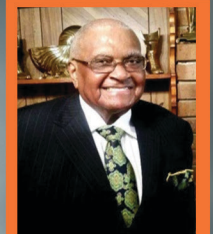


DIVERSITYWORKS

OCTOBER 2015 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 4

"For All of Us"



REV. WILLIAM THOMPSON



SARA BARBER



GERMINA SUFFRANT, MD



GARLAND SCARBORO

ROOTED & GROUNDED
IN DIVERSITY

HIS JOURNEY DESTINED
TO IMPACT OTHERS

BATTERER INTERVENTION
GROWING WINGS

A CHILD OF
ABJECT HAITIAN POVERTY

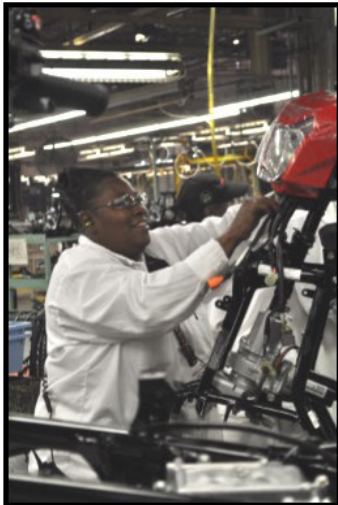
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
SHOW POSITIVE RESULTS

FEATURING:
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RUIZ FOODS

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MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

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

Spanish Version

Translated by: Yadiria Santiago, MA

NUESTRA MISIÓN

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

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

NUESTRA VISIÓN

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

Published By:



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Publishers Message



Diana M. Murphy
Publisher

It has been a pleasure serving you these past four years and as we embark upon our fifth year in business, we realize that this is the year which many may say will make or break you. We want to say "Thank You" and that we just can't say to you enough how much we value you as a supporter, an advertising partner and as a constant reader of Diversity Works Magazine ©.

You are the foundation of our success, and we want you to know how much we appreciate your loyalty. Your commitment to us has helped us to operate smoothly and has led us to develop strong business and personal relationships over the years. As this year draws closer to the end we dare not let it happen without us letting you know how much your continued patronage means to us. And because of that we have been able to make a difference within the communities we serve.

We strive on being committed to you as you are to us. We will continue to make you feel confident in us and with our services. While continuing to work to build diverse communities, educate and empower by being informative, and use new and different approaches through our print and digital environment. We will continue to do our best every day with consistent service and respect.

Please enjoy reading our last edition for this year, keeping your eyes and ears open for what Diversity Works Magazine© has in store for you in 2016.

Thanks again for the opportunity of serving you and if there are any additional ways we can help you succeed please feel free to contact us.

From the Editor's Heart

Like most strong and successful companies – start up or otherwise – a smart business plan has the intrinsic foundational value based on a five year pro forma. Yet, just because we here at Diversity Works Magazine© are marking our four-year milestone of delivering our best in Information, Business, Entertainment, Finance, Health/Wealth building, and the other expanding staples of our quarterly publication, we are counting the next year as victory in advance.

And since it takes forever to become who we ultimately are, we are taking a bow now to open the floodgates for what is to come, both from the receiving and giving positions. As we are motivated by dignity and goal attainment and other noble causes, we continue to tread the trenches for the brightest, best and even unheard/unknown who make this earth spin on its axis.

Check out the newfound D&I practices at Food Lion, North American Assemblies' HR Pro, McCall Farms growth, how tenants and landlords should get along, how the City of Lake City is flourishing with its new personnel along with NESA and Ruiz Foods major accomplishments. Then enjoy the victory of new hires at the local American Red Cross, Santee Electric Cooperative and the City of Hartsville, plus the longstanding performers at Roche Carolina, Ella's Boutique and the City of Florence.

Historymakers we all are and we should plant the best seeds for the best outcome harvests as do Robin Lewis, Rev. William L. Thompson, Florence-Darlington TEC, Francis Marion University outstanding employees, Marion County Schools, Coastal Carolina University, ScienceSouth, UNCF, Florence District One Fellows, and Florence Career Center.

We always take every opportunity to appreciate our special caregivers and protectors like chaplains of area hospitals and prisons, (under)shepherds, veterans, breast cancer and domestic violence overcomers and overall (SC) thrivers.

When we say here's to your health, we mean get to know CHS doctors Suffrant, Gioia, and Owens; chiropractors Evans and Gittens and Hope Health's extended hours and AIDS walk.



Rennie Lunn-McAllister
Executive Editor

The hills come alive with the SC Music Award winners and tears are dried after growing up hard, as a teenager; we recognize the special efforts put forth by Raldex and Raines hospitality entities and offspring who care for their elder parents who can double as skill swappers in creative ways. We are gearing up for fall fun -- and hope you are -- at the Pecan Festival and the City of Dillon's Holiday Goodness Bazaar.

And while we are at it, do take this moment and edition to celebrate with us our fourth year of jubilation in publication. And please don't forget to remember our featured subjects in need with letters to the editor at dmmadworks@aol.com or renniediversity@yahoo.com.

Read, enjoy and share!!!

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION DEPARTMENT SHOWS POSITIVE RESULTS AT FOOD LION

Submitted by Laurie D. Willis



Millette Granville and
Garland Scarboro
(Photo Courtesy of Toni Shaw/
Black Business Ink)

For a number of years, diversity and inclusion have been hot topics throughout U.S. workplaces. And, as the country gears up for the 2016 presidential election, expect diversity to become a buzzword among candidates. Yet, while many companies talk a good game about diversity and inclusion, more

often than not they fail to make strides on either front. But not Salisbury-based Food Lion, which has more than 1,100 stores throughout the Southeast.

Food Lion, which is a company of Delhaize America, created a diversity and inclusion team in 1993 – long before many companies began realizing the importance of such action. That same year, Food Lion’s supplier program was expanded to include service vendors, with a focus on increasing external community partnerships. A decade later, in 2003, the grocery company’s diversity and inclusion strategy was enhanced to include “acknowledgement and respect for all,” according to Millette Granville, director of diversity and inclusion for Delhaize America, which also includes Hannaford grocery stores. The Hannaford chain is headquartered in Maine and has stores dotting the Northeast in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

‘Committed to diversity’

Granville says Delhaize America has five focus areas for diversity and inclusion: to recruit, hire and promote diverse talent; to cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, inclusiveness and flexibility; to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion through continuous learning; to build on the company’s diversity brand; and to develop structures to equip leaders to manage a diverse workforce. “We are committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace,” Granville says. “Our culture thrives on mutual respect, teamwork and diversity of thought and productivity.”

The Department of Diversity and Inclusion has enjoyed several recent accomplishments. Among those were assemblies for associates on unconscious bias, multicultural communication, the generational impact on the business and transgender inclusion in the workplace. The department also successfully solicited more than one thousand Delhaize America associates to

volunteer at more than seventy events last year, and is leading the company’s Workforce Diversity Committee in support of its global diversity strategy.

Other successes include holding the first Business Resource Group membership fair for local associates in 2014 and raising membership to more than four hundred; developing partnerships with community organizations to recruit diverse talent; expanding Business Resource Groups to the Hannaford market; maintaining a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index annually since 2010; and being recognized as “Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality.”

Granville is responsible for creating and overseeing implementation of a strategic approach to diversity and inclusion initiatives in the U.S. and globally. Additionally, she provides oversight to the Workforce Diversity Committee and the company’s Business Resource Groups and Supplier Diversity Council.

‘An industry leader’

Garland Scarboro, manager of diversity and inclusion for Delhaize America, is a 25-year veteran with the company and a member of its Workforce Diversity Committee. He helps the company meet the changing needs and demands of business and works to address the challenges that come with changing demographics to advance workplace inclusion.

He and Granville say the company’s diversity and inclusion statement, which reads in part, “A diverse workforce makes us a better company and is essential to our continued growth,” couldn’t ring more true.

“Delhaize America truly understands the value of diversity and inclusion, which is demonstrated by the programs and initiatives it undertakes and the markets we serve,” says Scarboro. “For example, Food Lion has been an industry leader in developing new stores in underserved communities in its operating areas, earning a National League of Cities Neighborhood Partnership Award in 2008.”

Of course, Food Lion’s diversity and inclusion entails much more than strategic placement of stores. Last year Food Lion introduced a Multicultural Women’s Mentoring & Sponsorship Circle to assist with the development and growth of women within the organization, Granville says. Additionally, the company partners with the Network of Executive Women regionally and nationally to support career development and networking opportunities for women.

To that end, for more than eight years, Delhaize America has been in partnership with Diversity Woman magazine, which was founded by Sheila Robinson, and for four years with Diversity Works magazine, established by Diana Murphy, both African American women who

have a combined 50 years of experience in corporate America in leadership roles ranging from projecting management to global marketing.

Black Male Mentoring Circle

The company isn’t focusing solely on women and, in fact, has implemented programs targeting minorities as a whole. The company’s Black Male Mentoring Circle advocates for African American men to create a powerful impact through development and mentorship at work and in the communities it serves, Scarboro says.

“We build a network for development where leaders will be cultivated to grow professionally and personally,” he says.

Additionally, the company’s African American, Asian-Pacific, Hispanic/Latino and Native American business resource groups focus on associate engagement, associate development and building brand awareness with consumers. Likewise, the company’s Retail Management Training program offers participants a curriculum that teaches how to become effective leaders and how to run multi-unit retail businesses by focusing on retail, business management and leadership skills, Scarboro says.

But while many companies like Delhaize America have introduced programs to help advance minorities and women, many have been slow to recognize members of the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender community.

Embracing LGBT

Delhaize America – unlike many major corporations – has embraced the lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender community. In fact, since 2006, the company has sponsored and participated in eight LGBT Pride events in several of their operating markets, from Capital Pride in Washington, D.C., which had some 350,000 people in attendance, to Salisbury Pride, with 4,000 in attendance.

Additionally, Delhaize America has partnered with other LGBT organizations such as Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or PFLAG, Equality N.C., Equality VA Commonwealth, Campus Pride, Charlotte Lesbian and Gay Fund and the Charlotte Business Guild, Scarboro says. And the company’s Friends LGBTQA Business Resource Group has sixty-seven members and has been in existence for more than a decade. Group membership is comprised of associates from all levels.

“This group cultivates a comfortable environment for all of our associates and customers with a focus on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and straight-ally community,” Scarboro says. “Food Lion President Meg Ham is an active executive sponsor for the Friends LGBTQA Business Resource Group and has been for eight years.”



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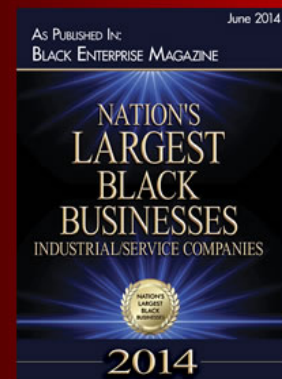
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HR ROLE IS VITAL TO NAA OPERATIONS OVERALL

by Mallory Brayboy



Tamara Johnson

North American Assemblies (NAA) is a modular assembly company located in Timmonsville, SC. “The assemblies that we provide allow all of our customers to focus on the core-competencies of their businesses which creates an even greater benefit for their customers”, says Tamara Johnson, Manager of Human Resources at North American Assemblies.

Johnson joined the management team at North American Assemblies in September of 2013. She is directly responsible for the breadth of Human Resource services provided at NAA. Her duties include an emphasis on finding and selecting key talent to ensure that the company achieves its mission and goals. “Building a successful team requires an HR specialist to find key talent with a specific set of knowledge, skills, and abilities and placing them in strategic roles which allows the company to be competitive and responsive to changing business trends all at the same time”, says

Johnson. Several other key areas of her job are Benefit Selections and Employee Relations. Employee Relations involves preserving the employer-employee relationship and Johnson tackles this by exploring strategies that ensure the welfare of North American Assemblies and its employees. She also has the responsibility of scheduling production for all departments. With added assemblies and an increased amount of talented workers Johnson says the company has grown significantly in a short period of time, all adding to the benefit of their customers.

Prior to joining North American Assemblies, Johnson was employed at Honda of South Carolina where she was a Team Leader in the Material Services Department. Her job duties there included Change Point Control and Inventory Control. Many of North American Assemblies’ services benefit Honda of South Carolina, which is also located in Timmonsville. Johnson says her favorite part of the job is interacting with employees. “HR Managers have to be good communicators as well as good

listeners. I believe that I have been blessed to be able to do both”, she says. “It’s important to me to be objective enough to acknowledge every aspect/concern of any issue when making decisions that affect both the business and the employee.”

North American Assemblies believes in giving back to the communities in which it does business. Their generosity is expressed through charitable donations and civic involvement. Their goal is to meet the needs of all stakeholders and the environment while at the same time creating a benefit for the company.

NAA’s mission is to become the region’s supplier of choice for quality-and delivery-critical contract manufacturing, assembly and associated logistical services. We will succeed by consistently meeting the needs of our customers more effectively and economically than our competition.



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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.

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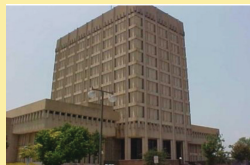
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MCCALL FARMS IS TOP OF THE HEAP IN SPECIALTY FOOD MANUFACTURING

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Bill Williams

EFFINGHAM-- To position itself at top South Carolina's commodity list, McCall Farms has had to do some reaching and that has entailed some corporate marriages, takeovers and other type acquisitions and mergers.

Back in 2010, the key joint venture that catapulted the 180-year-old company to the top of agribusiness occurred

between the Swink and Williams families, the former being the fifth generation of founder James McCall and the latter being the second generation of Glory Foods co-founder Bill Williams, whose son by the same name led an eye-opening tour and granted a no holds barred interview.

"My father was a forward thinking man; he had what he called a 100-year plan. He taught us -- including his 30 employees -- to not look at our feet as we work, but where these feet would/could take us... where we were going," said Williams, now the West Coast Manager of Sales. "He built the company and its team from scratch and practiced what he preached about staying committed," he continued.

According to Marketing Director Annie Ham, McCall Farms acquired Bruce's Yams in 2013 and that led to a boost in manufacturing and began capitalization on new crops of white and sweet

potatoes. "Much of the company's growth last year was perhaps not the physical move of the plants to Effingham, but the company had to increase its staff to accommodate the additional volume," she said, noting that the \$4 million invested in the new facility will result in the creation of dozens of new jobs and will more than double the company's overall manufacturing capacity.

Packaging and distribution of Bruce's Yams was done in 2014 and now the manufacturing will be the heart of the operation. "We added brand new, high-speed labeling lines last year," she told, "and ten more production lines have been built, resulting in the creation of more than 100 new jobs. Additionally, this new facility will allow McCall to increase its retail canning capacity by 100%, its foodservice canning capacity by 300% and its water, boiler and packaging capacity by 200%."

Adding Bruce's Yams to this mix has been a sure win, according to Williams. "In homes, restaurants and in food service in general, our contributions have added capacity in all areas," he shared, pointing out that although California and North Carolina had been holding the top two spots in growing sweet potatoes, the transition to grow them locally is a real plus to area farmers. "We want to and are going to support the local farmer and will grow with them when they grow; it will be symbiotic. Sixty percent of our sweet potatoes are now grown in South Carolina and after this transition is complete, we will be the

number one site for producing the raw product." To date, McCall Farms has grown its products on 2,000 acres of family farmland locally, with 18,000 acres contracted throughout South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida. These diverse sites render crops of mixed, collards, kale, mustard and turnip greens, cut cabbage, cut sweet potatoes, turnip roots, and yellow squash. The company also cans tomatoes, okra, corn, beans, peas, peaches, and peanuts among the some 40 products under Margaret Holmes, Glory Foods and Peanut Patch brand names, all sold throughout the southeast but growing nationally. There is an increasingly strong demand for and tons of end user growth in southern seasoned vegetables in New York, Los Angeles, Portland and Texas.

When asked what his dad would say about his taking the reins at this level and at this point, Williams said "he'd say we did great, but we missed something or some kind of detail. But because we are the breadbasket of the country, we will be busy seeking out any missing pieces. After all, that's what staying committed is all about: keeping the marriage happy and prosperous. And whatever questions any meal masterminds may have, McCall Farms wants to say 'Yes, we have that answer.'"

For more information on each of McCall Farms brands, you may visit their websites: www.margaretholmes.com, www.gloryfoods.com, www.peanutpatchboiledpeanuts.com or www.yamright.com.

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RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD AND TENANT LAW: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

Submitted by Charlie Blake



Attorney Charlie Blake

The law provides a strong framework to assist landlords and tenants in understanding their basic rights. An interested party in South Carolina can rely on the statutory guidance of the

South Carolina Residential Landlord Tenant Act. Also, Congress and certain federal agencies have adopted regulations to cover discrimination and health hazards, such as lead-based paint.

While there are a myriad of legal sources for landlords and tenants, a few basic concepts are very important in a healthy landlord-tenant relationship. An effective lease agreement is paramount. This lease agreement should memorialize important terms including the length of the contract, the payment amount, and the rights of the parties to terminate the contract. Also, a detailed inspection prior to the tenant moving into the property will lessen the likelihood of a dispute over damage to the property

and the responsibility for repairs.

Once the landlord allows the tenant to move into the property, both parties have certain rights and responsibilities. A tenant must keep the property clean and not damage or destroy the property. South Carolina law even requires the tenant to provide certain access to the landlord to inspect the premises. The tenant is also expected to adhere to the terms of the lease agreement including paying rent as agreed and complying with any enforceable rules and regulations promulgated by the landlord. Conversely, the landlord is equally bound by the terms of the lease agreement. The landlord is expected to allow for the peaceful enjoyment of the property by the tenant. Further, the landlord bears the burden of maintaining a habitable property including appropriate heating, air, electrical, gas and plumbing. A knowledgeable tenant in South Carolina can even withhold rent in certain circumstances where a landlord is noncompliant with his duties, so it is important for both parties to know their rights.

If the landlord and tenant are unable to maintain a healthy relationship, several options are available. Again, an effective

lease should dispose of many issues. The majority of the disputes center around the landlord's right to evict and competing claims to security deposits. A landlord should provide written notice of intent to terminate the rental agreement and itemize and present to the tenant any claims to the security deposit. Failure to follow these simple steps could subject a landlord to harsh penalties including payment of damages to the tenant.

The tenant must also follow certain steps at the termination of the landlord and tenant relationship. The tenant should give the landlord timely possession of the property. Also, any tenant that vacates the property prior the end of the lease or leaves the property in disrepair is subject to a claim for actual damages and attorney's fees by the landlord.

If additional help is required, the local Magistrate's office is generally a suitable resource to assist both parties. Also, attorneys can assist in litigation. For any additional information, please feel free to visit or call the Finklea Law Firm at 814 West Evans Street, Florence, South Carolina.



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BELL, HAWKINS ADDED TO MAKE LAKE CITY LEADERSHIP TEAM EVEN GREATER

by Mallory Brayboy



Shawn Bell

Shawn Bell, new city administrator in Lake City is turning plans into action and making things happen in the city. Hailing from Edwardsville, IL, a town just outside of St. Louis, MO, Bell knows a thing or two concerning city administration. He received his undergrad from the University of Missouri and Masters of Public Administration from Southern Illinois University. Prior to his move to Lake City Bell served as the Assistant City Manager in Abbeville,

SC. Having been here for about one year Bell feels that things are finally getting in order in Lake City. "In Abbeville they had a City Manager and an Assistant City Manager in place for several years. In Lake City the Mayor had been running the city for at least a year or so", says Bell. Getting the city running the way its supposed to was a top priority for Bell. "Now we can really start taking off and completing a lot of the projects that we need to do."

The state Penny Sales Tax has allowed the city to get its water and sewer infrastructure upgraded. A brand new public works pump station is underway, which is going hand in hand with the city's lake project scheduled to be completed by spring. The city also received \$850,000 in grant money from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA). The City of Lake City wants to ensure that its citizens have a role in choosing additions and improvement to their hometown. Part of the Penny Sales tax funds were allotted for upgrading the Blanding Street Park. "The city owns about 50 acres at that park and we want to see what other amenities they should add and how to upgrade the existing park", says Bell. A city meeting was held recently to see what citizens would like to see at this location. Options such as a dog park, gym, football field, and walking trails were discussed. Bell says a master plan is being created to put these ideas into action. "As funds allow we will start putting those things out there." Bell is proud to be a part of a city making a comeback. "The people here are really working together to make the city a better place. The community is really striving to be something better."



Lenessa E. Hawkins

Originally from Hartsville, SC Lenessa E. Hawkins has recently become a citizen of Lake City where she works as the town's Finance Director. Lenessa hopes to be an addition to the city and help in its revitalization. She holds a Bachelor's of Science in Financial Management earned at Clemson University along with a Master's obtained at Francis Marion University. Hawkins plans to implement some of her tried and true practices of the past in her new town.

She is implementing cost cutting by examining more strategic ways of how the city procures their items. Decreasing debt is also a goal she has for the city. "Instead of creating debt, we will save money and use it when we need it", says Hawkins. She is also an advocate for homeownership and moderate affordable housing. "I'd love to see that here. You can move a whole community onto a path where they can have transfer of wealth to their children."

Hawkins knows that it takes a great team to run a great city. She is working to make sure her staff is properly trained and empowered in their roles. This will enable them to bring more initiative to their positions and come up with solutions to issues. The Finance Director also believes cross training and written policies are necessary to improve order and cohesiveness and allow the city to reach its full potential.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT KEY TO ATTRACTING INDUSTRY

Submitted by NESAs Staff



Jeff McKay (right), the executive director of the North Eastern Strategic Alliance, introduces panelists (left to right) panelists Lewis Gossett, Elisabeth Kovacs and Brad Neese at a workforce development forum at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology on Tuesday, Sept. 22.

In modern manufacturing, finding employees capable of doing a job well is of the utmost importance. With that in mind, the North Eastern Strategic Alliance (NESAs) – a nine county regional economic development organization – hosted a consultant event at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology in late September. The event featured presentations from organizations such as the South Department of Commerce, the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance and the South Carolina Technical College System.

Throughout the NESAs region – spanning from Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion, Marlboro and Williamsburg counties – workforce development has been an integral part of an overarching

economic development strategy. South Carolina officials such as Lewis F. Gossett say that strategy is personified in the existence of the sprawling campus of the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology.

“This part of the world is doing a wonderful job,” Gossett said. “We’re standing in one of the best things you can have to attract industry to a region and that is a top-notch world-class technical college.” In creating an effective pool of candidates, region officials believe the curation of an exemplary workforce training program is one of the most important steps. Gossett said the existence of the Apprenticeship Carolina, ReadySC, the technical schools throughout the region and other workforce training implements make the northeast corner of South Carolina one of the best places in the state to train a workforce.

“Generally, this area has the ability to train anybody,” Gossett said. “We’ve just got to get them interested in the job. If you come to Florence Darlington Tech, you’re going to be trained as well as anybody in the state, if not the country. They’ve got state-of-the-art facilities that they have spent years working toward.” Though manufacturing is not what it once was – a laborious process built from long hours and meager pay – that perception still exists. NESAs Executive Director Jeff McKay said one of the keys to creating an effective and marketable workforce is to get students interested in manufacturing at a young age.”

“We’re not talking about at some place that’s not desirable and going to be using more back power than brain power,” McKay said. “Let the students know that there’s an opportunity in manufacturing.” NESAs primary objective is to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents of the region by creating additional jobs and capital investment within the existing industry base, recruiting new companies and expanding tourism-related development.



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AMERICAN RED CROSS HIRES GIFTS OFFICER



Nicole Echols

The American Red Cross, Palmetto SC Region, has named Nicole Echols as a major gifts officer for Eastern SC. She brings more than fourteen years of human services and community development experience to the Red Cross. “We are extremely pleased to have Nicole joining our team as she brings both experience and a passion for her community to the Red Cross,” said Nanci Conley, executive director for the American Red Cross of Eastern South Carolina. In her position, Echols will identify, engage, cultivate, solicit, and

steward current and prospective donors in expanding their financial support of the work of the American Red Cross. Prior to joining the Red Cross, Echols spent five years with Harvest Hope Food Bank, where she was responsible for developing and implementing programs for individuals, churches and businesses giving to the organization.

Echols is a member of the Florence Lions Club, Pee Dee Women’s Professional Network, and Women in Philanthropy. She serves on several local boards, including Florence First Steps, MINGLE of the Pee Dee, and the Carolinas Hospital Healthy Women Advisory Board. She earned a bachelor’s degree in social work and a master’s in rehabilitation counseling, both from South Carolina State University. In South Carolina, the American Red Cross touches one out of every four lives. For more information on Red Cross services and programs throughout South Carolina, visit www.RedCross.org/SC or call 843-662-8121.



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ARDIS IS NEW CEO AT SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Submitted by Mark Quinn



Rob Ardis

began work August 1. "After a comprehensive, nationwide search, the Board selected Rob from a pool of highly qualified candidates," said Don E. Coker, chairman of the board of trustees. "We look forward to helping him build on the success of the cooperative over its past 75 years."

Ardis comes to Santee Electric after serving 10 years as chief operating officer at Pee Dee Electric Cooperative in Darlington, South Carolina. A Georgetown County native, Ardis is a licensed professional engineer. He graduated summa cum laude from Francis Marion University with a bachelor's degree in Physics and Mathematics. Ardis also graduated summa

KINGSTREE -- Santee Electric Cooperative's board of trustees announces the hiring of Rob Ardis, of Florence, South Carolina, as the new president and CEO. Ardis replaced Santee Electric CEO Floyd L. Keels and

cum laude from The University of Tennessee with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering.

"My excitement about the job ahead is beyond words," Ardis said. "Returning to the area where I grew up, and the chance to lead Santee Electric is the opportunity of a lifetime."

Ardis assumes the top position at Santee Electric after Keels's retirement from the cooperative July 31 after 17 years of service.

"There is no finer person in our industry than Mr. Keels," said Ardis. "I have tremendous respect for him personally and professionally. I am honored and humbled to succeed him after his many years of distinguished service."

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association conducted the nationwide search to replace Keels after he notified the board of directors of his retirement effective July 31.

"With Rob's background and experience, the Board is sure he possesses the skills to navigate the challenges and opportunities the electric industry will face in the future," said Coker. "Under his leadership, Santee

Electric will continue working hard to provide our members with the most reliable power at the most affordable cost."

Santee Electric Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, serves more than 43,000 consumers in Clarendon, Florence, Georgetown and Williamsburg counties. The cooperative maintains more than 5,000 miles of power line covering the largest geographic service area of any electric cooperative in South Carolina.

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JESSICA COHEN NAMED DIRECTOR OF HARTSVILLE'S TOURISM & SPECIAL EVENTS

Submitted by Russell Cox, Public Information Officer



Jessica Cohen

Hartsville— Jessica Cohen has been named Director of Hartsville's Tourism and Special Events, the City of Hartsville announced today. Cohen, who has been serving as Darlington County Tourism's Director, will transition to the new position

beginning July 6.

Cohen will lead Hartsville's newly created Tourism Office, a project of the City of Hartsville and the Community Foundation for a Better Hartsville, which will locate in Hartsville City Hall and will serve as a resource for the area's events and recreational opportunities. Her focus areas will include sports tourism at local venues like the Byerly Park Recreation Complex, Coker College DeLoach Center and Darlington Raceway, as well as expanding and promoting the programming for Hartsville's historic Center Theater. She will also be responsible for coordinating events such as the Hartsville Christmas Parade and the Mayor's Christmas

Tree Lighting.

"Jessica will bring her experience with marketing, communications and working alongside leaders in the tourism industry to the Hartsville community at a time when it's growing by leaps and bounds," Hartsville City Manager Natalie Zeigler said. "We in the City of Hartsville and downtown development organization Main Street Hartsville are thrilled to begin working closely with her to put Hartsville's unique facilities and atmosphere on the map, and increase our community's visibility as a tourist destination."

Cohen is a native of North Charleston and a 2013 graduate of Coker College, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies. In addition to her time as Tourism Director for Darlington County Tourism, she has also served as the Communications Assistant for the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce.

"I'm extremely fortunate for the learning experience and the mentors I've gained through the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce," Cohen said. "I'm elated to begin the next chapter with the City of Hartsville, and can't wait to help Hartsville's tourism reach the next level."

Some of her first projects will include a Hartsville mobile app intended for tourists and residents alike, which she described as a virtual visitors guide providing information on attractions, accommodations, restaurants and events. Cohen will also develop a facility guidebook aimed at tournament directors and event planners which will detail all of Darlington County's venues and facilities for sports and events, as well as meeting spaces, accommodations and natural resources.

As Tourism and Special Events Director, Cohen will also lead Hartsville's Hospitality Council, serve on the Butler Heritage Foundation's board and serve as a liaison to the Alliance Serving Sports and Eco-Tourism and the South Carolina Sports Alliance.



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YESTERDAY A SEASONAL WORKER; TODAY THE ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER

by Anna Bowman



Marquita Nowlin

One of the most important things that Marquita Nowlin can teach someone is to take every opportunity for career advancement extremely seriously because you'll never know how it can impact your future.

As a result of her making the best of a temporary position, Nowlin, a once "seasonal worker," today is the Assistant General Manager at Residence Inn in Florence.

"Three years ago," Nowlin recalled, "I started my first hotel job ever, when I was hired as seasonal help in the housekeeping department at SpringHill Suites, and I gave it one hundred and ten percent every single day," she said. One of the most important things about working for hotels with Raines Hospitality, Inc., is the company's outstanding reputation to thoroughly train every member of their staff. "None of my past jobs could have prepared me for my current position," Nowlin stated, "I owe my success to the on-

the-job training and my wonderful upper management and co-workers."

As the assistant manager, Nowlin enjoys greeting the guests that have designated the Residence Inn as their home away from home. In fact, meeting the hotel guests is one of the things she loves most about her job. In order to ensure that each guest has a pleasant experience, Nowlin must communicate daily with each of the department supervisors; read and send a ton of emails; input numbers, and order supplies for the hotel. The 94 spacious suites have a variety of amenities for guests to enjoy. "Our hotel, which is just a 7-minute walk from the Florence Civic Center, offer rooms ranging from studios to two-bedroom suites which includes a fully equipped kitchen and a desk".

Nowlin, a graduate of West Florence High School currently pursuing a degree in business management, realizes that there are numerous hotels in Florence where people can stay, but she wants the Residence Inn to be their one and only choice when they make Florence their destination. "I realize that the decision to select a hotel is totally up to the guest, but the staff and management of Residence Inn

work extremely hard to ensure that each person will leave feeling more like family and not just a guest," she said.

Nowlin, who is a self-described "Southern Girl," loves being around her family and friends, and she's still humbled by the fact that she works for a company that never saw her as a "temporary" employee, but embraced her as an employee with outstanding potential to work with and to grow into her current managerial position with the company.

The Residence Inn by Marriott is located at 2660 Hospitality Boulevard, Florence. For additional information call 843-468-2800. Raines Hospitality operates Courtyard, SpringHill Suites, TownePlace Suites by Marriott and Hotel Florence.





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CVMSDC GRADUATES MBE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT 2015 CLASS

Submitted by CVMSDC Staff

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – In September, Carolinas-Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council and the University of Richmond’s Robins School of Business partnered to host the annual MBE Executive Management Program, an innovative leadership program designed exclusively for chief executive officers of certified minority businesses. The weeklong Minority Business Enterprises Executive Management



Graduates from CVMSDC's 2015 MBE Executive Management class took part in a week-long series of training for minority business professionals at the University of Richmond in September.

Program supports leadership training, business growth and development, client relations, and customer service enhancement for participants. The initiative was jointly founded and sponsored by three major Central Virginia-based corporations: Altria Group, Dominion Resources and MeadWestvaco. Premier sponsors for this year’s 2015 graduating class include Capital One, Delhaize and Denny’s. The training takes place at the business school on the university’s main campus located in Richmond, Virginia. Leslie Kelson, CVMSDC Director of MBE Development said, “The success of this executive management program

reinforces the reality that in order to succeed, minority businesses will need to adapt to a changing landscape and business environment. Innovative instruction provided through this joint venture presents additional opportunities to collectively strengthen minority businesses and to further support economic development in Virginia and the Carolinas.”

The following participants graduated in the 2015 class:

- Sponsored by Altria: Jeff Conley, City of Richmond; Evette Darden, Century Products; Dease Moore, 4Core Technology Group Inc.; Joeffrey Trimmingham, Philip Reese, LLC
- Sponsored by Capital One: Ashley Maru, Aquent; Felipe Wright, eWaste Tech Systems, LLC
- Sponsored by CVMSDC: Cebrina Harley, Thomas Enterprises of Greensboro; Carolyn Smart, Smart Concepts
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- Sponsored by University of Richmond: Kandi Edmonds, Quality Moving and Storage
- Sponsored by West Rock: Duane Cook, DD Consulting; Calvin Yarborough, Managed Care Consultants of VA.

The Carolinas-Virginia MSDC is a non-profit corporation chartered to enhance business opportunities for minority-owned companies by providing support through developing mutually beneficial networking opportunities with corporate members and promoting minority business development. For more information, visit www.cvmsdc.org

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LOCAL CHAMBER AWARDED BY STATE FOR DIVERSITY

Submitted by Patricia Burkett, Director of Marketing & Membership Relations
Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce



Award Finalist (Photo Courtesy: SC Chamber of Commerce)

The Florence Chamber was very honored to be recognized on Thursday, September 10th, during the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce's Palmetto Vision Awards Gala. The Chamber, represented by Community & Minority Enterprise Director Les Echols, was a finalist in the Excellence in Workplace Diversity Awards.

We were humbled to get the nomination in the same category as other great business leaders including Google and Starbucks. The Excellence in Workplace Diversity award recognizes companies for their significant contributions to the advancement of South Carolina through diversity initiatives and inclusion efforts. Criteria considered in selecting the winners included diversity initiatives, effectiveness, and applicability.

To read more about the event and for a complete list of winners, visit: <http://www.schamber.net/.../south-carolina-chamber-commerce-...>



Les Echols (Florence Chamber Community & Minority Enterprise Director)

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ROCHE CAROLINA STAFF HELPING TO DIVERSIFY WORKSITE AND COMMUNITY

by Mallory Brayboy



Leslie Reali, Terrence Hamilton & Patricia Mori

Roche Carolina has recently undertaken new initiatives to drive diversity and inclusion throughout their organization. Following the footsteps of Genentech, the headquarters for Roche's commercial operations in the U.S. located in San Francisco, Roche Carolina has implemented diversity groups known as Diversity Network Associations (DNA) groups into their plan. The company aimed at forming at least two groups in 2015, but has already exceeded that number with three groups. Each DNA group welcomes employees of all genders and backgrounds to learn more about different individuals and support their causes.

Patricia Mori is the Manager of Manufacturing Quality Assurance (MQA) and Batch Record Review Group and heads the Roche Carolina Women's Professional Group. The group is in the works of being approved and should take off this month. The goal of this group is to leverage female talent throughout the organization by sponsoring, coaching and helping women to reach new

levels and become future leaders. Having been with the company for a dedicated 40 years Mori knows the difficulties women face at times. Mori has held several positions within the company including being the first female manufacturing supervisor at Roche. She cites supervising 25 men as the most challenging task she's done. The Women's Professional Group will be instrumental in making sure the male population of the organization is encouraged to join the group so that they can understand the concerns that women face as leaders and somehow form a cohesiveness to work together. The group also has plans to reach out to future women leaders in college and high school and provide mentoring.

Leslie Reali has been with Roche Carolina for two years and serves as the Logistics Supervisor. She is a military veteran, having served in the Army and SC National Guard, and leads the Roche Carolina Veteran's Diversity Team. When the company reached out to its employees regarding the diversity groups Reali stepped right in and offered to lead a group. She was motivated by a passion to help veterans gain employment and to bring recognition to the veterans on site. The mission of Roche Carolina Veteran's Diversity Team is to eliminate the stigmas and stereotypes associated with veterans. "We want to prove that you don't have to necessarily hire veterans for their position served in the military. They are trainable and adaptable", says Reali. The group will also focus on conquering issues faced by Veterans entering back into the civilian world.

Reali is planning for the group to be involved in Veteran's Day activities, Wreaths across America which places wreaths on the gravesites of veterans during the Christmas holiday, and Operation Palmetto Employment, a program created by the state of SC along with the National Guard to help employers become "employers of choice" for veterans. Her goal

is to partner with them and make Roche an "employer of choice" for veterans within the state of SC.

Terrence Hamilton is an MQA Specialist for the site. He has been with the company for nine years and leads the site's first ever DNA group, AAIM. The group which recognizes African Americans in Medicine officially began in April of this year. As the first diversity group onsite Hamilton learned a lot from the Genentech operations pertaining to chartering the DNA groups, the benefits of diversity, how to make the groups effective and how they benefit the company. He believes the DNA Groups will help change the mindsets about individuals of different genders and backgrounds. His plans for the group include forums to learn the career paths that got others into their current positions and achieve equal employment. "Hiring is one area that we can all work together on to accomplish this" said Hamilton, he also hopes to improve the literacy rate for African Americans in Florence County. The group has several creative ideas for this including partnering with local barbers and providing free haircuts to young boys in return for reading a book.

Hamilton credits former site head Jami DeBrango-Palumbo for diversifying leadership roles onsite and pushing the formation of DNA groups. "There was not a diverse leadership team before she came along. She brought the west coast concept of free thinking with her", he said. He also notes that the new site head Phil Adamson has also embraced the DNA groups and has nominated himself as the AAIM sponsor.



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A member of the Roche Group, Roche Carolina Inc. (RCI) is a state-of-the-art pharmaceutical manufacturing facility. With capabilities in small and large scale manufacturing, our highly flexible operations allow us to adapt quickly to new production needs. Our highly educated and well-trained workforce diligently ensures our products are of the highest quality, allowing patients around the world to lead healthier lives with a higher quality of living.

Roche Carolina's workforce is comprised of approximately 275 very diverse, well-educated employees from many countries and cultures. Our employees work collaboratively in an environment that is stimulating and rewarding, where imagination, creativity and individual initiative are encouraged. Roche Carolina also encourages and supports the involvement of our employees in our communities. Through organizations like the United Way, the American Cancer Society, Rebuilding Together and the American Heart Association, our employees are able to have a positive impact on those with needs right here in our community.

MORNING BY MORNING NEW BLESSINGS SHE SEES

Submitted by Ella Frazier, Owner



Ella Frazier

Ella Frazier says every day is a constant reminder of how blessed she is. From the moment she was put on the greyhound bus by her mom some 40 or more years ago northbound to New York City, she knew that her life would forever change. However, to what extent was far from her imagination. Overcoming adversity in her life was on top of her list. Living in New York for more than thirty six years and working for Verizon, formerly known as New York telephone company prepared her for what was to come after returning home twelve years ago. She found that having an education does not always promise that a job will be available so she embarked on what she would call her second career.

After returning home and submitting more than twenty resumes over a period of three years for jobs that required a bachelor's degree, she found that having a masters in the

field would require who you knew, and not necessary what you knew, so she made a one hundred degree turn around and decided to do what she loved more, so she pursued her second love of fashion, but God had another task, for her and her husband David to complete before the fashion idea would take root. He sent a man whose name was David, the same as my husband, to take us to a section of Florence, a neighborhood that we had no idea it existed since neither of us grew up in Florence. He asked if we're looking for a house and if so I have one to show you. So we opened the first African American bed and breakfast in SC; (Ambrias Garden Manor) then my first desire, a boutique would be imminent.

They did as God commanded and in 2009, Ella's boutique was established on Irby Street where she stayed for two years and ultimately moved in 2011 to the downtown area of Florence some two or more years before the revitalization of downtown began. (she is also a new member of the Florence Downtown Development Corporation Board).

Ella's boutique is now in its sixth year and has become an icon in the downtown area for women in the Pee Dee, but her customer spends time and money across state lines as far as Virginia, New York, Connecticut and other states. Her customers are women who


love great quality, fashion and elegance. The customers she serves desire and demand something different and knows it can become reality because she will order from a variety of boutique catalogs and receive their items within a few days. A great number of customers travel up to two hours or longer from neighboring cities to purchase that one of a kind outfit for a special occasion or the white outfit for a church program that is needed in a hurry. Fifty percent or more of my Ella's Boutique customers are repeat customers and fifty percent or more are recommended by word of mouth.

Ella enjoys being in the downtown area and has been in the forefront of a change in downtown for years waiting for something to happen and knows that there is many good things waiting to be a part of something great. In this ever changing economy, Ella's Boutique realizes that she has to be really inventive, so at Ella's the word truly resonates with her customers because her boutique has been transformed into a one-stop emporium, offering all accessories needed for the well-dressed woman. At Ella's, there is also a lay-away plan because all women want to look beautiful and if a shopper's budget does not enable them to purchase it today, Ella's lay-away plan also make it possible to own it.

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THE CENTER TAKING CARE OF OCCUPANTS' BUSINESS

Submitted by Brianna Zhang, Director of the North Dargan Innovation Center



Brianna D. Zhang

In 2014, the City of Florence and the Florence Downtown Development Corporation launched an initiative to foster the entrepreneurial spirit in downtown Florence through the creation of the North Dargan Street Innovation Center (“the

Center”). The development of entrepreneurship and small business is critical to the viability and vibrancy of the downtown, as well as the City and region. The purpose of the Center is to focus on supporting business ventures, providing small business training opportunities, and establishing strong strategic alliances among the business, education, and community.

The Center is located at 150 North Dargan Street. The building boasts 11,000 square feet of space, which includes 10 defined incubator office spaces of various sizes rented at a lower market rate, a conference room, shared office space for non-incubator clients, and printing, copying, and mailing center. A key strategic alliance for the Center is the partnership with the FMU Kelley Center for Enterprise and Innovation for small business development assistance. An advisory committee composed of entrepreneurs, as well as

community and business leaders was formed to provide a level of governance and strategic planning for the Center.

The City of Florence, City Council, and the Florence Downtown Development Corporation Board are major supporters of the Center. The Center offers individuals who may not have the necessary tools required to start and sustain a new business the opportunity to achieve success through access to established resources and experience. Currently, there are six incubator clients with diverse backgrounds that represent different industries.

While the Center strives to create an energized model of mentoring and resources, clients often find needed support by collaborating on projects with fellow incubator clients and by hiring another incubator client to provide services for their business. The vast experience among current incubator clients also creates a mentoring atmosphere. The exchange of ideas and advice among clients is a fundamental part of the incubator culture.

To become an incubator client a completed application, comprehensive business plan, and interviews are all required. Once accepted into the incubator, all clients must provide and meet milestones as well as comply with all requirements and regulations of an operating business. Each

client has access to small business development services from the FMU Kelley Center for Enterprise and Innovation to assist with brainstorming, problem solving, and clarity.

The shared office space, also known as co-work space, is available for individuals who want a place to work outside their home and like the open work environment. The process for renting co-work space is different from the incubator but served as a platform for a business to launch through the incubator, provided that the business can meet all of the requirements.

The vision to create an entrepreneurial culture in downtown Florence developed from the desire of the City of Florence and the Florence Downtown Development Corporation to promote business opportunities downtown. The North Dargan Innovation Center has been the catalyst to showcase and provide support to entrepreneurs. It is the hope of all involved that an entrepreneurial spirit will continue to thrive in downtown Florence and that spirit will continue to spread through the city and region.



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YOU ARE A HISTORY MAKER

Submitted by Robin L. Lewis



Robin Lewis

The voices of culture and tradition want to define your life and make you dependent on their approval and acceptance. These voices say that your identity is linked to your

position, income level, skin color, or circle of friends. These voices want to fill your mind with fear, doubt, and insignificance. They want to define and paint a picture of your life that's less than who God says you are. This is small scale living.

The truth is you are a masterpiece.

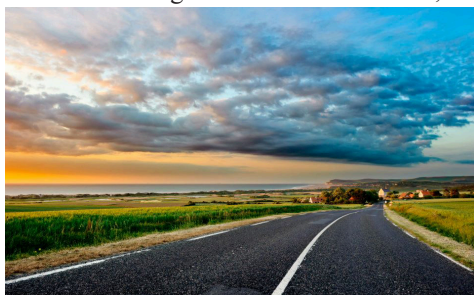
A few years ago, I took classes in an art gallery and learned that a Master Artist is one who has learned all the rules of shape and color, of texture, brush strokes, and canvas, and then breaks those rules in such a way that creates something new, one-of-a-kind, a can't-be-duplicated work of art, a masterpiece.

Ephesians 2:10 (AMP) says, "We are God's own masterpiece, recreated in Christ Jesus with a new start so that we may do all the good works for which we were created, taking the paths which He prepared for us ahead of time, so that we can walk in them and live the good life God thought out, prearranged, and made ready for us to live."

You are a can't-be-duplicated, highly valued creation by God who rightly defines you. He created you to be a person who connects with Him for vision, a man or woman with a voice that is here to create positive change and make a difference for the betterment of mankind. God chose the timing of your birth to be in this generation. He chose the talents, spiritual gifts, and

dreams that would be developed for the purpose of your life. And He chose your gender. Whether you are a man or a woman, you have been made in God's image and have been created to be a person of power, love, and great influence.

Like an inspiring work of art, you are here to lead others into their greatness. As you grow into a person of authenticity, you experience freedom to move in your strengths, giftedness, and passion because your authentic self will always display your uniqueness. A false self will only display a clouded, partial version of who you are to be. You are designed to be an overcomer, not



a copy. You are created to be a problem solver, not one who just accepts things as they are. You are fashioned to be a one-of-a-kind, greatly valued individual with a purpose.

Our problem? We don't believe it. More people are held back by self-limiting beliefs than by any other barrier. We will always live out what we really believe is true or possible for us. It's time to let the real you emerge, the beautiful parts, and the places where you are strong. For this to happen, you must be intentional about your personal growth. There are parts of you that need to be healed and strengthened. When you choose to trust and receive, you become your truest self, enabled by God to fully live with eternal significance.

Recently, America watched as the Confederate Flag was removed from the

statehouse grounds in Columbia, SC. The news reporter kept repeating, "You are seeing history being made." Events of historical significance are distinguished and memorable, but do you think of the importance of your own life in creating history? With your life, you are writing history! Your life has an impact on others around you and on the generations yet to be born. Don't let the authentic you be painted over or muted by the brush strokes of the world that seek to diminish your beauty and purpose. We are all history makers, for better or for worse, and God will help you become all He originally intended you to be - a leader, a history maker, and a person with confidence and joy. No more boxed in, insignificant living. With authenticity, learn to lead like the unique, significant history maker you are.

You're invited to email Robin L. Lewis at robinlewiswords@gmail.com about Spiritual Life Coaching or to book her to speak. Visit her website to subscribe to her inspiration blog at www.sozolifeleaders.com.

Robin Lewis is a professional speaker, writer, and certified spiritual life coach whose words bring truth, inspiration, and growth. Framed in encouragement, her teaching helps women and men see more of their own self-worth and be more empowered to live the amazing life created especially for them.

With many years experience, Robin has worked with organizations like the United Way, Pee Dee Realtors Association, Lighthouse Ministries, the Gould Business Incubator, GoFlo Radio, and other organizations and local churches. You can find her articles in She Magazine, The Morning News, and on her website at sozolifeleaders.com.

Robin is married to Jeff Lewis and they reside in Hemingway, SC. For more on Spiritual Life Coaching or to book Robin to speak, please email her at robinlewiswords@gmail.com.



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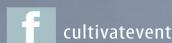
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SIMULATION TECHNOLOGY IS A BOOST FOR HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS

Submitted by Hunter Thomas, Public Relations/Marketing Specialist



Florence-Darlington Technical College's (FDTC) Health Sciences Campus in downtown Florence offers the cutting edge in health care education thanks to its recently installed simulation suites.

The Better Occupational Outcomes with Simulation Training (BOOST) offices are located on the second floor of the Health Sciences Campus. The two rooms appear to be actual hospital rooms with manikins lying in the bed. In fact, if it's your first time on the campus, you may think those are real people being examined by students. However, it's a simulation suite that offers students a real-life atmosphere before graduating and being placed in front of a state examiner.

The simulation suites were made possible through a \$3.5 million federal grant, and the manikins and Laerdal Learning Application (LLEAP) software were purchased from medical equipment manufacturer, Laerdal. The entire setup on campus was a collaborative effort with Healthcare Simulation of South Carolina (HCSSC) that's based out of the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston.

"We worked with an organization that helped us put in something that has been proven to be effective over time at MUSC," said Chris Hutchinson, simulation specialist. "Their instructors and their faculty run their students through labs, and we're doing the very same thing."

Once inside the simulation suite, students are graded on every move they make by an instructor stationed in a control room that has a one-way glass view. From the control room, an instructor has an array of options and scenarios already

programmed into the system, or they can sit back and allow the actual simulation program to take control and keep the students guessing on what will happen next to their "patient." Each of the sessions are recorded via remotely operated video cameras and archived to be reviewed by instructors and students. Students may also choose to incorporate these videos into digital résumés they give to prospective employers.

The scenarios mimic reality. Students may think that they're treating an asthma attack, but then the symptoms evolve into a heart attack. If the "patient's" pulse, blood pressure or CO2 saturation raises or lowers, students must quickly bolt into action or their "patient" will flat line and die. There are also prerecorded responses from the manikin patient if the student doesn't react quickly enough. Some classes even have another student pose as an angry family member, and the students being graded must contain the situation while also keeping their "patient" alive.

"The state exam requires them to be tested on 22 different skills, and we have skill scenarios loaded in the software that are pre-programmed for each one of those 22 skills," Hutchinson said.

Each session is recorded, and throughout the semester, students will go through at least 15 simulations. This process enables students to perform better when they get to clinicals.

Next to the simulation suites is a debriefing room where potential employers can watch the students in action and decide if they want to hire them or not. The simulations can even be simulcast in another room for employers to view.

This past semester, FDTC students in the BOOST program who used the simulation suites had a 100% job offer rate at competitive salaries.

"The debriefing room works very well when we bring McLeod and Carolinas Hospital personnel and some of the other healthcare providers in here," Hutchinson said. "We bring them in here and let them watch our students in action, and many of them are ready to skip to the second level of their interviewing with these students after they've seen them."

As successful as the implementation

of the simulation suites has been so far, the current setup is only phase one. Beginning this summer and into the fall semester, phase two will start to take shape. Students will be able to practice their skills by using a laptop with the LLEAP software before setting foot inside the actual simulation suites. They will also be able to practice with each other instead of the manikins. This process will enable students to focus more on executing their tasks when it comes time to be graded.

"While all of this technology is great, it is still about using these tools to teach technical proficiency as well as soft skills," said Lee Daugherty, BOOST program director. "Before making job offers, employers want to observe the interaction between the student and the manikins."

Moving towards the future, the idea is to integrate all of this new, innovative technology into all nursing curricula. Currently, only two-year nursing assistants and nurses in the two-year Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN) program have access to the simulation suites.

"The plan is that we will begin to make this available to the rest of the full nursing career curriculum," Hutchinson said. "We'll get the other nursing instructors in here, get them trained, and get them comfortable bringing their students into the lab and running through more scenarios with them."

For more information on FDTC's Health Sciences Campus, please visit www.fdtc.edu. Keep up with the BOOST program at the college by liking (<https://www.facebook.com/FDTCBOOST>) on Facebook and by following the program on Twitter, @FDTCBOOST.



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FSD1 IB RECIPIENTS HEAD TO COLLEGE WITH \$2.4 MILLION IN SCHOLARSHIPS

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



Photo: (Beginning from the bottom, first row: Victoria Nwankudu, Hannah Gandy, Alexis Harris, Ramsha Shams, Olivia Ouyang; Second Row: Jenna Goodman, Jennalee Moore, Dominic Guzman, Amanda Stevenson, Harriotte Davis; Third Row: Robert LaFrance, Marvin Dias, Anja Derry, Taylor Rowson; Fourth Row: Paul Bryant, Mason Park, Rashad Ingram, Bryce Jensen; Not pictured: Amanda Anyim, Jo Bayliss Baslot, Lindsey Buie, Hixon Copp, Maggie Letki, Jonah Kolsrud and Robert Narvaez.

Twenty-five students in the International Baccalaureate Program in the Wilson High School Class of 2015 received their International Baccalaureate (IB) diplomas. The 2015 IB senior class received scholarship offerings totaling over \$2.4 million dollars for the next four years.

An International Baccalaureate Diploma is awarded to students who complete a rigorous course of study by taking six courses in a minimum of five different subject groups. In addition to taking the six exams, these students also complete a Theory of Knowledge course, an extended essay, which is an independently

researched 4000-word paper, and 150 hours of community service. According to IB Program Coordinator Patty Evans, the percentage of diploma candidates receiving a diploma for the Class of 2015 was 68%. The minimum number of points needed to get an IB Diploma is 24, and the average score of Wilson High School students who received a diploma was 29. The highest number of points earned by a Wilson candidate was 36.

Evans further explained that the exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 7. Four or above is considered a passing grade. The average score on an exam was 4.45. These students exceeded the world average in English Literature, History of the Americas, Information Technology in a Global Standard Level, and Visual Arts B Standard Level. Students who score a 4 or higher on a higher level IB exam are eligible to receive college credit at most SC colleges and universities. All of the 37 students who participated in the diploma program passed at least one higher level exam and will be eligible to receive college credit.

Said Evans, "Because of the students' scores on the IB exams, most of them will exempt from a semester to a year of university work. The students are meeting curriculum standards that are studied by students around the world, and they are well prepared for study at any major university," she added.

Students receiving an IB diploma and the college/university they will attend this fall include: Amanda Anyim, College of Charleston Honors College; Jo Bayliss Baslot, University of South Carolina; Paul Bryant, Furman University; Lindsey Buie, Francis Marion University; Hixon Copp, Wofford College; Harriotte Davis; Clemson University; Anja Derry, University of South Carolina; Marvin Dias, University of South Carolina Honors College; Hannah Gandy, University of South Carolina; Jenna Goodman, College of Charleston; Dominic Guzman, College of Charleston; Alexis Harris, Clemson University; Rashad Ingram, Clemson University; Bryce Jensen, University of South Carolina; Jonah Kolsrud, University of South Carolina; Robert LaFrance, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts; Maggie Letki, University of South Carolina; Jennalee Moore, Winthrop University; Robert Narvaez University of New Mexico; Victoria Nwankudu, Wofford College; Mason Park, University of South Carolina; Taylor Rowson, University of South Carolina; Ramsha Shams, College of Charleston; Amanda Stevenson, Erskine College.

For more information about the International Baccalaureate Program in Florence One call Patty Evans at 673-1188 (pevans@fsd1.org) or Christy Bishop at 664-8162 or cbishop@fsd1.org.

NEW JOURNEY IS TO TEACH LIVING AND WORKING WELL

Submitted by Dr. Dan Strickland



Dr. Dan Strickland,
Superintendent

One of the nice things about education is we begin a new journey every year. For the last four years we have been on a journey of consolidation. The journey was filled with character building moments but we have arrived as a solid and unified district. This year we will take our journey to the next level with a new start, new enthusiasm, and new expectations. Marion County School District begins the year with a new, strategically developed direction, an optimal goal and reason for our existence. Our direction is to prepare all students to live and work effectively, responsibly, and productively within our society. Pair this

direction with our strategically developed purpose; to prepare and inspire students to be productive citizens in a changing and global society, and you have a very clear and focused vision and mission. We now have a district wide litmus test, so to speak, for all our decision making this year. As we go forth and face choices that will affect our students, we will need to test our choices to be sure they are aligned with our new direction and purpose.

Our strategic planning process also provided us with a chance to examine and update our basic beliefs. Beliefs are defined as a set of principles that one uses to determine their personal concept of self. It is the basis of making up just who we are and how we interact with the world around us. The Marion County School District believes: • All students can become projective members of society. • Education is a partnership among students, families, schools and community. • Our

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

Our district priorities this year will be: • Making student driven decisions. This priority keeps our focus on what is most important and it maintains the same focus we have in our direction and purpose statements. • Cultivating a positive climate. It's no secret that we all find that extra degree of effort when we are happy and feeling fulfilled in our environment. This is true for both students and staff. We understand that sustained happiness comes from liking what you are doing, feeling good about your job and the positive feeling that happens from within when you are able to give back to your own world. District and school leadership will be working together to create that atmosphere throughout our system. Promoting the Profile of the SC Graduate. Two state organizations, TransformSC and the SC Association of School Administrators Superintendent's Roundtable established a profile of the South Carolina Graduate that was approved by the SC Chamber of Commerce. This collaborative definition of the skills (both soft and hard) needed by our high school graduates gives our school district a unified picture of what our graduates need when they leave our system. Again, this statewide initiative fits with our direction and purpose. Building capacity. Our business is education and it doesn't stop with our students. We are committed to work with our present staff to continuously improve their skills as teacher leaders.

Our professional development for all teachers and staff is designed to improve the skills needed for their position and capitalize on their strengths.



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✓ New Mechatronics Class for Careers & Technology Center

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TEAL NATION DELIVERS YET AGAIN

by Alicia C. Phillip



Domonic Prince, Student at Coastal Carolina University –

Domonic Prince, a senior at Coastal Carolina University (CCU), chose to attend the university for several reasons. He was enamored by its coastal location near Myrtle Beach, the array of academic programs, the school size, and the smaller class sizes that would allow for more student interaction. In addition, CCU offers various student clubs, of which Prince is a member of seven: the Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity, Leadership Challenge, Coastal Inspirational Ambassadors, Sigma Alpha Pi national leadership

society, Inspirational Movement, African American Initiative for Males (AAIM), and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) clubs. Prince attributes the development of his communication, organization and public speaking skills to his participation in these clubs. Further, Prince regularly performs in theater shows and productions.

To add to that already hectic schedule, Prince also works as a student assistant in the Office of Multicultural Student Services, a position which affords him a great opportunity to observe the diversity at CCU. Prince describes the diversity of the student body in these words: “I would say that Coastal has a very diverse student body. We are diverse in so many ways: age, race, culture, even geography. One of the benefits of student diversity here at the University is that we are exposed to individuals who some

of us thought we never would have met. We befriend them and have lifelong connections.”

Prince’s involvement in various activities at CCU also enables him to make connections with and impact younger people considering a college education. He warmly describes his most memorable, positive experience as the moment when a young man approached him at Walmart and told him that he had inspired him to go to college. He was among a group of teenagers that Prince spoke to for the Upward Bound Program in the summer of 2014. That young man has now started his freshman year of college and is majoring in business management.

Upon graduation from CCU, Prince plans to obtain a master’s degree in international business. Subsequently, he will pursue a career as a global expansion coordinator, in which he will oversee and manage projects and trades for global companies.

Prince touts CCU as a great choice for university-level education. According to Prince: “Coastal Carolina University has an atmosphere that is unlike any other campus. Here at Coastal there is a community/home feeling. It’s amazing when you can walk around campus as a student and you can hear your professors, the Dean of Students, or even the Vice-President of Student Affairs calling your name and wildly waving and speaking from the other side of Prince Lawn. Here at Coastal you know that the faculty members care; you’re not just another number or some random student. Here they take the time to get to know you. There is no place like Teal Nation.”



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LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Submitted by *Andreka Johnson, Marketing & Communications Coordinator*



Andreka Johnson

It's no secret that children learn in a variety of different capacities. While one child may learn a concept through the written word, another may need a tactile experience, and yet another a combination of both. There's also no law that confines education or learning to the four walls of a classroom. With these things in mind, what's a parent to do if you want to enhance your child's learning experience? The answer's quite

simple; take measures to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Take advantage of teachable moments. A child can learn addition and subtraction just as easily in a classroom as he or she can while shopping with parents. So the next time a child looks up at you inquisitively and asks, "why this, or why that," be open to answering their question. Now take note, you won't always know the answer to the question, but in those instances the pursuit for an answer becomes a learning experience for you both.

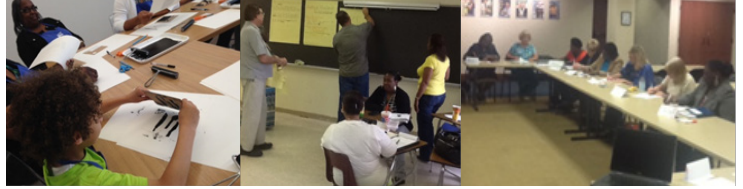
Pursue educational enrichment. Seeking avenues for educational enrichment does not mean your child has to be performing poorly in school. What it does mean is that you are concerned about his or her academic development and desire experiences to build a strong educational foundation. Inquire about any afterschool, enrichment programs, or clubs at your child's school. ScienceSouth offers afterschool programming in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to several schools in the area. Ask the afterschool coordinator at your child's school about what can be done to add ScienceSouth to the programming roster.

Explore. Taking learning outside the classroom necessitates some form of exploration. Become a tourist in your own city. There's a wealth of history and educational opportunities within our cities that we often overlook as residents. I challenge you to visit your library, museum, or science center to learn more about the city, nation, and world you call home. ScienceSouth provides a variety of programming geared to learners of all ages. Visit www.sciencesouth.org to find out about upcoming programming.

As the examples above illustrate, the world around us can be a life-long classroom. See every moment as a chance to learn something new, and you'll have a child that is ever the more curious and eager to learn.



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FLORENCE/PEE DEE AREA KICKS OFF UNCF FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

Submitted by Tiffany Andrews, Publicity/Media UNCF



A diverse group of business, community and political leaders, as well as dedicated individuals who support the mission of UNCF, will join together at the Florence Civic Center for UNCF's Annual Florence/Pee Dee Area gala on December 4, 2015. City of Florence Mayor Stephen J. Wukela is the Honorary Chair and he is encouraging everyone to join him in wearing a mask and supporting the exciting UNCF Mayor's Masked Ball.

Notable figures from throughout the Florence/Pee Dee area will help support UNCF's mission to invest in the lives of our youth and ensure a substantial return on the investment in the form of a better future for students and our country. Through donor investments, more than 8,000 young people in the great state of South Carolina are able to attend college through UNCF scholarships each year.

The 2015-16 UNCF Campaign will run from September 2015 through March 31, 2016, with 90 percent of all funds from the Campaign staying in the state. The overall South Carolina fundraising goal is \$500,000 with the Florence/Pee Dee Area being challenged with raising a \$150,000 investment.

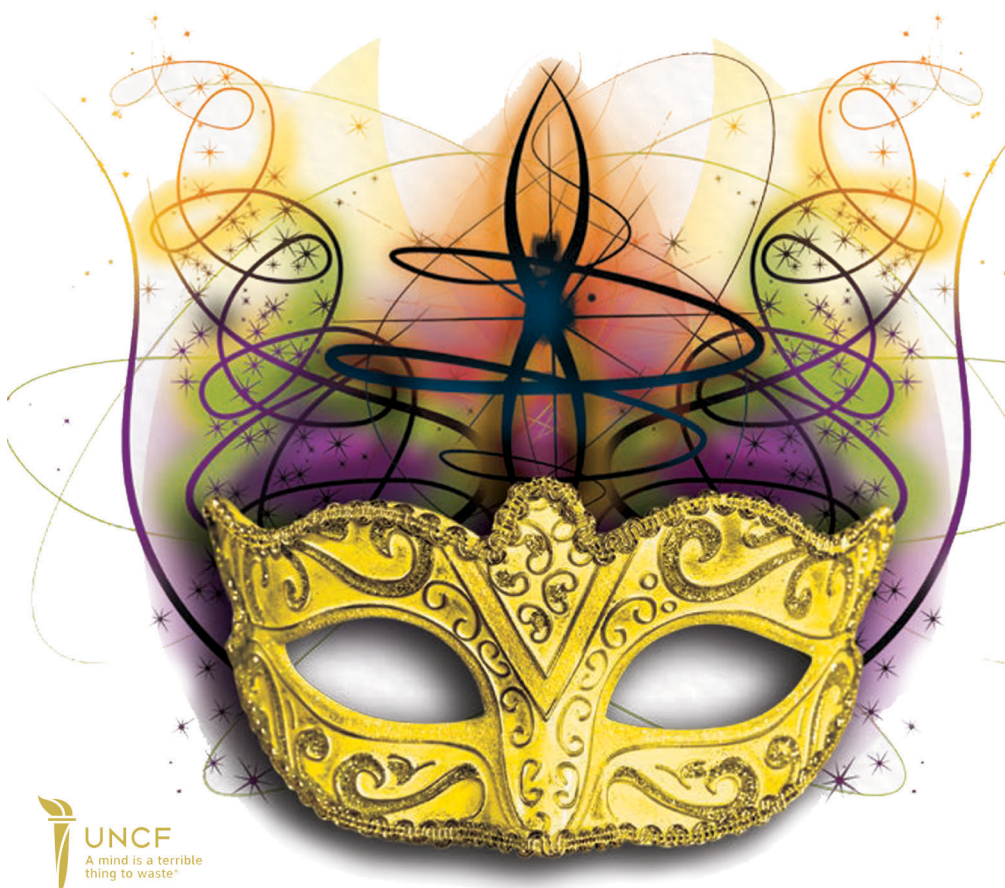
The UNCF Florence/Pee Dee Area Leadership Council, chaired by Mrs. Charlene G. Lowery, includes corporate, faith-based and community leaders, as well as county chairs from Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter and Williamsburg counties. The Florence/Pee Dee Area UNCF Leadership Council and

county chairs are charged with raising monies from businesses, faith-based organizations, community organizations and individuals.

Throughout the next six months, there is a great likelihood that the general public will be asked to invest in the lives of the young people that UNCF serves, and we encourage you to say "YES!" The return on investment will be a better future for not only the young person that your money helps, but for our state and nation, as a whole.

Nationally, UNCF is the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. To serve youth, the community and the nation, UNCF supports students' education and development through scholarships and other programs, strengthens its 37 member colleges and universities, and advocates for the importance of minority education. UNCF institutions and other historically black colleges and universities are highly effective, awarding 21 percent of African American baccalaureate degrees. UNCF does not stop there! UNCF administers more than 400 programs, including scholarship, internship and fellowship, mentoring, summer enrichment, and curriculum and faculty development programs, and supports more than 60,000 students at more than 900 colleges and universities across the country. Learn more at www.UNCF.org.

For information on how you may support UNCF and/or attend the Florence/Pee Dee Area Mayor's Masked Ball, call 843-662-4164.



UNCF MAYOR'S MASKED BALL

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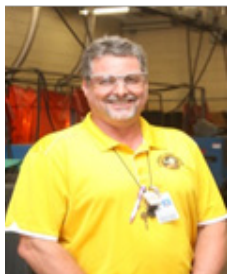
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Mr. Alphonso Bradley, Director

STUDENTS AND WORKFORCE BENEFIT FROM ECONOMIC REBOUND

by Les Echols



Mr. James Pratt
Welding Instructor

With the economy and job market recovering and the well documented lack of skilled welders in the U.S., the timing is perfect for an efficient welding education program. These factors help to once again put The Florence Career Center in the forefront of career education for youth.

The Florence Career Center has a welding program that is offered to students in grades 10 – 12 from Wilson, West Florence and South Florence High Schools, respectively. Students from Timmonsville high School in Florence School District Four may also enroll in the Welding Program at the Florence Career Center if space is available. “Welding Instructor James Pratt has been instrumental in the success of the program; I gained a lot of knowledge in the program and I am very confident”, said Richard Thomas, a graduate of the program. Richard secured a position with Honda upon graduation, and is very confident because of the training he received in the program.

Although he is obviously a big part of the program’s success the always modest, Mr. Pratt deferred from himself to talk about the success of the program. “This program is a great opportunity for students to get 13 credit hours and enter college”, said Mr. Pratt. The program is not only practical, but also affordable because of South Carolina Lottery funds students are



Richard Thomas



Mr. Pratt and Dawson Knight

eligible to receive in this dual enrollment program. Students enrolled in the Welding program may earn dual credit at Florence-Darlington Technical College, along with earning credits toward earning their high school diploma. Upon completing the Dual Credit Welding program at FCC student go straight into their second semester at FDTC.

The Welding program is designed to prepare students to perform beyond entry level skills. Students receive a firm foundation in math, writing and comprehension skills, as well as safety, Gas metal Arc Welding, Oxy/fuel cutting and welding, shielded metal arc welding, construction math, welding testing and print reading. The students receive 540hrs of training, and, according to Mr. Pratt, “99% of students that complete the program either go on to FDTC, military service, or relevant employment”.



Mr. Pratt and Dawson Knight



Welding Rodeo team and winning sculpture.

GSSM HIRES NEW STAFF, ONE OF THEM AN ALUM

Submitted by Lauren Shirley, PR & Marketing Coordinator

COLUMBIA, SC - The South Carolina Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM) Foundation is excited to welcome Mary-Kate Ward and Lauren Shirley to the team.

Mary-Kate Ward

Ward joins the Foundation as a Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator, and Shirley joins as the Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator.

“Mary-Kate and Lauren are excellent additions to our dynamic team,” said Kim Bowman, CEO, GSSM Foundation and EVP Strategic Direction, GSSM. “I’m confident they will bring an abundance of energy and creativity to their respective roles in addition to talent and commitment.”



Mary-Kate Ward

Ward graduated from GSSM in 2009. She is originally from Summerville where she currently resides. Ward attended Clemson University and graduated in 2013 from the Calhoun Honors College with a Bachelors of Science in Science Teaching with a concentration in biological sciences.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Ward worked with Athletic Academic Services at The Citadel, and her role with GSSM will focus on students and program delivery across the Lowcountry.

“I am thrilled to be fulfilling one of my career aspirations by returning to the Governor’s School as a recruiter. Not only does GSSM expose students to high-level academics and an opportunity to live in a community of scholars, but students learn how to be successful in so many aspects of life and develop permanent friendships,” Ward said. “I thrived both academically and personally during my two years at GSSM and am grateful for all of the opportunities my exceptional education afforded me. I look forward to sharing my story and meeting talented students throughout the Lowcountry.”

Lauren Shirley

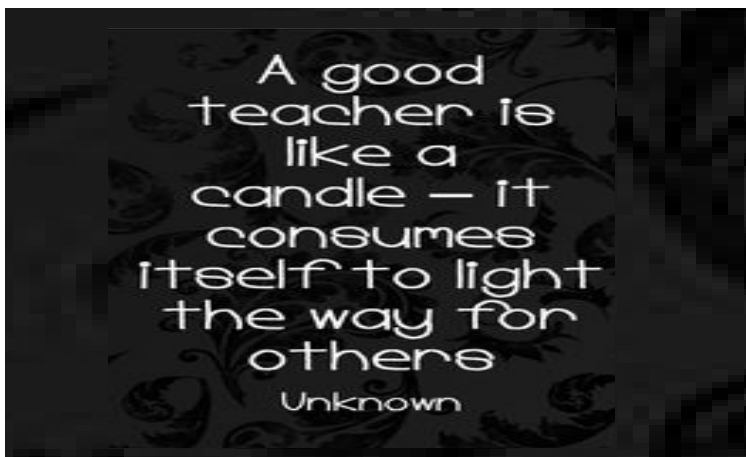
Shirley is a native of Cincinnati, OH and a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina, where she worked as the news editor for the Daily Gamecock. Prior to joining GSSM, she worked as a news reporting intern at the Post and Courier in Charleston where she covered local news and feature stories.



Lauren Shirley

As the PR and Marketing Coordinator, Shirley will focus on cultivating relationships with statewide media and expanding the school’s social media presence.

“I’m really excited about the opportunity to work with GSSM,” Shirley said. “I’m especially looking forward to using my passion for news to put our school into the spotlight, where it belongs.”



LOCAL LEADERS TO GET A CLOSE LOOK AT DAY-TO-DAY SCHOOL OPERATIONS

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



FELLOWS IN EDUCATION

A JOINT PROGRAM OF:



Through a three-way partnership among Florence One, the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and The School Foundation, there has emerged a program designed for business and community leaders to spend time getting a unique, behind-the-scenes look into schools in Florence One. At Thursday's meeting,

the Florence One School Board approved a plan to implement **Fellows in Education**, a program which will take place over the course of the next nine months. The program is designed to give local business and community leaders the opportunity to center on different educational experiences that are unique to the classroom.

"I am so excited about the Fellows in Education program," said Debbie Hyler, Executive Director of The School Foundation. "Bringing business and community leaders into modern-day classrooms exposes them to the advanced technology currently being used in the classrooms. The Foundation is proud to showcase the numerous grants we have funded through the years."

"The Chamber has had the pleasure of working with The School Foundation, Florence School District One and other community leaders in this joint effort," said Michael Miller, President of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce. "In the end, we have a program that will help create a community of educational ambassadors that can share firsthand knowledge of local student proficiencies and educator experiences."

During the duration of the program, there are plans for leaders to see first-hand some of the successes and daily challenges educators face

in the classroom. Within this program, there will also be an opportunity for interested participants to take part in a "Principal for a Day" exercise where the local leader will spend a portion of the day with a school principal as he or she conducts the duties of running the school.

Florence One Superintendent of Schools Dr. Randy Bridges expressed his views about the program. "We look forward to the continued partnership with The School Foundation and The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce in this effort to build capacity within the community for our schools. I believe that the **Fellows in Education** program will be one of the best ways to allow community leaders to become knowledgeable about the interworking of our school system," he remarked.

Organizers of the program say the ultimate goal of Fellows in Education is to create a cadre of local leaders who will be able to collaborate with policymakers and community members in developing better education policies in the local community.

"The Chamber feels strongly about contributing to the development of better education programs in the communities in which we all live and work," further stated Miller.

An orientation meeting for the program was held on Tuesday, September 22nd. The first of eight sessions was on Tuesday, October 6th and sessions will be held thereafter on the first Tuesday of each month through the month of May at different Florence One schools.

Members of the three-way partnership have sought after a select group of approximately twenty community and business leaders whom they believe are civic-minded supporters of the need for expansion of local educational resources. Meet them at FSD1.org.

For more information contact Debbie Hyler, Executive Director, The School Foundation, dhylert@theschoolfoundation.org; Michael Miller, President, Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, mmiller@flochamber.com; or Dr. Randy Bridges, Superintendent, Florence School District One, randy.bridges@fsd1.org.

VOLUNTEER!

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Florence One announces that training for volunteers will be held on the following dates:

Tuesday, October 27; Saturday October 31.

Interested persons are required to attend only one of the training sessions. In order to qualify for one of the training sessions, an application and SLED check form must be completed. These forms are found on the Florence One website (www.fsd1.org).

The application and SLED form should be completed and submitted to the Florence One Office of Public Information at least one week prior to the training date. Tuesday training sessions begin at 5:00 p.m.; Saturday training sessions begin at 8:30 a.m.

For more information call
843.673.1107

UNENDING THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO UNLIMITED GROWTH

by Anna Bowman



Chuck Gibbons

CONWAY – Chuck Gibbons, Campus Director at Miller-Motte Technical College, has had an exemplary career in both the medical and education field. When it comes to advancing one’s personal growth through education, Gibbons is no stranger to the hard work and dedication it takes to accomplish this goal. His steadfast quest for knowledge has earned him numerous advanced degrees.

Gibbons, who was promoted to his current position in July 2014, began his career with Miller-Motte Technical College after earning his M.S. in Healthcare Administration from the University of Maryland University College, and was hired as the Lead Instructor for Surgical Technology at Miller-Motte College in Cary, NC. Gibbons was hastily promoted to the Program Director of Surgical Technology, and was responsible for managing a program consisting of 150 students and five instructors. Within five years, Gibbons quickly excelled in his new position, building a solid reputation, which prompted the college to expand him to executive manager.

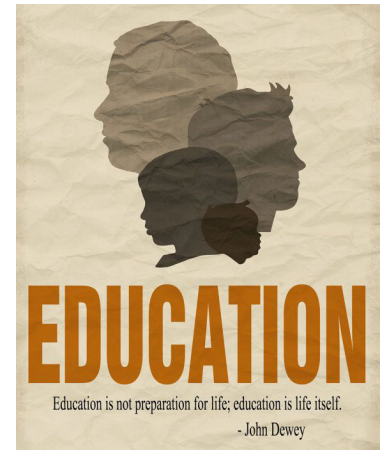
When Conway was selected as a new campus site for Miller-Motte Technical College, Gibbons transitioned from position as Lead Instructor of Surgical Technology to Director of Education. He played an instrumental role in the opening of the new campus, which is one of the primary reasons for his current leadership position with the college. Gibbons has dedicated his educational career to “getting things done” and driving results – through

collaboration, partnerships, and building relationships with the community. In fact, he credits the receptive attitude of the Conway and Myrtle Beach areas for the steadfast growth of the college.

As the Campus Director, Gibbons is responsible for the vision, operations, human resources, compliance issues and financial success of the campus. His duties also include working actively with local businesses, government and community leaders to further the campus objectives. Gibbons’ job is made easier by the fact the college offers a multitude of career training options.

Miller-Motte Technical College offer Business Programs, Medical Training, Healthcare Administration Courses and Skilled Trades Training. Graduates have access to Lifetime Career Assistance which includes guidance from the Career Services Team, resume updates and workshops, along with additional services. Financial aid is also available for students who qualify. The Conway Campus of Miller-Motte Technical College is located at 2451 US-501, Conway, SC, or via phone (843) 591-1100.

Gibbons and his wife, Kortney, reside in Myrtle Beach, SC, with their three children: Lexi, Sammy, and Charlie.



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VERIZON HELPS “PROJECT LEAD THE WAY”

by Karen Schulz, Verizon Wireless



The School Foundation receives \$10,000 grant from Verizon for ‘Project Lead The Way’

Verizon donated \$10,000 to The School Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides resources and support to administrators, teachers, and students of Florence School District One (FSD1). The grant will enable Delmae Elementary School to join three other FSD1 elementary schools in piloting Project Lead the Way (PLTW) – a comprehensive approach to science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education.

With Project Lead the Way, Delmae Elementary School students have a great opportunity to experience science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics as they would in a career setting where all the components are infused in both creative expressions and problem solving situations. Students learn how to communicate effectively, work in teams, facilitate discussions, practice professional conduct and think critically.

Roy Ann Jolly, Delmae Principal, stated, “We are thrilled at the possibilities for learning through Project Lead the Way. We are committed to provide classrooms that are engaging and relevant for our 21st Century learners. This initiative will allow teachers to empower students with the tools needed to test, tinker, and design in classrooms where collaboration is key and content comes to life.”

FMU NAMES OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEES

Submitted by Angela Crosland, FMU Director of Communications



PHOTO: (L-R) McLeod, Jackson and Lester; Brown not pictured

Francis Marion University honored four employees with special awards and recognized others for long-time service at its annual Staff Awards Luncheon Wednesday on campus.

Anthony Lester and Janet McLeod were

named winners of the 2015 Staff Service Awards. H. Vashon Brown was the recipient of the John J. Kispert Leadership Award, and Donald Jackson received the Marvin Lynch Humanitarian Award.

Co-workers nominate individuals for the awards. A special committee consisting of FMU faculty and staff make the final selection.

Lester is a leads groundskeeper and McLeod is an administrative associate for Rogers Library. Lester has been employed at FMU for five years. McLeod has been at FMU for 35 years. Both were cited for their dedication to their jobs and for their high levels of service.

Kispert Award winner Brown is the director of network operations and systems at FMU. The award recognizes staff members who are not in formal leadership positions, but who exhibit the drive, determination and initiative to embrace the mission of their departments and to inspire their colleagues to a higher standard. Brown has been employed by the University for 16 years.

Lynch Award winner Jackson is an accountant in the University's business office. The Lynch Award recognizes a staff member who

exhibits an unusual commitment to, and care for, his fellow man, both at work and elsewhere. Jackson has been employed at FMU for 21 years.

Employees were also recognized with service awards at Wednesday's luncheon.

Recognized for 30 years of service: Kathy C. Johnson, coordinator of special events; Dorothy King, chief cook; Nick McKithen, motor pool supervisor; Ted T. Nettles, lead custodian; Bryan C. Turner, electrician; and Benita Y. Woodbury, senior administrative assistant for Student Life.

Recognized for 20 years of service: Murray G. Hartzler, director of athletics; C. Ann Kelly, administrative manager for the foundation/development office; Violet L. Lloyd, lead custodian; Benjamin A. Strickland, supervisor of maintenance support in the maintenance pool; Marcella Y. Turner, senior library technical assistant; and Ann M. Williams, student services counselor in the Registrar's Office.

Recognized for 10 years of service were: Marvin L. Black, estate groundskeeper; LaTasha D. Brand, dean of students; Kipp M. Britt, police officer; Leon C. Campbell, lead custodian; James M. Huggins, craftsman/electrician; Stacey D.J. Vallee, head women's softball coach; R. Thomas Welch, associate director of financial and auxiliary operations; and Brianna D. Zhang, manager of the Kelly Small Business Institute.

Seven employees who recently retired from FMU were also recognized. They included: Richard J. Austin, former police chief; Carl E. Capps, psychology lab manager; Robert H. Collins, estate groundskeeper; Yvonne G. Davis, acquisitions coordinator; Dorothy E. King, chief cook; Kenneth J. Pittman, police officer; and N. Ray Taylor, custodian.



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#FMExpectations

ROOTED & GROUNDED IN DIVERSITY, RUIZ FOODS OUTCOMES ARE MULTIPLIED

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Fred Ruiz, Co-Founder & Chairman Emeritus. Kim Ruiz Beck, Chairman

When California-based Ruiz Food Products Inc., looks back on their history, they see the power of diversity at work. When they look around today, they see even stronger, more conscientious measures to keep them competitive.

When they envision tomorrow, they sense the

overwhelming success that the company's founders planted seeds for five decades ago and which they contribute toward every day.

RFPI Chairman Kim Ruiz Beck tells just how the company grew from simple, humble beginnings to two nationally recognized and enjoyed brands. "When my dad and grandfather co-founded our family business in a small rural town located in California's Central Valley, they started with very little; in fact, just a kitchen mixer, a twin chest freezer and my grandmother's Mexican food recipes. From day one, both my dad and grandfather understood the importance of people... all people... their opinions, backgrounds, culture and ideas. In fact, to this day, when we're asked what is our competitive advantage our answer is three words: our team members," she said.

Beck also recalls her early start with the company. "As I grew up, I worked in a wide variety of departments during summer breaks, after school, and then, full time after graduating college. As I look back, I can say with confidence that employing a diverse workforce has always been our company's culture. In fact, I've never known it to be any other way," she told.

And because there is no need to fix what isn't broken, she continues, "What diversity brings to our workplace is invaluable. By giving our team members the opportunity to work with other team members from different backgrounds, different experiences and with different working styles, they not only learn about but are exposed to other views. Diverse views make for better decisions that serve to fuel what I believe we have... a high performance culture."

"What's more, it is a pleasure to see how our diverse workforce reflects the diversity of each community in which we live and work. Geographically, each of our four manufacturing facilities is located in smaller communities. Each is comprised of a diverse population. From Dinuba and Tulare, CA, to Denison, TX to Florence, SC – in all cases, we are proud to be a member of each community, are committed to giving back and strive to be an employer of choice."

In order to remain in the foreground of their niche industry, Ruiz Foods relies on consumer/

provider interactions. "As a food manufacturing company, it is always important to stay in touch with what our consumer likes and what he/she is looking for. With diversity in nearly every function of our organization, we find ourselves able to understand the consumers we serve. It makes our team better able to develop fresh ideas that will meet the needs of the market we serve. Diversity clearly promotes improved morale, outside-the-box thinking, greater teamwork, and an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect," she said.

Some things are common to the majority of every population, no matter the preferred tastes and/or palates. Beck gave an illustration: "An example of the value of diversity specific to our workplace is the introduction and success of our El Monterey Signature Breakfast Burrito line introduced earlier this year. Let's take a simple premise: breakfast is enjoyed by most everyone no matter their background, experience, ethnicity, race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, marital status, age, citizenship, work experience, parental status, educational background, geographic location and much more," she said.

Their research and development team scored an all time high when they delivered just what consumers expressed a preference, desire and need for. "As a food manufacturing company selling the #1 frozen Mexican food brand in the country (El Monterey), we began to notice an increased desire among consumers for breakfast options. We also determined that consumers wanted breakfast items that were handheld, convenient to prepare, made with quality ingredients, offered great taste, value and were available in a variety of flavors," she shared, adding, "Every department at Ruiz Foods... and I do mean every department... marketing, R&D, finance, procurement, sales, operations and human resources... became our resource to investigate and determine what products and flavors we could manufacture that would meet the needs of the consumer. Call it 'internal innovation' if you will. In fact, many of our own team members participate in new product sensory panels organized by R&D providing valuable input."

How was that study so pointedly effective? "What's key is that our team members were able to relate to our consumer because their own diversity represents our consumer. Our team members brought to the initiative their individuality ... their own diversity," Beck revealed.

The result? "We developed a line of El Monterey Signature Breakfast Burritos (multiple flavors) that quickly became the #1 selling brand in the Frozen Mexican Breakfast category and the fastest growing segment in the Frozen Breakfast Protein Handheld segment," she said.

Likening Ruiz Foods' diversity at work from its one-kitchen genesis to the multi-state operative that it is now to being an inclusive culture, Beck said it is a pleasure to see it in action on a day-

to-day basis. "In tandem with our commitment to a diverse workforce, I am also pleased to share our commitment to vendor/supplier diversity. We view our own Company's beginning and subsequent success as an example of the American Dream come true. With that in mind, our commitment is to 'pay it forward' whenever possible – providing opportunities for other family-owned or minority-owned companies to grow as we grow.

She said that as chairman, her responsibilities include the preservation of this culture born by "my dad and grandfather and, I am proud to say, embraced by the nearly 2,800 team members employed in our four manufacturing facilities. Our culture includes our commitment to: safety, teamwork, respect, innovation, quality and integrity. I continually work to ensure that our organizational systems and practices reflect our culture so that the advantages of the diversity of our team members are maximized and celebrated. In doing so, I feel honored to have the opportunity to witness the empowerment of our team members and watch them grow, thrive and accomplish new and exciting things. And that, I am pleased to say, is what I like most about our place of work the most."

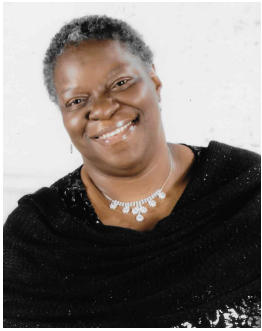
So as to keep pace with the seismic shifts yet stay ahead in today's workplace, Beck said "as we and other companies continue to embrace diversity, we must remember that we will need to continually shift our practices to reflect the new and ever-changing demographics. What we define as diversity today, and how we measure it, will constantly change because people and their expectations will continue to evolve and change. Currently our workforce composition is 54% women and 70% Hispanic/Latino. We also have two female Senior Vice Presidents, our CEO is a woman and we have three women (two of them minority) on our Board of Directors."

The organization's top two immediate goals are both centered in the Florence facility. "Since its acquisition in 2014, the facility has been undergoing a complete renovation. At the same time we expanded the building to include a distribution warehouse. Once the renovation is completed, our focus will turn to hiring and training team members for the production of a variety of our El Monterey and

Tornados brand products. We believe our culture will continue to attract some of the very best people as we continue to expand our manufacturing and distribution on the East Coast. We are proud of our diverse workforce and their amazing accomplishments and we are pleased to be able to celebrate what makes us different. We also thank my dad and grandfather for laying the groundwork for the culture we fully embrace. Together, we honor our past ... and embrace our future ... a future that is exciting and full of promise. As a family-owned business, our commitment is to grow and remain successful for many years to come."

FAMILY HISTORY PLAYED ITS PART

Submitted by Sheena Generette



Sheena Generette

Cancer is an awful demon that has plagued my family for years. It seemed to have hidden itself behind other illnesses, taken root and later manifested itself-only to take an effect on myself and the lives of those I love. My paternal grandmother died of ovarian cancer when I was a little girl. I remember my mother trying to explain to me the reason for her death. I clearly remember looking out the window asking what is cancer and why did it take my “gramma”? Several years later I had almost the same conversation again when my maternal Grandma Lyla passed of liver cancer. I was devastated and often wondered why cancer had such a great impact in my life. I became afraid of cancer. Every time I saw or even heard the word CANCER I panicked.

I can remember sitting in 9th grade Home Economics when the teacher, came in holding two large model breasts in her hand and said, “Today we are going to talk about breast cancer.” In my mind I was thinking “cancer goes in your breast too?” So I took out my notebook and took vigorous notes and collected all the information. When I got home, I wrote down the five things you should look for if you suspect you have cancer and posted it on the wall in my room. Those five things haunted me into doing self-breast examinations at least once per week.

Almost thirty years later, though research has since changed the course of cancer; but through those self-checks, I found myself being diagnosed with breast cancer. My freshman home economics teacher may have helped to save my life. At that moment, my life was forever changed. Even before I was diagnosed, breast cancer continued to affect my life. My oldest sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. I became her caregiver. I really wasn't sure how to be, but God gifted me the ability to do the very best I could. On January 1, 2005, she passed away from that dreadful disease. After being her caregiver, when I was diagnosed myself, there were some things I knew to expect, but nothing or no one can prepare you for your own personal battle. You have to first prepare your mind before your body can ultimately follow. You have so many emotions to deal with, those of your own and

those of your family and friends.

One morning while doing a self-examination. I found in my breast a form that felt like something the size of a mustard seed. (That is the size of faith you will need in order to be healed) By the time I was seen by my family doctor, it had tripled in size. When I was able to have a biopsy, the mass had grown to the size of a pecan. Waiting to see the Oncologist and Surgeon, the mass had grown into the size of a golf ball. At this point, I was scared, nervous and uncertain of my future.

I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma and classified as triple-negative. It was aggressive and growing which meant my treatment had to be fast and aggressive. Before I got to my first treatment, the cancer in my breast was the size of a tangerine, eventually growing to the size of a small orange. I began to prepare myself mentally for the days ahead of how I was going to communicate my condition to my husband and children. It seemed as though my body was not responding to treatment, the cancer only seemed to grow and my prognosis was not what I had hoped it would be. At this point I was getting sicker, weaker and tired.

I was tired of the cancer, the treatment and the stress of it all. I felt myself slipping away fast. This particular day, I was at a low yet crucial time in my life when all I could think of was letting go to be with Jesus. Almost instantly, my seven year old came running in my room and to my bedside and said, “Mommy, I prayed for you all day at school!” and my eight year old chimed in, “me too!” Something happened, a change had taken place immediately and intensely. I realized my children needed me to live and if I wasn't going to fight for myself I knew I had to fight for them. Just moments before, I was making a decision to keep the cancer and let go of life. Now I'd made the decision to let go of the cancer and hold on to life. God is so wonderful and amazing because he allows us to make split second decisions in choosing life or death. I often think of how my little boys saved my life.

From that moment on I decided I wanted to live and win this battle against breast cancer, no matter how hard or scary it was. I was now in a race to play catch up, I was behind in my healing, and I had to do what it took to live. I sent God this heartfelt awesome prayer for the team of doctors who was responsible for my care. I asked God to give them the knowledge and understanding and the right plan of care for me to be healed. I wanted to live, enjoy my family and every second of

life. Once I decided I wasn't going to succumb to this vice that plagued my family and haunted me for many years, my healing process began. I truly believe in the saying “Mind over matter.” When I decided in my mind, I wanted to live, the cancer no longer mattered. Soon it would be gone and eventually end up a distant memory yet a constant reminder of how perseverance, self-preservation, faith and determination can move mountains; not just mountains, but cancer.

A grand healing began to take place in my body and the cancer began to respond to the treatment so much so until my oncologist said, “Sheena, you are certainly blessed because everyone does not get this type of healing and that is from His (God) lips to mine.” I immediately burst into tears of joy. I found a great expectation to live and enjoy life. If my prayers were answered enough for my doctor to recognize it, I knew that God has truly shown up in my life. My nurses would tell me that I was the happiest cancer patient they had ever seen. I would go into treatment thinking of how I couldn't wait to be healed. Cancer was the troll that lived under that bridge and stood firm between me and my healing. I was determined to make it to the other side by crossing that bridge, defeating that mean old ugly troll and to enjoy the beautiful green grass of life on the other side.

I tried to encourage and plant a seed of faith in everyone I met while I was in treatment. I feel so privileged to have been snatched out of the arms of death in the nick time. I tell people all the time, everywhere I go when I share my story, that God didn't save me for me, he saved me for you, so that you and everyone else can see that God, through his son Jesus is still performing miracles today.

When my sister passed away from breast cancer, I wanted to do something great to encourage life and healing in others so I joined the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Team as a caregiver. I worked diligently, raised money, tried to support other caregivers, and advocate awareness. I served as the chairperson for my area for two years and had a great time doing it. I stepped away for a while only to return in 2015 as a survivor. My last treatment was September 2, 2014 and my birthday was September 3rd. The slogan for the American Cancer Society is “Creating a world with more birthdays.” I am so proud to be a product of that slogan. I will continue to fight to stay healed, encouraged, pray for others, and hope for a cure. Cancer is a battle, but even with the smallest army of faith, financial support, love and determination, it can be defeated.

Breast Cancer Awareness

A SHARP EXTRA SENSORY PERCEPTION CAN SAVE LIVES

by Alicia C. Phillip



Debi Kalaritis & husband Panos

Debi Kalaritis will tell anyone who asks that she owes her life to God. When she received a breast cancer diagnosis in 2001 at the age of 44, it was due to Divine providence. According to Kalaritis: "I had mistakenly gone for the mammogram five months earlier than I was supposed to, and after waiting for two hours, the nurses informed me that I couldn't have a mammogram because insurance wouldn't pay for it. As I was under 45, my insurance only paid every other year, so I told them to do it anyway.... I felt that God sent me early for that mammogram; my family will tell you that I NEVER make that kind of mistake and I NEVER pay for something that I don't have to. We all feel that this was a miracle and a blessing."

The day that Kalaritis received her diagnosis, she already "knew" when she left the hospital after her follow-up mammogram and sonogram that she had cancer. Although neither the radiologist nor the nurses had yet told her; she felt it in the environment of the room. Ironically, Kalaritis actually had a biopsy in the same breast two years before her cancer diagnosis; it was exactly at the same location of one of two suspicious spots which both proved to be malignant. Says Kalaritis: "I feel that God gave me the first scare to allow me to grow in faith and strength."

After much research, and with the help of her husband, who is a pharmaceutical scientist, Kalaritis elected to have a mastectomy and reconstruction on the affected breast, followed by chemotherapy. Today she is cancer free. The cancer was removed with the mastectomy and there was no metastatic disease in her lymph nodes.

Kalaritis recalls that there were many challenges in her fight against cancer. One such challenge was what she refers to as "Chemo Brain" which describes the malfunctioning of her memory and brain activity. To combat that, she does crossword puzzles to help with mental acuity and keeps lists for almost everything. She also had complications after bunion surgery, which resulted in her having to have her foot reconstructed and ongoing physical therapy. In addition, Kalaritis struggled with depression, and is still currently taking antidepressants.

However, cancer also brought positive rewards. According to Kalaritis: "My faith is stronger, as is my love and appreciation for my friends and family. I think that I am better at taking care of myself physically, mentally and spiritually. I am lucky and have been able to give back so very much beginning with volunteering and fund-raising for the Relay for Life/American Cancer Society and our local hospital foundation. I am involved with many civic and charitable organizations in our community." She also made a new friend in chemotherapy and would do it all over again if that was the only way to know her. Further, toward the end of her

chemotherapy treatments, Kalaritis received one of the dearest compliments that she has ever received and she would not trade it for a world of riches. She was told by the head nurse that she was specifically put in a room because that room needed a bit of sunshine. Says Kalaritis: "When you receive a cancer diagnosis, it is like being inducted into a secret society and getting a secret decoder ring. There are many survivors and it gives great hope to know of them. I feel that one of the best things to come out of my experience is my ability to give hope to others."

Kalaritis could not have survived without the support of her family and friends. Her mom, who lived out of state, came to take care of her after surgery and arranged for family and friends to come and help her during the six months of chemotherapy. Her husband curtailed most of his business travel. Her oldest friend came from Florida for a week, as did her dad and his wife. Her sister-in-law gave up a week of vacation to come from Maryland. Her sister also came from Pennsylvania. Many local friends sent food and/or provided "shuttle service" for her appointments. She will forever remember their support.

Kalaritis offers the following advice to others fighting cancer: "People will want to help you and you have to let them. Cancer is so very frightening and there is so very little that friends and family can do to actually fight the disease but allowing them to assist you helps them to feel that they are making a contribution."

MORE THAN A CONQUEROR

by Alicia C. Phillip



DeEtte Young

Three and a half years ago, at the age of 56, DeEtte Young received some news that would forever change her life. She was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her subsequent treatment was successful and today the cancer is in remission, however, Young's life has

not returned to "normal." Instead, her new normal is a heart and life that is filled with gratitude. She lives every day as if it could possibly be her last; loving with abandon and giving glory to God in all things.

Young received the breast cancer diagnosis in March of 2012 and she recalls that initially it was difficult news for her husband, two daughters, and other family and friends. She was no stranger to the impact of cancer because several of her family members had died from cancer. Moreover, it was especially hard on Young's husband Phillip, whose former wife had also succumbed to cancer.

However, Young was full of hope, and proceeded with treatment. After the lump in Young's breast was removed, she then underwent several rounds of chemotherapy, and subsequently

radiation. Young recalls that for about five days after chemotherapy treatments, her bodily functions would slow almost to a crawl, her mouth would get sore, and all food would taste the same. However, because the treatments were three weeks apart, she had time to normalize somewhat between them. Another side effect of chemotherapy was the loss of hair. According to Young, "It seemed trivial to me before it happened to me, but it was a shock. It may seem vain, but my hair was more important to me than I ever realized." Young completed all treatment by March 2013 and since then has been taking an anti-estrogen drug, which her oncologist prescribed to be taken for at least five years after treatment ceased.

Trying to transition back to a normal life was a challenge, and Young is not sure that she has done that. However, she appreciates the opportunity to work, as it gives her something to focus on. She was able to return to work right after the first chemotherapy treatment and never missed a day of work due to treatment.

Young describes the emotional toil that she experienced in these words: "Emotionally, I felt many things. At first, there was unbelief and denial. Then the diagnosis set in to discourage me. There were times I wondered why it happened to me. It

was the first time I had been so ill, and I did not like it. Cancer had interrupted my life. People heard about the diagnosis and asked about it. I knew they were sympathetic, but they were glad it was not them with the cancer. I was told how the radiation would probably burn me because it burned someone else. The negativity was unbearable at times."

However, it was her faith and the support of her family and friends that helped her to survive. Says Young: "The words of the Bible comforted me and gave me faith that I would be well.... God was so good to me." Likewise, her family had faith and trusted God with the situation. They were concerned and kept a close watch on her, offering to go with her to chemotherapy treatments. Many family members and friends called to inquire about her welfare.

Although Young's current medical condition is described as remission, Young prefers to use the word "cured." Says Young, "It is my belief and testimony that I am well and fully recovered. My prayer was that God would give my oncologist wisdom and the proper plan of treatment for me."

Young advises anyone dealing with cancer to never give up, no matter how bad the diagnosis seems, and trust God for the outcome.

Breast Cancer Awareness

HOST TURNED HONOREE AT CANCER SURVIVOR LUNCHEON

by Alicia C. Phillip



Jamie Poulas Hanna
most recent photo

For years, Jamie Poulas Hanna had served as a volunteer at her church's Cancer Survivor's lunch tent. However, this year was different. This time, when she showed up for work as usual, she was greeted with a resounding and surprising "No! This day is for you!" When she proceeded to the registration table, the registration lady looked up at Hanna and asked her whether she was a survivor. Says Hanna: "For the first time since being diagnosed, I burst into tears. YES! I AM A SURVIVOR! YES I AM! And I walked that walk crying my eyes out!"

Hanna received a breast cancer diagnosis in November of 2014 at 54 years of age, but even before receiving the official diagnosis, Hanna already knew that she would be positive for breast cancer. She hadn't had a mammogram since 2012, her mother had succumbed to breast cancer, plus Hanna had had a shelf of flat cysts for years in her left breast and dozens of lumps aspirated in her right one. Prior to receiving the diagnosis, something, which Hanna believes was God, kept nagging her to go to the family doctor for a physical, which is something that she had never done. After the physical she was sent to have a mammogram that same day, and then a follow-up mammogram two days later. A biopsy revealed that Hanna did indeed have breast cancer. For treatment, Hanna chose to have a double/bilateral mastectomy and

reconstruction, and was considered cancer free after her mastectomy. For her reconstruction, Hanna opted for a breast size two sizes larger than she was. Describing her reconstructed breasts, Hanna shared: "I love the way that I look in shirts and tops...however, I am very uncomfortable lying down; these implants are no joke. I call them shapeshifters. They're uncomfortable. Some days I wish I didn't have them and I hate them, yet I love them. I love that I'm alive to have them."



Jamie and son James in
June in Italy post surgery

As with other cancer survivors, Hanna credits her family and friends for their amazing support. Hanna's husband of sixteen years was very loving and supportive. Although Hanna adamantly insisted that he not take too many days off from his job that was located 90 miles away, he still went above and beyond to care for and show Hanna that she was loved. Says Hanna: "My husband was so loving and accepting of my new "look" and nothing about how he feels about me has changed other than he loves me even more and is astonished at my strength. Such a blessing! Many marriages end in divorce after breast cancer and surgeries. Some grow stronger. I am grateful to say mine has become even stronger." In addition, her best friend, Susan, took time away from her family to take Hanna to the hospital and she stayed with Hanna for three days. Other friends brought in food every night for two weeks. Her son, who was 13 years old at the time, took care of her, brought her

her medication and food, helped her get in and out of bed, helped her go to the bathroom, and so on.

Hanna exhibited a lot of strength and positivity throughout her ordeal with cancer. Six days after her mastectomy, she attended her son's performance in Bye Bye Birdie at the Florence Little Theatre. Then nine days after her exchange surgery she traveled to Fort Myers, Florida for a Boston Red Sox v New York Yankees game. Less than three months after that, she traveled to Italy with her son for ten days. She was determined that she would not allow cancer to get her down.

Hanna described her positive mentality in these words: "I never have gotten sad or depressed, never wondered why me, never ever let the cancer get me down. For 95% of my journey, I have been upbeat, determined, and had a great attitude."



Jamie and her son James
4 days post mastectomy

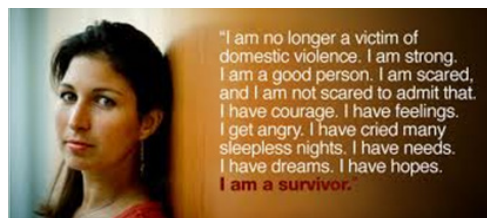
Hanna describes her biggest personal challenge since her surgery as learning to take it easy and not do too much. Because of her independent personality, it has been a big challenge for her to wait for someone to do something for her.

Her best advice to others: "Do self exams and get your mammograms. Keep these in the forefront of your mind. Don't forget them. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Live each day like it's your last!" She invites anyone who would like to contact her to do so via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/jamie.p.hanna>

Domestic Violence Awareness

CHOOSING LIFE IS ROOTED IN A MADE UP MIND

by Les Echols



"I am no longer a victim of domestic violence. I am strong. I am a good person. I am scared, and I am not scared to admit that. I have courage. I have feelings. I get angry. I have cried many sleepless nights. I have needs. I have dreams. I have hopes. I am a survivor."

Thanks to the Naomi Project, Renee can take steps to taking her life back, but it wasn't that long ago when she found herself afraid and alone, with her life and her safety constantly in jeopardy. Renee is a 46-year-old survivor of domestic abuse, a lifelong resident of Florence and mother of two. She was in an abusive relationship with someone with a history of alcohol and drug

abuse. But it wasn't until after she was in this relationship for two years did she realized her situation would take a turn for the worse.

"It started with him being controlling and overly possessive, from accusing me of cheating to checking the yard for car tire tracks. I never gave him a reason for any of that", said Renee, but she was hopeful that he would change. She once went to her family for Thanksgiving and was beaten so bad that the family ended up taking her to the police department. Renee moved, but was soon followed by her abuser and the abuse got progressively worse. "I would be walking and seconds later, my face would be on the concrete and I was being pummeled", she said, tearfully. Renee found herself at Naomi Project after

living in her car for two months. "Every night I walk in Naomi, I thank God for Ms. Joyce and Naomi Project, she is my biggest supporter", continued Renee. After years of rampant physical and verbal abuse, she is on a path that her spirituality along with Naomi Project helps her to effectively navigate.

I SURVIVED
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
I Spoke Up, I Chose To Live 



Domestic Violence Awareness

PROGRAM DELIVERS HELP AROUND MANY UNADDRESSED HURDLES

by Les Echols



Joyce Gillespie Ford

For the past decade, The Naomi Project has been an asset not just to Florence County, but to the entire Pee Dee area. With a reputation for service and stern leadership by Executive Director, Joyce Gillespie Ford, The Naomi Project has become a superlative

agency in the battle against homelessness and domestic violence. Joyce started The Naomi Project in 2006, and her passion shows whenever she elaborates on the mission and vision of Naomi and the needs of the individuals she helps on a daily basis.

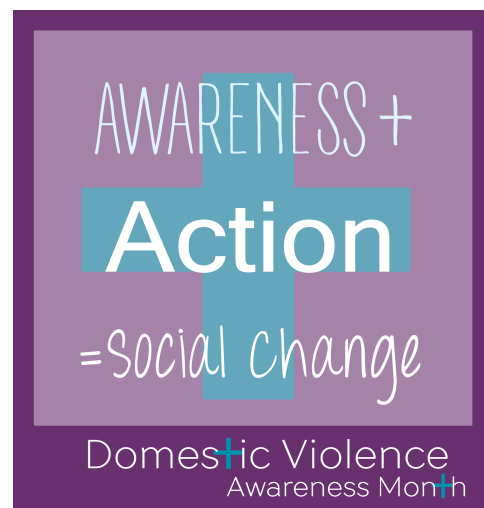
The Naomi Project is a transitional home for homeless women who are victims of domestic violence and are tired of the abuse and do not want to return to the abuser. Naomi also offers assistance with basic skills, such as money management, life skills and counseling. "Coming to Naomi gives you the opportunity to have safety and confidentiality for up to one

year, while providing you with the tools that empowers you to regain self-sufficiency and self-respect" said Joyce.

The Naomi Project was started out of need for a number of reasons and issues that were not being addressed by other transitional housing. Women were faced with having to return to their abusers within 30 to 60 days of going through a crisis. To add to that, no transitional shelters in the area would accept male children 11 years or older, a problem that Joyce felt needed to be dealt with. "We accept male children up to 17 years of age, allowing them to live as a family, not just a person in a bad situation.

Joyce also cites volunteers and collaboration as a vital part of her agency. "We are a volunteer based organization, so we depend on the community to help us with everything from counseling to job skills", explained Joyce. The Naomi Project is able to partner with a number of agencies to procure affordable medical and dental services for the residents. Something which many have been unable to have because of the situations they are in.

Joyce remains optimistic that awareness of domestic violence is growing, but she knows that there is a lot of work to be done. "With the understanding that this is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we have to continue to advocate for the fact that domestic violence is a yearlong issue. People are in danger of being consistently abused, even murdered, but have no place to go", Joyce concludes.



BOONE AT WORK ON GOVERNOR'S SPECIAL JUSTICE DIVISION

by Les Echols



Florence County Sheriff
Kenny Boone

Law enforcement has always been a positive force in the fight against domestic violence. A fact that is even more important because South Carolina has been consistently ranked in the top ten in the nation regarding the rate of women murdered by their men for the past 12 years. South Carolina

Force. The primary objective is to study and make recommendations to improve areas affecting Domestic Violence. These areas include including social, economic, and geographic issues, as well as incorporating professional standards and best practices both within governmental entities and organizations but also non-government organizations. More than 65 government and non-government entities are represented at both the state and local levels.

The Task Force is implemented in four phases. The first phase is survey and collection of data and information from counties and regions throughout the state. The second phase is the Identification of specific problems and creating proposed solutions. The third phase is to begin implementation of proposed solution, and the fourth phase is assessing both short and long term goals for combating and preventing domestic violence throughout the state.

The Task Force was created with members from various disciplines and assigned roles in one or more of divisions. These divisions are The Criminal Justice Division, which Florence County Sheriff Kenny Boone serves in The Victim and Offender Services Division, The Community Awareness, Education and

Outreach Division, and The Governor's Resources Working Group.

Boone of Florence County says he was honored to be asked by Governor Haley to serve in the Criminal Justice Division on the Law Enforcement Sub Committee due to his extensive law enforcement experience and his involvement with the creation and implementation of Senate Bill 3. This is the bill which became the revised Domestic Violence criminal statute recently signed by Governor Haley into law. With his years of experience as a Patrol Deputy, Criminal Investigator and eventually Sheriff of Florence County, Sheriff Boone has seen first-hand the devastation that is caused by Domestic Violence, not only to the victims, but to their families, coworkers and neighbors.

Governor Nikki Haley has vowed that this must change, but the problems with Domestic Violence do not begin or end with legislation or even the criminal justice system. There is also a grassroots movement to change the culture of the people in the state of South Carolina, and, through a cumulative effort, teach children as early as possible that it is not okay to hit or use violence as a means to control, manipulate or resolve disputes in the home.

A milestone in this initiative came to fruition on January 29, 2015, when Governor Haley issued Executive Order 2015-04 establishing The Domestic Violence Task





Domestic Violence Awareness



BATTERER INTERVENTION GROWING WINGS ACROSS STATE

by Les Echols



Sara Barber

For the fourth time in 18 years, South Carolina is among the leaders in deadly violence against women, ranking number one in 2015. While a number of agencies have worked diligently to alleviate the negative numbers in the state, none have been more prevalent than the

South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, or SCCADVASA.

SCCADVASA is the statewide coalition representing the 23 organizations that work directly with victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in our state. The statewide voice for those organizations and for the needs of victims/survivors, its mission is to end domestic and sexual violence through influencing public policy, advocating for social change and building capacity through training and education, prevention and awareness efforts of member organizations, allied organizations and the community at large. Executive Director Sara Barber leads SCCADVASA.

Originally from the UK, Sara first came to

South Carolina for an exchange program while studying for a degree in American Studies. She first started working in this field in 2000 when she took a job as a case manager at the Domestic Abuse Center which is the state's largest batterer intervention program.

A batterer intervention program, or domestic violence intervention program works with offenders to encourage taking accountability for their previous use of violence, to increase understanding of the many facets of abusive behavior and the effects on victims and children, and to examine what they need to do to become non-abusive and to incorporate those goals and behaviors into their lives and relationships. Most participants are referred by the courts after an arrest/conviction for domestic violence with the jail time and/or fine being suspended if they successfully complete the program "I worked at that agency for thirteen years, the last four as the Executive Director. During that time I also studied and graduated with a Master's degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice at USC. I started at SCCADVASA in June 2014", says Barber.

When asked how the community can help alleviate the problem, Sara immediately noted several steps. "The most important first step is to become educated so you can speak up in your community. There are many myths about domestic

and sexual violence that are often used against victims. "Hosting an event at your business, community or youth group to benefit survivors and to educate others on the facts and how they can identify and prevent domestic and sexual violence has proven very effective," she added. As have becoming involved in legislative advocacy and encouraging your local officials to become educated about these issues", continued Sara.

She made it a point to include the fact that domestic violence and sexual assault are complex issues that are embedded in our culture. "To create meaningful change will take the effort of the entire community to encourage prevention and intervention, hold offenders accountable".



ANOTHER WOMEN'S HELP GROUP STEPPING UP TO BAT

Submitted by Sisters 4 The Future



First row from left to right: Lynn Poston, Mary Solomon, Angelica Reyes, Terester (Lisa) McAllister, Evg. Jereline Graham, & Elsie McFadden. Back Row from left to right: Mia David, Wendy Johnson, Debra Slater, Margaret Boatwright, April Simmons & Kertrina A. Graham (Not pictured is Annisha Timmons & Inez Dubois

Sisters 4 The Future is a faith based organization with the mission of providing group session to the women to help them moved forward in life by empowering the women to help them come from behind the mask of poor self-worth, depression and hopelessness. There are women in the community that still hide behind the mask. Our vision came into existence in March 2014.

Sisters 4 The Future was inspired by personal struggles that we have gone through as women trying to reach our own personal happiness and joy. Our organizations number one goal is to help other women to overcome that hardship, from being abused to reach their potential by coming from behind the masks as we did to reveal their real personalities and

dreams. Our goal is to help decrease homelessness and help these women increase their employability rates through education, leading to independence. Sisters 4 the Future is providing a Tool Kit to help empower the women which consists of positive group sessions,, spiritual activities, health and wellness and motivational activities to help the women move forward in their lives after abuse, as well as helping those searching for a place to call home.

Sisters 4 the Future has been working with other organizations in the Pee Dee area, through providing positive empowerment sessions for women and children using our Tool Kit to help them develop skills to promote hope, courage, joy and forgiveness.

We meet on a weekly basis, held in the evenings between 4 pm and 5 pm at our office or the Florence County Library. Our dream for 2015-2016 is to continue our empowerment sessions and obtain transitional housing to help the homeless and abused women. It is important to give back to others because someone helped us along the way to be the person we are now. The most rewarding aspect is helping the women make their lives better and seeing the smiles on their face. Sisters 4 The Future plan to make changes in the community by eventual opening a transitional shelter, provide referrals for other needed resources and continue to using our Tool Kit to help empower the women.

Sisters 4 The Future is planning to host several events such as, hat shows and fashion shows to help increase monetary donations to help our organization provide needed assistance to the women we service .

Sisters 4 the Future is a non-profit organization relying on donations from the community to help us move forward with decreasing homelessness, and increasing empowerment to the women we service through our Tool Kit.

Sisters 4 The Future has a wonderful group of ladies that help contribute to the organization through volunteer work.

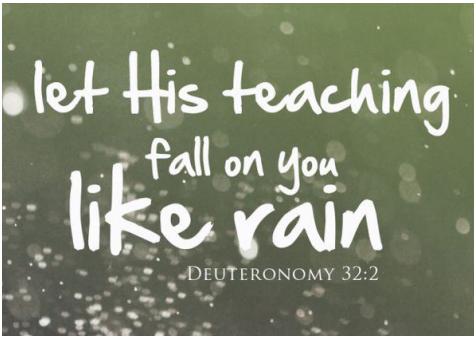
If someone is interested in joining we can be contacted by the following: Director, Terester McAllister at 843-610-4549; Elsie McFadden at 843-245-5203. They also can reach us at P. O. Box 13054, Florence, SC 29504.

It is time to remove the Mask and go forward to love, happiness and Joy.



HIS JOURNEY DESTINED TO IMPACT OTHERS

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Rev. Thompson at his church... Mount Clair Missionary Baptist Church

He once considered himself and his peer preachers of the era as 'little legends' and his life work has proven him to be not too far from the mark. Only the size has changed. And albeit not nearly over, the life of Rev. William Levi Thompson has taken some courageous turns and bold moves along the route.

"We really looked up to the Rev. D.J. Lunn and Rev. F. H. Ham and leaders like that of the 1950s and '60s; we were their apprentices in the cloth and they taught us and introduced us to clergymanship on the state and national scales," said the founder of Thompson and Sons Barber College, whose work was recently celebrated by Florence City Council with the naming of a few city blocks on North Dargan street in his honor. But for an adjacent funeral parlor, nearly the entire 200 block edifice north of the railroad track – which houses the once famous Lincoln Theatre – is occupied by Thompson interests and investments.

Thompson said that he, in return, has tried to be a mentor to up and coming barbers, masons, businesspeople, parents,



Pictured under the newly name street sign is with Rev. Thompson along his sons Sheldon, William Jr., and Gradlin

mission workers, preachers and pastors and his effect on students and newcomers to these fields has exceeded his intentions. From wherever he has walked and gained expertise, he willingly shares his knowledge for the betterment of the overall journey. As a master barber who learned the trade at his father's feet in the Spring Branch community of Pamplico, he has eclipsed great heights to train and graduate more than 500 barbers who now practice throughout the country.

Rendered an amputee four years ago, Thompson said he momentarily lost his balance but never his focus. "My spiritual intellect has never been shaken because I am moved only by what God is doing in, with, through and for my life. I have learned to not lean unto my own understanding but to acknowledge and rely on Him to direct my paths," he said, adding that despite other health challenges (including a few more chemotherapy treatments to go as of this writing) he has not missed a beat from this life walk.

Pastor of Mt. Clair Missionary Baptist Church for the past four plus decades, Thompson said he plants seeds every day in a variety of ways, expecting a good, plentiful harvest whenever the time is ripe. "My father (Willie) was the first generation barber. While I worked for the railroad I was contemplating opening a barbershop and when I did I became the second generation, not foreseeing that in 1970 it would become a reality and in 1988 a full fledged school. My sons and grands are the third and fourth," he told.

A history buff, Rev. Thompson recalled how novice preachers got their first pastorate positions – from the endorsement or nod of a senior clergy – and how one's



Rev. and Mrs. Thompson at the Dedication Service of the street being named after him

word served as contract. He also remembered the first telephone system comprised of four party lines.

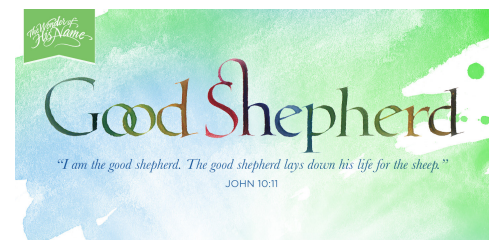
Fast forward to today, the award-winning self avowed 'late bloomer' has encompassed what seems to be light years of achievements. A 1954 graduate of Pamplico High School and 2006 graduate of Morris College with a BA in pastoral ministry, he has served as moderator of the Greet Pee Dee Baptist E&M Association, National Baptist Convention USA Inc, the SC Baptist E&M Convention, member of Mill Branch Masonic Lodge #231, Pee Dee Consistory #197. He and his wife, the former Geneva Eagleton, are the proud parents of four boys, three girls and a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Little legend no more, the Rev. William L. Thompson is a giant of a man.

His youngest son, his namesake, has been hit by a similar fever that plagued his father years ago to open the first barber shop. William Jr. has the innovation bug to revamp modern and classic barbering from traditional techniques. "When you hear the word barber school, it has an Afrocentric stigma attached. When you hear cosmetology school, then there's some really high tuition and other mystiques in the details. We must be careful to not let all that training and knowledge be taken from us for if we allow that, then we will have to get our tuition fees back, give our licenses up, and madness will go on without limit."

But that's another story.



Rev. & Mrs. Thompson at morning worship



HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS ANSWER THE MOST HUMANE SERVICE CALLS

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Rev. Michael Vereen

Although the role of hospital chaplain is simple by definition, the avocation for Carolinas Hospital* volunteer Rev. Michael Vereen is anything but. “The dictionary says my job means ‘a physical presence’ but my work

is much more detailed in practical terms. You see, a chaplain’s function is to bring comfort; to listen; to assist (if necessary). A spiritual presence could mean bring it via scriptural reading, prayer and counseling,” he explained.

And yes, to become such a servant was solely his choice, “Yes, I personally chose to become a chaplain as I understand the need for this in our hospitals as well as in our communities,” he said.

When it comes to ministering or praying for patients or families or people of diverse

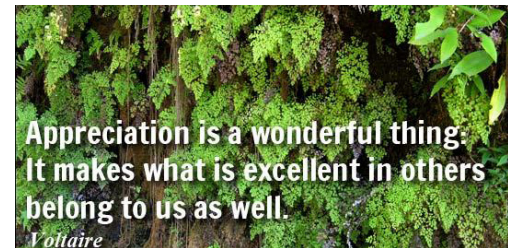
denominations or faiths, Vereen said CHS’ Chaplain Program is sensitive to diversity. “We do not discriminate. Our chaplain staff is made up of clergy from various faith backgrounds and denominations. Thus, when patients or family make specific requests we try to accommodate their requests.”

In providing the utmost care for patients, he said the hospital answers to the call or need for well rounded, trained chaplains. “Generally, when we as humans face an obstacle such as a sickness and uncertainty in life, beyond the physical, we need emotional and spiritual healing. This is when the need for a chaplain comes into the organizational structure of a healthcare facility.”

There is no typical day or work week for a hospital chaplain, because, as Vereen says, “At Carolinas we serve as volunteers, as needed in an on call duty capacity. No one can predict when an emergency will occur. Some times are busier than others so it all depends on the need,

but the most commonly asked questions of patients is “will you pray with or for me?”

When asked what his biggest weakness is when serving patients, Vereen expressed uncertainty. “I’m not sure it’s a weakness, but the feeling of not being able to do enough for a patient is overwhelming, especially when their illness is critical or terminal. But I’ve learned to rely mainly on the most useful job materials for my role: A healthy spiritual and mental attitude, knowing my limitations and God’s unlimited omnipotence and sharing that with all.”



Saluting Our Veterans

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID WORKS ANYWHERE BUT TAKE TRAINING FIRST

Submitted by SC Thrive Staff

According to a report released by the Department of Veterans Affairs, twenty-two veterans die from suicide every day in the United States. Over the last ten years the United States has been at war, suicide numbers have surpassed combat deaths according to a study published by the Pentagon. Mental health plays an enormous role in the lives of our friends, brothers, sisters, spouses, children and neighbors returning home from deployments. Mental Health First Aid USA says that thirty percent of military members deployed to the Middle East have returned home with a mental health problem, but less than half of those veterans have received any mental health treatment. It is vitally important that veterans and those working with military and veteran populations understand how to recognize and react to the signs of mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants to recognize signs and impact of substance abuse and mental disorders, offers an action plan to assess a mental health crisis and identifies local resources and organizations to turn to for help. It is an incredibly beneficial training for anyone who works in a social service position, such as in a school, business, church, foodbank, restaurant or library. South Carolina is 1 of 4 states to have less than .01% of the population trained in Mental

Health First Aid. However, the state has one of the highest veteran populations in the nations, according to the VA. Mental Health First Aid is important to veterans and therefore important to South Carolina.

Knowledge is power and we must understand mental health issues so that we might be able to assist in recovery. Service members, providers and the public must be educated so that they might make a difference in the lives of the military members and veterans around them. SC Thrive offers Mental Health First Aid trainings throughout South Carolina. Find a class near you at scthrive.eventbrite.com or send an email to training@scthrive.org.

The VA says that eleven percent of South Carolina’s veterans are women and SC Thrive recognizes the need for support initiatives focused on women. We have launched a peer support program called Table TalkTM: Color Me Camo in partnership with the Texas-based organization Grace After Fire. Table TalkTM: Color Me Camo is a female support group for women who have served or are currently serving in the military. If you are interested in being a facilitator for Table Talk: Color Me Camo, or in joining a group, contact Melissa Watson at

mwatson@scthrive.org or Lance Newman at lnewman@scthrive.org.

Mental Health isn’t the only tool with which SC Thrive can assist Military Members and Veterans; SC Thrive is connecting South Carolina’s veterans with the resources they earn for their service, such as VA Education and Housing Benefits and help requesting their military records, like DD 214s. We can help individuals apply for resources such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and file their Federal and State Income Taxes. We also partner with other wonderful organizations to assist the multitudes of military members, veterans and their families that live in our state. To learn more about helping military members and veterans near you by partnering with SC Thrive, reach out to Lance Newman at lnewman@scthrive.org or Steven Diaz at sdiaz@scthrive.org.

(See ad on page 43)



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NEW DIRECTOR PASSIONATELY FOCUSED ON VETERANS

by Anna Bowman



Corbett "CB" Anderson

It has been said time and time again, "If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life". Corbett "CB" Anderson, Executive Director of the Veterans Resource Center of Florence, knows this to be all

so true. Corbett, himself an honorably discharged Vietnam "era" US Army veteran who also served in South Korea from 1969-1970, truly understands the needs of veterans in the Pee Dee. Anderson is not only the executive director, but the founder of the Veterans Resource Center, which is a 501c-3, non-profit organization. The vision for the center came from Corbett who has worked with veterans over the years. "After working with veterans for several years, I realized that there needed to be a central location for veterans to go to in order to get information on services available to them," he said, adding, "Many veterans know that there are services available to them but have no idea where to go or how to apply for these services – some veterans don't even have a clue of anything that is available."

The mission of the Veterans Resource Center (VRCF), which is located at Lighthouse Ministries, 201 East Elm Street, in Florence, is to be a one-stop location and referral source of information for Pee Dee area veterans. "We try to assist the veterans of the seven counties in the Pee Dee area: Florence, Marion, Dillon, Williamsburg, Darlington, Chesterfield, and Marlboro counties. Veterans must have a copy of their DD-214 (discharge) and the character must be "honorable." Corbett adds that the center serves both male and female veterans.

The center isn't a place where veterans are handed literature with contact information, but a place where they can find assistance. Some of the services the center assists "qualifying" veterans with include, past due rent/utilities, issues pertaining to eviction notices, unemployment/under employment, financial management, legal problems, homelessness, medical and psychological problems, along with other situations. "If things cannot be done in our office, we know exactly where to send the veteran and who they should talk with once they arrive. In many cases, we make the phone call before the veteran leaves our office and generally, we are talking to the directors of many of the agencies and not just a receptionist, which tends to expedite the process," Corbett said.

Corbett is grateful to the community partners that work with the VRCF to ensure that services/programs are available for veterans: Alston-Wilkes Society, ECHO, County VA Officers, Dorn VA, local VA clinic, Goodwill, House of Hope, Hope Health, Lighthouse Ministries, Mercy Medicine, Naomi Project, Pee Dee Mental Health, Poynor Adult Education, SC DEW, DMV, SC Legal Services, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Thrive, Social Security, VFW, American Legion, Purple Heart, and DAV; just to mention a few.

The Veterans Resource Center of Florence is also grateful to its donors, and welcomes all donations. Anyone who would like to send a tax deductible donation to the center, can make checks payable to, VRCF, 201 East Elm Street, Florence, SC 29506. For additional information, contact Corbett "CB" Anderson, at 843-629-0830.



VETERAN NOT BEING TREATED GRATEFULLY

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Cpl. Ken Moore & his wife

Cpl. Ken Moore has always taken care of himself and his own. And over time that ownership grew to include his new family (composed of wife and children), community and ultimately, country.

Joining the US Army in 1948 at age 18, the Alexandria, VA native set out to explore new worlds and perhaps even try to conquer some, like most other fellow soldiers. After some six years in service, he launched a civilian career that spanned turns in law enforcement, as limousine driver (Red Skelton was his favorite fare), personal bodyguard and Smithsonian night watchman, all those 56 years married to Doris, who convinced him to retire from the high life in 1991.

"My two brothers and I joined different branches of service around the same time and everything Uncle Sam asked us to do, we did it... readily, ably, immediately. When they sent me to Korea to fight, I went selflessly; I actually wanted to go, ending up fighting two major battles. I never asked for or used anything (i.e. GI Bill) in return because I was always able to

maintain and take care of everything myself; I needed nobody's help," he said.

So he never asked for any. He never knocked on a VA door, rang a VA doorbell or wrote a letter to VA officials because he was indeed self sufficient. That was then. Together the family flowed through life until Doris hit a bump in the road with colon cancer, then he, in his usual watchful demeanor, stood stoically by her side and helped her beat that bout.

Dissatisfied with Florida living, they sought comfort for their golden years elsewhere and ended up in Florence eight years ago. When isolated areas of his health began to falter, he continued to rely on private insurance and doctors. That was then.

Now, his hearing has become impaired, not long after which, his heart has required five stints and a pacemaker due to blockage. His eyes developed cataracts which have been surgically corrected, but while putting out those fires, other health issues arose and with the depletion of personal finances on their fixed income, he turned to the Veterans Administration, because he needs them now.

"My church referred me to (veterans' advocate/former Florence County VA officer) Rick Walden after I had been waiting 20 months

for an appointment at Dorn {VA Center in Columbia}. Caught up in the backlog of paperwork and delivery of services, Moore said he contacted his state representative and an aide who went to the VA, all to no avail.

"Everything seems double or triple or more now. The paperwork, the waiting, the unreturned phone calls, all of it is compounded it seems. I could use some real VA help now that I'm a diabetic, my lungs are underperforming, my skin is suffering some type of condition and I really need their help," he listed.

Add to that his early onset dementia, need for an electric wheelchair as varicose veins in his legs are causing malfunctions and more health challenges are looming. "We have a little hope that the VA will fix our house and install a ramp" which needs retrofitting to accommodate certain equipment.

While Walden and other individuals and groups fight for these and other related causes, the need is still great for public input. After all, the battles he fought through the military was for the common good and freedoms for all to enjoy. Now he seems left to fight alone the biggest fight of his life – that being the fight for his life and livability. He is still knocking.

CONSIDER CONSOLIDATION FOR A SIMPLER RETIREMENT

Saving for retirement is something that many people have high on their priority list. The way people save for retirement can certainly vary a great deal, but one of the most common, and beneficial, ways is to participate in a company-sponsored retirement program, such as a 401(k) plan.

Today, most companies typically offer some sort of optional retirement program in which their employees can participate to save for retirement. These plans offer a convenient, and often tax advantaged, way to save. While company-sponsored retirement plans make a lot of financial sense for employees, the rate at which people change jobs today may pose a problem in some cases.

Recent studies have found that people are changing jobs frequently these days. In fact, Baby Boomers born between 1957 and 1964, on average, held 11 jobs between the ages of 18 and 44. Younger workers are also changing jobs as a way of advancing in their careers. A byproduct of all this job changing is that there may be a good deal of retirement money left behind at former employers.

When someone changes jobs and has been participating in an employer's 401(k) plan, he/she has to make a decision regarding what to do with their retirement plan distribution. If he/she does nothing, it remains with the employer's plan. If he/she has changed jobs a few times, that means he/she can potentially have several pots of retirement money spread around in numerous plans. This can be cumbersome when trying to keep track of how much is saved and knowing how each account is performing.

While leaving money in a former employer's plan may be an option, one way to gain more control of those assets is to consolidate the

retirement funds into a single individual retirement account (IRA). By rolling over the assets and consolidating them into an IRA you can:

- Develop a simplified strategy for your retirement assets that includes all your savings.
- More easily track your investment performance.
- Potentially reduce the cost of working with multiple companies.
- More easily plan for your retirement income and calculate your required distributions when you retire.
- Simplify your tax reporting.

Of course, in some cases consolidating your retirement assets may not be appropriate, but if it is, you may be able to simplify your retirement planning and gain more control over your assets in the long run through consolidation.

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 and jacord@ft.newyorklife.com. Neither New York Life, nor its agents, provides tax, legal, or accounting advice. Please consult with your professional advisor for tax, legal or accounting advice.

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STEPS TO PREPARE FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP



Homeownership is a dream for many Americans, and maybe it's one of yours as well. Making this dream a reality requires hard work, dedication and the proper preparation. You must figure out where you want to live, what type of home you desire, what you can afford and also how your credit rating may impact your home-purchasing goals.

Your credit rating can play an important role in the home buying process, and your creditworthiness could also affect the amount that you can borrow, the interest rates you will qualify for and your ability to obtain a mortgage loan in the first place. A consumer's credit is one of the biggest factors that goes into the mortgage-application process before applying for a loan, it is crucial to get your credit in the best shape you possibly can. To help you build good credit and increase your ability to obtain better loan terms, listed below are a few tips for improving your credit:



Pay your bills on time

Late or missed payments on any of your credit accounts, such as credit cards, mortgages and other loans, could cause a drop in your credit score. To prevent this, make your payments on time. Making additional payments whenever possible and

paying extra toward the principal balance will also help to keep a good payment history and decrease the payoff timeline. Using an Extra Principal Payment Calculator tool can also help you calculate the savings that come with paying extra - generating additional motivation to do so.

Minimize any outstanding debt and keep existing debt manageable. Paying your statement balances in full instead of letting debt accumulate can improve your credit scores, which may result in better terms being offered from lenders. Lenders often check your credit report when you apply for a loan and measure the amount of debt you're carrying against the loan amount they've requested. Excessive debt is one of the factors that could cause a lender to decline your application.

Avoid applying for unnecessary credit

Credit applications can appear as inquiries on credit reports, which may suggest to lenders that an applicant is taking on additional debt. Be aware of advertising or sales promotions that offer purchase discounts if you apply for a credit card. Even these cards could show up as inquiries on your credit report. These inquiries remain on credit reports for two years. Instead of applying for additional credit, use your existing lines of credit to showcase your responsible credit management by paying bills on time and paying off the debt quickly.



"There are a lot of steps you can take to improve your credit, but it's important to remember that credit scores don't change overnight. It takes time to increase your credit rating, and while it may feel like a slow-moving effort, it is well worth the wait when you get to open the door to a home of your own for you and your family.

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HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

A CHILD OF ABJECT HAITIAN POVERTY, THIS DOCTOR TURNS IT AROUND EVERYDAY

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



Germina Suffrant, MD

It's a long, long way from the dusty, little village of Desdunes, Haiti, to the halls of Carolinas Hospital System in Florence. Growing up in Desdunes in a two-room mud hut with a dirt floor, a thatched

roof and no electricity or running water, little Germina Suffrant never dreamed there would be a day when she would graduate from two universities and carry the title "doctor" in front of her name.

Dr. Suffrant was born to a 16-year-old mother who'd never been to school a day in her life and to a 20-year-old father who dropped out of school and became a field worker when she was born. However, what her parents lacked in education and money, they more than made up for in dreams and vision. When she was two, her father left the family and moved to New Jersey to escape the poverty of their village. He sent money home every month. A short time later, her mother left to join her father and for the next six years, Germina was raised by her grandmother in the little mud house they called home. "We were poor, but I always had plenty to eat and lots of love," she said. Over the next six years, her mom and dad sent photos of themselves and as much money as they could to her grandmother. "I always knew I would join them one day; I just didn't know when," she said.



Dr. Suffrant with her mom at a wedding

Around late 1984, her grandmother died of what Dr. Suffrant now believes to be cervical cancer. "I watched her suffer and die with no medical attention and it made a lasting impression on my life," she said. "I realized later that becoming a women's physician was largely influenced by that experience."

In January 1985 at only eight years old, she stepped off the plane in New Jersey and was greeted by a foot of snow and two strangers that she had not seen in six years who said they were her parents. "I was freezing. I couldn't speak a word of English, and to top it off, I had another major surprise, a little sister named Patricia," she said. "Patricia was really excited about having a playmate, but couldn't understand why I was calling her parents, 'mama and daddy.'"

"I grew up speaking Creole, so when I started school it was a bit of a challenge," she said. The language barrier wasn't the only challenge she faced in her new hometown of East Orange, NJ. "The mid-eighties was not a good time to be a Haitian in America," she said. "Word on the streets was that Haitians were responsible for bringing AIDS to America. We were shunned and avoided. On top of that, our neighborhood was so bad that my sister and I were not allowed to play outside."



Dr. Suffrant and her family on vacation

Long story short, school became her life. "We couldn't go out and play so we studied. My mom worked during the day and my dad worked at night. Both were factory workers and one of them was always home with us. As immigrants, they knew that the key to getting ahead in America was to get an education. I had a parent at every school function and every PTA meeting," she said. "My dad would go over every report card and if an 'A' dropped to a 'B,' I had some explaining to do."

After high school, Suffrant graduated from Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey with a degree in biology. In 2005, she received her medical degree from Howard University in Washington, DC and completed her residency at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta.



Dr. Suffrant at an orphanage in Haiti, which she visited April 2015

Dr. Suffrant has been back to her poverty-stricken homeland of Haiti on a few occasions, on a medical mission trip to Port-au-Prince. "I would be delivering a baby or performing surgery and the lights would go off in the hospital," she said.

"Those fortunate enough to get to the hospital had to bring their sheets and towels with them, as well as a cup for drinking."

Dr. Suffrant's two sisters, Patricia and Beatrice, also have college educations. Over the years, her mother taught herself how to read and write and both of her parents became U.S. citizens. "I am where I am because of the sacrifices my parents made," she said. "My mom could stretch a \$20 bill for a mile and she did so on more than one occasion." Today they live in Irvington, NJ where her father drives a taxi cab and her mother is a housekeeper in a nursing home.

Dr. Suffrant is associated with Carolinas OB/GYN Associates and is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. She is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, please call 629-1791. Most insurance plans accepted.

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OR
THE SLOWEST
FORM OF POISON."

Ann Wigmore

PREVENTION OF LYME DISEASE IS BEST CURE

Submitted by Dr. David Gittens

Definition

Lyme disease is an infection transmitted by the bite of ticks carrying the spiral-shaped bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The disease was named for Lyme, Connecticut, the town where it was first diagnosed in 1975 after a puzzling outbreak of arthritis. The organism was named for its discoverer, Willy Burgdorfer. The effects of this disease can be long-term and disabling unless it is recognized and treated properly.

Description

Lyme disease, which is also called Lyme borreliosis, is a vector-borne disease. This term means that it is delivered from one host to another. It is also classified as a zoonosis, which means that it is a disease of animals that can be transmitted to humans under natural conditions. In this case, a tick bearing the *Borrelia burgdorferi* organism literally inserts it into a host's bloodstream when it bites the host to feed on its blood. Currently some scientists think that Lyme disease can be transmitted by mosquitoes, from pets to humans and in rare cases directly from one person to another.

Controversy clouds the true incidence of Lyme disease because no test is definitively diagnostic for the disease, and many of its symptoms mimic those of so many other

diseases. Cases of Lyme disease have been reported in 49 of the 50 states.

In the United States, Lyme disease accounts for more than 90% of all reported vector-borne illnesses. It is a significant public health problem and continues to be diagnosed in increasing numbers. In addition, some epidemiologists believe that the actual incidence of Lyme disease in the United States may be 5-10 times greater than that reported by the CDC. The reasons for this difference include the narrowness of the CDC's case definition as well as frequent misdiagnoses of the disease.

The risk for acquiring Lyme disease varies, depending on what stage in its life cycle a tick has reached. A tick passes through three stages of development-larva, nymph, and adult-each of which is dependent on a live host for food. Nymphs are very active from spring through early summer, at the height of outdoor activity for most people. Because they are still quite small (less than 2 mm), they are difficult to spot, giving them ample opportunity to transmit *Borrelia burgdorferi* while feeding. Although far more adult ticks than nymphs carry *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the adult ticks are much larger, more easily noticed, and more likely to be removed before the 24 hours or more of continuous feeding needed to transmit

Borrelia burgdorferi.

At Gittens Health and Wellness, we use Applied Kinesiology to detect the presence of Lyme disease and cold laser to eliminate it from your body. Over the past year, we have noticed a steady rise in the number of cases seen in our office, but I am happy to report that all have been resolved satisfactorily. If you are having joint pain or swelling, flu-like symptoms, stiff neck, fatigue, bull's eye rash, muscle numbness, face drooping or have been bitten by a tick, you should be checked for the presence of Lyme disease.

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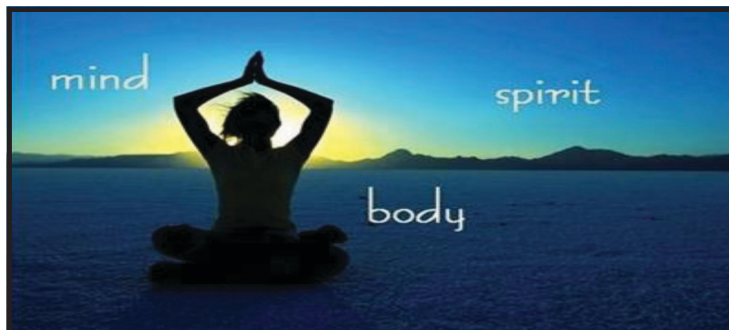
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SPECIALTY DISORDERS DEMAND SPECIALTY TREATMENTS

by Anna Bowman



Dr. Evelyn Coe

DARLINGTON – Dr. Evelyn Coe, An experienced Family Nurse Practitioner, has had a stellar career in the medical field for more than three decades and recently opened the Hypertension and Diabetes Clinic. A Darlington Native, Dr.

Coe envisioned having her own clinic where every patient would be treated with respect and dignity regardless of their socioeconomic status, and today that vision is a reality for her clients. Dr. Coe took time out of her very busy schedule to answer questions about her new clinic.

DW: Dr. Coe, why did you decide to start the Hypertension and Diabetes Clinic?

DR. COE: My vision for creating the HPDT Center came many years ago after treating patients with serious health concerns in a rural community setting. Often times, my patients had not been seeing a provider regularly - due to the lack of transportation, income, or just fear of their prognosis. So that by the time the patients would arrive to be seen by me, their issues had been compounded. That's when I

knew something needed to be done, to create a space, an opportunity to prevent and treat hypertension and diabetes - leading causes for cardiovascular disease and other debilitating illnesses.

DW: Your practice focuses on clients with Hypertension and Diabetes, why these two areas?

DR COE: I chose to focus on hypertension and diabetes because these are leading causes of death in the Stroke Belt, an area of the United States known to have high incidences of strokes and cardiovascular disease. The correlation between hypertension and diabetes prompted me to focus on these two areas in my practice and my goal is to do additional clinical research in the future.

DW: What is your professional background in the medical field, the college/university you studied to received your professional training?

DR. COE: I have been in the healthcare field for more than 30 years. I spent more than a decade at Darlington County Public System as a School Nurse; many years as a Staff Nurse for local hospitals (home health, floor nurse); trained in the McLeod ER during my clinical rotations for graduate and post-graduate studies, and served more than a decade in a rural community health setting as a Family

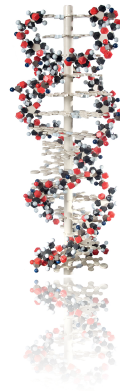
Nurse Practitioner. I am board certified with the ANCC, WOCN, and DOT (industrial/school physicals). I received my license practice nursing at Darlington Hospital, earned my BSN, MSN, and DNP from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston.

DW: What type(s) of services do you provide in your practice to the community?

DR. COE: My practice offers an array of services to the community: screenings for high blood pressure, ankle brachial index testing (blood circulation in lower extremities), women services, prescription management, and above all patient education. We treat individuals first, and promote healthy decisions to reduce non-compliance and untimely hospital visits.

DW: What is your clinic's locations, office hours, and days that your office is opened to the public?

DR. COE: Office hours are generally, Monday - Friday, 9 AM to 5:00 PM. We also offer home visits to patients in some circumstances. We are located at 118 N. Main Street, Darlington. Conveniently located between the Darlington Public Square and the County Library.



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*Back row: Thomas Phillips, M.D., Emily Stonerock, M.D., Steven Coker, M.D.
Front row: Linda Evonne Brogdon, M.D., M. Mitchell Silver, D.O., Heather Draeger, M.D.*

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CARDIOLOGIST HAS BEEN IMPROVING UPON THE ART, SCIENCE EXTENSIVELY

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



Giuseppe Gioia, M.D.

Most people can only dream of spending time in an ancient historic city such as Rome. The history and culture of Rome make it a popular vacation destination. Dr. Giuseppe Gioia was fortunate to have

spent his childhood there, developing his interest in becoming a physician.

Growing up in Rome, and having the opportunity to walk the same streets and halls as great scientists and philosophers, Dr. Gioia developed a passion for medicine. “The education system is much different in Italy. Our high school lasted five years followed by six years of medical school. That was probably the most challenging part of school, the length of time it took to complete. Going into medical school, kidney transplants had just come on the scene, and I thought I would enter the urology field. My uncle worked in England and wanted me to meet an acquaintance

of his. Though he didn’t know how well-known he was, my uncle knew he was a cardiac pathologist. That man was Edgar Olsen, chief cardiac pathologist at the National Heart Hospital in London and editor-in-chief of the British Art Journal.”

After meeting Dr. Olsen, Dr. Gioia spent several months working with him before deciding to move to London and pursue cardiology. Dr. Olsen’s popularity and influence in the medical field made him an ideal mentor for Dr. Gioia, who became an Interventional Cardiologist. His additional work and studies in pediatric cardiology also allowed him to work with patients who had cardiac surgeries at a young adult age.

As a cardiologist, Dr. Gioia had the opportunity to work in Germany. “While there,” he explained, “I had the opportunity to train in performing balloon angioplasty, which was a newer procedure at the time. After that, I went back to work in Italy until I moved to the United States for further training.” His wife, Sondra, is living in Italy while taking care of her parents. They have three children, two in medical

school and one in high school. His daughter is specializing in infectious disease in medical school and one of his sons is following in his footsteps, studying cardiology.

Before coming to the United States, Dr. Gioia attended medical school at the Padua Medical School, one of the oldest medical schools in the world. It was built in 1100 A.D. and Galileo taught physics and astronomy there. Dr. Gioia also completed a fellowship in cardiology in Padua. Once in the United States, he completed his residency at the University of Pennsylvania and a fellowship in cardiology at Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia.

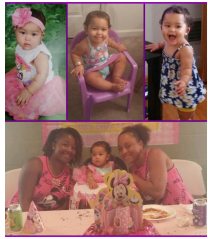
Dr. Gioia is board certified in Cardiovascular Disease and Interventional Cardiology. He is associated with Carolinas Medical Alliance Cardiology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. New patients are welcome. To schedule an appointment, please call (843) 674-4787.

EYEWITNESSES TO CHIROPRACTIC HELP



HOW HAS CHIROPRACTIC CARE IMPROVED YOUR LIFE? When I first began receiving Chiropractic care last year I was unable to get out of bed alone, I was unable to walk straight because my balance was very poor, and I also suffered with horrible, blinding headaches which are all side effects of Chiari Malformation and Syringomyelia, a debilitating brain and spinal cord disease. At this time, which is just over a year of treatment, I very rarely have these horrible headaches. I am now able to get out of bed alone and most days I walk with no balance instability. I feel that I have gained a lot of quality in my daily life since I first began my Chiropractic and Acupuncture treatments. It is so nice to know that I now have a non-surgical treatment plan that will keep me comfortable and keep my pain level manageable, as well as, keep me able to independently do things such as, getting out of bed alone, and walking without any limitations. I know longer feel that brain and spinal cord surgery is the only option (as I was told by other physicians) for treatment of this disease. **WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A**

FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER WHO WAS CURIOUS ABOUT CHIROPRACTIC CARE? I would highly recommend Chiropractic care to anyone who suffers with serious pain conditions. I must admit that I was extremely skeptical about Chiropractic care at first. I went to my first appointment only because I was completely fed-up with all the treatments of modern medicine. I basically figured I didn't have anything to lose! Making the decision to continue with Chiropractic care has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. Prior to beginning the Chiropractic care I was on several pain medications that made me very tired and made me sleep a lot. Brain and Syringomyelia surgeries were the ONLY option that I had been given. Thanks to acupuncture and SOT technique that Dr. Evans performs, my pain level has drastically decreased and I am only taking 1 pain medication. I am now able to do a lot of things independently and I now know that surgery is not the only option that I have for the future treatments. **WHAT HAS PLEASED YOU MOST IN YOUR COURSE OF TREATMENT?** I have been very pleased with my quality of life since I began with Chiropractic care. I am now able to do things that I had once given up. I'm pleased that I don't fall and hurt myself as much. And, I'm also pleased that even though I do have "rotten" days from time to time, the "rotten" days are so much better than they were in the beginning. **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** It is also helpful that Dr. Evans and her staff interact so graciously with the patients. I have felt cared for since I started going got treatments. Dr. Evans is very hands-on and she is "genuinely" concerned with the care of her patients. -- Candice Renee Woolfall



My daughter was a little over a year old and the only baby I knew her age that was not walking. She was not standing well and only took steps if she was completely supported. Dr. Evans did one adjustment on her and she started taking 6 steps at a time that same night! She began standing for minutes at a time. When she was being examined, Dr. Evans explained everything including some misalignments and dysfunctions with her hip, which she stated could have some affect on her delay in walking and stability. She also found other problems and explained them thoroughly while relating them to common conditions that the neurological irritation could cause including sleep disturbances, colic, bed-wetting, asthma and many more. We had no idea of the close relationship between chiropractic care and the health of the nervous system. After adjustment number 2 our daughter, Samia not only has been walking more, but SLEPT ALL NIGHT LONG!!!! We were seriously amazed! Since this had been my first night of full sleep since I was about 6months pregnant with my now 13 month old, something more than think you seemed to be in order! Dr. Jennifer M. Evans is just simply amazing! We would highly recommend her to anyone... She is gentle, patient, encouraging, and highly intelligent. We found that she explained things very well and answered all of our questions thoroughly. She even gives her personal contact information to every parent for peace of mind and encouraged us to call at ANY time! We absolutely love her... She more than a doctor to our family, she IS family! --Hermenia Melton

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



Alan Barrett, PA-C

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



Brinda Chokshi, MD

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



Reynald Garma, MD

PUT A RIBBON ON IT THIS DECEMBER

by Stephanie Caffee, HopeHealth Grants & Communications Manager



Worldwide, UNAIDS estimates that 35 million people are living with HIV. In the United States, 1.2 million people live with the disease and yet it can also be found in our own backyard. In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked South Carolina eighth in the nation on the rate of new AIDS cases annually. World AIDS Day has been celebrated on December 1st since 1998. The World Health Organization created the day to bring attention to the worldwide HIV epidemic. 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.”

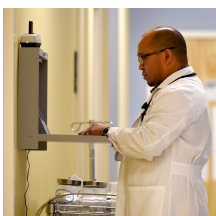
Ways to Get Involved:

1. Pledge to wear the red ribbon on December 1st. HopeHealth will provide all participants with the ribbon.
2. Take a photo of yourself wearing the red ribbon and upload it to Facebook, Twitter & Instagram using the hash tags: #HHRedRibbon
3. Attend our 18th Annual AIDS WALK on Saturday, December 5, 2015 at Central United Methodist Church in Florence. Visit our website for event details.
4. Get tested!
5. Become a patient of HopeHealth.
6. Like us on Facebook to stay up to date on all event details.

HopeHealth organizes awareness events throughout the year to increase the dialogue about HIV and AIDS, decrease stigma, and provide support to individuals living with the disease. Rapid HIV testing is available at HopeHealth sites in Florence, Manning, Orangeburg, and Aiken. In addition to having HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, HopeHealth is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) that provides comprehensive primary care to Clarendon, Florence and Williamsburg counties. For more information about HIV/AIDS services or to participate in the Put A Ribbon On It Campaign, please contact the Community Relations Department at communityrelations@hope-health.org.

HOPE ACCESS OFFERS MORE INCLUSION

Submitted by Stephanie Caffee, Grants and Communications Manager



HopeHealth is excited to announce our latest endeavor to increase access to care. Hope Access now offers health care services Monday through Saturday from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm. The hours of operation are especially well suited for working professionals who are too busy to take off of work during the week for a medical appointment.

The expanded-hour program looks much like our other doctors' offices. A physician and a nurse practitioner staff the center during the week, and a nurse practitioner is available after hours. A patient account representative helps patients complete needed paperwork. Lab services are offered on-site. At a later time, x-ray and SC Thrive services will be added.

Hope Access is not to be confused with an urgent care, however it is open to see patients who do not have a primary care provider and are seeking to establish a medical home. The expanded hours can also be accessed by existing HopeHealth patients. If acute needs or symptoms occur after hours or on Saturday, HopeHealth patients can come to our practice, so that their medical and medication histories are accessible. This is certainly preferred over an urgent care where the providers are unfamiliar with the patient and the medical information. The program also provides a more appropriate, less expensive treatment alternative with same day care to patients with non-emergent problems. The intent is to provide low-risk, frequent utilizers of the emergency department with a consistent medical home, helping to improve the health of individuals, while reducing the number of unnecessary emergency department visits.

Hope Access is currently offered at HopeHealth Family Practice (506 E. Cheves Street) in Florence. We will continue to assess the need for extended hours at each of our HopeHealth sites. For more information about Hope Access, please contact the Community Relations Department at communityrelations@hope-health.org.

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF CONCUSSIONS

Submitted by Elijah Owens, M.D., Neurologist



Dr. Elijah Owens

With fall around the corner, training for football and soccer are well underway. Sports and outdoor activities are good ways to stay healthy and active, but there are risks of injury too, especially with contact sports.

Concussions are common sports-related injuries that frequently go unnoticed or overlooked. Take time to learn the warning signs of concussion to keep your child from experiencing a more serious brain injury.

“A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that alters the way your brain functions,” said DR. Elijah Owens, a Neurologist at Carolinas Neurology. “They can be caused by a blow to the head or when the upper body and head are shaken. Brains of children and teens have not fully developed, putting them at risk for more serious brain damage from a concussion.”

Symptoms of a serious head injury include repeated vomiting, loss of consciousness lasting longer than 30 seconds, a headache that gets worse over time, changes in behavior, changes in coordination such as stumbling or clumsiness, disorientation and slurred speech. If someone is experiencing any of these symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately.

When someone suffers a more mild concussion they could lose consciousness temporarily and be confused. Other common symptoms include: • Headache • Amnesia • Dizziness • Ringing in the ears • Nausea • Vomiting • Slurred speech • Fatigue

Sometimes symptoms will not appear until a few hours or days after the injury, such as difficulty concentrating, memory loss, personality changes, and sensitivity to light and noise, sleep disturbances, feeling depressed and issues tasting and smelling. Anyone with these symptoms should rest and not return to sports or other vigorous activities until they have been checked and approved by a medical professional.

The effects of a concussion are usually temporary however, if a person with a concussion does not take time to heal, they can experience serious complications.

“Resting and slowly returning to regular activities is the best way to recover from a concussion,” said Owens. “If a concussion is left untreated, you risk getting another concussion or permanent brain damage.”

Take precautions when your child participates in contact sports and make sure equipment such as helmets and pads are in good condition. If an athlete experiences a blow to the head and feels disoriented, have them sit out the rest of the game. They are more susceptible to getting another or more serious concussion if they keep playing.

Carolinas Neurology treats many patients with many sports related injuries including concussions. To learn more about concussions or to find a doctor, visit carolinasneurology.com.

Dr. Owens is board certified in Neurology. He is associated with Carolinas Neurology, an affiliate of Carolinas Medical Alliance. He is a member of the medical staff at Carolinas Hospital System. Dr. Owens is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, please call 843-669-0927.

New.

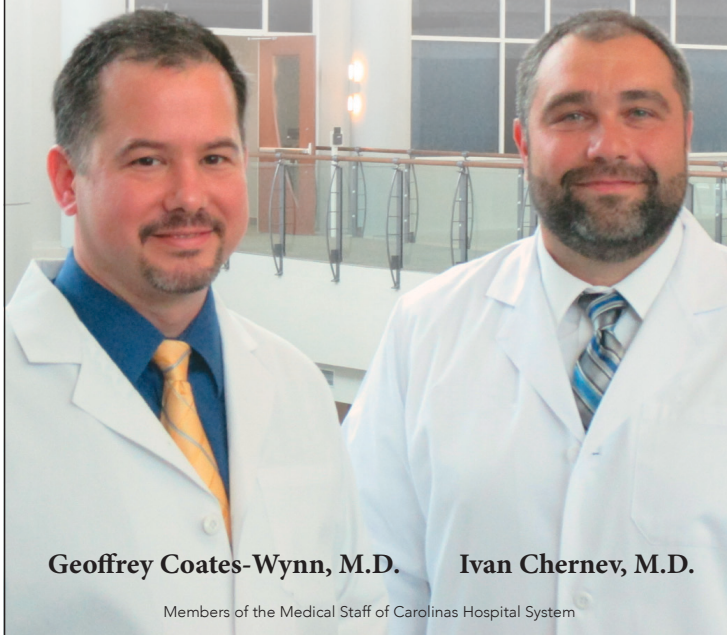
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CHS RECEIVES CHEST PAIN CENTER RE-ACCREDITATION

Submitted by Mark Warrin, Marketing Coordinator for Carolinas Medical Alliance



Carolinas Hospital System has recently received Chest Pain Center Re-Accreditation from the Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care (SCPC), in recognition of the hospital's commitment to the highest standards in the country for heart failure care.

SCPC is different from other accreditation processes: instead of publishing criteria and then judging hospital compliance, SCPC provides hospitals with evaluation tools to examine current operations and promote continual improvement in cardiac care.

"Carolinas Hospital System is committed to making our heart care program the best it can be – and this means pursuing a path of continual improvement: ongoing evaluation of our clinical practices, and investing in the latest tools, techniques and innovations," says Darcy Craven, CEO of Carolinas Hospital System. "When the people who live and work in the Pee Dee Region think about quality heart care, we want them to think of Carolinas Hospital System."

Chest Pain Center accreditation encompasses many facets of the hospital's heart care program: direct patient care, clinical education and strategic planning for future program development. As an accredited Chest Pain Center, Carolinas Hospital System regularly undergoes onsite review of its operations and patient care processes by a panel of SCPC experts.

Chest Pain Center accreditation also links Carolinas Hospital System with other medical specialties and emergency services

– such as EMS, emergency medicine and dispatch services in the area. These integrated relationships mean shorter response times, more seamless communication between emergency responders, and expedited treatment for cardiac patients – when minutes count.

"Chest Pain Center accreditation validates that we continue to exceed the SCPC quality of care measures in acute cardiac medicine and assures a system-wide commitment to the care of patients with chest pain. From EMS activation until discharge, we are dedicated to providing exceptional care to patients who present to our hospital with chest pain," said William L. Cauthen, Jr., Chief of Emergency Services for Carolinas Hospital System, who also serves as medical director of the Florence County EMS.

Carolinas Hospital System was the first hospital in the Pee Dee Region to receive Chest Pain Center Accreditation and is one of just 19 hospitals in South Carolina that carries Chest Pain Center Accreditation.

To learn more about the services at Carolinas Hospital System, visit CarolinasHospital.com

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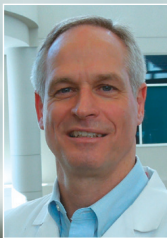
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Members of the Medical Staff of Carolinas Hospital System.

SC MUSIC AWARDS GIVE CONFIRMATION AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES

by Mallory Brayboy



Shera Bass-Housey & Marcus Housey

The first SC Music Awards was held in 2008. After positive returns from their magazine Niche Carolina, Marcus Housey and Shera Bass-Housey wanted to create another avenue for entertainment, specifically for independent artists. “We decided to put together the Award Show to celebrate the magazine and honor people in the music industry within South Carolina”, says Marcus Housey. The award show was also an effort to unite people in the industry for networking. “They come from all over the country”, says Housey. The event is hosted in a different city each year and has taken place in Greenville, Columbia, Charleston, Spartanburg, and most recently in Florence. Shera Bass-Housey was pleased with the city’s reception of the award show. “Florence is a very nice city. The city of Florence showed us a lot of love and we really appreciate that.”

The Award Show features several different categories including Video of the Year, Single of the year, Album of the year, and the best in R&B, Rock, Country, Gospel, and Hip-Hop. Another award, the Indie Grind Award, is a special award open to any independent business, individual, or group that is working hard towards attaining their goals in the industry. The award show also honors two individuals making an impact on the music scene through the “I Am Legend” award. Honorees are chosen by a committee. “We talk about people in the music scene that have paved a way and have a tremendous impact on the community”, says Shera Bass-Housey.

The honorees are chosen based on their work ethic, history, contributions to the community, and most importantly their relationship with

the community. This year’s honorees were DJ Skills (Braxton Brown) and radio host Buddah Rat (Tirek Robinson).



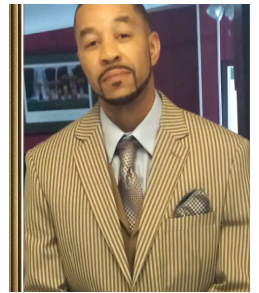
DJ Skills has over 15 years in the dj game. Originally from Florence, he has lived in Atlanta for a period and now calls Charlotte, NC home. Family members introduced Skillz to disc jockeying at an early age. “I fell in love with them. From there it was no going back”, he says. Receiving the “I am Legend” honor was just more motivation for the dj to keep pushing forward towards his goals. He cites his biggest milestone as working with rapper Kanye West. After meeting the artist fresh on the scene the two collaborated for mixtapes, touring, and parties. DJ Skillz plans to continue on as an international dj and knows that his dreams are right above the horizon. Skillz also has a heart for the youth and provides a listening ear and sound advice to students in his hometown who are interested in the entertainment field. “There are so many no’s but all it takes is one yes to make whatever it is you’re working towards become a reality. You just have to prepare yourself for when you get that yes. You may not get that yes again”, says Skillz. He is currently in the process of starting a nonprofit for children that should be up in the coming year.



Tirek Robinson (Buddah Rat)

Buddah Rat was born in Brooklyn, NY and relocated to the Carolinas as an adolescent. He hit the radio waves in 1999 on WYNN 106.3 but his introduction to the music world was actually as a rapper. Signed to Brooktown Records in New Jersey he toured the East coast performing. His performance at the annual fair in Florence attracted the attention of program director Paul Perry who offered him a position as a radio host. Buddah Ratt credits Perry with saving his life. During the time the radio personality had a darker career in the

drug dealing business. “That’s how the name of my show became Rat Trap Radio. I had a real trap”, says Buddah Ratt. “They got me out of the drug house. I went to the radio and I’ve been here ever since.” Having no formal education or training Buddah Ratt says his introduction into radio was the most challenging aspect of his career. “They just kinda stuck me in there and said talk”. What seemed to be a trial was actually a benefit for the host as listeners appreciated the authenticity and rawness of his show. Buddah Ratt speaks to local students, hosts a back-to-school drive, and does a turkey giveaway with Steve Harvey during the Thanksgiving holiday. Receiving the “I am Legend” honor was a special moment for him. “I loved it. People recognized what I was doing. I felt like everything I’ve ever done was in that award.”



This year’s show included performances from Marcus Allen, Silk the Prince, Koolie G, Mo Beatz, and more. Several entertainers to grace the SC Music Awards stage have gone on to become nationally recognized. Benton Blount, winner of Country Artist of the Year 2014, can be seen on the most current season of America’s Got Talent. Model of the Year Jasmine Sanders can be seen in campaigns for Aldo, Garnier Fructis and more. Nominations for the awards begin every February and voting begins in May. Visit www.scmusicawards.com for more information and contact the Housey’s at info@scmusicawards.com for all questions and inquiries.



Braxton Brown (DJ Skillz)





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TEARS OF A TEEN CAN BE DRIED

by Anna Bowman



Tianna Walker

Today, Tianna Walker is a 19 year-old, young adult, looking forward to everyday of her exciting and joyous life – but her journey to become the young radiant person that her family and friends know today – was almost thwarted! In her debut novelette, “Tears of a Teen,” Walker recalls the trauma that once led her, as a teenager, to envision taking her own life!

It was like any ordinary day in the life of a kindergartener when Walker was unexpectedly introduced to a painful lesson that wasn’t a part of the school’s curriculum – Bullying 101. “In kindergarten, I was the nice, shy, chubby cheeked girl. That’s how everyone knew me,” she said. “I was very good at my studies and I would be very polite to my teachers,” but one day her little young life took a horrific detour into the dark abyss of being bullied.

“Everything was going well during our playtime,” recalled Walker, “Until I heard the words, ‘Hey big black gorilla,’” a boy about her age said to her out loud. At first she thought he was talking about a stuffed toy gorilla that was in the corner of the classroom; until he clarified it for her and the entire class. “He pointed at me and said, ‘No, you’re the big black gorilla!’” To her shock, he started referring to her in this way and told other boys to refer to her in the same manner; they even made monkey sounds whenever she passed. To make matters worse, when she told the teacher, she was labeled a “tattle tale,” which just made other kids turn on her, as well.

Unfortunately, school wouldn’t be the only place that Walker faced bullying about her weight, she suffered the same as a Girl Scout. “I was excited about traveling with my Girl Scout Troop to Atlanta to visit such iconic sights as the home where Martin Luther King Jr. was born and to visit the famed Coca-Cola Factory,” said Walker. But cruelty

about her weight would once again rear its ugly head. “I had to share a bed with two other girls and they refused to sleep in the bed with me because of my weight; I cried inside as I slept on the floor, until I was discovered by our chaperone who offered the pull-out bed in her room for me to rest for the night.” As the years progressed, the bullying became more aggressive, however, she didn’t want to stress or aggravate her mother with all of her struggles, and faced the bullying alone – until, the day came when she couldn’t face another day of torment.

Some kids hurry home to do their homework, but Walker rushed home to commit suicide. “School wasn’t supposed to be like this! I considered everyone I loved, especially my beloved mother, Michelle Coe, but I wanted the pain to end that day.” Fortunately, as Walker prepared to end her life, her past offered her a new beginning. “The image of my favorite childhood stuffed teddy bear, Donny, came to me, along with the voice of my late grandmother, telling me to stand up for myself.” Instead of taking her life that day, Walker confided in her mother about the verbal abuse that was occurring at school, and her mother promptly spoke with the school counselor, who offered Walker an opportunity to face her bullies and change her situation for the better.

If Walker’s story sound familiar, suicide is now the 10th-leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 36,000 people in the U.S. kill themselves annually. Nearly 1 million attempt suicide each year.

For young people age 10-24, suicide is the third leading cause of death, according to the most recent data from the CDC.

Today, Tianna, is attending Midlands Technical College in Columbia, SC, where she is majoring in Human Services, and plans to go into the field of Social Work. Walker says to ask anyone being bullied to talk with someone they trust and seek help as soon as possible. You can purchase a copy of, “Tears of a Teen,” by Tianna Walker, on Amazon.com.

BREAKFAST ROTARY GIVING PYA GIANT LEAPS FORWARD

Submitted by Carol T. Adams, Ph. D.



Florence Breakfast Rotary Club may be the smallest Rotary Club in Florence (quite possibly because of the 7:30 a.m. weekly meetings!) but a visitor only has to attend one of the breakfast meetings to see and hear the energy, enthusiasm and humor to know it's a club with a big heart.

When members in this club are asked why they joined Rotary, certainly networking with others is important, but most will say that equally important is the opportunity to make a difference in our community and in our world. The Rotary "service to others" motto is one that is taken seriously. In addition to giving dictionaries to third graders, participating in drug deterrence education in the elementary schools, and providing shoes for deserving school children, this club has now adopted Palmetto Youth Academy. They, too are also making a difference in this community.

For those who don't know, Palmetto Youth Academy (PYA) opened in 2005 after a group of parents became concerned about their children who were falling behind in school. The children did not meet the criteria for special services in public school, as defined by state law, but somehow were not being successful in the larger classrooms where attention to specific learning differences was not possible. These were future leaders who simply needed a different approach to learning, not children who could not learn. Their parents, led by Yvonne Brown-Burgess, explored the possibility of establishing a charter school which would give them some flexibility and creativity in their curriculum. After much hard work, only two years later, they had completed the laborious application process, found a building that could be used for the school, had district approval and were ready to take in their first classes of children in grades 3 through 6. Yvonne Brown-Burgess was named Director of the new school. They expanded in the 2014-15 school year adding K through 2nd grade, and enrollment expanded as well. One of the significant differences in charter schools is that they have the prerogative to use a flexible curriculum. For example, if a child comes in as a 4th grader but is reading on the 2nd grade level, they can put the child in 2nd grade reading for one semester and provide focused attention on bringing that reading up to grade level. Then they spend the remaining semester on grade level curriculum. Classes are small and success is not difficult to attain. Students also have an opportunity to participate in such activities as praise dance, flag team, chorus, drum line and art club...all the things a well-rounded student needs. Indeed, PYA is making a huge difference in the lives of these children.

So, how did these two small groups of diverse individuals intersect? One of the Breakfast Club Rotarians, Larry Bartol, heard about this school a couple of years ago and suggested that the club do some cosmetic "fix-up" for them. A group went out and did some painting and deck repairs. Then, Yvonne was invited to give a presentation at our meeting on what this school really brings to the community. Smart woman, this Yvonne Burgess-Brown. She brought one of the



choral groups with her to perform and the sheer joy in what they were doing was contagious...hearts of the Rotarians were stolen! We wanted to do more. In the 2014-15 school year, backpacks stuffed with all

necessary school supplies were furnished for all the children. Also, with the club's "Happy Feet" program, co-sponsored by Rack Room Shoes, the children were outfitted with new shoes for the school year. Supplies such as copy paper, extra pencils, etc., have been generously donated to the school by various Rotarians. Still, the club wanted to do more. These children had had an enormous impact on Florence Breakfast Rotary members. It was again Larry Bartol who noted their playground—or lack thereof—and he suggested that the club apply for a district grant with matching funds to provide playground equipment. The club responded with a resounding YES! Larry headed up the group and to say that he researched this project is a gross understatement. He came to Rotary with a thousand page tome on playground equipment safety, and members excitedly agreed to help. The district grant was approved and work was underway. Rotarians learned lots about not only putting up playground equipment but also how to spread mulch appropriately! When school reopened, the children were elated over the new playground equipment and reports are that they enjoy it daily.



Making a Difference in our community. That's what it's all about. Both these groups are doing just that. As it's been said many times, reaching out to others not only benefits the one receiving the help, but the one giving it; maybe even more so! And remember, just because the numbers are small, it's the heart that counts! That's what really makes the difference.



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HER EXPERIENCE YIELDS BEST PRACTICES

by Rennie Lunn-McAllister



Pictured from left to right: Monique Maxwell, Terry Bess and Jamall McFarlin. Both Monique and Jamall are Sales and Event Coordinators

Viewing diversity as accepting and respecting others because of differences, Hampton Inn & Suites Director of Sales Theresa “Terry” Bess has found herself in the right line of work. “It is important in the workplace because it demands that we think and move beyond our narrow views and perspectives and see multi-colors instead of two or three colors. Diversity is also important because it can enhance personal and professional development by exposing us to the unfamiliar; thus, creating opportunities to learn and to use different abilities and talents,” she espoused.

“In the hotel industry, we must interact with people on various levels – those in management, those employed in lesser capacities, those who are seeking our services, entrepreneurs as well as consumers, sales representatives and those who provide essential services for the hotel. Therefore, our sensitivity to the needs and services required by others is heightened. Our communication skills are improved and we learn to treat everyone equally and fairly. We develop better understandings of others so that we can respond to them courteously and professionally. Backgrounds and experiences are different, so we are careful not to treat others in manners that can be perceived as discourteous or offensive,” she continued.

Bess finds that diversity is not as emphasized as much as it once was. “Training and discussions must be re-ignited because we can always learn and grow. Technological advances have changed the way that we do many things, and in some ways, have negatively impacted how we interact with others. Too many of our people skills have diminished for reasons such as being overly concerned about our individuality

and success, a lack of intrinsic values and a strong disregard for the rights of others. What is now occurring in the workplace is merely a reflection of our society, in general. It is my hope that there will be a reversal of this trend. Thus, there is definitely room for future enhancements and necessary changes,” she said.

A believer that diversity in the workplace ensures workplace equality, Bess attributes “The team concept, by which we are all linked. We all have different functions to perform, and each of our responsibilities is equally important, regardless as to how insignificant they may appear. The human brain controls much of our bodily activities, but if something were to happen to any one of our body parts, we would not be able to perform at our maximum capacity. The same principle is applicable to workplace diversity and equality – we all have different responsibilities, but one team player cannot do his part effectively if the other team players do not or cannot perform.

Aiming to be the first choice of guests, team members and owners alike, Hampton Inn & Suites wants to be the preeminent global hospitality company and to exhibit and portray excellent service by anticipating clients’ needs and making every experience positively memorable.

Bess has skills transferable from work to leisure, hobbies and avocations. Armed with what she regards as superb marketing skills and public relations strengths, the Tefts Business School graduate says she does a better job as a certified lay speaker and finance chair at Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, as a life member of the Improved Benevolent Elks organization and as Associate Matron in the Magdalene Chapter of Order of Eastern Star. A former personnel specialist for Sears and computer systems instructor for McLeod Health, she enjoys working with older adults and nursing home residents.

HILTON GARDEN INN WELL ESTABLISHED

by Mallory Brayboy



Pictured left to right: Craig Addison, Food and Beverage Coordinator, Melissa Banks, Mike T. Torris, Chef and Mark Green, Banquets Supervisor

The Hilton Garden Inn opened its doors to Florence in December of 2005. The hotel is one of twelve brands under Hilton Worldwide. Melissa Banks is the Director of Sales at the Inn where she is directly involved with negotiating rates for corporate travel and group events such as reunions, conventions, and weddings. She also assists clients in coordinating meetings and events held in the hotel’s banquet hall and meeting rooms. Originally from Huntington, WV, Banks has been in Florence 24 years and at the Hilton Garden Inn since May 2005. Prior to working at Hilton Garden Inn Banks was the Director of Catering at Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites in Florence until the management company sold the property in 2004.

The Hilton Garden Inn has 186 sleeping rooms and more than 3,000 square feet of flexible meeting and banquet space. Amenities also include a full service food and beverage department that caters to banquets and meetings and the hotel’s onsite restaurant, The Garden Grille and Bar. Banks say the banquet hall is primarily used for meetings during the weekdays and social events during the weekends, however there is no limit to utilizing the facility. “We have a banquet team who sets up and breaks down the rooms. These team members also are here to assist the clients and their guests during the entire event”, she said. The Hilton has a variety of tables to accommodate seating for classroom, U-shaped, conference and banquet seating. Also available are audio and visual equipment.

Banks says her favorite part of the job is the many people she meets and interacts with. “I have return clients who have weekly meetings and clients who’ve never booked an event in their lives. They’re so appreciative when the team gives them direction and professional advice. Hilton Garden Inn Florence is ranked #6 in overall satisfaction out of all 585 hotels of the same brand around the world. A survey is emailed to every guest where the Hotel is scored on items such as check-in efficiency, comfort of the beds, and quality of service. “We’re grateful to have such wonderful team members. We take pride in that ranking but we strive for the #1 spot”, says Banks.

Many workers at the Hilton have been with the company since its opening in 2005. Hilton Worldwide provides an extensive training program for each department. Before any new hire can start work they must view training videos and complete a series of online classes pertaining to their department to receive a certificate of completion. “A nice feature about the online classes with Hilton Worldwide University is any employee can increase their knowledge about any department. If one of our servers in the restaurant were interested in learning more about hotel sales, they’re permitted to take any of the classes online”, says Banks.

The branch’s management company, Raldex, Inc. Hospitality Group is a local company whose owners reside in the area. Raldex Hospitality currently owns 4 hotels in the Florence and is working on plans for a fifth property.





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DOES MY ELDERLY PARENT NEED IN-PATIENT REHABILITATION?

When elders suffer a serious fall, injury or medical trauma, they may need to live at a rehabilitation center for some period of time.

Inpatient rehabilitation is a rehabilitation service offered to elderly people in a residential setting, rather than to people who travel to a clinic for rehabilitation appointments. These facilities are called Inpatient Physical Rehabilitation Centers. Inpatient facilities could be located inside of hospitals or senior housing, such as assisted living facilities and nursing homes.

These centers provide around-the-clock treatment and supervision. Their progress is continuously monitored. In some cases, inpatient treatment programs stand a better chance of success. The types of ailment that might be best treated (check with your doctor for the best advice) include:

- Fracture or broken hip
- Parkinson's Disease
- Joint injury or replacement aneurysm
- Stroke
- Neurological conditions
- Arthritis of the spine and other joints
- Brain injury
- Tumor/Cancer
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Nerve impingement
- Amputation

The goal is to help the elderly patient return to his/her maximum functional potential after suffering a life-altering event.

Inpatient physical rehabilitation centers are well equipped to conduct various therapies. Therapies are conducted by health care workers such as rehab physicians, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, rehab nurses and social workers.

Treatments can range from re-gaining communication skills, improving mobility, strength training for using wheelchairs and walkers, carrying out daily activities (such as bathing and dressing), improving muscle function and emotional support to help the elderly patients cope with the alterations in their life.

Treatments are broken down into three main categories:

- Physical Therapy (PT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
- Speech-Language Pathology (SLP)

In an inpatient physical rehabilitation program, patients typically have a very structured day. Part of the day is devoted to followup medical care which is designed to address ongoing physical issues, and part of the day involves physical and occupational therapy to help the patient build up strength and skills.

Duration of treatment varies depending on the severity of the condition and potential for improvement. Generally, significant results can be achieved in four to six weeks. However, this differs widely depending on the condition being treated and the patient's involvement in his/her rehabilitation program.

Some inpatient rehabilitation centers may include a falls clinic, in which a physical therapist provides treatment, assessment and intervention to those who are at high risk of falls. This includes looking at the home environment to increase safety and providing education to reduce risks.



SKILL SWAP: HOW GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDKIDS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER



Known for their wisdom and patience, grandparents pass down skills, knowledge and stories to both their children and grandchildren. Conversely, grandparents can also learn from

their grandkids, especially when it comes to technology. Traditional skills and new trades and tools alike, both grandparents and grandchildren have a talent to bring to the table.

Whether they live in the same city or must rely on technology to communicate, grandparents, grandchildren and even parents can come together to learn from each other. In honor of celebrating family all year round, Intel offers some suggestions on activities for a grandparent-grandchild skill swap:

Savvy skills from grandchildren:

Capturing memories. Grandparents are all about capturing memorable moments in photo form. While they most likely know how to use a point and shoot camera, they may not have mastered the art of a tablet or smartphone camera. Grandkids are experts when it comes to technology and will love spending time teaching grandma and grandpa how to take pictures, edit and create digital albums with them.

Friendly competing. Many grandparents love playing cards and board games. Some even join clubs where they get together with friends to play games like Bingo and Bridge. Grandparents may also enjoy the digital games that their grandchildren are always playing. Then, even

when families are miles apart, they can still enjoy a little friendly competition through group or one-on-one digital games.

Reading redefined. Grandparents grew up in a world of hard copy newspapers, magazines and books and aren't always familiar with today's e-books and digital reading platforms. Grandkids can help Grandma and Grandpa set up a digital library on their tablet, All-in-One PC, 2 in 1 or smartphone and download a few of their favorite books, magazines or newspapers.

Passed down pastimes from grandparents:

Real home cooking. Make sure your secret family recipes are kept within the family. Grandkids can create a digital archive of grandma and grandpa's recipes on their tablet, PC, 2 in 1 or smartphone while grandparents teach them how to create the delicious feast from scratch. Spotlight storytelling. Grandparents can spread their family history and make their life story last for generations when they share it with their grandchildren, interview style. As they talk about their childhood, school, career and more, the kids can take notes on their device or record the story, pairing anecdotes with photos to eventually create a digital memory book. The whole family will be able to look back and enjoy these memories for years to come.

Learning lost arts. There are certain skills learned in the grandparents' generation that some would consider "lost arts" today. Boy Scouts, etiquette class and home economics are not as common as they used to be. Grandparents can spend time teaching their grandkids these valuable skills, such as tying their favorite knots learned in scouts, sewing a button or a patch on a pair of pants, table manners and the art of writing a well-crafted thank you card. Grandkids can take notes as they learn to help them remember in the future.

Family time is precious. Take advantage of these ideas to broaden your horizons as both a grandparent and a grandchild.



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LIVING IN NEUTRAL

Submitted by Randy Cole



CEO, Randy Cole

One of the most interesting debates going on in many states and communities today is that of choosing marijuana legalization or continued prohibition. Our state is beginning to wrestle with this question, often passionately on both sides and it is not a simple or easy one. I am often asked for my perspective on marijuana legalization as a substance abuse professional and I continue to have strong feelings about the overall negative consequences of legalization on the members of our community and the community as a whole.

There is a great deal of research that demonstrates the negative consequences of marijuana use, particularly by youth. Most concerning is that the potency of today's marijuana has increased nearly 400% since a generation ago, significantly increasing the levels of its negative consequences.

The human brain does not completely mature until the mid-twenties and marijuana use can affect its development by inhibiting its growth which adversely results in smaller brains, lower test scores, memory loss, increased anxiety and depression, lower IQs and it is addictive as well. One of the most distinct and defining responses I refer to in answering the question of legalization is to ask someone to name who they truly admire and respect in their lives. Who are their heroes or role models?

I then ask what association do their role models and heroes have with marijuana and it becomes quickly obvious that there is most often none at all. Why would that be, such little association between respect, accomplishment, success and marijuana? In large part because one of the simplest definitions of marijuana use is that it slips you, your life and behavior into neutral. With today's world and lifestyles moving at a faster and more competitive pace than ever, do you want to simply live your life in neutral?

I hope you too want a full and prosperous life for yourself, family and loved ones and marijuana use quite honestly will neutralize your ability to reach your fullest potential. In the coming months you will hear more and more in regards to the legalization movement locally, statewide and nationally. I hope you will give the issue your due diligence and ask yourself "is neutral what I want out of life?"



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EMBRACE YOUR "NATURAL" BEAUTIFUL

by Anna Bowman



Jeannine Rush

During her 24 years as a cosmetologist, Jeannine Rush, the owner of Embrace Natural Hair Salon and a salon owner for the past 18 years, has seen hairstyles come and go, but five years ago, she witnessed the emerging birth or rebirth, of a wave of women desiring to wear their hair in its natural state. No stranger to this latest hair revolution, she was excited to assist her customers with their

transition to a "chemical free" hairstyle.

Since 2002, Rush ditched hair relaxers, saying, "I've been relaxer free since 2002, started wearing my hair in locs, and began to educate myself about natural hair and natural health," she said. "I fell in love with being natural, and my goal was to help women find their natural curl pattern and to learn what products would work best for their type of style." Rush wanted her customers to not only find a style they liked, but she wanted them to be able to confidently wear natural hairstyles that would enrich their overall beauty and confidence for weeks. Her most requested natural hair style is the twisted up-do.

In 2012, Rush, and her expertly trained staff, began to operate solely as a natural hair care salon. Her former business, Progressive Image Salon, was re-Christened as Embrace Natural Hair Salon, is located at 3336 West Palmetto Street in Florence.

The young entrepreneur actually didn't start out to become a salon owner; in fact she started out to follow in her mother's footsteps of becoming a nurse. But fate would step in and change her destiny. "I originally started technical school as a nursing student, because my mother was a nurse, and my grandmother worked as a home health care provider, and she had dreamed of becoming a nurse. However, in her second semester as Davidson County Community College in Lexington, NC, she overheard students were signing up for cosmetology to become make-up artist – I was instantly hooked!

Rush is elated about her upcoming Fourth Annual Natural Hair Expo, to be held November 21, 2015, from 11 am-5pm at the SIMT Conference Center, located behind Florence-Darlington Technical College, in Florence. The Expo grew out of her desire to teach others about caring for their natural hair. "I decided to create an expo to bring about a greater awareness on a larger scale, because I truly enjoy catering to my clients." Since the inception of her expo, Rush, has educated thousands about caring for the health of their natural hair. An enthusiastic Rush outlines some of the highlights of her upcoming expo. "People can expect to be educated on natural hair and natural wellness. They will learn how to start the process, which is called "transitioning" in the natural hair world," she explained. "They will be introduced to a host of styles (including styles for children). Additionally, the expo attendees will learn how to use food as medicine and how to make their supplements. The workshops will also include diverse topics, such as achieving a healthy financial status; an African Fashions Runway Show; and various vendors selling clothes, jewelry, artwork, make-up demonstrations, homemade products and natural health products.

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Sat. November 21, 2015 at the Dillon Wellness Center Admission is free! There will be over 60 vendors with all types of goodies. New this year – the Yellow Jessamine Garden Club will feature baked goods, casseroles, cookies all in an area called Santa’s Kitchen. Some of the finest cooks and bakers are ready to help homemakers and hostesses stay out of the kitchen on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day.

Many of the prepared dishes are already frozen, ready to take home. Again, Santa will visit there, carriage rides will be the rave and a magic elf who will do children’s magic shows at 11 and 3. Dillon’s own Dan E. Lockemy will liven up the day and there will be 14 drawings for \$10.00 each in “Vendor Bucks”. Winner must spend it at the Bazaar that day. Also for a 2nd year, the Humane Society of Dillon County will have a “Chili-Cook off”. The Cook-Off will be on the Wellness Center grounds from 11am to 2 pm with the winners announced at 2 in the gym.

For \$5 you can sample all the contestants and vote for 1 People’s Choice. There will be trophies and cash prizes. To enter or for more information call Mary McDaniel 843 487-7592.



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12TH ANNUAL PECAN FESTIVAL ABOUT TO CRACK OPEN

Submitted by Allene Glapion-Tellis, Downtown Development Coordinator



The 12th Annual South Carolina Pecan Festival is rapidly approaching, and this year promises to be bigger and better than any other. The festival has come a long way since its inception in 2003. This event has gone from being one stage in one block of South Irby Street to 11 blocks of pure fun featuring, eight stages of live music, amusement rides, an all free Kid's Fun Zone, Pecan Cook-Off, Classic Car Show, Antique Tractor Show, Pecan Classic Cornhole Tournament, Sing Like A Nut, Bike Like A Nut, Run Like A Nut and of course over 250 food and craft vendors! In addition to these staples of the festival, this year the festival will be offering up some new attractions.

On Saturday, November 7, 2015 the South Carolina Pecan Festival will host the first annual Flavors of Florence live cooking demonstrations. This great attraction will give Florence residents and visitors a chance to see and taste what makes Florence so great. Sixteen chefs from local eateries will show off their culinary skills with live cooking demonstrations and samplings of their favorite menu items. Check them out at one of the four platform stages located in the 100 block of South Dargan Street.

The cooking demos will begin at 11:30 AM and go on until 5:00 PM.

Once you have a chance to check out some of Florence's finest dishes, stop by the 100 block of West Evans Street to take in the Arts on Evans. This wonderful attraction is one of a kind. Come see some of the most talented area dancers perform Latin, Chinese, Indian, African and Irish dance on one of our two dance floors. In addition to these living works of art, there will also be real live artists showing off their handcrafted wares and artistic talent along this city block full of the best artists in and around Florence.

If all that wasn't enough we have a couple of new ways for the attendees to be a part of the excitement. This year the festival will conduct to great contests. The "Chalk It Up" sidewalk chalk competition will be held in the front of the Arts on Evans attraction and offers at \$250 grand prize to the winner, as well as 2nd and 3rd prize gifts. Contestants can register to compete at WWW.SCPECANFESTIVAL.COM.

If your talents don't fall in the artistic category, don't worry, we have "Hunt Like A Nut" for you this year. Hunt Like A Nut is an interactive scavenger hunt that will give contestants a chance to earn points all over the festival. Hunters will look for clues in various attractions to earn points. The highest scoring individual or team will win a brand new iPad. Second and third prizes will be awarded as well, but everyone who participates will pick up great gifts along the way, so there are no losers to this great hunt! The competition is limited to 30 teams, so register early by emailing allene@florencedowntown.com.

The South Carolina Pecan Festival is one of the largest events in Florence and this year we are making it even bigger and better. Don't miss this great day of food, fellowship and family fun! For more details and a festival layout map please visit, WWW.SCPECANFESTIVAL.COM.



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Marion's 26th Annual Holiday Prelude & Community Tree Lighting Celebration

Saturday, December 5th

The Prelude to Christmas - The Artist's Place

- Carriage Rides in downtown Marion 10am - 1pm
- Photos with Santa - 10am - 1pm, Byars Park
- Annual Christmas Parade - 4:30pm

Sunday, December 6th

- Marion Pilot Club Soup & Cornbread Supper & Bake Sale. 5pm - 7pm at the Marion Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. \$5.00 per person.
- There will also be a silent auction & raffle during the evening.

- Tree Lighting Celebration - 6:00pm

Additional highlights Include:

- Arrival of Santa Claus, aboard the City of Marion Fire Truck - 5:30pm
- Hot Apple Cider Sponsored by Local Banking Institutions
- Handicapped Section Available
 - Nativity Scene
 - Children's Community Chorus
- Fireworks at Withlacoochee Park 7:00pm

Marion Mayor Bobby L. Davis & Members of City Council invite you to enjoy your time in Marion

Merry Christmas



SOUTH CAROLINA PECAN FESTIVAL

Saturday November 7, 2015 ENTERTAINMENT LINE UP

Presenting Sponsor



Sustaining Sponsor

Entertainment
Sponsors



BTC
PROPERTIES



FIVE STAR



IRBY & BAROODY

- 10:45 AM A New Creation Band
- 1:00 PM Natural Wonder - A Stevie Wonder Tribute
- 3:30 PM The Tams
- 5:30 PM Three Dog Night**

CROWN
Beverages

IRBY & PALMETTO

- 11:00 AM 42 - A Cold Play Tribute
- 12:30 PM Pantasia - Steel Drums
- 2:30 PM Dwayne Dopsie & the Zydego Hellraisers
- 4:00 PM 42 - A Cold Play Tribute

Evening SHADE Inc.

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EVANS & DARGAN

- 11:30 AM Shrimp City Slim
- 12:30 PM Luckyman Beall
- 1:30 PM The Blues Buckets
- 2:30 PM Ramblin Don Scott
- 3:00 PM Freddie Vanderford

FIRST RELIANCE
BANK

DARGAN & PALMETTO

- 10:30 AM A Deeper Shade of Blue
- 12:00 pm Josh Brannon
- 2:30 PM Josh Brannon
- 4:30 PM Morgan's Road

JEBAILY
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KID'S FUN ZONE

Petting Zoo - Carnival Games- Soda City Cirque - Face Painting - Joy the Clown - Balloon Tying- Characters interactive - Story Telling - Youth Performers - Cheerleaders - Majorettes - Praise dancers - Robotics - Impact Christian Theater



FLORENCE MRI & IMAGING

Gospel Stage - CHEVES & COIT

10:30 AM - Sandy Banks 11:30 AM - Team Freedom 12:30 PM - Kept 2:00 PM - Palmetto Church of God 3:00 PM - Florence Baptist Temple - 4:30 PM - Sensational Brown Brothers

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