Events Coordinator



*Holiday Goodness*  
 arts • crafts • baked goods  
**BAZAAR**  
 843 774-5115 Ext 3

**DILLON** -Dillon is **CALLING ALL VENDORS** for November 18, when the city will host its seventh annual Holiday Goodness Arts, Crafts and Baked Goods Bazaar.

Held in the gym of the Wellness Center, there are 10' x 10' spaces available. The cost is \$20 without electricity and a limited number of spaces with electricity for \$25, which includes one 30" x 6' table and two chairs. Last year there were more than 600 visitors. The application is available online at [www.cityofdillonsc.us](http://www.cityofdillonsc.us).



**COME SHOP:** The day of the event, which is the weekend before Thanksgiving, we open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and typically have 50 to 55 individual vendors. Admission is free.

From 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. Santa will be on site and a magical elf will do face painting, design balloons and perform two magic shows, one at 11 a.m. and one at 2 p.m.

In addition, there are free horse and carriage rides. As a special promotion, there are drawings for \$10 "Vendor Bucks" throughout the day, which must be spent that day and are accepted by all vendors.

To view the types of items that have been showcased in the past go to Facebook: "Holiday Goodness-Arts, Crafts and Baked Goods Bazaar."

For more information or an application call Bridget Elvington at 843-774-5115 Ext 3.



*Holiday Goodness*  
 arts & crafts  
**BAZAAR**

**One Day Event**  
**Sat., Nov. 18, 2017**  
**9am - 4pm**

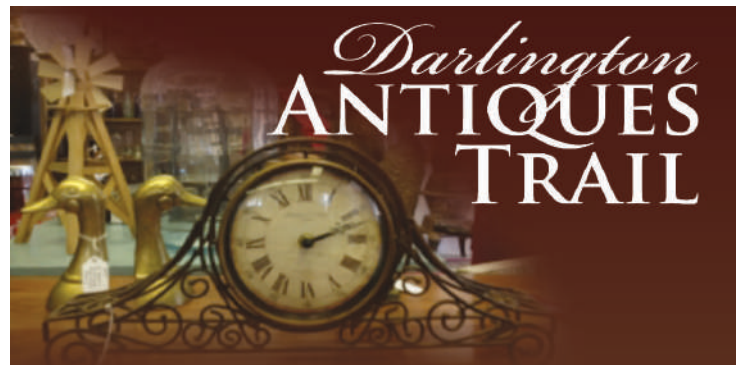
**Free Admission**  
**Santa &**  
**Free Carriage Rides - 10 - 3**  
**Free Children's Magic Show, 11 & 2**  
**Drawings for \$10.00 "Vendor Bucks"**

**Dillon Wellness Center**

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*Same Day-Same Place!*  
 Humane Society of Dillon County

**4th Annual Chili COOK-OFF**  
 \$5.00 - Sample All Contestants & 1 vote for "Peoples Choice" Trophies - Cash Prizes  
**11:00 to 2:00**  
 Wellness Center Grounds



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**Darlington County Historical Commission**  
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**Darlington Raceway**  
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**Scarlett's Antiques**  
 500 E. Broad St.

**So-lina Auction Market Inc.**  
 2085 Lamar Hwy.



**The Jeweler's Bench**  
 60 Public Square



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**HOW  REFRESHING**

# GO NUTS AT THE 14TH ANNUAL SC PECAN FESTIVAL ON NOVEMBER 4

Submitted by the SC Pecan Festival



It's that time again, time to "GO NUTS" at the 14th Annual South Carolina Pecan Festival. This year, the stage is set to be our biggest year to date with new attractions, our biggest line-up of entertainment ever, and the return of some old favorites. It all takes place in historic Downtown Florence, which has seen tremendous growth since the festival's inception in 2003. What started as a single-block, single-stage community event has grown into one of the most time honored and anticipated festivals in South Carolina. The festival was also just named the best fall festival in South Carolina by Travel + Leisure.

This family-friendly event kicks off on Nov. 4, and will feature eight stages of live entertainment, amusements, rides, a free Kids Fun Zone, a pecan cook-off and Duke's Mayonnaise Pecan Challenge, a classic car and truck show, an antique tractor show and hayrides, Bike Like a Nut half century and century bike rides, Run Like a Nut 5K/10K/ Half Marathon (now certified by USATF), over 250 food and craft vendors, the Pecan Pub, and more. Back by popular demand this year is the Chalk-it-up sidewalk chalk contest.

We invite locals and visitors to spend the day with us at the 14th Annual SC Pecan Festival and check out our fantastic line-up of entertainers this year. With eight stages, this year's festival truly has something for everyone from gospel, blues, our new jazz stage, and our community dance stage, to beach music, Motown, and rock and roll. You don't want



to miss our biggest headliner to date, The Spinners, performing live on the Sharonview Federal Credit Union Main Stage at Irby and Baroody Streets starting at 5:30 p.m.

Is your pecan-infused dish the best in town? Do you want a chance at winning great prizes? Enter our annual Pecan Cook-off and show us what you've got. Fill out the registration form (available online at [www.scepecanfestival.com](http://www.scepecanfestival.com)) and bring your recipe and best dish using pecan to the 100 Block of S. Dargan St. in front of Restaurant Row at 10:15 a.m. to compete for the \$250 Best Overall Award. This year, thanks to Duke's Mayonnaise, we will also have the Duke's Mayonnaise Pecan Challenge category in which home cooks must present a dish that contains both Duke's Mayo AND Pecans to vie for the prize.

Looking to indulge in all things pecan? All of our food vendors this year will have at least one item containing the South's favorite nut on their menu, so you are guaranteed to find pecans anywhere you go.



Pick up your bagged and covered pecans, pies, pecan treats and more from the Young's Pecan booth or at any one of the official Pecan Festival booths.

If that wasn't enough, don't forget about our FREE Kids Fun Zone located on the lawn of the FMU Performing Arts Center (S. Dargan St.). Check out the Kids Zone Stage featuring live entertainment, inflatables, roaming characters, balloon sculpting, a petting zoo, a bicycle giveaway, storytelling, and the Kids Fun Zone feature entertainers, Circus Stella, who appeared on America's Got Talent. We've even got something for the pre-teens too with our brand new STEM ZONE featuring science, engineering, and robotics demonstrations, NASA telescopes and ScienceSouth on Wheels.

The South Carolina Pecan Festival is one of the largest events held annually in Florence, attracting over 50,000 people each year. Go nuts with us this year and enjoy great food, fellowship, family fun, and of course, PECANS. For more information and a festival map, visit our website, [www.scepecanfestival.com](http://www.scepecanfestival.com) and find us on Facebook for updates and features leading up to festival day. (Photo Credit: True Light Photography)

## PECAN FESTIVAL 101

Submitted by Amanda Pope, CMO Administrator



The transition from summer to fall commences, and slowly we see highlights of the season – crisp, cooler mornings, kids return to school, football season kicks off, leaves start to change color, and the anticipation begins for weekend festivals in many cities and towns. In Florence, the Downtown Development Corporation, Pecan Festival Committee and City Downtown Development staff are just about to "Go Nuts" over the Pecan Festival. So where did it all begin?

The idea for a fall festival began approximately 14 years ago with a vision to showcase the beauty, talent and history of Florence by bringing the community together and attracting people from all over the region to Downtown Florence. There were individuals with the interest and drive to bring the vision to life. Active community members such as Jeanne Downing, Steve Powers, and Councilwoman Pat Gibson-Hye Moore partnered with the Florence Downtown Development Corporation (Councilman George Jebailly was then President of the Corporation) and Parks & Beautification Commission (Michael Hawkins was then Chairman). The City of Florence, eager to energize downtown and create a greater sense of community, co-sponsored the event, and many other generous Florence businesses joined in to make the vision a reality.

And what would they call this festival? A majestic tree, known to

grow well in this region that serves a dual-purpose--grown both as a shade tree and for its delicious nuts--is the Pecan Tree. The smooth oval nuts with a sweet oily kernel produced by this tree are enjoyed in many variations but most popular in pecan pie, which is a southern delicacy. Young Pecan Company was started in Florence in 1945 as a pecan shelling operation by L. Givens Young. The company was in business for many years, creating an association to this delicious nut and Florence. It is fitting that a community festival in Florence be named the Pecan Festival, and the tag line, "Lets Go Nuts" brings humor and lightness to this fun-filled event.

A committee was formed and partnerships developed to hold the inaugural Florence Pecan Festival in 2004 on one block of downtown



with about 4,000 attendees. The first festival, although small, pulled the community together as a whole and demonstrated the diversity of Florence.

Michael Hawkins, chairman of Florence Parks & Beautification Commission at the time, said, "We're so proud to see the degree of diversity here – Black, White, Asian. In fact, in going to all the local festivals, I haven't seen anything like this because ours is so diverse, we truly have something for everybody, from babies to grown-ups, and we definitely have to keep this kind of thing going" (Florence Morning News, 2004).



## PECAN FESTIVAL 101 CONT'D

The event kept going and was recognized with a Main Street Inspiration Award at the South Carolina Municipal Association Annual meeting in 2005. One of the original committee members, Steve Powers, was also recognized as a Hometown Hero at the same event for his work with the festival.



In 2011, the festival was officially designated the South Carolina State Pecan Festival by Act No. 9 of 2011. Now in its 14th year, the festival boasts over 50,000 locals and visitors in attendance each year. The Pecan Festival Committee meets nearly year-round in preparation for that

first Saturday in November. Many hours of planning are now required for the annual community festival that has grown tremendously since 2004. The multi-block festival is packed with food, craft vendors, rides, an antique tractor show, a car show, competitions, a cook-off competition, 5K/10K/half marathon runs, and a half metric century bike ride. In addition, there are 8 stages with live entertainment performing throughout the day. The committee's hard work was recognized by the Morning News in 2014 as "Best of the Pee Dee for Excellence" as Best Community Festival. This year, the South Carolina Pecan Festival was recognized by Travel & Leisure magazine as the best fall festival in South Carolina for its online "best of" article.

The City of Florence is proud to co-sponsor an event that has become the season's main event in Florence, bringing us together as a whole, and sharing our vision to unify, strengthen and invigorate. The festival creates a strong sense of community, celebrates our diversity, and advances Florence – Full Life. Full Forward. Come downtown, and "let's go nuts" on Nov. 4.

**City of Marion 28<sup>th</sup> Annual**  
**Holiday Prelude & Community Tree Lighting Celebration**

**Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
 HMRA Prelude to Christmas 9am-1pm  
 Marion Christmas Parade 4:30pm  
*Sponsored by the Marion Chamber of Commerce*

**Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
 Annual City Tree Lighting Celebration 6pm  
 Marion County Courthouse  
 Fireworks at Withlacoochee Park 7pm

**Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**  
 Pilot Club of Marion Bazaar 10am  
 Marion County Museum Luncheon 12pm  
*Sponsored by Marion County Museum*  
 Historic Marion Christmas Tour of Homes 3-6pm  
*Sponsored by Marion Chamber of Commerce & the Pilot Club of Marion*

**Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>:**  
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\*call the Chamber office for information/details 843-423-3561

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\*For a list of risk factors and American Cancer Society recommendations, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).  
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