

DIVERSITY WORKS

APRIL 2020 VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2

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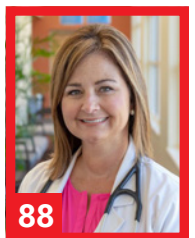
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MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

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

Spanish Version

Translated by: *Yadira Santiago, MA*

NUESTRA MISIÓN

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

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

NUESTRA VISIÓN

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

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FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

A COMMUNITY, UNITED



*Dawn "D.A." Goodwin
Editor*

As I reflect on just a year ago, I recall urging you to "Do these things right now," and those things included to honor, practice, learn, enjoy, cherish, prepare, empower, handle and appreciate. Today I easily see how life in our community, nation and world is much different from when I wrote those words of encouragement. At the same time, I realize how my advice is still the same as I encourage you to move forward with living a fulfilling life, even under your new circumstances. A part of the circumstances most of us are now facing stem from the new coronavirus disease called COVID-19. With

this in mind, we at Diversity Works Magazine© want to let you know that we are here with you and, together, we will make it through this battle.

Just wait until you see what organizations are doing to help combat the impact of COVID-19. For starters, the SBA offers disaster assistance to South Carolina small businesses while the Better Business Bureau gives you tips to avoid being a victim of scam associated with the pandemic. We don't forget about the entrepreneurs whose workflow has been interrupted, so be sure to read "Ways to Boost Business in Your Neighborhood" and "How Small Business Can Boost Sales." Keep entrepreneurs in mind with "8 Gift Ideas for Energetic Entrepreneurs." For those who have lost their jobs, remain strong, knowing that better is coming. "5 Secrets for Landing Your Next Job" is the perfect article, just for you. On the other hand, Dr. Nika White shares how "How to Engage a DEI Consultant," and as always, we check in with local businesses that practice D&I like the one discussed in our much-anticipated cover story that features Chad Patterson, the vice president of Raldex Hospitality. Stick around as he gives you a new D&I perspective that you may not have considered before.

What you will discover, overall, is that having a new perspective in life can be extremely helpful when dealing with our latest set of challenges. Take, for instance, the fact that most New Year resolutions were broken by February. If you broke yours, don't beat yourself up. Just do your best, and start over if necessary, knowing that "this too shall pass." If you are a believer who desires answers to the tough spiritual questions, pay attention when you read the articles "Is Coronavirus a Foreshadowing Revelation?" and "Prayer Warrior or Panicked Warrior?" We hope they give you comfort during these times.

As an educator and parent, I am comforted in knowing that education is continuing. Although school has moved to a digital format, we still want to congratulate our area's exceptional teachers for winning Teacher of the Year. Some include Mark Davidson, Rita Cameron and Nichole Scipio. In addition, we celebrate our libraries and librarians, some of whom have been doing this for 20 plus years. Thanks to the Johnsonville Library for developing literacy and the Williamsburg County Library for meeting community needs. We sincerely appreciate all that you do. In other school news, find out who was the recipient of the FMU AAFSC Diversity Award and the FMU Distinguished Alumni award. FDTC's RUSH program was named the SCTEA's A. Wade Martin Innovation Team of the Year. We also check in with Claflin University, Virtus Academy, Darlington County School District, Marion County School District and other area schools.

Elsewhere in this issue, we cover your financial needs. Julie Cord of New York Life Insurance helps you to prepare for an unexpected financial loss, which is extremely important given the economic impact some are experiencing because of coronavirus. Then, we join Anderson Brothers

Bank, whose services assist you with reaching your financial goals, as its locations welcome new members and recognize those who have been promoted to new positions within the bank.

We also recognize Chandra McClary, Grady Weaver and several others as we acknowledge Military Appreciation Month and celebrate National Volunteer Month. Thanks to all organizations and individuals who go the extra mile to volunteer their services to help our community. Join us in thanking volunteers like Ajay Patel and Roselind Hughes and organizations like Lighthouse Ministries, United Way and Mercy Medicine. And help us in congratulating the 2020 Marion Medallion recipients as well as the McLeod Volunteer of the Year 2019.

In this issue, MUSC, Carolina Pines, HopeHealth and several other medical facilities share articles on topics ranging from stroke, Stem Cell Therapy and compassion fatigue to COVID 19 prevention and how to manage anxiety associated with it. As I found myself telling my sons, we must all focus on our health and must strengthen our immune systems to help combat diseases such as coronavirus. Therefore, listening to what the medical experts have to say and adhering to their guidelines are of utmost importance.

Although the guidelines and the practices you'll find in this issue support a new lifestyle for some of us, especially while under "Stay at Home" orders, don't let it get you down. Besides, you still get to enjoy family and friends but in a new way as we all practice social distancing. For quiet time, you can work on self-improvement by exercising and reading. Keyon Michelle James, the author of "What Grandma Didn't Tell You: Minding Your Business" and "The Right Balance to Your Brew" teaches you about advancing in the corporate workplace, and Marjan Champine gets you back on the journey to better health. And the Florence Chamber has a message for the community that you don't want to miss.

On another note, it is imperative that our community unites as one and stands up against those battles individuals might be facing alone. Find inspiration by reading what we have for Child Abuse Prevention Month, and don't stop there because for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Denisse Guzman, the director of Prevention Education with the Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Assault, describes a tactic the organization is teaching for sexual assault prevention. Rubicon teaches us when drinking is a problem, and survival stories like "Somebody to Love" and "A Woman Against all Odds" are here to reassure you that you can be victorious in your fight. For Autism Awareness Month, you'll discover how SOS Health Care empowers individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities to thrive on their own, and you'll meet an inspiring chef who uses her platform for autism awareness. And stay tuned as Florence School District One discusses exceptional children.

You will also hear from CareSouth, Eastern Carolina Medicine, New York Life, Euro Mobile Auto Repair LLC and more. But as you read on and consider your temporary new norm, remember to prepare, pray and be mindful of your lifestyle choices, making sure they not only protect you and your loved ones but also our community.

Here's an idea. Take a moment one day to anonymously sew a seed of kindness, whether it be a "thank you" note to a teacher or an essential worker or a financial gift to someone in need. I bet doing so will surely touch hearts. Don't forget, we are all in this together, and Diversity Works Magazine© is right here with you. We appreciate you for remaining our dedicated reader. Please stay safe, and be blessed!

You can reach me via email at admin@youreditingpro.net, or follow my author page on Facebook: @authordagoodwin. I would love to hear from you!

HOW TO ENGAGE A DEI CONSULTANT

Submitted By Dr. Nika White, President and CEO of Nika White Consulting and Best Selling Author of "The Intentional Inclusionist®" and "Next-Level Inclusionist: Transform Your Work and Yourself for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Success"



Dr. Nika White

GREENVILLE—As the business world catches on to DEI and more consultants are hired, people are realizing there is much more strategy and guidance needed for successful and sustainable outcomes to occur. The working relationship between an organization and consultant can't be left to chance in the hopes that the fit is correct or a strategy will be smoothly enacted.

To achieve desired outcomes, it's a great idea for organizations to know exactly how to engage a DEI consultant, what the relationship should look like and what strategic steps to expect along

the process. Before I share those details, I want to touch on why it's beneficial to specifically hire an external DEI consultant.

First, why do businesses seek out DEI practitioners? There are a multitude of reasons why a business or organization, with or without resources, would need to hire a diversity consultant or additional support for its practitioners:

- Businesses may have a DEI practitioner or department in place, but the volume of work can be too great.
- Businesses may not have in-house capabilities, current staff expertise, or the wherewithal to execute the work.
- Businesses might need specific expertise and additional facilitation to round out their current knowledge base.
- Businesses may already have someone astute at DEI who is facilitating in a programmatic way, and they may need an assessment or audit to elevate the work to the next level.
- Businesses may have reached a point where they are building out learning and development and need someone who has expertise in specific content and curriculum areas.

In addition, many in-house DEI leaders share that hearing from an outside voice helps to move the work forward in a more intentional way and with greater confidence. I often hear from internal DEI leaders that organizations can feel they are biased towards their work and suggestions (as they should be because that's what they are hired to focus on). Bringing in a non-biased outside voice to analyze and share what's needed can be helpful.

DEI is both a specialized skill set and a broad discipline. People can forget that there is an extremely large volume of work to be done and that there are various types of specialists within the field.

Because of these points, there are many ways you should engage with your hired consultant in order to get the best outcome for your organization. Here are 7 ways to better engage a DEI consultant for effective outcomes:

1. Understand the difference in expertise

It's important for leaders who are making the hiring and vetting decisions to understand that different consultants have different areas of expertise. Many people lump DEI into a giant category of diversity consulting, but there are many different divisions. You must be clear about what specific needs or areas of focus you're trying to address—whether you need someone involved in HR, career development, board leadership, cultural audits, DEI strategy planning, implementation, supplier diversity, employee resource groups and so forth.

Before even reaching out, you should at least have a general

understanding of what the internal problems are and what you perceive the needs to be, and then you can secure accurate proposals and quotes from the different consultants.

2. Leave room for the DEI consultant to do an evaluation

Often, an organization will call a DEI consultant saying, "We need this {specific item} in regards to DEI." In reality, the needs of that organization can be very different—and often are.

It's important to leave room for the DEI consultant to do some type of his or her own evaluation so he or she can help you uncover deeper needs. This evaluation doesn't have to be intense or overly formal. You can create a dialogue so the consultant can spend time with your primary contacts, ask questions, dig into your organization's culture, and be able to ascertain how to best go about the assessment.

Come with the problem and opportunity you are trying to address versus coming with exactly what you believe you want them to execute. By leaving space for the DEI expert to evaluate, you can uncover hidden issues or opportunities and then ultimately create a better game plan for effective work.

3. Do preliminary internal work and come prepared

As a client, you should already have done some preliminary internal work, especially within leadership. One of my earlier blogs shares various steps and ways this can be done. With this relationship, there needs to be some level of "buy in" to address the internal opportunities or solve the potential problems.

If you're bringing in a DEI consultant blind and no one else in the organization has done any preliminary work, it can waste time and effectiveness for both you and the consultant.

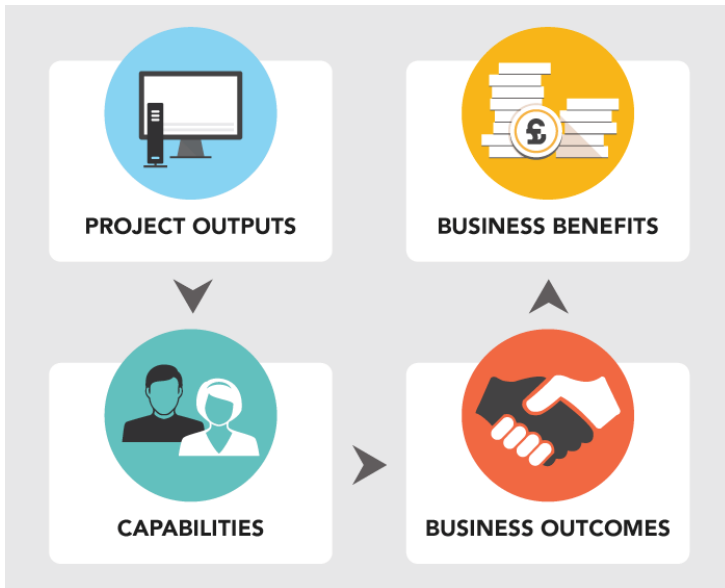
Create an internal dialogue with stakeholders and leaders around the problems for what you're trying to address with DEI. This intel can then be shared with the DEI consultant so he or she can be as informed as possible. This intel can be:

- Sharing assessments/surveys with staff and leadership
- Internal audits with various teams
- Sharing the types of information that would help the consultant have a good sense of the "pulse" of the organization
- Analyzing where the organization is at within the continuum of DEI (not every organization is in the same place)

As the DEI consultant, one question I like to ask when first engaging in potential client relationships is, "What led you to seek out a consultant?" The answer usually helps me understand his or her "why" of this work and lets me know if some initial legwork has gone into discussing with stakeholders. If others in the organization don't believe there's an issue, problem or opportunity, then it can cause stagnancy and lack of progress in the work.



HOW TO ENGAGE A DEI CONSULTANT CONT'D



4. Review the type of budget you're working with

A vital point is having a sense of what type of budget you are wanting to allocate to solve this problem or opportunity. Assessing budget can be difficult because the business often wants the consultant to tell them to share what they believe the budget is.

The conversation is valuable to have both ways since there needs to be initial analysis and allocation of the internal budget, and then the DEI consultant can share proposals for what different projects might be (whether it's for certain ongoing work, specific types of practitioners or specific curriculums/programs). It's an important move to have these preliminary financial conversations and see that there is, in fact, an investment of money that can be allocated towards this work.

5. Be aware that a DEI consultant is not necessarily a "diversity trainer"

This is an essential distinction that ties back to Point #1—in regards to the needs of the organization and what you are trying to accomplish. Just because you consult with a certain DEI consultant around areas that need to be focused on, it does not mean that that consultant is necessarily the "diversity trainer" to develop those specific curriculums. As stated, there are many types of consultants, advisors, specialists and trainers—and there is a difference between all of them. Each one is somewhat nuanced, so make sure you are asking questions for exactly what you're looking for before hiring.

As the DEI consultant, one thing I personally like to provide in initial conversations is a capability statement and media kit that relates to some of the work that I've done with different clients. This helps clients become aware of the exact type of work I do and provide, and they can better reflect on their own needs. This means we will be on better grounds to perceive the work going forward, and I can see if I can personally address their needs or if they have to hire a different advisor or specialist.

6. Look for specific skill sets or certifications in a consultant

As you begin to vet different consultants, make sure to check for their academic background and what they've executed and accomplished in the DEI space. You want to look into their competence and involvement on the various topics that astute DEI consultants should be able to speak to. This includes organizational leadership, change management, labor relationships and talent management and development.

Sometimes it's necessary to ask questions or consider: "Does this DEI consultant have a certification—particularly from entities that will train at a high level?" Educational pedigrees and certifications are not necessarily "make or breaks" but in the comparison process, they are an important consideration, especially if their certification or education is directly applicable to the need your organization has.

7. Think about the value of a long-term retainer relationship

A key consideration when you're hiring a consultant is the value and effectiveness of long-term retainer contracts. An ongoing consultant relationship often leads to the best institutional, interpersonal, and knowledge-based outcomes for clients.

Initially, some businesses want to do monthly or six-month long projects. A DEI consultant can, of course, come in to do that scope of work. But the benefit of a longer investment, such as a 24-month retainer contract, is that it becomes more productive to gather more data points and more effective to implement the strategies over a longer period of time.

Some further benefits of long-term retainers are that they ensure fiscal transparency, predictability and allow for fluidity to align the body of work with its vast needs and complex layers. Longer work creates the ability to build upon the initial, foundational groundwork. Working on a recurring basis also tends to be more cost-effective over the long term—instead of varying and additional project fees for multiple scopes of work.

This is because the consultant won't really know the full scope of work and ideal strategy until his or her time has been spent on doing the deep work and truly assessing the business. As the consultant uncovers new data, the work often evolves and updated strategies or specialist recommendations can become necessary.

With any change management process, long-term trust and buy-in are critical to effective change. Long-term relationships let DEI consultants intimately know the organization's culture, knowledge of industry and overall business processes, which can lead to more targeted and applicable advice.

Success with a DEI consultant relationship

By putting the proper effort and time investment into a relationship with a DEI consultant, your business or organization can create the most effective results.

But it's not only about putting the effort in to secure the consultant but also knowing what to look for, how to engage them and how to lead each other to those sustainable outcomes. The relationship can then become more beneficial in terms of stakeholder comfort, the consultant's ability to lead and both side's overall confidence through the entire process.

Do you have any additional tips or insights from either side—either how businesses and organizations can better engage DEI consultants or as a consultant, how to better support the relationship with organizations for more effective outcomes? I'd love to hear.



WINGATE DISCUSSES HOW D&I WORK AT ATFC by Anna Bowman



Debra Wingate

QUINBY- Debra Wingate, the Brooklyn-born, Timmonsville transplant, knows a thing or two about inclusion in the workplace. In April 2018, she joined Atlantic Tooling and Fabricating (ATFC) as a receptionist. Within three months, she was hired in the position of office support/AP. Her second promotion to production support/ISO representative came about within her first year with the company. Today, Wingate's position is that of manufacturing support/ISO representative after her most recent promotion with the company. Her journey from receptionist to manufacturing

support/ISO representative within a two-year span is extremely noteworthy but not surprising to Wingate because one of her company's missions is to invest in training for its employees.

Wingate believes that her promotions are the result of not only her hard work and determination but also her company's testament to inclusion for all employees. She contributes her success within the company to a leadership team that believed in her abilities from the moment she became a team member. Her successful resume, which included working with well-known companies such as Assurant, ADP, Honda of SC, and Roche Carolina, not only highlighted her work ethics but also assured Atlantic Tooling & Fabricating that she would be a valued asset for their company.

She said that her current position offers her an opportunity to grow and learn as she works alongside other team members. Her duties include tracking production, ordering raw materials, maintaining inventory, shipping/receiving, supporting the production department, tooling department and plant manager, as well as making sure standards



Luncheon for the associates provided by our Leadership Team (this was prepared by the Leadership Team)

are being met to maintain certifications.

Wingate, who is a member of the company's newly developed Diversity and Inclusion team, commends the company's all-inclusive leadership approach. "Our leadership team--from the director to managers--have an open-door policy. They are very transparent and forthcoming with information about the company. Monthly meetings are held to update everyone on the status/growth of the company," she said. The company's core values (Honesty, Trust, Respect and Caring) are put into practice every single day, internally as well as externally, because ATFC also values its customers.



A Steak Lunch given for a perfect month with no delivery or quality issues; this is something we do every time a month like this is achieved.

Implementing a Diversity and Inclusion program in the workplace can have its own set of challenges. Wingate emphasizes one challenge as "getting beyond the 'we've always done it this way' mindset. Once we move beyond this way of thinking, you can begin to

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WINGATE CONT'D

change the way things have been done and visit other options that may help in gaining a better outcome,” she explained.

Diversity and Inclusion has so many meanings, but ATFC believes that everyone deserves a chance to prove themselves, regardless of race or gender. “A person is not judged by their race or gender, but by their character and their ability to do their job. Typically, certain parts of my job, such as shipping and receiving, have always been dominated by the male gender. The company was a family-owned business where men held these positions. These things have changed with the new ownership and leadership that is now in place. There is trust and respect that has been built with the leadership that is now in place.”

Wingate believes that Diversity and Inclusion works at ATFC because “there is no discrimination,” she proudly announced. “You’re received by your character, your work ethics, and how you treat others. Everyone has the same opportunity to receive not only on the job training, but the company pays for training classes that pertain to your position. One hundred percent of our workforce received outsourced training in 2018 from FDTC and SCMEP because ATFC believes in equipping you with the tools and knowledge you need to be successful in your position.”

Wingate is a single mother of three children, and she has four

grandsons. She enjoys singing with the Gospel Choir and serves on the media ministry at her church. She is a graduate of Erasmus Hall High School for Music and Art in Brooklyn, and she has an associate degree in business administration from Kaplan University.

Atlantic Tooling & Fabricating Company, Inc. (ATFC) began operations in 1985 in Florence. ATFC opened its doors as primarily a tool repair and machining facility and has since expanded operations to become one of the premier tool & die and sheet metal stamping facilities in the country.



A poster where we sponsored the Annual Witch's Run by SPC Credit Union



A moment of prayer at our 2nd Annual Family Day and other pictures from Family Fun Day





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WAYS TO BOOST YOUR BUSINESS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD



The beauty of running a local business is you've got boots on the ground, ready to capture attention and build your brand in and around your community.

Using simple grassroots marketing tactics, you can shout about your business from the rooftop. (But

you may want to start with the sidewalk.) Here are five ways to help grow your business by boosting awareness among the locals.

Sidewalk Signs

Turn the sidewalk into a billboard for your store by creating a PVC sign for display in a highly visible A-Frame that's sure to attract attention from passersby and fellow business owners in the area.

Business Cards

Even in this digital era, small business is all about relationships. Make it easy for customers to grab a business card that includes your website and contact information. A quick reference for them (and their network) means future business for you.

If you don't already have a logo, consider creating one. A well-designed visual identifier lends professionalism to business cards and other marketing materials, along with brand recognition. A logo will come in handy if you advertise or support local events, depending on your target audience. Ask your local printer to connect you with a professional designer if you need creative expertise.

Custom Branded Boxes

The quality of a box reflects the quality of the products inside it. Today's digital technology makes it possible to print custom packaging

in any quantity, large or small. Use a branded box to tell your company's story and create an emotional connection with customers from the get-go. That is especially important if you conduct business online with limited physical interaction.

Your customer's front porch becomes your storefront at the moment of delivery, so make sure the box reflects your brand.

Flyers

Sending a flyer to your customers directly is still one of the best and most cost-effective ways to advertise offline. Use flyers to promote your business and events. Have them professionally printed to ensure quality and color accuracy. After all, presentation matters, especially when it comes to bringing your brand to life.

Mounted Posters

Your store walls and windows are prime real estate to connect with potential customers and deliver your marketing messages. Create signs on a lightweight material that can be printed on both sides for maximum impact inside and outside your store.

You put a lot of work into carving out

a unique niche for your

business. Now it's time to

spread the word with an

effective brand

awareness campaign

that calls for a little

creativity, a modest

budget and color-

accurate marketing

materials that are

of as high a quality

as the goods you

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LA QUINTA AND DAYS INN WELCOME YOU Submitted by Amanda Eargle, Director of Sales



Days Inn

At the La Quinta and the Days Inn North by Wyndham Florence, you will be greeted with good ole' southern hospitality from a warm and friendly staff eager to provide you the personal attention you deserve, and with two convenient locations to serve you with all your corporate, group or meeting

needs, the possibilities are endless. They are conveniently located right off I-95 just minutes from the Florence Regional Airport, Darlington Raceway/Museum and the gorgeous Downtown Florence.

If you are touring Francis Marion University (FMU) or Florence Darlington Technical College (FDTC), you will appreciate the location of both the La Quinta and the Days Inn North. FMU is only a short drive away, and FDTC is just down the street.

While you are visiting with us, we highly recommend taking the time to enjoy our local Farmers Market, all the wonderful antique shopping and a great selection of dining options. All of this and more is just a short distance away.



Days Inn Breakfast Area

Golfers can enjoy several beautiful and challenging golf courses, all found locally and offering that Southern

charm that can always be expected here in Florence.

At La Quinta, the Business Center is open 24 hours every day to provide you all the accessibility you need to handle any business needs, day or night. We also offer a meeting room and a boardroom available for all your business and social gathering needs.

Relax and stay fit with our fitness center at La Quinta, and both La Quinta and Days Inn provide a beautiful outdoor seasonal pool.



La Quinta

While relaxing, local shopping and restaurants in the scenic Downtown area can refresh your needs to unwind with the family after a day at the Darlington Raceway or after catching a Red Wolves game. You can also enjoy a show at the Francis Marion Performing Arts Center or Florence

Little Theater. Also, don't forget to visit the Darlington Racetrack Museum. There is always a fun-filled adventure awaiting you.

Our spacious rooms are fully equipped with top-of-the-line bedding and decor as well as other amenities such as refrigerator and microwave, coffee maker, iron and board and a 47-inch LCD HD flat screen television featuring channels such as HBO, Fox News, the History Channel and many more. All rooms offer complimentary high-speed wireless Internet as well as data port phones and free local calls.



La Quinta Breakfast Area

Enjoy our complimentary, Hot Bright Side Breakfast with its delicious, healthy and filling selections such as waffles, sausage, bacon, French toast, breakfast potatoes, eggs, muffins, bagels, yogurt coffee and assorted juices each morning during your stay at La Quinta, and a complimentary continental breakfast while

staying at Days Inn.

Coffee is also available in the lobby 24 hours a day at both properties, and fresh cookies, baked daily, are ready for you when you check in at La Quinta, all complimentary as our way of saying "thank you" for choosing us.

With two convenient locations to serve you with all your corporate, group or meeting needs, the possibilities are endless.



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ATTORNEY LINWARD EDWARDS EXPANDS LAW OFFICES

by Anna Bowman



Attorney Linward Edwards II

It's been a banner year so far for Attorney Linward Edwards II as he opened the second location of his law firm in Dillon. The expansion of the Dillon branch of the Law Office of Linward Edwards II, LLC, which opened Feb. 1 and is located at 106 Harrison Street, is the culmination of years of hard work and dedicated legal service to his clients in the Pee Dee and surrounding areas. Edwards, the young, charismatic attorney, is a true example of one of his favorite quotes by former President Barack Obama, "You must create the change that you want to see in the world.

Ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things." The youth, who didn't see any attorneys that "looked like him" growing up, is now one of the faces of extraordinary lawyers who is changing the landscape to include people of color, like himself.

Edwards, who was born in his mother's hometown of Marion and raised in Florence, is a 1995 graduate of Wilson High School. He chose to enlist in the Air Force immediately upon graduation, which was a decision he describes as one of the best of his life. He completed his basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and stationed at Kessler Air Force Base on the Gulf Coast in Biloxi, Miss., where he trained for six months as a weather observer before receiving his order to be stationed for the next three and a half years at Hickam Air Force Base, located on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Edwards stated that his time in the military gave him the ability to grow up, essentially, which helped him to navigate through the ever changing maze called life. "I entered the Air Force at 18 years old, seeking directions in my life, and exited a man who had gained greater knowledge about himself and the world as well."

Upon leaving the Air Force, Edwards enrolled in his father's Alma mater, Francis Marion University. In 2004, he received his Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) with the hopes of obtaining a master's degree in business administration and becoming either a CEO of his own company or a CEO or board member of a major corporation. His plans were altered, slightly, after a conversation with a friend. "I had a college buddy who was already in law school, and he knew my desire to become a business owner," stated Edwards, but he offered him a different route to owning his own business, which changed the trajectory of his career path. "He advised me that a lawyer with a Juris Doctorate degree can become a businessman, but a businessman without a Juris Doctorate degree can't become a lawyer."

Edwards earned his Juris Doctor in 2010 from the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law in Washington, D.C. While in law school he clerked for the Public Defender's Office of the District of Columbia, and he was a summer judicial clerk for the Fourth Circuit federal judge, the Honorable Margaret Seymour. "The clerkship allowed me to see the difference between federal versus state cases." Edwards also interned with Michael Steven, Fourth Circuit public defender, which served, Dillon, Darlington, Chesterfield and Marlboro counties. "The internship allowed me to witness court cases, and I was able to meet all the solicitors and public defenders, which was an invaluable experience," he stated. Upon graduating from law school, he made the decision to return to the Pee Dee to practice law and accepted a position with The Sellers Law Firm in Dillon. The position would eventually give him the necessary first-hand experiences and insight of the day-to-day challenges that came with running a successful law practice.

In 2012, the dream of being the CEO of his own business became a reality when he opened The Office of Linward Edwards II in



Pictured behind Attorney Edwards from L to R: Yolanda Self, Addie Graham, Nikki Farley and Portia Singletary

Florence. His dedication to the legal profession and recruiting staff with the same insight for excellence has allowed his law firm to become one of the most sought after ones in the Pee Dee. His law firm represents clients in both state and federal court cases. He practices in the areas of criminal and civil law, which includes bankruptcy, business law, criminal defense, DWI/DUI, personal injury, immigration law,

estate planning and family law.

Edwards, who is the only lawyer in his family, understands the true meaning of giving back to his community and is always looking for ways to give back to the people of the Pee Dee. "I'm always available for speaking engagements at churches and 501(c) (3) non-profit organizations in the area," he stated. But his greatest joy comes from being a mentor. "I've always offered internships at my law firm for high school/college students who are interest in the legal profession," said Edwards. He proudly stated that since his law firm started mentoring students, he has seen several of them attend and graduate law school as well pass the bar to practice law. He always advises those who want to pursue a career as a lawyer to learn the art of reading and writing, which is what you will spend the majority of your time doing in the legal profession. He also added that it's not as glamorous as you see on television. There are hours of dedicated research for each case. Just remember, in some cases a person's freedom is on the line, and the last thing they need or deserve is a law who didn't do his/her due diligence on the case. He hinted his law firm's motto: "We want to give you the best outcome for your legal situation."

Edwards and his wife Jennifer, a Zumba instructor, are the proud parents of three sons: Amir, a sophomore at Wilson High School; Tahjae, a sophomore at Bethune Cookman College; and Cordae, a Grammy-nominated artist. Edwards is the son of Martha and Linwood Edwards, Sr. of Florence.

Edwards is an avid member of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP). In addition, he is a co-founder of the non-profit organization MINGLE of the Pee Dee, along with Les and Nicole Echols, and Katrina Garnes. The acronym stands for Minorities Involved in Networking, Growth, Leadership and Empowerment. The mission of MINGLE of the Pee Dee is to engage and enhance minority professionals and entrepreneurs in professional development, social networking and community service. This is just another positive example of Edwards becoming "a part of" the change he wants to see in the world.





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The Pee Dee Coalition celebrated the opening of the new satellite center in Kingstree. From left: Holly Powell, Legacy Campaign project assistant; Wendell O. Brown, Legacy Campaign honorary chairman, Freda Cox, PDC Williamsburg County services coordinator; Teavis Young, PDC Williamsburg County trauma counselor; and Adrielle Cooper, PDC Williamsburg County volunteer coordinator.

KINGSTREE-The Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault was founded in 1986 with the goal of reducing rape, family violence, and child abuse. The nonprofit, volunteer organization now works in seven counties with a satellite center in each county.



The newest satellite center is in Williamsburg County. The Coalition began serving residents in the Williamsburg County area in 1993. However, a permanent building has just recently been acquired and renovated.

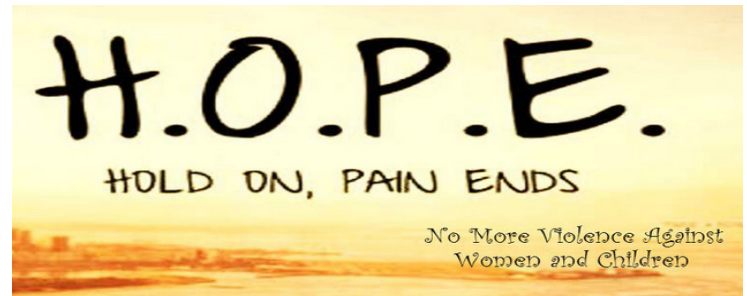
The Organization hosted an open house in their beautiful Williamsburg County home at two Courthouse Square

in Kingstree on Feb. 26. This new satellite crisis center will now be able to better meet the needs of victims in Williamsburg County. The philosophy of the Pee Dee Coalition is that rape, family violence and child abuse are community issues, and the community should come together to help those who suffer at the hands of an abuser. Santee Electric Cooperative agrees with this philosophy and, along with many other businesses, towns and organizations, donated funds to support the renovation of the historic building.

There are many services provided by this important coalition. In addition to a 24-hour crisis line (1-800-273-1820), the organization provides two shelters for battered women, a children’s center and educational programs for middle and high school students, college-age students and even adults. In addition to community education, presentations for younger children and training for those who work with children, self-defense classes and anger management classes are also among the services provided by the Pee Dee Coalition.

“This is an excellent way for Santee Electric Cooperative to support the community in which we serve, and more importantly, our neighbors in need,” stated Mary Grace McGee, manager of community relations.

For more information on the Pee Dee Coalition, visit www.peedeecoalition.org, or call 843-354-6481.



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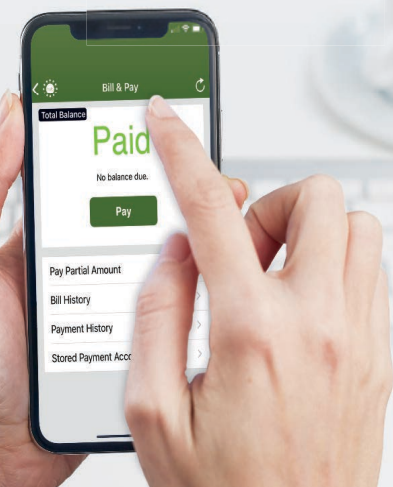
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HOW SMALL BUSINESSES CAN BOOST SALES



With over 30 million small businesses in the U.S., it's tough to stand out from the crowd. Successful small businesses turn first-time customers into repeat business, building momentum, and growing sales.

How can you achieve this? By marketing. Finding

effective, easy-to-execute marketing strategies can boost your business by helping you engage your customers while attracting new ones. Here are some proven ideas to help your business thrive:

Engage first-time customers

Show new shoppers that they matter. Send welcome emails, and recommend products to complement what they bought. Offer special deals to keep them coming back.

Utilize positive customer reviews

Did you know that over 60 percent of consumers read reviews before buying? Reviews can include ratings, testimonials, photos, videos and more. Treat reviews as marketing gold, sharing them with customers and prospects to build trust and increase sales. You can generate and integrate them into your website, on social media and other marketing efforts.

Turn shopping carts into opportunities

Let's face it, plenty of potential customers add items to their online shopping carts and never check out. While these "abandoned carts" seem challenging, they're an opportunity.

An effective way to convert abandoned carts into sales is by drawing on the power of customer reviews. Small businesses can change their fortunes with this approach.

Our most successful small business customers don't just send a reminder email to shoppers about items left in their carts. They take it a step further and include positive reviews and ratings about that product with the follow-up, knowing how much importance buyers place on others' experiences. By featuring personalized product reviews for abandoned cart items, there can be a recovery rate of 5-10 percent.

Spark interest with special offers

Entice new and returning business by offering discounts, encouraging shoppers to give your business a try.

Also, if you don't have one already, create a loyalty program for frequent shoppers or a referral special for those inviting friends to your website or social media.

Personalization matters

Shoppers don't want mass emails treating them like just another number. Small businesses that tailor emails based on each customer's shopping experiences and interests are far more successful in driving sales.

Creating customized content may sound complex, but it all comes down to how you organize your customer list. For example, segment your customers by which products they've purchased. Then use this information to inform them how to use their products best or remind them when it's time to re-order.

Personalization really pays off when you incorporate dynamic content--information that changes based on a person's interests--in promotional emails. Use a customer's previous purchases and shopping interests to generate ideas on products to complement items they already bought. For example, recommend a similar flavor of cupcakes to ones they ordered before.

Get started

These proven marketing approaches can springboard your business to success. But how do you get started?

Marketing has greatly evolved, with many new, easy-to-use tools. You don't need to be a marketing expert, technical whiz, or creative designer to use them. For example, CM Commerce is an email marketing platform designed for small eCommerce businesses. It can easily create professional email campaigns to enhance and grow your business.



To help small business owners, CM Commerce features pre-built email marketing recipes for everything from welcome emails and newsletters to abandoned cart reminders and more. Business owners can follow these guidelines and put their email marketing plans

in place with a single click. It's a cost-effective way to establish your brand and regularly reach your customers and prospects. Most importantly, email marketing has the potential for huge returns and can truly make your business stand out.

For more tips and ideas to grow your business, visit The Marketing Resources Hub.



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- Public infrastructure

We emphasize innovative and cost effective engineering design. We find ourselves riding a lot of elevators, making us no strangers to the proverbial, but polite question, "What do you do?"

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When it comes to manufacturing softgel dosage forms, nobody knows more about operating the equipment that makes them than Adamou. He's relentless about finding new ways to make the manufacturing process more efficient. When he saw the amount of scrap material being produced during a specific manufacturing process, he was determined to find a way to decrease it. He enlisted the help of a team of experts who supported his cause and they worked after hours and weekends until they found a solution. The result is a new process that greatly reduces scrap, delivers savings to clients, and most importantly, helps to lower the cost of medicines for the patients who need them.

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DON'T BE A VICTIM TO COVID-19 SCAMS

by Dr. John D'Ambrosio, CEO/President, BBB of Coastal Carolina



Dr. John D'Ambrosio

CONWAY-COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, has hit our area. While this is bad news for us, it's great news for scammers who are cashing in on our anxiety about the disease. Look out for fake cures, phony prevention measures, and other coronavirus cons. Scams are hitting fast and furiously. Here are a few ways scammers are trying to get you to respond.

You are worried about the corona virus and hear about preventions or a "cure" on social media, in an email or a website. The message or website contains a lot of information about this amazing product, including convincing testimonials or a conspiracy theory backstory. For example, one scam email claims that the government has discovered a vaccine but is keeping it secret for "security reasons." You figure it can't hurt to give the medicine a try, so you get out your credit card. Don't do it.

Currently, there are no U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccines or drugs to prevent coronavirus, although treatments are in development. No approved vaccines, drugs or products specifically for coronavirus can be purchased online or in stores. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission issued warning letters to several companies claiming they had a product to cure or prevent the virus.

Peddling quack medicines isn't the only way scammers are trying to cash in on coronavirus fears. Con artists are impersonating the CDC and the World Health Organization in phishing emails. These messages claim to have news about the disease and prompt readers to download malicious software.

Another scam email tries to con people into donating to a fake fundraising effort, claiming to be a government program to develop a coronavirus vaccine. And the calls are coming in asking for your banking information to direct deposit your check from the government.

BBB.org/ScamTracker has received numerous reports about scam websites claiming to sell facemasks online. As you strive to keep yourself and loved ones healthy, be sure to watch out for phony eCommerce sites and other scams. Even better, save masks for the medical professionals who really need them, says Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Spot a fraudulent COVID-19 scam by watching out for these red flags:

Don't panic. Do your research. Be skeptical of alarmist and conspiracy theory claims, and don't rush into buying anything that seems too good—or crazy—to be true. Always double-check the information you see online with official news sources.

Be wary of personal testimonials and "miracle" product claims. Be suspicious of products that claim to immediately cure a wide range of diseases. No one product could be effective against a long, varied list of conditions or diseases. Also, testimonials are easy to make up and are not a substitute for scientific evidence.

It's "all-natural." Just because it's natural does not mean it's good for you. All-natural does not mean the same thing as safe.

Check with your doctor. If you're tempted to buy an unproven product or one with questionable claims, check with your doctor or other healthcare professional first.

Be savvy about product claims. While wearing a facemask may seem like an easy way to stop coronavirus from spreading, the Centers for Disease Control does not actually recommend it for the general public. Be sure to evaluate the claims of any medical product before buying.

Only buy from reputable stores and websites. The best way to

avoid getting scammed is to buy them directly from a seller you know and trust. Check BBB.org to see what other consumers' experiences have been.



Be sure the online store has working contact info. If a company seems legitimate, but you aren't familiar with it, be extra careful with your personal information. Before offering up your name, address and credit card information, make sure the company is legitimate. A real street address, a working customer service number and a positive BBB Business Profile, these are just a few of the things to be looking out for to determine if a company is legitimate.

As the disease spreads, be wary of other coronavirus cons. Look out for fake cures, phony prevention measures, and other scams.

If you've spotted a scam (whether or not you've lost money), report it to [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker). Your report can help others avoid falling victim to scams.

About the BBB: The Better Business Bureau of Coastal Carolina is located at 1121 Third Ave., in Conway, S.C. and covers the counties of Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion and Williamsburg in South Carolina and Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, New Hanover, Pender, Robeson and Sampson in North Carolina. For more information about becoming an Accredited Business, call 843-488-2227 or visit <https://www.bbb.org/myrtle-beach/accreditation-application>.





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ARE YOU CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN READY?

by Tonita Perry, APR, Principal/PR Strategist, Eddy Perry & Associates, Inc.



COVID-19 is profoundly reshaping American life due to the uncertainty of the virus with many restrictions and mandates being placed by state, local and federal levels of government. As this crisis affects the country, it also affects businesses, large

and small, and it is now time to implement the crisis communications plan. Wait, you do not have a crisis communications plan?

Results from over 400 public relations professionals surveyed for the PR Crisis Preparedness Survey, conducted jointly by PR News and Crisp, found that 32 percent of businesses surveyed were either unprepared or had an out-of-date crisis communications plan. If your business is in this number, it is not too late to at least work from a basic framework to get you through. Keep these points in mind:

CRISIS IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO CHAOS

Just because there is a crisis does not mean you have to be in a state of chaos. React quickly and without confusion. Though in a reactionary state, make sure you are taking the time to organize. Being organized would encompass truly identifying the crisis and collecting all the facts associated so that you can proceed to resolve the problem in a timely, open and effective manner. Put your crisis team together, assigning priorities based on urgent vulnerabilities. Assign a spokesperson and offer communications training. Identify and understand your key stakeholders and their behaviors to strategically steer long-term and short-term outcomes.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE

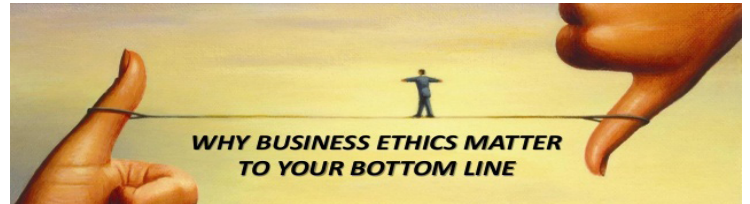
When communicating with stakeholders, the goal is to foster a

mutual understanding through the dissemination of information. Information shared is mutually beneficial to the business, and the public it serves should. Always identify the problem, tell the truth, and reinforce values while displaying empathy. Make sure a focus is placed on what you are doing matches what you say in a contained and counteractive way. Your word is always the identity of your business.

REPUTATION MATTERS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

A business' most important asset is its reputation. Its reputation is the sum of what and how the public thinks of its brand and drives how it interacts with its stakeholders. While dealing with the crisis, you must always keep in mind how stakeholders feel about the way the brand impacts financials. Reputation and money have a direct correlation and will determine short-term and long-term outcomes. The crisis will impact stakeholders' behaviors and possibly change public sentiment. Now is the time to show your business is a good community partner by being socially responsible. Mitigating any damage to brand reputation, while being mindful of the bottom line, is key.

It is encouraged that your business is proactive by having a crisis communications plan. It is also encouraged to manage issues and risk by using environmental scanning to foresee problems, foretell threats, minimize risks, seize opportunities, resolve problems and ultimately prevent future crises. After this, get your crisis communications plan in place to be ready for the next crisis.



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MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



We've all heard church folks say, "There's nothing that's too hard for God," and I must agree. But now, an additional saying you've been hearing from folks of all walks of life in our community probably came when you asked them about Euro Mobile Auto Repair LLC, the Pee Dee's only European

mobile vehicle repair service, which is owned and operated by Chris Green. If my guess is correct, then what you've heard them smiling and saying is, "Oh, there's no job that's too hard for Green" with the phenomenal help of his fiancée Karen Wheeler.

If you come across what seems to be an impossible task to have your higher-end vehicle repaired, don't be discouraged. Some clients are not aware of exactly what's going on with their vehicle, and it could be something minor or major. Regardless of the job, Green thoroughly discusses the repair needs and details with each customer. And what he has noticed is how guys and girls, alike, look upon his work in admiration, and when he does a tutorial about their particular car, they're all ears. He said, "There



are a lot of guys out there who love what I do, so when I do tutorials about the European cars, they're all ears and eyes, watching what I'm doing so they can learn it. I feel good about it. I love it."

A parent himself, Green, has noticed how some single-parent households have



daughters who have a passion for cars also, but they might not have a male mentor to show them the ropes. Not only does the father in Green allow him to be open to allowing children to watch the repair process as a teachable moment, but it's also actually fun for Green because it's not what he considers "work." Remember,

this is his passion and what makes him smile ear-to-ear as he fulfills his purpose. Even our community's senior citizens are on to Green's great service and the tireless work he puts in.

Green remembers a particular job he recently did. "I had a repair call for a black Bentley where another repair shop had jacked the car without setting it to jack mode first, so when they changed the tire to take the car back down, the air shocks wouldn't go back up. They didn't know how to recalibrate the car to get it back up in the air. The customer was frustrated because he'd been told he would have to take the car to a dealership in Charlotte for the repair. The customer drove the car home and reached out to Euro Mobile. The dealership would have been charging him \$8000 for two air struts and an air compressor the customer didn't even need. I completed the repair job right in the customer's front yard and for much less at that." This type of work is also the reason why dealerships with clients who can't afford their bills often refer those clients to Green.

Through the years, even through difficult times or difficult jobs, Green realized something that pushes him and reminds him he is right where he needs to be. That's the fact that "the Lord only gives his strongest soldiers the biggest tasks." Green's work shows that he is absolutely battle strong and is ready to make those seemingly impossible repair jobs possible."

5 SECRETS FOR LANDING YOUR NEXT JOB

We've all been there: you embark on the job hunt, and you're full of excitement for what's ahead, but you sometimes feel like one name in a sea of candidates, trying to figure out the hacks to break through, get noticed and land that interview (and job offer).

If this sounds all-too-familiar, you're not alone, but the good news is LinkedIn is letting us in on the top five secrets to getting noticed and snagging that new job opportunity.

Get ahead of the pack: There are 100 million job applications on LinkedIn every month. This may sound overwhelming as a job seeker, but remember this: getting a head start can make all the difference. In fact, LinkedIn research shows that being one of the first to apply to a job can increase your chances of landing a job by four times. Tip: sign up for LinkedIn Job Alerts, which will send you a notification within minutes of a relevant job posting.

Spruce up your online presence: A picture might say 1,000 words, but a strong LinkedIn profile can say a million. Refresh your profile photo, relevant skills, experience, and summary section so that you show up in hiring managers' searches. It's a good idea to put in this work ahead of time because, once you capture a recruiter's interest, you want your profile to showcase why you're the best for the job. Tip: check out LinkedIn's new "Featured" section, which allows you to showcase samples of your work on your profile.

Brush up on your skills, and let the world know: showcasing your skills can make all the difference when it comes to being considered for a job. Everything you've learned from your past experience, education, courses, and more make up what you are and how you shine as a professional, including hard skills, soft skills and transferable skills that round out everything you bring to the table.

Use your secret weapon (people you know): You never know where reaching out to a connection on LinkedIn might lead. Getting introduced to someone through people you know and are connected to on LinkedIn can increase your chances of getting hired by nine times. And the best

part is, you have this invaluable tool right at your fingertips. Tip: start with your family and friends first (you never know who they're connected to online), and consider joining LinkedIn Groups, where professionals in the same industry or with similar interests can share their insights and experiences, ask for guidance and build valuable connections.

Put in the practice: According to LinkedIn, 54 percent of job seekers say the interview phase is "moderately to extremely challenging" due to two reasons: uncertainty and lack of confidence. The trick? It's all about preparation. Get ahead of the interview jitters by putting in the time, research, and practice sessions to be sure you're on your A-game when you walk through the door.

LinkedIn has millions of jobs and the right one for you. And remember all the tools you have right at your fingertips to land the opportunity of your dreams.



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ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19 Submitted by Michael Lampton



U.S. Small Business Administration

ATLANTA – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for

working capital to South Carolina small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), SBA administrator Jovita Carranza announced recently. SBA acted under its own authority as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was signed by the President to declare a disaster following a request received from Gov. Henry McMaster on March 17.

The disaster declaration makes SBA assistance available in the entire state of South Carolina; and the contiguous counties of Burke, Chatham, Columbia, Effingham, Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Lincoln, Rabun, Richmond, Screven and Stephens in Georgia; and Anson, Brunswick, Cleveland, Columbus, Gaston, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Mecklenburg, Polk, Richmond, Robeson, Rutherford, Scotland, Transylvania and Union in North Carolina.

“SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible to assist South Carolina small businesses with federal disaster loans. We will be swift in our efforts to help these small businesses recover from the financial impacts of the Coronavirus (COVID-19),” said Carranza.

SBA customer service representatives will be available to answer questions about SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan program and explain the application process.

“Small businesses, private non-profit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives and small aquaculture enterprises that have been financially impacted as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) since Jan. 31, 2020, may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred,” said Carranza.

“These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can’t be paid because of the disaster’s impact. Disaster loans can provide vital economic assistance to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing,” Carranza added.

Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the Coronavirus. The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses. The interest rate for private non-profit organizations is 2.75 percent. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years, and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call 800-877-8339. Completed applications should be mailed to U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, Texas 76155.

The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Dec. 21, 2020.

For more information about Coronavirus, please visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.sba.gov/coronavirus). For more information about available SBA resources and services, please visit [SBA.gov/coronavirus](https://www.sba.gov/coronavirus).

About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.

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CITY OF FLORENCE’S WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Submitted by Amanda Pope, CMO Administrator



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new market!

Recognizing that community wellness and attributes associated with community livability promote economic growth and constituent satisfaction, the City of Florence, makes an effort to encourage health and wellness internally through its Employee Wellness Program, as well as throughout the community. Additionally, the City acknowledges that community wellness is multi-faceted, requiring meaningful collaboration, and works to build a network of partners that include producers, retailers, government agencies, public transportation and health providers. The Eat Smart Move More (ESMM) Florence Chapter is an excellent example as it has facilitated a network of various organizations in Florence that share the same interest.

On March 3, the City of Florence held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new home for the City Center Market and Kitchen at 200 Sanborn Street, followed by the grand opening that Saturday. Plans of the City

Center Farmers Market addressed two Principles of Progress contained within the City’s comprehensive plan, Community Health and Community Livability. The City identified an area for the establishment of a Food, Artisan, and Warehouse Development District. The District’s purpose was to advance opportunities that improve the overall health of the Florence community. This includes the focus of addressing issues associated with healthy food access by applying a multi-modal transportation initiative, the removal of identified socioeconomic barriers, development of the farmers market and commercial kitchen, partnership with local businesses and a recreational/wellness campus that houses an all-inclusive playground, gymnasium and green space.

Providing access to wellness opportunities, healthy food, and improved health care, Florence first constructed a gymnasium. The Drs. Bruce and Lee Foundation assisted with funding for the relocation of the PDRTA hub to the Development District and across from HopeHealth. Next, the City partnered with i-Play Florence to construct an all-inclusive playground. Finally, the City of Florence invested in the construction of a commercial kitchen and farmers market. These efforts were efficiently funded by using TIF, hospitality and foundation grant funds, minimizing the impact on City taxpayers.

The location of the Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen was intentional on the part of the city as it is located immediately adjacent to a USDA food desert and the City’s recreation/wellness campus. Through this dynamic, a geographic sense of place was created where healthy choices



Kitchens outdoor facility

CITY OF FLORENCE CONT'D



New Florence City Center Market & Kitchen outdoor facility

are apparent and convenient, connecting those with shared values. For example, the School District engaged in the installation of school gardens, a Farm-to-School program and a working farm; PDRTA facilitated a transportation hub and free shuttle to healthcare facilities and the market, and wellness programming was incorporated into senior and youth programming.

This new facility is much closer to residential areas and provides increased access to fresh foods and Carolina-grown and made products. The old warehouse site has been repurposed and now offers vendor space and restrooms as well as start-up resources for small, food-oriented businesses. The City will open the Kitchen, a commercial production space located onsite, later this spring. The market is open weekly year-round, currently on Tuesdays 4-7 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Future plans are to add additional days. During this current phase of social distancing, the market operates exclusively as an open-air grocery store with extensive precautions for health safety.

The City's mission addresses its commitment to "elevate the quality of life in our city and region." Recognizing that wellness is an essential component of this, the City will continue addressing issues affecting the health of residents and collaborating with community partners to improve overall health for the community. Let's get moving Florence.

HIRING THE NEXT-GEN EMPLOYEE



The U.S. workforce is in the midst of an influx, with 65 million workers from Generation Z beginning to look for jobs, according to BridgeWorks Consulting. This group of workers, born after 1997, do not remember a time without the Internet and have grown up in a post-2008 recession-era of

financial responsibility, meaning what motivates them differs greatly from previous generations.

The combination of Gen Zers' financially savvy, entrepreneurial spirit, and their deeply rooted relationship with technology means employers need to reassess and diversify the ways they interact with and what they offer candidates. This also creates challenges in identifying the groups' reasons for choosing a field or job, placing the pressure on the hiring business or brand to stand out as an attractive experience.

"With this generation, the onus is on employers to learn how to relate to and attract their next employees," said Kristen Wahl, director of the EcoCAR Mobility Challenge, the current Advanced Vehicle Technology Competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, General Motors and MathWorks.

EcoCAR's recent study of college students participating in the competition revealed two key insights that translate across industries and may help employers of all types better understand who their co-workers and employees of the future will be.

Tech is integral to all aspects of their lives

Gen Z hasn't known a time without access to infinite information at their fingertips as smartphones debuted when many were infants. Easy access to information has allowed Gen Zers to be curious learners and interact with companies and brands much earlier than generations past.

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PRAYER WARRIOR OR PANICKED WORRIER? by Robin Lewis



The Abundant Life

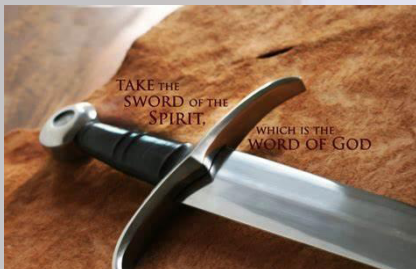
ROBIN LEWIS
CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE COACH



HEMINGWAY-At the time of this writing, we are in the throes of the coronavirus pandemic. Living in the southeastern United States, we're used to preparing for things like hurricanes and floods but not highly contagious diseases. I have never seen fear take hold of people so quickly. There are more questions than answers. This situation has many people praying to God like never before, and many are wondering if their prayers will be answered.

When things happen beyond our control, and they always will, whereas a believer in Christ, do you turn? Is your faith strong enough? Has your faith been built in the word on quiet, good days so that you're ready when something seems to threaten your life or livelihood? Have your experiences taught you to look to God no matter what comes?

Fear or Faith?



When we pray, we are uniting with God, spirit-to-spirit. Praying builds our faith and helps us to turn our focus fully onto God. Psalm 34:15 says, "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry." This means we never have to

wonder if he is listening to our prayers.

Many believers pray out of fear instead of faith. We aren't meant to live in fear even when the world is struggling. Bible teacher and author, Lisa Bevere says, "God doesn't watch over your worries to perform them; he watches over his word to perform it!" We want to be prayer warriors, not panicked worriers. We need to learn to seek the Holy Spirit's direction on how to pray in faith so that God's will is accomplished.

How can I know God's will?

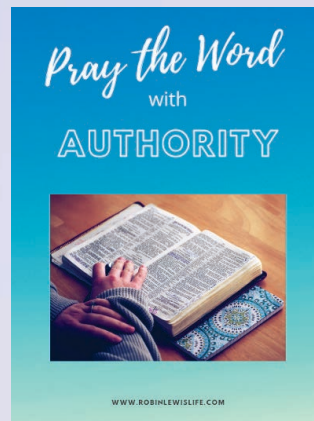
James 4:2 says, "You do not have because you do not ask." In Matthew 6, when teaching the disciples about prayer, Jesus instructs them to pray, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

Many people wrongly believe that whatever happens on earth is God's will, saying things like, "If it is meant to be, it will be." If this were true, then everything that happens would have to be God's will—even things like sickness, murder, child abuse, car accidents, or cancer. When something is contrary to the very nature of God's character, we can know for certain that it is not his will.

So how does his will come about? God partners with us to bring about his will on the earth through prayer. John Wesley said, "God does nothing except in response to believing prayer." We pray in Jesus' name for God's will to be done, and we can rest assured that God will move on our behalf to bring his will about.

Simple prayers build faith

God invites us to come to him with even the smallest concern. When we pray, our focus should shift from our fears to our faith. In Matthew 6,



Jesus says, "Here's what I want you to do: find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace (Matthew 6:6 MSG)."

Philippians 4:6-7 also tells us to bring our concerns expecting God's grace and faithfulness. "Don't worry about anything. Instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds

anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Giving thanks helps to shift your focus onto God so you can receive his peace. Whatever you focus on grows larger, for better or for worse. If you let your thoughts remain focused on what is fearful, then the fear will grow, displacing God's voice in your life. But if you pray and give thanks to God, naming the ways he has provided or protected you in the past and thanking him for being faithful, then your focus returns to him and to peace.



Praying God's Word

We relate to God spirit-to-spirit, so when we have a concern, we can ask him to show us how to pray. If you are positioned in Christ, then so is the situation you're praying about. Bible teacher Graham Cooke says, "Every issue you face has already been assigned

an outcome that God wants to generate. If you are in Christ, so is your situation."

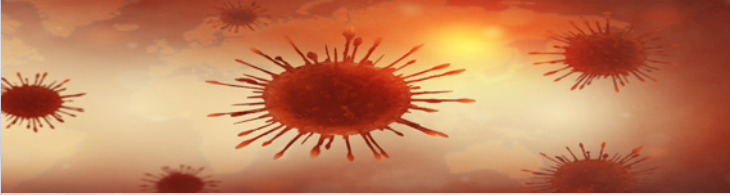
If we are unsure how to pray or what to ask God for, we can turn to his word. In Ephesians 6, Paul writes about the armor of God. He says the "sword of the Spirit is the Word of God." This means that when we use passages from the Bible in prayer, it's like picking up a powerful sword that can pierce the problem and break the enemy's grip.

In regard to a pandemic like the Coronavirus that stirs up vast amounts of fear, we can take authority over it in prayer like this: Father God, I come in the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ and bring to you my concerns over this virus, according to 1 Peter 5:7. I confess my fears and concerns to you, Lord, and ask for your reassurance and faithfulness over our lives. In Jesus' name, I stand in authority over and bind down everything about the virus and command it to stop its advance against my family. Your word says in Psalm 91, that if we make the most high God our dwelling place, then nothing can harm us. You will save from every trap and rescue us from deadly diseases. Thank you, Father, for being faithful. Help me to keep my eyes focused on you and my ears open to your voice. I praise you for being a faithful father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You, too, can become a prayer warrior by praying simple prayers and praying God's word over your concerns. Let him guide you, for he is indeed faithful.

Contact Robin Lewis – Christ-Centered life coach at robin@robinlewislife.com, and visit her website at www.RobinLewisLife.com.

IS CORONAVIRUS FORESHADOWING REVELATION EVENTS? Submitted by Dr. Roger Barrier



Seldom, if ever, has our earth faced a global crisis like the current worldwide spreading of the coronavirus. In like manner, the coming of the Antichrist during the end times will precipitate a worldwide crisis.

The whole world was astonished and followed the beast...“all inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world” (Revelation 13:3-8).

1. Birth Pains

Watching the advancement of the coronavirus is like watching and hearing Jesus describe the “End Times” as being like “birth pains.” Just as labor pains grow stronger and closer together, God will allow an escalation in trials of all kinds to bring men to Christ. In fact, the purpose of the Tribulation itself is to bring pressure for men to surrender to Jesus and find salvation. Jesus describes End Time events in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains (Matthew 24:6-8).

The coronavirus’ fear level is increasing daily—especially among the elderly and infirm. However, the coronavirus may, or may not, fit into God’s plan, it certainly foreshadows the terrors that will occur on earth during the tribulation.

But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them (Revelation 11:11).

2. Food Shortages

Food shortages are occurring in various places. The unknown is scary. So many are beginning to hoard in anticipation of long-term shortages. What we are seeing with the coronavirus foreshadows the soaring costs for basic essentials on the black market during the End Times of the Great Tribulation.

“A court quart of wheat for a day’s wages and three quarts of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine! (Revelation 6:6).”

That verse is rather enigmatic, so let me make it simple. This verse is like saying, “A luxurious roll of six-ply toilet paper for \$1,000 or three rolls of plain paper for \$1,000.”

Coronavirus portends the four Horsemen of Revelation 6:1-14: the white horse of conquest; the red horse of war; the black course of famine; and the pale horse of death!

3. Economic Collapse

Coronavirus may very well foreshadow a potential worldwide economic collapse because of the ensuing panic and incredible debt loads incurred by almost all nations. The October 1929 stock market crash was the beginning and not the end of the deep depression.

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the great!...The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries...In one hour she has been brought to ruin.

“Babylon” is difficult to identify precisely; however, it is obviously a symbol for the economic center of the kingdom of the Antichrist.

Of course, it’s unthinkable to fail to mention the personal and economic costs foreshadowed during the end times by the present coronavirus. Think of the economic sanctions of the mark of the beast!

He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead. So that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him

calculate the number of the beast, for it is man’s number. His number is 666 (Revelation 13:16-18).

4. Dastardly Viruses

The coronavirus foreshadows the dastardly viruses that torment those who refuse to repent, change their ways, and surrender to Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Out of the smoke locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth...They were not given power to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes a man (Revelation 9:3-4).

How do we find peace and protection in the midst of the storm?

The psalmist wrote Psalm 103:2-3: “Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all of his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals your diseases.” Here are six suggestions for living in peace through this pandemic:

1. Wash Your Hands and Your Heart

Get your life right with Christ by receiving him as your savior and lord.

2. Saturate Your Mind With Biblical Promises of Comfort and Care

Let the peace of heart that comes from Christ be always present in your hearts and lives, for this is your responsibility and privilege as members of his body. And always be thankful (Colossians 3:15-16).

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble (Psalm 9:9).

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid (John 14:26-27).

3. Stop worrying, Pray, and Thank God for Answers

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6).

4. Focus on Heaven, Not on Earth

Don’t camp on social media hysteria. God is not surprised by these events, and they are not out of His control. After all, heaven is our real home for eternity.

By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:9).

5. Ask God for wisdom during the crisis

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you (James 1:2-5).

6. Pray Solomon’s Prayer

Join with others in praying Solomon’s classic prayer for Israel, and make your prayer applicable to the United States as well as to the entire world. This prayer is still effective today.

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).



DES'S LYLE: SUB TURNED SPECIALIST IN MATH AND SCIENCE *Submitted by Angela Crosland, Title I Parent Liaison*



Imani Lyle with students at Dennis Elementary School

BISHOPVILLE—It's her "Student First" mentality that has secured Imani Lyle the position as an elementary math interventionist at Dennis Elementary School (DES) in Lee County School District (LCSD).

The Lee County native recently moved back to her hometown from the Spartanburg and Rock Hill areas, where she taught for more than five years, initially working as a long-term certified substitute teacher at Lee Central Middle School (LCMS). Her experiences, coupled with a degree from Winthrop University in Rock Hill in middle-level education (concentration in math and science), have adequately prepared her for her first year in the new position, she says.

In fact, seeing the students as they learn the basics of math will make a world of difference, according to Lyle. [At the middle school level], "I felt like those weak areas, I couldn't go back and hit them. I feel like coming to the elementary school, I get to see the kids at an earlier age and give them that help, so when they make it up to the middle school, they'll be more prepared," says Lyle. "So, even me having a middle school background coming to the elementary school, it's the best."

Lyle has developed various games that challenge the students to higher levels of thinking, and she's done so with no holds barred."As a teacher,

you concentrate on their needs, but you also have to teach the standards," says Lyle. "With this job, I'm concentrating on what the students need and am able to deliver that to them, and I get to be more creative because every student needs something different."

In her classroom, different is what they get. Lyle's math multiplication game is a fast-paced, round-table challenge of peers, which keeps the students at attention. Of the game's origins, Lyle says, "I created the math game with the cards because I saw there was a struggle with them and their multiplication."

Lyle says it's a universal problem that has existed since she was in school. "Just that retrieval...I remember that was like one of the processes that we used when I was a kid, and it worked," she says. "So, [the game was created] just to help them get those multiplication facts down because I always tell them if you can't multiply, you can't do the other math in class."

Classroom climate is also important in raising student achievement, says Lyle. "I believe in a student-friendly environment where it's student-centered—where they are engaged, and they are learning," says Lyle. "So, with [this] space, I feel like I get to be creative and reach them where they are and concentrate on their needs."

Lyle has earned numerous awards for her teaching methods and continues to build upon her craft as she is currently in pursuit of a master's in educational leadership from Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, N.C.

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Census 2020

FMU HONORS FIVE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AT AWARDS GALA

Submitted by FMU



Francis Marion University (FMU) recently honored five of its most distinguished alumni at its annual Alumni Award Gala at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

Dr. Marion Fowler ('78) of Lake City was recognized as the University's 2020 Outstanding Alumni. Fowler earned his bachelor of arts from Francis Marion, where he was named an All-American golfer multiple times. Fowler is the CEO of the Darla Moore Foundation in Lake City, a position he's held since 2016. In 1982, Fowler graduated with his medical doctorate and served as a medical doctor. He graduated with his Juris Doctorate in 1988 and has practiced as a trial lawyer for more than 30 years.

Dr. Australia Greene received the Professional Industry Award in Medicine and Health. Greene ('11, '15, '18) graduated from Francis Marion with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Nursing and was a member of the inaugural class of FMU's first doctoral program, graduating with a Doctorate of Nurse Practice. She is currently practicing as a family nurse practitioner.

Rufus Jackson received the Professional Industry Award in Business and Industry. Jackson ('00) graduated from Francis Marion with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management Information Systems. He is currently the chief information officer at HopeHealth, Inc.

Dr. Taylor Poston received the Professional Industry Award in Natural and Behavioral Sciences. Poston graduated from Francis Marion with his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and is currently an infectious disease immunologist at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

Dr. Jennifer Lyles received the Benjamin Wall Ingram III Young Alumna Award. Lyles ('09) graduated from Francis Marion with her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. After receiving her Ph.D., Lyles returned to Francis Marion as an assistant professor of biology. Lyles is a member of a distinguished FMU family. Her grandfather was one of FMU's first faculty members, and her father Seth is the Pee Dee Electric Cooperative professor of physics at FMU.

VIRTUS ACADEMY BREAKS GROUND IN NEW LOCATION

Submitted by Iris Brown, School Development



Renee Mathews, interim principal

Florence's first public charter school is set to open its doors at a new location on August 1. The project that has been in the works for some time now is finally coming together to offer students grades K-7 the opportunity to achieve excellence through project-based learning, rigorous academics and leadership development.

The new school, which will be located off of Pisgah Road, is being built on 10 acres of land that were donated by a Florence citizen, with an additional 40 acres available for expansion. Future plans include a cafeteria that will provide breakfast

and lunch daily along with free and reduced lunch as a part of the USDA school nutrition program. There will be an art room, science lab, music room, full-court gym and two playgrounds.

"Future plans include an outdoor classroom where students can have an outdoor learning space equipped with a seating area and a place for presentations. There will be areas for gardening and plant study. The school will also have future plans for an outdoor field and high school," said Renee Mathews, Virtus Academy's acting principal.

In addition to Math, English Language Arts and Project Based Learning for Science and Social Studies, students will be offered:

- Physical Education • Dance • Art • Music • Spanish • Latin

Middle school students will be able to choose many courses in practical skills such as entrepreneurship, life skills, journalism and other electives.

"Through PBL students are encouraged to think creatively and work in teams to serve real-world problems."

There will be a gifted and talented program that will serve the elementary grades. Once in middle school, those students will qualify to participate in a new program called Leadership Experiences for Academic Development (L.E.A.D.).



Aerial view of construction at the new school location

Mathews first became involved with the school through the planning stages of writing the charter for Virtus. She was asked to come on by the board of directors in 2018 as a consultant to advise on policy and governance and to help get the school up and running. In January Mathews was asked to serve as principal for the remainder of the school year while the school conducts a national principal search. "It's an exciting time for Virtus because the school is growing rapidly and has this major facility construction in progress. The passion of the parents and staff to support Virtus's students is inspiring."

"The students are very polite and expressive. In January the students held a community PBL showcase of work from first semester. Their enthusiasm was evident, and we look forward to their next PBL showcase in May. The PBL showcase two times a year is a unique

VIRTUS ACADEMY CONT'D



View of the new school under construction and work on the interior of the building has begun.

feature of Virtus Academy.”

Another unique feature is that parents get a choice when it comes to Virtus Academy. “Virtus supports parent choice. Students are not limited by geographic zone. We have students from both Florence and Darlington County. Parents choose Virtus for the small school environment and personalized learning.”



Home of the Wolves!

Virtus Academy opened August 20, 2018 with 187 students. By the following year it had 307 students enrolled in grades K-6th grade. By the 2020 school year, the new school will hold 507 students in grades K-7th.

The school is projected to add a grade level every year until it reaches 12th grade in 2025.

About Renee Mathews

Renee Mathews is an extremely knowledgeable and talented South

Carolina charter school leader. She holds education specialist and master’s degrees in K12 educational leadership, as well as a master’s degree in secondary social studies. Mathews is certified as a school district superintendent and secondary and elementary principal. Her teaching certifications include high school and middle school English Language Arts, middle school reading, and middle and high school social studies. Additionally, she taught high school math for five years. Throughout her career in education, Mathews has served as a school district superintendent, chief academic officer, deputy superintendent and principal in both large, urban and small, rural settings. Previously, Mathews was the founding principal of East Point Academy, a Chinese language immersion charter school in Columbia, which is consistently one of the highest performing charter schools in the state. Thereafter, Mathews served as the transformation principal at Coastal Leadership Academy in Myrtle Beach. She has also served as a consultant to numerous traditional and virtual charter schools. Further, Mathews taught struggling readers at the technical college level and served as an adjunct professor of teachers at the graduate level for six years.



Virtus Academy, a tuition free charter school for Florence and Darlington counties, is now accepting applications. Virtus Academy will accelerate academic achievement to prepare students for civic and career leadership by focusing on personalized learning, rigorous academics and character development in a creative, arts enriched environment.

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New Facility Opening 2020!

CLAFLIN PROVIDES HELPFUL COVID-19 INFORMATION

Submitted by J. Craig Cotton, Director of Public Relations, Office of Communications and Marketing, Claflin University



Dr. Shannon Smith,
associate professor/chair of
the nursing department

ORANGEBURG - Q. What is the coronavirus and where did it originate?

A. Coronaviruses are [from] a large family of viruses. The novel Coronavirus or more specifically, COVID-19, is a respiratory illness that is believed to have originated in the horseshoe bats in southern China. But we do not know the exact source of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Q. Can I contract the coronavirus from someone who is not or has not been infected?

A. No, but this is specifically the reason social distancing is necessary—to stop the spread of the disease.

Q. Can the coronavirus be transmitted by pets or other animals?

A. Coronaviruses that infect animals have been able to infect people, but this is rare. However, there are different kinds of coronaviruses. The one causing the pandemic is COVID-19. We do not have evidence that companion animals, including pets, can spread COVID-19.

Q. Is being outdoors potentially dangerous?

A. People may leave their homes “to engage in outdoor activity,” provided they comply with social distancing requirements. If you remain six feet away from other people (not counting those in your household), you can exercise outside.

Q. Is it necessary for me to change clothes when I come inside after spending time outdoors?

A. Infectious-disease experts say you generally don’t need to do so more often than usual. If you are a healthcare provider and potentially subject to a high density of virus, the answer is different. But for most of us, it is all about our hands and face and keeping social distance.

Q. How long is the virus active on hard surfaces?

A. Preliminary tests (as of March 17) show that when the virus is carried by the droplets released when someone coughs or sneezes, it remains viable, or able to still infect people, in aerosols for at least three hours. On plastic and stainless steel, viable virus could be detected after three days. On cardboard, the virus was not viable after 24 hours. On copper, it took four hours for the virus to become inactivated.

Q. What are the best cleaners to remove coronavirus germs?

A. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water), alcohol solutions with at least 70 percent alcohol and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants, such as Lysol spray and wipes and Clorox disinfecting wipes, should be effective. You should read the labels to ensure the product has disinfecting properties.

Q. How do outbreaks like the coronavirus normally end?

A. Outbreaks similar to COVID-19 have ended as endemic conditions. For example, HIV was considered an epidemic in West Africa for decades before becoming a pandemic in the late 20th century. Now, thanks to advances in modern medicine, HIV is considered endemic, which means the rate of the disease is stable and predictable among certain populations. It is my hope, however, that scientists will be able to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 (much like flu strains that develop each year) to prevent the virus altogether.



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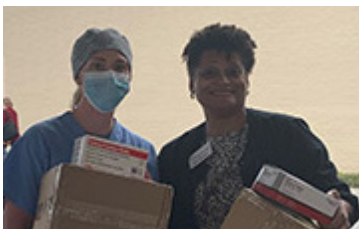
ORANGEBURG - Claflin University President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack visited Florence recently as part of his President's Alumni Chapter Tour. Warmack provided members of the Florence Chapter of the Claflin University International Alumni Association (CUIAA) updates on key University initiatives and expressed his gratitude for their financial support of scholarships for Claflin University scholars.



*From Left: Front Row: Hester Cooper Smith, Lenolia K. Bryant, Theresa T. Davis, Dr. Warmack, Madeline Thompson, Chapter President Bishop Kenneth L. Gibson and Zelda M. Lee
Middle Row: Thelma M. Stanton, Peggy H. Farmer, Clyde A. Bess and Vanessa H. Ellison
Top Row: Lamaris H. Eagleton, Zenobia K. Perkins and George F. Lee*

HGTC DONATES PPE TO HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Submitted by HGTC



HGTC's Ann Daniels (right) with Grand Strand Medical Center Emergency and HGTC nurse grad, Dana Smith (left).

CONWAY—Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) donated personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies such as gloves, isolation gowns, masks and surgical caps to several local healthcare facilities. Under the leadership of Dr. Marilyn M. Fore, HGTC president, Ann Daniels, HGTC associate vice president of Academic Affairs,

worked with Scott Cyganiewicz and Lorraine Aldrich, HGTC Healthcare Program chairs, to pull together and provide supplies to local hospitals, nursing homes and behavioral health facilities in the area. Conway Medical Center, Grand Strand Medical Center Emergency, Lighthouse Behavioral Health Hospital, McLeod Health, National Health Care, Pruitt Health Nursing Home and Tideland Health received supplies from the College to help address the shortage presented by the unexpected demands of the Coronavirus outbreak.

“We are very proud to provide supplies to our local healthcare partners at this critical time,” said Dr. Marilyn M. Fore, HGTC president. “It is our business to understand the needs of our community, and we didn’t hesitate to give what we could spare to those facilities that work so closely with our students and the College. This is a way to show our appreciation and support for the partnerships we’ve had with these facilities when needed most.”

HGTC is currently on closed under the Governor’s orders. Academic Affairs and faculty members are operating remotely and making the transition for online instruction. HGTC will complete the spring semester with academic courses delivered in an online format, beginning April 1. HGTC is a leader in online education and already has online programs and online options available, so the continuity of academics will remain. The College is still awaiting further approval from the Governor to conduct small group instruction through labs, clinicals and internships.

“As the community College serving this area, displaying teamwork and caring for those impacted is so important to HGTC right now,” continued Fore.

For more information about HGTC, visit www.hgtc.edu or call 843-347-3186.



JAMES RECEIVES FMU'S AAFSC DIVERSITY AWARD Article submitted by FMU



Dr. Erica James

Dr. Erica James, assistant professor of psychology at Francis Marion University, received the African-American Faculty & Staff Coalition's Diversity Award at the organization's annual 19th annual gala.

The diversity award, given annually by the coalition, highlights the work of individuals who are dedicated to celebrating diversity and inclusiveness at FMU and beyond. Organizers noted James' commitment to encouraging inclusivity, especially within the FMU student body.

James is a native of Dothan, Ala., who joined the FMU faculty in 2015. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the College of Charleston, her Master of Science in Applied Psychology from Francis Marion University, and her doctoral internship at the University of South Carolina as a part of her Doctorate in Counseling Psychology from the University of Georgia.

The presentation of the award was one of many highlights from the event. The African-American Faculty & Staff Coalition (AAFSC) also recognized 12 recipients of AAFSC-sponsored scholarships during the gala. Maggie Wallace Glover, the first African-American woman to serve as a South Carolina state senator, provided the event's keynote address.

Francis Marion University President Dr. Fred Carter announced the University would also begin the process of establishing a study

abroad program with an institution on the African continent. The University plans to have the program in place by the spring of 2021.

The 12 scholarships are provided with AAFSC fundraising as well as support from Francis Marion. The AAFSC funds named scholarships for Dr. Freda Campbell Wilson, Dr. Joseph E. Heyward, Dr. Leroy "Pete" Peterson, Rebecca Lunn and Dr. Dorothy Harris.

Teresa McDuffie, FMU's network administrator, was also awarded the newly created Outstanding Service Award, which recognizes AAFSC members for their dedication to the coalition.

The AAFSC was founded at FMU in 1995 to stimulate and enhance cultural awareness and to promote professional development and welfare among faculty, staff and students.

The organization's goals include increasing morale and communication among members; creating an atmosphere of community for FMU African-American faculty, staff and students; serving as a liaison between the administrative personnel of FMU and the African-American faculty and staff; and examining the university's efforts in recruitment and retention of African-American faculty and staff.



Diversity is worth celebrating!

Dr. Erica James

Recipient of the 2019 Diversity Award

Presented by Francis Marion University's African American Faculty and Staff Coalition.

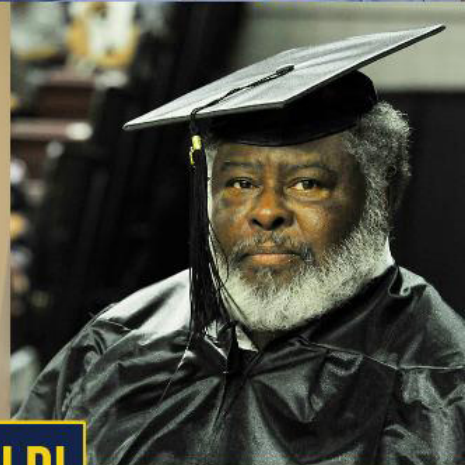
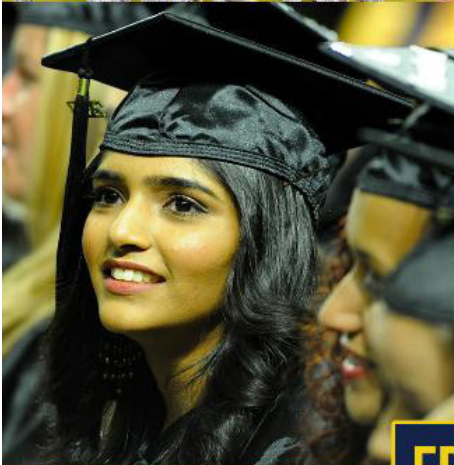
James, an assistant professor of psychology at FMU and a proud FMU alum, was recognized by the AAFSC for encouraging inclusivity and diversity within the FMU student body.

Congratulations, Erica!





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Ken Malachowsky patents his 3D printed educational model aimed to teach allied health students.

Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) biology instructor Ken Malachowsky recently received a patent for his 3D printed educational model aimed to teach allied health students how blood is typed and what happens during incompatible blood transfusions.

Throughout his years of instructing anatomy and physiology, Malachowsky noticed that students typically memorized without truly understanding which blood types were compatible in proper or improper blood transfusions. In an effort to find a solution to the issue, Malachowsky

attended a human and physiology conference in 2013 on process-oriented guided learning inquiry and began formulating a plan for creating a new learning tool that would help students better understand blood types while in the classroom.

“We know that learning occurs better when doing something as opposed to just listening or reading,” Malachowsky said. “I applied that notion to blood transfusions to have the students actually make different blood types and see what happens when compatible and incompatible blood types are mixed together.”

Once Malachowsky conducted his research and developed the idea of visually showing the students what they were being taught, he reached out to the SiMT on FDTC’s campus and began working with the team on a prototype of the classroom materials.

The SiMT 3D printed several iterations of the design that resembled the shapes of red blood cells and antibodies. The individual pieces of

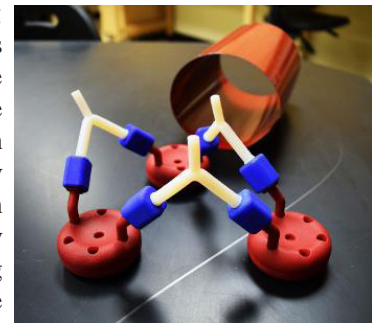
the 3D printed materials are color coordinated and can be pieced together, much like a LEGO set. This concept allows students to construct various blood types and visually determine what types of red blood cells constitute a given blood type. The concept illustrates types of allowable antibodies that would be in the blood as well. Students in Malachowsky’s BIO 211 class are currently being taught with this model.

“The SiMT was built to serve the needs of industry and education in our region, and across the country,” said SiMT Vice President Dr. Mark Roth. “It’s very exciting for us to assist and support one of FDTC’s own, instructor Ken Malachowsky, in his pursuit of a patent for his revolutionary teaching device.”

In July 2017, Malachowsky filed for the patent, and this past December, he was awarded Patent No. 10,510,269. Malachowsky said, “I am thrilled to have developed a novel learning tool that can help allied health students understand the difficult topics of blood transfusion and blood typing.”

Malachowsky is now in the process of reaching out to manufacturers and having his patented learning tool mass produced and sold to educators around the world.

The CEO of 3D Learning Solutions, Malachowsky is originally from Bronx, N.Y., but he has been living in Florence since 2001. He earned an M.S. in biotechnology from the University of Tennessee as well as a B.S. from Cornell University. Malachowsky has taught at FDTC since the spring of 2001. He earned Faculty of the Year in 2015.



Ken Malachowsky's model

RUSH NAMED SCTEA'S INNOVATION TEAM OF THE YEAR



The FDTC RUSH Program team was honored as the A. Wade Martin Innovation Team of the Year at a SCTEA luncheon

The Removing Underserved Student Hurdles (RUSH) Program at Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) was recently named the SCTEA’s A. Wade Martin Innovation Team of the Year and was presented a check for \$1,000.

The SCTEA’s A. Wade Martin Innovation Team of the Year honor recognizes a group of people who are significantly contributing to their respective college and the SC Technical College System. This year marks the first time that a group at FDTC has ever been chosen for the honor.

“We are extremely proud of the RUSH Team,” said FDTC Interim President Edward Bethea. “They have made a huge difference for our students and their success.”

The team award process begins with each college president of the

state’s 16 technical colleges nominating a team to represent their institution. Bethea nominated the RUSH Program to represent FDTC. Nominees for the honor had to be full-time employees and could not directly report to the institution’s president.

“We extend our deepest gratitude to our students, faculty and staff who have been receptive and supportive of the program,” said RUSH Program Coordinator, Dr. Andre Boyd. “Our community partners have provided numerous resources to lend a hand to the work to which we’ve committed. We consider it a tremendous blessing to be given the opportunity to use our gifts to make a difference in our own community.

“If you look at the diversity within our team, we have engineers, entrepreneurs, artists, counselors and a physician. Several of us are or have been certified public school teachers or college instructors. Collectively, we come from four continents and speak more than six languages between us, not including the language of computer programming.”



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#GrowingBetterTogether

THE STRATEGIC PLAN Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea, Superintendent



Dr. Kandace Bethea

MARION-ROAD TRIP! When vacation time arrives many of us hit the road to go to a desired destination. For most people that means packing the car and hitting the highway, but before that can happen, you need to know how you are going, and you need a map. That is what a strategic plan is for any company or organization. It is a plan of where you want to go and how you are going to get there that is communicated to all everyone that has a stake in organization.

The development of the strategic plan is not an event but an ongoing process. It is a time for deep and engaging conversations from every viewpoint. The Marion County School District is embarking upon this journey and has partnered with Insight Education Group to guide us as we go through the process. Bringing in an outside agency provides our organization with a consistent and neutral guide that will foster the tough conversations and pose thought-provoking questions that help our team develop a plan that will identify and evaluate the best way for us to accomplish our goals.

Over the coming months, our team will be examining the direction of our organization, what exactly we are going to do and for whom, along with how to measure it so we can be sure we are meeting our goals. We will record our vision, our mission and our beliefs that will

guide us in creating long-term goals. We will bring in our many stakeholders to include our students, parents, community members and business partners. Once the plan is written, it will be shared so that everyone knows exactly who we are, where we are going, how we plan to get there and what will let us know when we arrive.

The final strategic plan will guide the district in every decision made. It will also serve as a guide for each school as they begin to develop their own plan of action that will be aligned with the district's goals. It is important for all stakeholders to review the strategic plan to provide ongoing commentary. Although written every five years, a good strategic plan is reviewed and updated as appropriate. It is a living document that should change over time.

Our goal is to ensure that our entire organization is aligned when it comes to student achievement. With everyone following the same map, we are sure to arrive at our common destination.





Atiya Stokes-Brown

CONWAY-When Atiya Stokes-Brown started her higher education career trajectory, she quickly discovered that with her social identities she had the ability to transform spaces and help them to be more inclusive. This led her to her current position as vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Coastal Carolina University (CCU) in Conway. As vice president, Stokes-Brown provides leadership to help systemically involve diversity, equity, and inclusion in

everything that happens on campus.

Stokes-Brown has taught the University community a fundamentally different way to think about higher education and inclusivity. She believes, “All students, regardless of their social identities, can be successful and thrive. I perceive and understand that the work we do here in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) is central to facilitating that transformation on an individual level, and also at a systemic level here at our institution.”

Stokes-Brown is constantly implementing new ideas and initiatives to create a more inclusive space, including one that focused on leading and educating faculty and staff on campus. She leads a professional development series called the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Series, which Stokes-Brown describes as “teaching faculty and staff on campus the ways in which they can reach their cultural competency so that they then are better positioned to think about how, as individuals, they are able to create an environment that truly transforms our institution.” This series not only instructs faculty on how they can

transform spaces, but it also looks at their own social identities and how they can lead systemic change.

Another initiative is an inclusive pedagogy, and leadership workshop, a partnership between the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for Teaching Excellence to Advance Learning at CCU. This workshop is designed to encourage faculty and staff to think about the ways they engage with students and to introduce them to certain inclusive practices.

A future project Stokes-Brown hopes to bring to campus is related to the hiring process. “The project is an inclusive excellence partners program that will give faculty and staff the opportunity to embed themselves in the hiring process and see how implicit bias shows up in our decision making,” said Stokes-Brown.

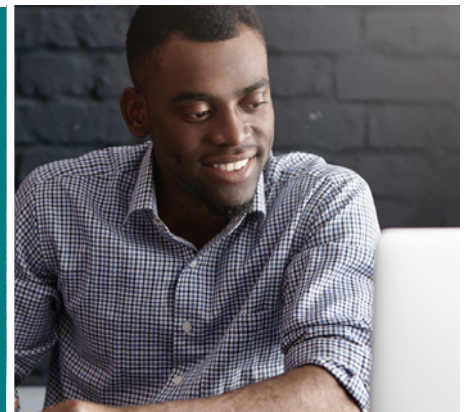
Another project coming up for ODI is teaming up with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Admissions to expand outreach in the community. Stokes-Brown wants to educate younger generations in the community on the availability and opportunities of college and why Coastal Carolina University could be the potential next step for furthering their education.

Stokes-Brown has spread her ideas and knowledge to both faculty and students at Coastal Carolina University. With many new projects coming up, and a diversity, inclusion, and equity strategic plan in the works, Coastal Carolina University and Stokes-Brown will continue to work together to expand and foster an inclusive community.



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MANAGING ANXIETY RELATED TO COVID-19 Submitted by MUSC Health

CHARLESTON-Anxiety is a normal feeling during times of uncertainty. The health, financial and psychological impact of COVID-19 is unprecedented, and there are many unknowns. It is a kind of threat that we are not used to. We know how to track a hurricane and plan accordingly. However, COVID-19 is more difficult to track. This can increase anxiety and worry.

When feelings of anxiety, worry and panic are overwhelming, they can interfere with our ability to cope. Therefore, practicing ways to manage overall anxiety and worry may be helpful during this time of preparation and response.

If you or a loved one feels overwhelmed by anxiety and worry related to COVID-19, we recommend seeking professional help. The National Disaster Distress Hotline at 1-800-846-8517 is available 24/7 to provide support. If you feel that you are in immediate crisis, please call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Follow guidelines from the CDC for preparation strategies.

Engaging in activities to become better prepared can improve our sense of control and reduce anxiety. Washing hands, keeping hands away from face and social distancing will help prevent spread of the virus and can help individuals feel a greater sense of purpose. Limit exposure to social media, especially sites that instill a sense of panic. Identify one or two reputable sources to follow, and check only once or twice a day. We suggest the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Limit children's exposure to media

Children can be exposed to distressing information via the Internet, radio and TV. Caregivers should provide information to children in developmentally appropriate manner. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network provides guidance on how to talk to children about COVID-19.

Balance

Given the number of news and social media feeds and daily discussions about COVID-19, try to balance these stories with positive ones that are occurring across the world.

Limit isolation

Maintaining connections to others to combat feelings of isolation is important. Regular texting, phone and video calls with family and friends, especially elderly friends and family, are especially important.

Practice self-care activities

This includes good sleep, hygiene, exercise and eating healthy. Try to get outdoors in unpopulated areas as much as possible.

Limit unhealthy coping strategies.

Limit unhealthy coping strategies such as alcohol and drug use, as this may worsen anxiety.

Practice relaxation techniques

Deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and imagery relaxation techniques may help take the edge off of anxiety. There are apps and websites to guide you through coping strategies.

Be present

Learning to be present in the current moment can help calm one's body if feeling overwhelmed with emotions.

Acknowledge emotions and thoughts, but avoid "getting caught up in them." Mindfulness is a skill that requires practice. There are a number of apps, readings and resources that can assist someone in learning and practicing such skills.

This information was gathered by Alyssa Rheingold, Ph.D., professor and associate director, Sleep and Anxiety Treatment and Research Program, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.



School counselors and career specialists, along with Darlington County School District administrators, gather for a group photo at Nucor Steel in Darlington during a tour of the plant.

DARLINGTON-School counselors and career specialists from across the Darlington County School District (DCSD) got a chance to tour one of the area's premiere manufacturing facilities recently. The visit to Nucor Steel of Darlington provided district employees with valuable experiences that will help them guide students into both college and the workforce after high school.

DCSD's Key to Career program works with business and industry to provide work-based learning experiences for students, particularly through paid internships. Key to Career arranges tours like the Nucor visit throughout the year for counselors and career specialists, according to Quinetta Buterbaugh, the district's business engagement coordinator.

"Engagement with the business community is the backbone of the Key to Career program," Buterbaugh said. "One of the most powerful things businesses can do to shape our workforce is to partner with the district by speaking with our students, opening its doors for tours and demonstrations, and mentoring through our internship program. We are grateful for the generous time and resources Nucor Steel gives throughout the school year to children in Darlington County."

The day began with an in-depth presentation by Nucor vice president and general manager Doyle Hopper, including the history of the company and opportunities available to potential employees. Hopper also discussed

the Nucor Technical Academy, which provides fully paid schooling and training for employee candidates each year. Hopper explained how students coming out of high school have an excellent opportunity to launch a long and prosperous career with Nucor.

"Young people must seek advice, ask questions and prepare themselves to be fully equipped for their future," Hopper said. "It is important for Nucor to partner with the school district and help educate the folks who are guiding Darlington County's students about the opportunities we offer at Nucor."

Following Hopper's presentation, about a dozen Nucor employees from across the career spectrum led tours of the facility. The counselors and career specialists got up-close insight into career offerings and the skills necessary for potential employees.

Jennifer Dunn, a school counselor at Hartsville High School, said the tour will help her in working with students in the future. "Our visit at Nucor was very enlightening. I was extremely impressed with Nucor's culture, variety of available jobs and their commitment to the local community," she said. "Darlington County is fortunate to have such a prestigious employer



Darlington County School District school counselors and career specialists tour the manufacturing facility of Nucor Steel in Darlington recently in an effort to improve services provided to students in the district.

providing opportunities for long-term career growth."

Key to Career, which is headed up by Buterbaugh, plans to continue coordinating visits to local businesses and industry for the district's educators. For more information about Key to Career, please visit www.dcsdschools.org/keytocareer.

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Raldex Hospitality Yours!

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Chad Patterson

Most often, we see members of organizations out and about, participating in community events, and sometimes we wonder what company culture is really like behind the company's walls. While we commonly hear employees give their take, it is also important to hear a different perspective, such as one from a company leader like Chad Patterson, the vice president of Raldex Hospitality.

Patterson grew up in Spartanburg and went to the University of Georgia. He started in the hotel business in 1996 and worked in several cities and states across the East Coast before landing in Florence in 2005. "I started with Raldex in 2008

as a general manager. After working at almost every property and being named General Manager of the Year by Hilton for the Hilton Garden Inn brand, I became vice president of Raldex and have enjoyed every minute."

Raldex Hospitality has five Florence properties, including the Hilton Garden Inn, Staybridge Suites, Holiday Inn Express & Suites and two Hampton Inn & Suites. Each Raldex hotel is located off of I-95 and/or I-20, which are both major interstates that make it convenient for business travelers and vacationers to easily access nearby cities such as Myrtle Beach, Charleston or Charlotte. In addition, guests at any of the properties have a vast amount of amenities and endless possibilities to be entertained locally by seeing a show at the Florence Center, checking out restaurants in Downtown Florence or enjoying a race at Darlington Raceway, to name a few.

When an organization has several properties and, hence, several employees like Raldex, company culture is of high importance, especially when the organization is customer-facing. According to the Balance Careers, checking out a company's website is one way to determine what a company's culture is. By looking at the Raldex website and its Company tab, the very first sentence on its Team page says, "Raldex's leadership team combines extensive industry experience with passionate team members who love setting the standard for others to follow." This statement in itself speaks on the group's values and culture, a culture that is built around diversity and inclusion and revealed through the manner in which the organization's leaders treat its employees and its customers.

"Overall, Raldex's company culture involves providing the team with" a comfortable place to work while providing our guests with quality accommodations and a positive environment to stay," said Patterson. "We, as Raldex, are all one big team. When you work for Raldex, not only are you a member of the team, but you are a member of our family. We are very diverse as a family, and we love every member as our own. We provide an inclusive and diverse atmosphere for our team members. Raldex ensures that you have everything you need to be successful at your job while making guests happy and having fun at the same time. Raldex celebrates and encourages the diversity of our team members. We have so much diversity that comes through our doors on a daily basis. We have strong anti-harassment policies, and annual training is provided for diversity and inclusion," he said.

These types of business practices can lead to the retention of the most loyal employees. According to the organization's vice president, the formula for retaining loyal employees is quite simple: "Make sure that they know their

worth," Patterson said. "Value them for what they are... the success of your company. Your team makes an effort every day to come in and make your company the best company. We offer our team profit sharing, medical/dental/vision coverage, vacation and sick time, promote from within and a fun atmosphere to work."

"Concentrated efforts to always provide the best service to our guests by empowering our team members" are what Patterson said make this hospitality group different from other hotels or hotel groups in our community. Standing out amongst industry competitors is a must, but it's also important for a company to support the community in which it operates, especially when dealing with adversity. The Florence community has had its share of just that. However, during those times, Raldex took the forefront, exhibiting a face of true hospitality. While Patterson could recall several shining examples of true Raldex hospitality, one in particular was when Hurricane Matthew hit the area. "Power was out in the whole city. At the Hospitality District exit by the Florence Center, all of the hotels were full but had no electricity or food because the restaurants were closed as well. The Raldex team pulled



Team meeting to discuss new plans

together, and with the help of a group staying at the Hilton Garden Inn, we were able to hook up large generators and feed over 200 people and provide charging stations for anyone staying on the exit." And during that time, he said the team wasn't only hospitable to its guests but also to "ANY people in need."

Raldex's service motto #RaldexROCKS encompasses so much of what the organization does for the community. The acronym ROCKS stands for Relationships Opportunities Community Kindness Service, and it is so befitting of Raldex, and our community stands behind this. Raldex was awarded the 2019 Outstanding Service award for the state of South Carolina from the SC Restaurant and Lodging Association. To Patterson, this was due to "our efforts in so many local charities that directly benefit our team members, support and participating with the Florence Chamber and our Haunted Hotel by which we partnered with over 60 local companies to give kids in the Florence area a safe space to come and trick-or-treat."

So what does the future hold for Raldex? In the next five or ten years, Patterson sees Raldex continuing to be a leader in both customer and team member satisfaction. In the near future, Patterson said, "The Hilton Garden Inn will get a new refresh in 2020. That will be a large task in itself! And, we will continue to be involved in our community in many ways... and of course... planning for our Haunted Hotel!"

With an exceptional guest experience at a great value to guests, consumers have the best reasons to choose a Raldex hotel accommodation and to return in the future. As Patterson said, "Great service, caring and friendly people and a quality product. What else would you need?!"



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Autism Awareness Month

INDEPENDENCE STARTS HERE

Submitted by Stacey Lyon, Marketing Director



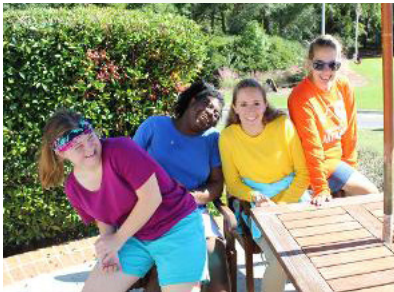
Friends practicing good listening skills together while having fun and jumping around in our Social Skills Program

MYRTLE BEACH -The thirteenth World Autism Awareness Day will be celebrated on April 2. “Joined by the international community, hundreds of thousands of landmarks, buildings, homes and communities around the world come together...to Light It Up Blue in recognition of people with autism and those who love and support them,” according to Autism Speaks.

Autism “refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication as well as by unique strengths and differences” (Autism Speaks).

With the diagnosis rate currently at one in 59 children (CDC) and growing, most of us know, either directly or through our social circles, at least one person with autism. It is a disorder that is becoming so commonplace that few families go unaffected.

When a family gets the news that their child is diagnosed with autism and/or intellectual disabilities, they can feel helpless. SOS Health Care answers their call for help. We can provide guidance, programs, resources and support to those diagnosed, along with their families, so they may seek comfort in knowing their child can have an independent future.



Four friends from our Adult Life Skills Program helping out at our SOS Charity Golf Event and enjoying lunch together outdoors with a little silly thrown in for good measure.

SOS Health Care is a non-profit direct service provider that empowers those with autism and intellectual disabilities to thrive on their own. We offer a range of programs, camps, activities and classes that teach the life and social skills one needs to live independently. SOS Health Care is actively working towards building an affordable housing community called Oak Tree Farm, so when these individuals gain the skills they need to live independently, they have a place to call home.

SOS currently has 13 programs serving Horry, Georgetown, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, Darlington, Florence and Charleston. Our programs serve friends with autism as young as two and go through adulthood, with our eldest participant currently at 42 years old. Our programs include ABA therapy, Social Skills groups, Friday Knights respite care and Summer Camp for young kids and teens. For adults, we offer Life Skills 1 & 2, Job Coach, College Mentor, Career Camp, Fit 4 Life and Project SEARCH programs. Additionally, we work with Horry County first responders to offer the Project Lifesaver tracking bracelet program at no cost to participants. To learn more about our program offerings, please visit



our website at sos-healthcare.com

SOS is currently developing an affordable housing community for adults with autism called Oak Tree Farm that is in Conway. The community will include access to transportation, life skills training, an amenities center, a swimming pool, on-site laundry facilities and more.



It's hard to say who enjoys our Friday Knights respite care more, the kids or the parents. Here our younger group heads outside to play and celebrate Fri-YAY.

Oak Tree Farm will have room for 96 residents. Each will have their own bedroom and bathroom, with a shared kitchen and living space in a duplex housing design. The community will have supports that encourage education to promote inter-dependent living in a place to live, laugh and love as friendships are developed.

SOS held a groundbreaking ceremony in August 2019 at Oak Tree Farm and is excited to have started construction on the first house, a transition house, with an anticipated move in date of July 2020. All Oak Tree Farm residents will first live in the transition house so that we may evaluate each person's skillset and provide any additional training or help as needed before moving into their home. If you would like more information about Oak Tree Farm, please visit our website at scautismhelp.com/oak-tree-farm.

At SOS our mission is to answer the call for help when individuals or families are facing the challenges of autism & intellectual disabilities. Our vision is to provide the resources needed for independent living for all individuals in South Carolina with autism and intellectual disabilities so they are not in danger of becoming homeless.

The road to independence is a learning experience that is life-long for us all. The goal of all of SOS' programs is to aid individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities along each leg of their journey so that they may be able to reach their utmost potential and lead happy and fulfilling lives just like their neurotypical peers.



Autism Awareness Month

CHEF JAMIE USES PLATFORM TO ADVOCATE FOR AUTISM by Ta'Meeka Epps



James Daskalis

MYRTLE BEACH-Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior. Autism is thought to be a “developmental disorder” because symptoms generally appear in the first two years of life, although it can be diagnosed at any age. Individuals on the spectrum may experience restricted interests, repetitive behaviors, or inappropriate social interactions.

Autism is referred to as a “spectrum” disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms an individual may experience. ASD occurs across all ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although ASD is believed to be a lifelong disorder, treatments and services have proven to improve an individual’s symptoms and ability to function.

The theme for National Autism Awareness Month for 2020 is #CelebrateDifferences. It is a time when we spread awareness, promote acceptance, and ignite change while learning to co-exist. It was 1970 when the Autism Society launched an ongoing national effort to promote autism awareness and to ensure those on the spectrum are given the best opportunities to experience the highest quality of life.

The puzzle piece is the national symbol for autism awareness, and it affects one in every 110 children. Unlike the puzzle you put together knowing the picture your hard work will reveal, when living on the spectrum, you create the picture with the pieces as you grow. These wonderful, amazingly talented individuals who live on the spectrum have some amazing humans gifted with the honor of fearlessly raising them in this uncertain world.

Chef Jamie of Johnny D’s Waffles and Benedicts in Myrtle Beach is one of those amazing humans who #CelebrateDifferences every day with her eight-year-old son James. Chef Jamie and James called Middletown, N.Y., home before relocating to the South in 2014 to open Johnny D’s Waffles.

James was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder when he was three years old. “James was having major trouble communicating. He would not make eye contact. He was not interacting with his loved ones or his peers properly for his age and had a lot of trouble sleeping,” recalled Chef Jamie.



Chef Jamie Daskalis

As a single mother and business owner, it is only natural that her two worlds complement each other. Chef Jamie uses her platform to advocate for her son James and others who are on the spectrum. Through advocacy, Chef Jamie is able to educate the community while giving back through hosting fundraisers and sensory events. Chef Jamie is one of SOS Health Care’s greatest business partners. She consistently donates to SOS, helping to make its programs possible. Her general manager, Danielle

Malcomb, helped start a gardening project at the SOS Myrtle Beach clinic so that its adults can grow fruits and vegetables, then eventually sell them at a farmers market as part of their Life Skills classes.

If you are ever able to meet Chef Jamie in person at the restaurant and taste her award-winning food, you will immediately find how her cooking skills are. And if you eat in, then you will notice all of the additional items

her mother and grandmother hand make and sell in support of autism. In addition, the menu has autism facts, and families with autism can even enjoy preferential seating. This is true advocacy like no other.

The exact cause or causes of ASD are unknown. Doctors diagnose ASD by looking at an individual’s behavior and development. ASD can usually be diagnosed by the age of two. It is important for those with concerns to seek out assessment as soon as possible so that a diagnosis can be made and treatment can begin.

James was diagnosed with Hyperlexia II. Hyperlexia II is when children on the autistic spectrum are hyperlexic. They are obsessed with letters and numbers, arranging them endlessly, taking magnetic tablets to bed instead of other toys or stuffed animals.

“James had a deep understanding of letters and sounds and started to read before the age of three. This understanding was the skill, which helped him to start talking and expressing himself. I share James and his awesome journey through my professional social media pages (Chef Jamie Daskalis). Through sharing, I hope to impart knowledge about autism and to give other parents and persons affected hope when they see James flourishing.”

Treatment for ASD should begin as soon as possible after diagnosis. Early treatment for ASD is important as proper care can reduce individuals’ difficulties while helping them learn new skills and make the most of their strengths.



Chef Jamie & her son James

on the spectrum. “James is perfectly made. I wouldn’t want him to be anyone else. He is the light of my life, and we work hard to make sure he is able to learn the skills needed to be successful and independent. The bad days are few and far between these days because we did the work and continue to do the work. James wakes up, ready for the day each day with a smile on his face, and regardless of how tired I am, it is hard for me not to smile as well.

James is a well-adjusted, sweet, happy eight-year-old. He loves eating blueberries and green beans. In his spare time, he enjoys watching videos on his I-pad and playing “Throw ball, please.” He loves tickles, squeezes and playing chase. Stop into Johnny D’s Waffles and Benedicts on King’s Highway in Myrtle Beach, you just might meet the SC Ambassador Chef Jamie Daskalis and her amazing kid with the energetic smile.

autism
SOS

SOCIAL AVOIDANCE
OBSESSION & REPETITION
SPEECH DELAYS

See signals? Start screening.



Autism Awareness Month

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN IN FSD1 *by Anna Bowman*



Brian Denny and his family

LAKE CITY– Brian Denny has been the director of Programs for Exceptional Children in Florence School District One for the past 13 years. Denny, a graduate of Francis Marion University with both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in psychology, began his career as a school psychologist. The Lake City native stated that he’s always been compelled to help others and wanted to help students as much as he could. His exemplary career is a testament to his commitment.

Denny, along with a 40-member staff, works closely to ensure that all students with special needs are receiving a free and appropriate education. With over 2,000 students in the district with special needs, having a dedicated staff is key to the successes that we have experienced throughout the years. “We put the best people in place to educate our students and provide oversight for those services. Being open and honest with parents is a big key to our success as well,” said Denny.

Measurable guidelines are in place to ensure that both state and federal regulations are being achieved. “We provide parents an update every 4.5 weeks regarding their child’s growth toward their individual goals,” which is an invaluable asset for parents to ensure that their child is being treated as an individual and not just a number.

Inclusion is a very big part of ensuring that children with special needs will receive the best possible education in a traditional setting. “Inclusive classrooms have afforded students from different learning abilities to receive instruction at the same time in the same classroom setting, instead of isolating students with learning challenges from their peers.” Denny stated

that several new programs have been implemented to restructure the classroom inclusion for special needs children. “Focusing on inclusion,” Denny stated, “has created a huge increase in the number of students who are moving to more classes with typically developing peers. This has been a movement our department has been pushing, and our superintendent, Richard O’Malley, has been pushing. It has been wonderful for all students involved, and we have seen growth in all areas.”

Lester Elementary, a school in the district with a high population of students with autism, has implemented a new concept called sensory rooms, which is unique to the developmental skills of children with autism. He expounded on the reasons for implementing these special classrooms. “These rooms will provide a calming space for students to receive therapies and provide sensory input that these students so desperately need. This will help students focus more, and we can help those students increase their achievement and self-regulation skills.

April is National Autism Awareness Month, and Florence School District One understands the importance of partnering with All 4 Autism, a local advocacy group, with the sole purpose of increasing awareness, resources and support for those of all ages with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Pee Dee Region and their families. Nationally, it has been estimated that one in every 110 children is affected by autism. To have such a powerful voice in the community as All 4 Autism benefits everyone. “We have partnered with them this year for programs at Sneed and West Florence. We are going to continue to work with them to ensure we meet the needs of students with autism. It has been a great partnership, and we feel it will continue,” Denny stated.

Denny and his wife are the proud parents of two young sons, ages 10 and 14, and the family attends Newspring Church. He describes himself as a “True Geek at Heart,” and when he’s not reading comic books, he enjoys going to the movies.



April is
NATIONAL AUTISM
AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know?

Every 20 minutes someone is diagnosed with autism

Autistic individuals (speaking and non-speaking) may use a variety of different and unique ways to communicate

Many individuals on the spectrum stay in school until they are 21

People with autism have very special gifts and talents!

The Autism Society has a resource for support called Autism Source.
To reach us call: 800-3Autism

#AutismFriendly #NAAM16
AUTISM SOCIETY



A WOMAN AGAINST ALL ODDS *by Ta'Meeka Epps*

LAKE CITY-Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an annual campaign used to raise public awareness regarding sexual assault while educating communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence by knowing the signs and where to turn for assistance.

During the month of April, national, state and community-based organizations, rape crisis centers, government agencies, businesses, campuses and individuals organize events and activities that spotlight sexual violence as a public health, human rights, and social justice issue and reinforce the need for preventive measures while celebrating the healing process.

Healing brings about restoration of mental and emotional well being. It is a process that cannot begin until the source that caused the shift or unbalance is faced. Most times, the hardest part of the healing process is facing and acknowledging what brought one to this place where restoration and healing are needed.

Healing from sexual assault looks different for everyone, and there is no definitive timeline as to when the process will end or if it will ever truly end. The process, although an arduous one, is necessary to get to the other side of pain.

A quote from the prolific author James Baldwin reads, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Those words embody the drive behind Alexan Green reclaiming her life as an adult after surviving sexual assault as a vulnerable child.

A child is supposed to feel safe and secure within the confine of their home. So naturally, he or she would trust those who stand in the role of caregiver, biologically or otherwise. For Alexan Green, she suffered silently at the hands of someone who lived under the same roof for nearly two years of her formative young years.

"The abuse had a lasting effect." Green recalled, "I was 37 years of age before I revealed my past

Green says "The pictures represent the new me after reclaiming my life with Christ. Being set free from the hands of the enemy, being rescued and restored! God gave me beauty for ashes."



Alexan Green

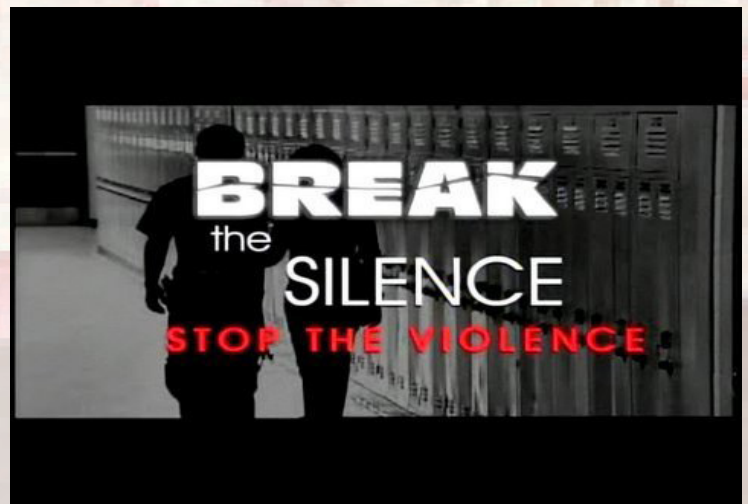
traumas. I was harboring the act of the abuse I experienced, blaming myself, creating more heartache and pain. I fought demons daily. My mind and thoughts were mostly negative. Although I was an adult, an event from my childhood was destroying me and my family (husband and children). The abuse tormented me for years until I broke my silence."

Why can't child sexual assault/abuse be stopped? Why aren't the institutions and people charged

with keeping children safe from the harms of predators effective? The answer is a complex one, and maybe it isn't an answer at all. However, most victimizers have a relationship of trust with the victim. They are the caregivers, the teachers and the community leaders. They are responsible for protecting the child, yet they create the unsafe environment.

Shame, guilt, fear and love, along with numerous other emotions, are the root causes that drive a victim to remain silent to the abuse. When safety and security are stripped away from an innocent child, that causes still waters to run deep. Green used her trauma to build others up while educating and exposing the ills of sexual assault. Out of her pain and through her healing, she created Women Against All Odds. "My ministry is a vision from God, and it defines me as a survivor. I want to be a light in the darkness for others when they feel hopeless. I want those who stories may mirror my own to know healing is possible, and, most importantly, it was never their fault," said Green.

Alexan Green is a true daughter of the Pee Dee Region. She was born in Florence, raised in the rural area in Williamsburg Country, and now calls Lake City home. She has defied the odds. She stands as a survivor at 40 years old. With Jesus as her savior and redeemer, Green shares her testimony to break generational curses and to break the silence surrounding sexual assault to help set other women free. She is a wife of 14 years to Rasheem Green and a mother of three.





SOMEBODY TO LOVE *Submitted by The Naomi Project*



All my life, all I wanted was somebody to love and for somebody to love me unconditionally, meaning not what I can do or be for a reasonable amount of affection. Often that's what it came down to. Being born a child of rape to a mom and

grandmother who were victims themselves, my mom always tried to show and reassure me that I was truly loved. Not knowing that my father was not my biological father until I was thirteen became the worst time in my life at that point. I always wondered growing up why my dad didn't like me. I was the oldest and always got verbally abused and degraded and the harshest punishment for things that children do because they are children and are still learning. I would often wish for his death or my own.

When I was thirteen, two things happened that changed my life for certain. I was molested repeatedly by my dad's nephew, and I found out my dad adopted me. My mom told him he could not have her without accepting me. But by then, because of a seed of low self-esteem that had been deeply rooted, I tried to kill myself when I was fourteen. The mental anguish just seemed too much. The cousin who molested me told me it was my fault because I "look like that, and if you tell, they are not going to believe you. You are not even blood!"

I began to transform by overeating and letting my appearance go so no one would want me like that again. I only set me up to be ridiculed by my peers and become a person who should "be glad I'm your friend." Going into early adulthood, I began to try to pick myself up, only to be good enough to marry a man thirty-one years my senior. I was 18. Only to find out that he was a functioning drug addict that, in the beginning, was that "somebody to love" me. Shortly after marriage was when some not so good, familiar things began to surface--things I knew all too well: name-calling and physical abuse. But I had been conditioned that all married people have problems, and what happens in the homestays in the home, but when my husband went on a drug binge and put me outside in a snowstorm at gunpoint, my parents came and rescued me.

I began a path of looking for love in all the wrong places, people and things. I met my "somebody to love" for the moment. I received my first miracle child, and then I had someone to love. Familiar things always found a way of searching me out. A cycle of abuse started again. I was being told that if you want something worth having, you have to be willing to fight for it. (I didn't get the memo about being fought on.)

"T.B." bought me a dog to keep me company while he was working but ended up killing it because I loved the dog more than I loved him. I ended up going into pre term labor. My Mr. Miracle was the lifeline I needed at that time in my life.

Sometimes I have looked for love and somebody to love me in all the wrong people. People who have been "damaged goods" to themselves, in the wrong things (substance and mind-altering things), and definitely the wrong places.

So when Mr. Casanova came along, I just went with the flow. Never was he physically abusive, but the emotional and manipulative abuse was much worse to me. I, at times, would have rather he just hit me and got it over. At one point, I had contemplated taking my own life because the mental anguish was overwhelming. But God had an intervention that truly was divine.

For a couple of years, I stayed to myself, and 100 percent devoted my life to my son and my career. I built a wall that I began to believe was unbreakable. Never ever again would I let anything or anyone tear on my heart or my soul.

The self-medicating to soothe my emotional pain began. I made it easier to just have somebody for companionship at any cost. A little abuse never killed anyone is what I really believed. My "somebody to love" showed me abuse could be detrimental. In the beginning, I was truly smitten. I had looked for the signs of familiar behaviors, but there weren't any. They tried to reassure me that I deserved the love and affection that was bestowed upon me.

After my husband came along, "Mr. Someone to Like Me" came when it was convenient. Finally, someone my own age said they loved me. I was always eager to be faithful, supportive and very caring. In the beginning, it was all about me, and nothing was too good for me. Working, going to school, and trying to make a happy home, I tried to make everybody happy and content, but I was suffering. It was always about the other and not me. More seeds of low self-esteem were rooted. I began to get on my feet feeling secure in my career and in my relationship when my familiar friend's mental, verbal and physical abuse decided to pay me a visit. I began to accept things that weren't acceptable for "My Woman," just to say I had somebody to love. He became jealous that I was making more money and reminded me that he was the man. Being self-confident doesn't make you something or someone you are not. But having low self-esteem will convince you to quote/unquote "stay in your place." I got to the point of fronting in front of others to silent tears. When he took my car and gave it away for drugs, I was devastated, but not enough to leave the relationship. I took him pouring hot water in my ear and even moving his girlfriend in and saying it was his cousin. I had a miscarriage, and he and my best friend had an affair while I was recovering. WOW! The mental torture drove me to leave. More roots were planted.

As time went by, I began to look for the signs, but there weren't any visible, as they say, love is truly blind. My guard that I had carried





SOMEBODY TO LOVE CONT'D

I ♥
CONSENT

for many years began to come down, not knowing that I really was being drawn into a stat that would eventually alienate me from my closest friend and even my family. I trusted, and I believed that my prayers had finally been answered. After fifteen years, I had a visitor from my past that I did not welcome. "Mr. Familiar" had found me, and

he definitely came with a vengeance. It started small then intensified. It showed me don't ever say never because it will happen. I had been blessed to receive a second and most precious miracle with "somebody to love me."

As I continued to do me, I was trying to be a good mom, a good wife, and also work. I tried to be nurturing to my family and my parents, but it seemed that I had not been making my soulmate happy. Alcohol abuse brought out this monster I did not know. I tried to put on the front to keep up appearances. All the while, I was breaking down, emotionally, physically and definitely mentally. When someone says that "they are going to kill you" and then says, "after all we've been through, I haven't killed you yet," that made me think. But when my abuser had never hit his own child, I remember in the beginning it only intensified with me: "the love of his life" and the only person he claimed that understood what would happen with my baby.

I took flight, and I found myself in an unfamiliar state and with no one but Mr. Somebody to Love Me who had always been there with me when I could not take care of myself. It bought me to The Naomi Project, where I have been given the opportunity to regroup, refocus, rebuild my self-confidence and self-worth and stabilize myself and my child to once again become positive and productive members of society in a safe and pleasant environment. I am grateful every day that my higher power made a way of escape for me and mine, although some days it's a struggle. But Somebody Loves Me.

Is someone making you feel unsafe?

Order an "Angel Shot"

Angel Shot "Neat"

Staff will safely escort you to your car or ride

Angel Shot "With Ice"

Staff will safely escort you to your cab, Uber or Lyft

Angel Shot "With Lime"

Staff will quietly contact local law enforcement

SPREADING THE WORD ON ANGEL SHOTS

by Les Echols



Denisse Guzman

The month of April is widely recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and is an annual campaign to raise public awareness about sexual assault and educate communities and individuals on how to prevent sexual violence. Looking at various aspects and advocates for sexual assault this month, Diversity Works Magazine© caught up with Denisse Guzman, director of Prevention Education with the Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Assault. Guzman joined the Coalition as a sexual assault advocate in 2019 and will help lead the Coalition's prevention efforts moving forward.

Before transitioning to life in South Carolina, Guzman was a general education & special education behaviorist in Bridgeport, Conn. "It has been an interesting transition, but I love it, and I am becoming acclimated to the hospitality and cordial nature of individuals here," she said. Guzman hit the ground running in her new role, strengthening existing community partnerships, and developing new rapport to benefit prevention efforts. She focuses on sexual assault education and leading the Coalition's Angel Shot campaign, which is something she has been strongly advocating for since stepping into her new role.

Angel Shot is an initiative to provide bar and restaurant safety. When a guest is feeling uncomfortable on a date gone wrong, for example, she can ask for "Angel Shot." But the concept has much more depth than just dismissing a bad date. According to the Pee Dee Coalition, "By ordering an Angel Shot in one of three ways, staff will help by ordering the guest a cab, escorting them to their car, or contacting law enforcement. They can speak a bit about the risks that come along with this, such as the victim going home where they could be followed. They have spoken to law enforcement about these concerns and are happy to address them with us as well. We want to make people aware of the option, as well as the potential risk. They have a trained officer who can provide input too."

Leading into Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, Guzman has been working diligently to spread the word about Angel Shots by educating several organizations and institutions, including the Florence County Sheriff's Office, Florence Police Department, Coker University and Francis Marion University. The idea is to spread the word in Florence and then to the surrounding eight counties served by Pee Dee Coalition. "Prevention needs to be focused on the community," said Guzman. "This means getting the word out to churches and community organizations as well as facilitating workshops and trainings. One key to prevention is learning how to recognize signs, which can expedite how to change behaviors. That is to our advantage," said Guzman.

Pee Dee Coalition is a member of the United Way.

April
IS BOTH

CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH

and

Sexual Assault
Awareness Month

Child Abuse Prevention

CARE HOUSE ACKNOWLEDGES CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Submitted by Meg Temple, Executive Director



This April, you might see lots of blue pinwheels around the community, and those pinwheels stand for a very important cause. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and blue pinwheels have become the symbol against child abuse. Since April is upon us, it is the perfect time to talk about the CARE House of the Pee Dee. CARE House of the Pee Dee is a children's advocacy

center (CAC) located in Florence that has helped over 7,700 abused children across the entire Pee Dee region since its inception in 2005. CARE House started because local law enforcement saw a need for a facility to provide help, hope, and healing to victims of child abuse and maltreatment. CARE House is a safe place where children and their families can come after a reported allegation of abuse.



Meg Temple

Often called "one-stop shops" for child abuse, CACs offer investigative services on behalf of law enforcement and DSS. There are two main pieces of the investigation that the CARE House is involved with: forensic interviews and forensic medical exams. A forensic interview is a non-leading conversation between the child and a trained interviewer. It is filmed, and law enforcement and DSS agencies involved can watch the interview in the observation room. It can be shown in

court as testimony. The second piece, a forensic medical exam, is completed by a forensic-trained pediatrician, and it is a head-to-toe exam to ensure the wellbeing of the child. In CARE House's case, Hope Health's pediatrician, Dr. Michael Foxworth, performs all medical exams and can testify in court to present his findings, if called to do so.

CARE House also provides counseling services to victims and their families. It offers five different types of therapies that are all trauma-focused, evidence-based (basically, that means that they are backed by science and are proven to help someone heal from trauma). Part of the therapy and services offered at CARE House now include a four-legged friend. McGuffey, a yellow lab, joined the CARE House staff in May of 2019, and he serves as a facility dog. He comes from an organization called Canine Companions for Independence and had to go through two years of training before he was placed with CARE House. McGuffey can sit with children during forensic interviews, medical exams and therapy sessions. "McGuffey has



McGuffey the CARE House facility dog

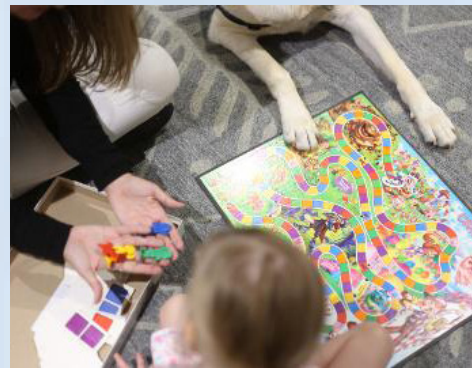
been a wonderful addition to our staff," says Meg Temple, executive director of the CARE House. "He isn't only therapy for the children, but he is good for our staff too. Not only that, but McGuffey helps us to break down barriers when we talk about what we do. It's easy to start a conversation with someone

in the grocery store or at the ballpark when they see me with McGuffey and ask questions about what kind of service dog he is. Talking about child abuse is a way to prevent it, and talking about McGuffey is a way to talk about child abuse prevention."

If you are interested in meeting McGuffey and the CARE House staff and supporting this great cause, think about signing up for CAPES for Kids 5k/10k/Kids Fun Run on May 2 in Florence. The race benefits CARE House. Come out in your best superhero costume, and be a CARE House Hero. You can sign up for this family-friendly event at CapesForKidsRun. ItsYourRace.com.

HOW CARE HOUSE SHOWED IT CARES

Submitted by Sarah Sweeney, Outreach Coordinator



Walking into a child advocacy center after your child has been abused is something no parent ever wants to go through, but that's exactly the situation that Emily (who asked that we only use her first name in order to protect her privacy) found herself in when her

daughter was physically abused. After being referred to the CARE House of the Pee Dee, Emily was scared and didn't know what to expect, but after just her first appointment at the CARE House, all of her reservations disappeared, and she noticed that her daughter's defenses came down.

Emily came to the CARE House for therapy for her daughter, who was a victim of abuse. Both Emily and her daughter were clients at the CARE House for about a year. Each week, Emily's daughter would go to therapy to learn coping skills to help her deal with the abuse she endured. "After my daughter would leave the session, I would talk to the counselor about ways I can help her cope," said Emily. "During that time at the CARE House, we learned to thrive with whatever life throws at us."

Each week, Emily saw improvements in her daughter, in herself and especially in her relationship with her daughter. "Even to this day, instead of me asking her how her day at school went and her just saying 'fine,' my daughter opens up and uses words she learned from her counselor at the CARE House," said Emily.

The healing didn't come right away, though. "I didn't think anything like this could ever happen in my little world, and I completely shut down. I was in a really dark place and never thought I would get through it. The 'what-ifs' were ruling my world," Emily stated. "But the CARE House staff really helped me get through that, and I feel I am stronger, and my daughter is stronger because of it."

"I guess the rainbow after the storm is that I became a better mom through the trauma," Emily says. "I am so forever grateful for everything the CARE House did. I hate that we had to go through all of that, but I am better because of it now." Emily is a strong mom who knew that her child needed the help, hope and healing that CARE House offers.

Emily was just one client of the CARE House whose life was changed through the efforts of the CARE House, but that kind of story is one you

HOW CARE HOUSE SHOWED IT CARES CONT'D



hear all the time when you volunteer or work at the CARE House.

Jenna Nance started out as an intern at the CARE House and has since stayed on as a volunteer because of the work she sees at the CARE House. “When I interned at the CARE House, I immediately

saw the passion and compassion that the staff threw into their work,” said Nance. “The staff truly cares about each of the children they interact with.”

The benefit of volunteering for a small non-profit is that there is a lot of work that can be done, so Nance got her hands in a lot of different tasks and was able to learn so much about the non-profit world. “I was up for trying anything, so they let me observe forensic interviews, work on the website design, and help plan events. I loved doing everything they threw my way because I saw my direct impact,” said Nance. “I would recommend to anyone who is looking for a volunteer opportunity to consider CARE House because working with and for children is so rewarding.”

HELP FOR UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

by Les Echols



Ana Andonie

Ana Andonie was born in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, which is where she grew up. After graduating high school, she attended the University of Honduras and majored in pedagogy. She left Honduras in November 2001 after September 11 and moved to the United States.

Andonie is an immigrant advocate with Pee Dee Coalition, helping the Hispanic community as a certified interpreter and translator for the state of South Carolina. She works with agencies like the Department of Health and Environmental Control, Department of

Social Services and Court Administration. She also works with foreign abused spouses (married to U.S. citizens) in an effort to legalize their status, and she helps victims of crimes committed inside the United States to obtain U and T visas.

Diversity Works Magazine© had an opportunity to gather more insight from Andonie and the Pee Dee Coalition, with emphasis on how immigrants who are victims can be discouraged by public policy.

DW: Have you seen where current public policy has instilled fear in immigrants and led to a decrease in reporting cases of abuse and/or pursuit of convictions against offenders?

AA: Immigrant survivors of violence face particularly high hurdles and barriers in accessing the U.S. legal system. Language barriers often prevent foreign victims from reporting crimes; some don't know how to report, or even that a 911 number exists. When you add fear and distrust of police to the mix (a result of the corruption of law enforcement in their home countries), gender dynamics and cultural or religious beliefs (some may prohibit a female from speaking with any man apart from her husband), the combination of circumstances often seems more debilitating than the

attack/assault itself.

Conversely, perpetrators of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking crimes often maintain their power and control through manipulation and misinformation. Threatening to call immigration officials or to turn the table on the survivor and misuse the criminal justice system, often dissuade survivors from reporting a crime. Perpetrators also commonly turn family ties into an instrument of abuse, making threats against the survivor's children or threatening to separate the survivor from other family members in order to dissuade her/him from calling the police.

Unfortunately, since the presidential inauguration in January 2017 and the implementation of an executive order that same month, immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking in the United States are less likely to report crimes to law enforcement due to the increased threat of deportation and separation from their children. As the U.S. government intensifies pressure on local law enforcement agencies to engage in federal immigration enforcement, a growing climate of fear pervades immigrant communities nationwide. As outlined above, immigrant survivors already endure difficult obstacles in reporting and escaping violent situations, and the current environment makes it even more frightening for victims to come forward and seek help. Now there has been a nationwide increase in immigrant survivors who have dropped civil or criminal cases. As immigrant communities around the country fear deportation and separation from their families, foreign victims and survivors are likely facing a magnitude of unreported violence.

The implications are clear. For undocumented immigrants who experience sexual and domestic violence, normal barriers are compounded with the fear of exposing their immigration status and being separated from their families. When the community and law enforcement are not engaged or fail to encompass a high percentage of the United States population, we miss opportunities to interrupt current and future violence in our country.

DW: Why should they come to Pee Dee Coalition? How can you help?

AA: Many immigrants are fearful of admitting that they have been a victim of a crime. However, U.S. law provides several protections for legal and undocumented immigrants who have been victims of a crime. There are specific protections for victims of domestic violence (and/or victims of certain crimes) and victims of human trafficking. The legal system grants them certain rights, regardless of their citizenship status.

Even if their status in this country is “illegal,” they have the right to visit an emergency room and seek help for physical abuse. They have the right to seek shelter, ask for an order of protection and ask for custody and divorce.

I am trained on immigration laws and have helped many families get their legal status by utilizing relief visas that immigration offers to certain victims of crimes.

Visa Self Petition-A visa available for foreign spouses married to American citizens who are battered or subject to extreme cruelty. (Must be married to a U.S. citizen)

U visa-This visa is available for people who have been subject to crimes committed inside United States territory. This includes sexual assault/rape, molestation, murder and kidnapping.

T visa- This visa is available solely for people who have been trafficked for labor and/or sex trafficking purposes.





DARKNESS TO LIGHT®

TWO DECADES OF PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

by Jennifer Robinson



Katelyn Brewer, President and CEO of Darkness to Light

CHARLESTON-The vision created 20 years ago was and still is clear: a world free of child sexual abuse. The vision actually began 25 years ago when the founders of Darkness to Light questioned why the community was more focused on post child sexual abuse services than on keeping children safe, following a child sexual abuse crisis that rocked Charleston. They began the conversation about the mobilization of services

to prevent sexual abuse versus being reactive to incidences of child abuse. They also found a way to highlight the stories of adult survivors of child sexual abuse by holding yearly conferences. Those conferences and community advocacy became the base for a new organization in 2000 called Darkness to Light. In 2005, after refining their mission to include adult education, advocates of Darkness to Light, along with other interested community members, released the first iteration of the group's flagship training, Stewards of Children®. Today the training is a two-hour evidence-informed program that teaches adults to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Within the training are messages of empowerment for past sexual trauma. The mission of Darkness to Light is to empower adults to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse through awareness, education and stigma reduction. Once those mission components are supported, then the real conversation can begin about how to protect children from sexual abuse.

There should be a continuum of conversations had in our families and communities about child sexual abuse. Having those conversations, which are often uncomfortable, will create respect of the topic. An issue like sexual abuse cannot be changed without acknowledgment of the topic. In the past, dialogue about sexual abuse has been labeled taboo due to the context of the way sex is described as a violent act. But in more recent years, says Katelyn Brewer, president, and CEO of Darkness to Light, people are more willing to listen at least. Brewer says that three years ago when she first started working at Darkness to Light, people would shun talking about the mission and vision of

the organization. Her goal was to help grow an army of allies because survivors were fighting internal battles quietly and reaching out to other survivors who eventually built their own community. "They were lone rangers fighting to be heard and feel relevant," Brewer stated. "Today, courageous individuals have started to stand with survivors, helping to carry their burden. Those allies are also active members on their empowerment journey. Darkness to Light is "working toward a world where adults have the courage to honor survivor voices." Brewer stated that she is encouraged to see that the world is now catching up with the message of survivors. Survivors being able to know they are being heard is a part of their empowerment and personal development.

It's evidence-informed training, Stewards of Children® has been an effective tool in educating families, communities and organizations about the signs of abuse and ways to prevent it. According to the 2019 Impact Report, "More than 1.7 million adults in 76 countries have been trained to protect children through the efforts of nearly 12,000 certified instructors and authorized facilitators. The programs offered by Darkness to Light are the only evidence-informed, adult-focused child sexual abuse prevention trainings proven to increase knowledge and change behavior."

Darkness to Light has a specific philosophy of social behavior change. This social behavior change approach targets adults in the community, in youth-serving organizations, the family, and with political power. The staff, supporters and advocates believe the approach will enable changes.

To further its efforts in education, in 2019, Darkness to Light announced its partnership with the Monique Burr Foundation for Children and introduced Prevent 360°. The Monique Burr Foundation for Children out of Jacksonville, Fla. is a top research-focused organization in terms of that assessing impact and quality of programming. Brewer stated, "We share a similar philosophy of educating children and a belief that adults are the ones who are responsible for prevention about child sexual abuse." Prevent 360° pushes a unified front, which means parents and children will learn a complementary language to help prevent abuse.

As the organization celebrates its 20 years of service to the Charleston area and beyond, Darkness to Light continues to increase awareness, programming and engagement. On Oct. 6-7, the IGNITE National Prevention Conference will highlight its progression of services and impact. Darkness to Light is certainly a light for those who were feeling polarized by sexual violence incidences. Congratulations to Darkness to Light.



Celebrating Our Libraries & Librarians

20 YEARS OF LIBRARY EXPERIENCE: THEIR DECISION, JOURNEY & DESTINATION *by De'Angela Haynes*

In life, we understand that decisions are important, so we must choose wisely. There are times in life when we make plans to do things and achieve certain goals, but not only do we have one plan in mind, we also have backup options or what is often referred to as "Plan B." Well, as it relates to the library experience and becoming librarians, Aubrey Carroll, Deborah E. Bartell and Paula Childers, have certainly made the right choice. To know them, to meet and talk with them, you can tell that they are library advocates, working in this great library system of Florence County for over 20 years. All three have just celebrated their 20th anniversary with the Florence County Library System.



Aubrey Carroll

Aubrey Carroll currently serves as the chief of Headquarters Library Services, stated that the library's mission is to provide library materials, services and programs to all citizens of Florence County and to assist them in obtaining information to meet their diverse educational, cultural, recreational and professional needs.

In 2016, we developed our most recent strategic plan. We formed Planning Groups, composed of community leaders and stakeholders, at each library location, and asked them to describe their ideal Florence County. We wanted to find out what needs had to be met in order to achieve that ideal and to prioritize library services around those needs. The results of each group were clear: early childhood literacy and public Internet access were the most urgent needs in the county that the library was best positioned to address. About these:

Research shows that students who begin school at an academic disadvantage not only stay behind, but they also fall further behind. Conversely, investments made in children's literacy before age five have a proven, permanent effect in academic achievement, graduation, and ultimately career success. Conversations with our stakeholders and Community Planning Groups revealed that the library is uniquely positioned to make an impact on Florence County by maximizing early literacy.

We are now preparing to develop a new strategic plan since four years is a long time in the library world. We will hold community-planning groups again, as well as conduct a survey of citizens across the county to see what the library can do for them. Even though our mission stays the same, the needs of our community change, and we change to continue meeting them.



Deborah E. Bartell

Deborah E. Bartell currently serves as the information services manager for the Florence County Public Library Branch. She says that her journey started back in 1998 when she was about to graduate with her bachelor's degree, and she needed a job, so she was planning to see which route she should take. She said that she was going to be a teacher, but that didn't work out, so she talked with her professor to get guidance on which path she should take. After talking with her teacher, Bartell decided to go the route of working in the library. She saw in the classified ads that the Florence County Library was hiring, so she applied.

At the old library, Bartell worked in the reference department and was the backup driver for the Bookmobile. After some time, a position opened up for the children's department. She worked with children and Young Adults (YA's). Later, she left the Florence County Library to pursue a position managing an after school program at Williams Middle School through Poyner Adult Education and 21 Century Learning After school grant. After working

with the after school program for four years, due to downsizing in funding, she realized that she needed to shift.

In 2005, the doors opened for her to go back to the Florence County Library. She applied for it and got the job working in the reference and children's department. Yet again, her devotion, love for people, and doing story time paid off, allowing her to experience the best of both worlds. In 2010, new branches began to open up, so Bartell got a promotion to be the manager for the Timmonsville Library branch. She loved working there because she, along with the associate librarians and staff, were able to connect with the community. They partnered with the Boys & Girls Club in Timmonsville, worked with the seniors, and did outreach and summer programs for children.

As it relates to her position, she now helps overseeing in the hiring process, supervising, employee reviews, community partnerships, but most importantly, connecting with the community, providing cultural and diverse related services for customers. Bartell is a recipient of a Doctors Bruce and Lee Foundation scholarship that afforded her the opportunity to receive her Master of Library and Information Science Degree from the University of South Carolina.



Paula Childers

Paula Childers serves as manager of the children's services at the Florence County Headquarters branch. She helps to oversee the services provided by the children's department to the youth and parents/guardians of Florence County.

Childers is known for her creativity and passion for children's literacy. "I just love what I do," she said. "I want to make a difference in children's lives. What better way than to bring books to children, just to bring that literacy to them?" She demonstrates a passion to not leave children behind but to help cultivate within them a love and discipline for reading/literacy. Within her department, she helps to oversee the Bookmobile services so that youth and the outreaches of youth throughout the entire Florence County will have available to them library books and other resources. The Bookmobile serves the public at local daycares, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other youth programs so that they will have access to the library experience when they are not able to come to the library because of where they live or a lack of transportation. With the Bookmobile services, a library associate is scheduled to provide storytime.

Childers has a passion to see youth and young adults optimize their experience with the library, so story time is available for toddlers, and the library has an array of picture books, chapter books, audio books and books leveled for YA. Each summer, hosted at each of the four branches, Childers coordinates with librarians from all four branches to prepare for the Summer Reading Program. The State Library gives a theme, but individual libraries prepare for their area/demographics in order to make sure that while students are out during the summer, they don't lose their momentum of reading and being developed in literacy. Weekly programs are held, prizes are given, and authors and presenters are invited to share their journey and passion for reading.

With over 20 years of experience together, these three librarians that started out working within the Florence County Library are still together, leading the charge of the library experience in this 21st Century. Florence County region is certainly much wealthier and more developed in literacy because of the decision, journey, and destination of Aubrey Carroll, Deborah Bartell and Paula Childers.

DEVELOPING LITERACY Articles by De'Angela Haynes



Cathy Pruett

JOHNSONVILLE—At the Johnsonville Public Library, we focus our programs, outreach, services and materials on the ways our branch can boost early literacy and public Internet access, which are the two urgent needs identified in the Florence County Library System's strategic plan. Helping to lead this great literacy development program is Cathy Pruett, serving as branch manager to the Johnsonville Public Library.

Through weekly storytimes, both in the library and at our local schools, Head Start classes, and childcare centers, we provide opportunities for young children and their caregivers to talk, sing, read, write and play together. While these lively storytimes may look like (and indeed are) just plain fun, that fun promotes learning with activities chosen based on years of research about how children develop the skills they need to become readers.

We are especially grateful to the Friends of the Johnsonville Public Library for their support in allowing us to create a learning-rich space for our youngest



Weekly story times give young children the opportunity to play together

visitors. The train table, building blocks, magnetic shapes, hopscotch rug, and puppet stage we added allow children to develop their imaginations as well as motor and social skills and make them eager to come back. Donations from our Friends' group have also allowed us to give more than a thousand new books to local children and teens over the past three years.

In addition to our early literacy focus, we are dedicated to offering point-of-need assistance to our adult patrons on library computers or on their own electronic devices. Whether you are printing a W-2 from your phone, setting up an email account, downloading an e-book to your tablet, or uploading a resume for a job application, our staff will work one-on-one with you to answer your technology questions.

Our branch strives to be an integral part of the Johnsonville community, and we are always looking for ways to do so. Our library's Facebook page has grown from less than 300 likes to over 1000 in the past three years. We are a member of the Johnsonville Area Chamber of Commerce, and we participate in the Johnsonville Heritage Festival. Thanks to the Altman family and others, we have a dedicated local history and genealogy collection. The library will be hosting a History Scanning Day for area folks in May along with Josh Dukes, the administrator of the popular Johnsonville South Carolina History Facebook group; Erin Lawrimore, the UNC Greensboro University archivist; and David Mace, Johnsonville's Downtown Development director.

Pruett said, "Before becoming branch manager in January 2017, I spent many years as the youth services librarian in Marion County and served as



Boosting early literacy

an elementary school library media specialist. Although I have many wonderful memories from my past employment, I know that whether I'm laughing with our lively book club members, building a marble run with some homeschoolers, getting a hug from an excited toddler after storytime or helping share local history, here at Johnsonville I have the best job of all."

SMALL PLACES DOING BIG THINGS



Jimmie Epling

DARLINGTON—Often times, there are some rural areas that may not get as much attention as the big cities or metropolitan areas. However, in Darlington County, there's a public library system that's doing great things. Jimmie Epling, director of the Darlington County Library System, shared some great highlights of the many lives that are being affected positively by the library's services.

Darlington County Library System covers the entire Darlington County, and the four areas within this county--Darlington, Hartsville, Lamar and Society Hill--all have library services that they offer to the public.

Epling says that each year, 300,000 visitors accounted for who come into and are served by these four libraries. Traditionally, there have been certain hours of operation of the libraries, but now in the 21st Century, patrons don't have to wait until the physical library buildings are open. Through the Darlington County Public Library website, patrons can access books electronically 24/7. There's a link on the website that provides free e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines by way of the Palmetto Library Consortium. He states, "We include the public by not just having services available to them with brick and mortar, but we're also equipped to serve them electronically and by means of up-to-date technology through our 'Digital Branch.'"

The Darlington County Public Library System exists not only to serve the elderly, but there are also services available for the youth. It has the TumbleBook Library with e-books for e-kids and the Learn360, where there are pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade multimedia resources with 24/7 access for educators, students and parents. This provides ways for them to have access to library materials when they are traveling.

What is most impressive about Darlington County Public Library is that they want to make it a place where the public is welcomed, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. The staff wants people to be able to come in, relax, and have a place where they can rest their bodies and minds. This is great because there are some places where businesses have no loitering signs up, but this is not the case with the Darlington County Library System.

Epling says that they have services "from the cradle to the rocking chair," meaning they have a variety of services that they offer to the public for youth and adults. The library has access to DISCUS from the state library, where patrons can research topics and subjects and have access to test preparation materials through the Learning Express and other online resources. Patrons can access the Universal Class, which has over 500 online continuing education classes. The library is also in the process of expanding services to the public, such as providing assistance with passport applications. The library networks and collaborates to provide free tax preparation for the public for individuals making below \$90,000. Epling added, "This year, it's going to be very important to citizens participating with the Census Bureau, and we want the people to know that we are helping to assist the Census because a major portion is to be done online. We are always looking to meet the needs of the patrons. We have 3-D printers, offer services with faxing documents, access to getting documents notarized, making copies, printing documents and resume assistance."

Overall, the Darlington County Library System, surely demonstrates that there are "Small Places Doing Big Things."

MORE THAN A BOOK

by De'Angela Haynes



DarCon at Darlington Library

Lights, camera, action... the spotlight is shining on a local public library in Lamar. April 10-16, we will be celebrating National Library Week 2020 with the theme "Find Your Place at the Library." It was first sponsored in 1958, and

National Library Week is a national observance sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and libraries across the country each April. So, we decided that it is time for us to celebrate the contributions of our local libraries and librarians and to promote library use and support. It gives us an exciting opportunity to raise awareness of their value and impact in the communities they serve.

Lamar County Public Library is among those local libraries. Although it's located in a small rural area, its impact and reach far extends its locale and zip code. Among its employees, Kelly Shull certainly stands out for her contributions to patrons and excellent customer service. She serves as manager, and to her, the library experience is more than a book. She said that this local library helps people with individual services such as learning how to attach documents to email correspondence, how to write a resume, how to print off personal documents and paystubs, etc. Shull says that although she's not that technically savvy, she and other library associates help the patrons with whatever their needs are, and she wants the public to know that they don't have to be ashamed to get the help that they need.

In the 21st Century, while there are a lot of technology and things that help people digitally, that doesn't take away the need and effectiveness of the library's purpose and function to help to grow and develop literacy skills. Shull says that regardless of technology, people still need that human touch and interaction in order to continue developing socially. She says that the library is more than just a book. She grew up when the card catalog and Dewey Decimal System were popular and pretty much served as a means to research materials within the library.

Along with making a difference in this Lamar Library, is Michelle Wallace. Wallace is a graduate from Coker College with a bachelor's in early childhood/elementary education (double major). She is a



Darlington native, born and raised. She's a wife and mother of two boys who go to school in Darlington County School District. Wallace began her library career as a part-time circulation clerk at the Society Hill Library, but after six months there, she accepted the position of children's librarian at the Lamar Library. She held that position for about a year and then accepted the position of branch manager there. Wallace was the manager for about a year before becoming the Darlington branch manager. Wallace has loved every minute of working for the Darlington County Library System.

Each library she's worked for holds a special place in her heart. They all have their unique "personalities" that is reflective of their own communities. She says, "My favorite part of my job is creating programming that is fun and engaging, as well as looking for new services to offer that will meet the needs of our community."

According to Wallace, some programs at the Darlington Library are:

"Black Creek Literary Festival...once a year in January we get several local authors together to sell their works and interact with patrons to promote their writings. During this festival, we hold a Q and A panel where patrons can ask the writers questions about the writing and publishing process or about their personal works. This is one of my favorite events of the year."

"My most favorite is our DarCon. This is a small library comic con that we offer for free to the public. During this event, we have cosplayers, vendors, cosplay contest, and free activities for kids. I love dressing up in costume and seeing all the kids come out to meet Batman or Captain America. This event is always fun for the whole family and, in my opinion, highlights what is so great about libraries."

"We offer so many programs and resources, we literally have something for everyone, and best of all, it's at little to no cost for everyone. But what truly makes the Darlington Library special is our best resource--our staff. The staff here at the Darlington Library (and all our libraries across the county) honestly care about our patrons. They greet visitors with a smile and do their best to accommodate requests. They do their best to offer personalized service from book recommendations to help with research projects. We offer outstanding youth services that enrich the lives of the children and parents that visit us. I am so very proud to be a part of such a caring and creative staff!" Wallace said.



Literacy Festival



MEETING THE NEEDS by De'Angela Haynes



Benjamin T. Hall

KINGSTREE-Williamsburg County Library has three buildings and a bookmobile. We also have a patron base of more than a third of our county's population. Patrons with active library cards total 10,375, which is slightly more than a third of the 2018 U.S. census estimation of 30,606. Benjamin T. Hall presently serves as the director for the Williamsburg County Library, and he's certainly demonstrating great leadership in this library experience.

The Williamsburg County Library endeavors to fulfill the informational needs of the entire county. The library supports educational, civic and cultural activities and provides an opportunity for self-education of residents. The library strives to provide compelling, authoritative and up-to-date resources and services in a variety of formats in a friendly and professional manner.

Hall said, "The library proudly serves a very diverse citizenry and strives to buy materials that fit the needs of all of our patrons. As a member of SCLENDS, Williamsburg County Library offers nearly three million items for checkout to our patrons. We believe this is a huge benefit to our citizens and provides them the opportunity to read so much on any topic they choose without the need to spend their money on books or DVDs. Having a selection that is so large helps break down financial barriers to success in school and self-improvement."

"We also help break down the digital divide by having over 35 public access computers plus Wi-Fi available. In the fiscal year 2019, Williamsburg County Library averaged over 219 uses of our Internet per day. Some of these uses came in the form of patrons connecting with their phones or laptops to our Wi-Fi so that they could access the Internet. Other uses came from patrons using our computers to do various tasks, including job searching, schoolwork, taxes, and numerous other tasks. Having computer access in 2020 is critical for numerous aspects of life, and our library continues to help provide that access," said Hall.

"Williamsburg County Library offers numerous programs through the week at all three of our branches. In our Greeleyville branch, Robin Hancock teaches patrons how to use a computer. The computer class shows patrons basic computer skills and has been a big success for the Greeleyville branch, drawing interest from across the county. In Kingstree, my favorite program is Creative Space. During Creative Space, children and adults are given an idea of something to paint, but

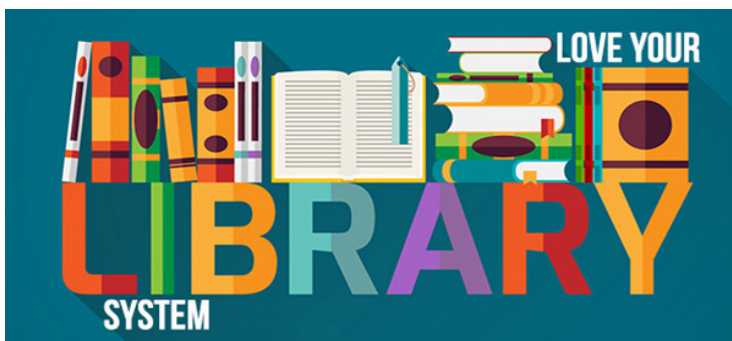


ultimately it's up to the patron to interpret what they want to do and be as creative as they choose. Many kids don't have access to paint, and we find that they really enjoy being able to paint at the library. I have had many parents tell me that they have hung their children's artwork on their walls at home. In our Hemingway branch, we have a consistent group coming to play BINGO at the library. They are able to win small prizes, and they really enjoy getting together and having a sense of community at the library."

"Last fiscal year, we had 218 programs with a total attendance of 5,391. That averages to 24.7 people per program. I am very proud of the educational entertainment that these programs provide our citizens and especially our children. This gives children a place to come and do something other than play video games, though we do offer video games for checkout as well at Williamsburg County Library."

"Another of my favorite programs that we offer at Williamsburg County Library is Sizzlin' Science. Each summer Bobbie McCutchen, our program specialist, designs a four- to eight-week program where children participate in simple science projects like making a paper-mache volcano. Last year they made stomp rockets out of PVC pipe, duct tape, construction paper and a water bottle. The rockets use air pressure to shoot up into the air. Some rockets go higher than the tops of our nearby oak trees. I've really enjoyed seeing children embrace science and hope that it is translating to success in school when summer is over."

"Our long-term goals are to continue to provide service that meets the needs of our community. We want to have every book you want, whether it is your favorite author's next great novel or a book about cooking, repairing your boat, making a website or designing your own business plan. We want to continue to be the place citizens come when they need to use a computer or access the Internet. We find that a lot of patrons have a device but cannot afford access to monthly data charges or the Internet at home. Many people seem to believe that everyone has a smartphone. However, many people do not have a computer or a smartphone, and some people have a device but do not have access to the Internet on that device. Our library will continue to break the digital divide and provide equal access to everyone," Hall said.



Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

LIVING A MODEL VOLUNTEER LIFE by Ta'Meeka Epps



Roselind Hughes

DARLINGTON-April 19-25 is National Volunteer Week. Shining a light on the people and causes that inspire us to serve, we take this time to celebrate service. Recognizing those who are making significant contributions to their community through their time, actions and commitment is the aim of national Volunteer Week. There are so many people in the local community who go without basic human needs: food, shelter and clothing. It helps when there are great organizations in the area that help

provide some of those basic needs. You know how they always say, "It takes a village"? Well, it really does.

House of Hope of the Pee Dee was established in 1988 by a husband and wife who saw a need, and it is a Christ-centered outreach organization that glorifies God by serving others with love and compassion as it responds to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of homeless men, women and children without regard to their race, color or social status. It accomplishes this through staff and volunteers working together at the Men's Home, Courtney McGinnis Graham Community Shelter, Mission Marts and various community organizations. The Men's Home is a nine to 12-month Christ-based life recovery program while the Courtney McGinnis Graham Community Shelter is an emergency shelter for men, women and children.

House of Hope's mission is to see lives change over time. This tangible transformation occurs through structured programs that focus on spiritual growth, education, employment, life management and recovery from substance abuse.

One of the many volunteers who give of their time, energy and expertise doing extraordinary things in an extraordinary way at the House of Hope is Roselind Hughes. She was born and raised in Lake City and now calls Darlington home. Hughes started volunteering with the House of Hope of

the Pee Dee in October 2019 but has had a heart for giving and servanthood for as long as she can remember. "Jesus was a servant, and I strive daily to model my life after his. As a child of Yahweh, I strive to be his earthly example. There is no better way to lead than through servanthood. It is all about helping others and allowing them to see Christ in you through your ACTIONS."

Hughes has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, Ronald McDonald House and Guardian ad Litem for the state of North Carolina. Her dedication to her volunteer work helps build a stronger community while she lives a life that reflects her values.

As a volunteer with House of Hope, Hughes works in the capacity of a receptionist. "At the Main Office and Men's Home, I direct calls. Incoming calls range from donations of clothing, food, finances to individuals looking for shelter, food, clothing, and financial assistance. In addition to directing calls, I assist with office projects such as preparing 'thank you' letters to donors and other clerical and day-to-day office duties."

Through providing support and assistance to the most vulnerable members of a community, we show by working together, and we have the fortitude to meet our challenges and accomplish our goal to strengthen the community one person at a time. Volunteering helps foster a sense of purpose while giving hope and helping others improve the quality of their lives.

Roselind Hughes and others like her deserve to be celebrated for the countless selfless hours of hard work. Their efforts do not go unseen, and we are shouting their praises. For more information about volunteering for House of Hope of the Pee Dee, visit <https://www.hofh.org/>.



HOPEHEALTH EARNS ADVOCACY AWARD by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth



From left, Julia Williams and Kimberly O. Johnson, members of the HopeHealth Advocacy Committee, display the 2020 Advocacy Award during the State Policy and Issues Forum.

This year HopeHealth was presented the 2020 Advocacy Award at the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association's State Policy and Issues Forum in Columbia. This award went to the South Carolina health center that signed up the largest number of advocates during the second half of 2019. In addition to the Advocacy Award, HopeHealth was recognized as one of eight centers to reach the goal that was set earlier in the year.

HopeHealth recently wrapped up a campaign that encouraged patients and community members to register as health center advocates, which resulted in 1,300 new advocates.

"Several individuals put in a tremendous amount of work to help us exceed our goal," said Kimberly O. Johnson, director of legislative affairs at HopeHealth. "It's a big deal to have so many advocates signed up, but it's a huge necessity to get everyone to advocate and respond to calls to action. As an organization, we still have a lot of work to do."

Most recently, the efforts of advocates across the nation have helped extend funding for health center discretionary programs (about \$1.6 billion) through Sept. 30 as well as the mandatory fund until May 22 (about \$4 billion). Without congressional action, the most recent continuing resolution was set to expire on Dec. 20, 2019. This resolution would have provided five-year funding for community health centers but did not have enough support in the House or Senate due to disagreements on "surprise billing."

The more advocates who take action by reaching out to elected officials with phone calls and emails, the more House and Senate members know that community health center issues, especially funding, are important to their constituents.

Becoming an advocate and supporting your community health centers is as easy as signing up at HCAdvocacy.org. Calls to action are sent out via email periodically and typically require a few minutes to send an email or make a phone call. Support your CHC, and become an advocate today.

HopeHealth is one of 23 nonprofit, federally qualified health centers in South Carolina. We provide quality and affordable health care services to individuals in Florence, Clarendon and Williamsburg Counties and infectious diseases services in Aiken, Clarendon, Florence, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414, or visit hope-health.org.

Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

PEE DEE VETERANS RECOGNIZE TWO YMCA VOLUNTEERS Article Credited to Matthew Robertson, Morning News



Roosevelt Wallace (left) presents Florence Family YMCA's Brian New a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Purple Heart recipients.

The Pee Dee Area Veterans Advisory Council honored its annual Veteran of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and Organization of the Year in February to recognize those who go above and beyond to serve veterans and their community. This year's recipients were Veteran of the Year Calvin Quick and Volunteer of the Year Vickie Gimla, plus the Florence Family YMCA as the Organization of The Year.

"We try to recognize them, let them know we appreciate what they're doing," said C.B. Anderson with the Florence Veterans Resource Center.

The Florence Family YMCA won for granting free membership to recipients of the Purple Heart medal, something Anderson said could end up going national. Already, he said, the Sumter Family YMCA is looking at picking up the program.

Quick, a 22-year retired Army veteran, is retired from the South Carolina Department of Corrections and serves as chairman of New Ebenezer Baptist Church's prison ministry. He has coached youth



Calvin Quick speaks after receiving a certificate of appreciation.

baseball, has been a scoutmaster, and has completed the Veterans Volunteer Program training at Dorn VA Hospital in Columbia. Anderson said Quick also works with veterans in hospice care.

Gimla was involved with the VFW with her husband, who was retired from the U.S. Army and continues to serve in the VFW Auxiliary, where she has been vice president for three years. She also is a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, where she has served as president for nine years. She has decorated the American Legion building for Christmas at her own expense, and she works with Toys for Tots and helps organize a program to get Thanksgiving dinner boxes collected for veterans. She also works with hospice patients.



Vickie Gimla, Volunteer of the Year

The names of those honored will be displayed on a plaque in the lobby of the county veteran's services building on National Cemetery Road adjacent to the old section of the Florence National cemetery.

AJAY PATEL: A VOLUNTEER PAYING IT FORWARD by Adalia Ellis



Ajay Patel

National Volunteer Week was first started and commemorated through a series of events organized by Women's Voluntary Service in 1943 in Canada as a way to draw attention to the important contributions women made on the home front during World War II, according to Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. The United States followed in 1974 when President Richard Nixon issued Proclamation 4289, declaring the week of April 21 as National Volunteer Week, stating, "I urge

all Americans to observe that week by seeking out an area in their community in which they can give to a needy individual or a worthy cause by devoting a few hours, or more each week to volunteer service."

As we continue to encourage volunteering, we spotlight Aja Patel, a volunteer at Mercy Medicine Free Clinic. Here's what he had to say:

DW-In general, do you think having a "service to others" mindset is important? Why or why not?

AJay Patel- In the words of T'Challa from Marvel's "Black Panther," "In times of crisis, the wise build bridges, while the foolish build barriers." This quote encapsulates my view on the importance of having a service mindset because volunteering with those who are different than myself helps me see past those initial differences and focus on the similarities between us. Progress can start from something as small as a single interaction, so maintaining a service mindset is incredibly important, not just for oneself but also for one's society.

DW -What are the qualities that exemplify those who serve?

AJay Patel -[I feel they are] compassion, patience and humility.

DW-How does serving others impact you?

AJay Patel -My Nani always told me that helping others is the best way to help oneself, and this sparked my passion for volunteerism. This motto has

driven me to seek out service opportunities whenever possible, and Mercy Medicine [Free Clinic] is by far one of my most impactful ones.

DW-Why did you choose to volunteer at Mercy Medicine Free Clinic?

AJay Patel -Admittedly, I originally started there because I just wanted volunteer hours. Within my first week, I saw just how valuable and necessary Mercy Medicine [Free Clinic] was for the community. Those of lower socioeconomic statuses often cannot afford primary care physicians or emergency room visits, so being able to actively volunteer in an organization that fills that gap in care was inspiring. Because of this, I intend on becoming a family medicine physician that works in low-income areas.

DW-What service do you provide on a volunteer basis to Mercy Medicine Free Clinic? For how long?

AJay Patel -My main responsibilities include being first contact for patients and the public in general via telephone and in person, as well as building and organizing patient charts and introducing potential patients to the application process. I started volunteering at Mercy [Medicine Free Clinic] August 2016. During almost all my breaks from college since then, I go back and help, however I can.

DW-How important do you think it is to foster a desire to be of service to others when raising children?

AJay Patel -Instilling altruism in your children ensures that for everything you give to them, they give some back to others. I was fortunate to grow up without fearing if I'll be able to get everything I need, but this is not true for everyone. My parents ensured that I understood the privilege from which I came. I would take the resources I was lucky enough to have and share them with those that did not have the same resources. I know that I will pass that value on to my children. It did for me.

DW-What would you tell those who say you can't help everyone, so why try?

AJay Patel -No one's asking you to help everyone. All you're asked to do is help whoever you can and hope that whoever you help pays it forward.

Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

PERSONIFICATION OF SERVICE

by Tonia Perry, APR, Principal/PR Strategist, Eddy Perry & Associates, Inc.



Mercy Medicine Free Clinic Florence, SC



Wayne Jackson

April is national volunteer month and recognizes those who are making significant contributions to their community through their time, actions, and commitment. Wayne Jackson is the executive director of Mercy Medical Free Clinic and personifies community through service in the role he has held for one year.

“I have been in healthcare my entire working life, either as a hands-on healthcare worker (medical technologist) or as a manager. Just by working in the profession,

one is serving others all the time,” said Jackson. “During my 24-year [U.S.] Air Force career, I was able to serve both my country and others at the same time, which was a tremendous blessing and challenge for me. It is very fulfilling to be part of an organization that profit motive is not the primary motivation but helping the ‘least of these’ in our community. Mercy Medicine does just that.”

Mercy Medical Free Clinic, serving Florence and Williamsburg counties for more than 25 years, provides free medical and dental assistance to low income, uninsured adults without healthcare benefits. The clinic is run by both paid and volunteer staff. The “front office” administrative volunteers give untold hours of service by answering the phone, maintaining medical records and by doing special projects. This not only saves Mercy Medicine thousands of dollars per year but also allows volunteers to use their talents, free of charge, to help others.

Jackson said, “Mercy Medicine has an excellent, complementary mix of paid employees and volunteers who take care of our very special patients. Volunteers, on a whole, do possess common qualities such as unselfishness, empathy and a willingness to learn. Mercy Medicine’s volunteers are critical to our success. We have several volunteer physicians and a physician assistant who willingly volunteer their time and expertise to give back to their community by treating our patients.”

The organization is committed to helping the community through freeing up emergency department resources for true medical and mental health emergencies as well as reduce costs for the community. They take great pride in knowing not only are they helping individual patients but also society in general by keeping a certain percentage of our community residents from making unnecessary hospital emergency room visits.

“All of the staff at Mercy Medicine, to include our great volunteers, feel a great deal of satisfaction in helping others get non-emergent health and dental care in our clinic as opposed to one of the two local [hospital] emergency departments.”



I was sick and you cared for me.
Matthew 25:36

MERCY MEDICINE FREE CLINIC COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS



The leadership of the Mercy Medicine Free Clinic is very concerned about the safety of our patients and staff during this challenging time of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. To effectively ensure everyone’s safety and the continuation of services to our patients we are implementing the below procedures immediately:

All who enter the building will be required to answer screening questions at the front door before being checked in for any appointments or doing any business in the clinic. IF someone answers in the positive to the screening questions regarding any symptoms, travel, or potential contact with anyone possibly infected with COVID-19 virus he/she will be asked to leave the clinic. The person will be given information on how to contact “MUSC.CARE” for further evaluation and possible testing.

- 1) If you have an appointment at the clinic, please come in the lobby alone (no children, family, friends, etc. with you). Use the hand sanitizer available in the clinic waiting room. If you require assistance, notify the front desk.
- 2) If you do not have an appointment, please try to conduct any business with the clinic via telephone, fax or email.
- 3) If you feel like you have symptoms, please call the clinic before you come and follow any instructions you are given. You may be asked to remain in your automobile until your appointment time if the appointment is still given.
- 4) The clinic is still taking applications for potential new patients on Monday mornings from 8:30am-11:30am. The screening process also applies to these potential new patients.
- 5) If you want to bring in any donations, please call the office and we can arrange to retrieve the items from your car when you arrive so that you will not need to enter the building.

Office phone: 843.667.9947
Office fax: 843.667.0455
Office email: info@mercymedicine.org

Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

OWENS HONORED AS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AT MCLEOD



Beverly Owens, the 2019 Volunteer of the Year for McLeod Regional Medical Center, is pictured with Linda Boone and Teresa Timmons from McLeod Volunteer Services.

McLeod Regional Medical Center named Beverly Owens as the Volunteer of the Year for 2019. The announcement was made during the annual McLeod Volunteer Recognition Luncheon held Jan. 23 at the Hellenic Center.

Owens, a resident of Marion, is the 32nd recipient of the McLeod Volunteer of the Year

award. A McLeod volunteer for nearly four years, Owens has served in a number of areas at McLeod including the McLeod Health Foundation, McLeod Diabetes Center, McLeod Home Health, McLeod Public Information Office, McLeod Health & Fitness Center and McLeod Sports Medicine. She was nominated for this honor by the McLeod Foundation.

In presenting the award to Owens, Linda Boone, director of Volunteer Services for McLeod, shared the comments she received from the McLeod Foundation. "During the past year, Beverly has been a great asset to the McLeod Foundation. She is very reliable and comes every Monday to help with New Employee Orientation. Over the past year, with Beverly's support, we had more than 900 new employees sign up to donate to the Foundation, which is vital in our efforts to raise funds for patient services in the McLeod Cancer Center, McLeod Hospice, McLeod Children's Hospital as well as many other programs that benefit the patients we serve in our 18-county region."

In the nomination, the Foundation staff described Beverly's attributes as truthfulness, responsibility, accountability, loyalty, appreciation, empathy, attention to detail and reliability. They also explained how Beverly represents the McLeod Core Values of Caring, the Person, Quality, and Integrity:

Caring: "Beverly is always willing to go the extra mile while always keeping a smile on her face. She does a great job with welcoming new employees, donors, and visitors."

Person: "Beverly works well individually and as a team. She is very pleasant to work with and is a great part of the McLeod Foundation family."

Quality: "Beverly is a great listener and quick learner. She gets tasks done quickly and makes sure they are accurate. She surpasses our expectations on every task that she is given."

Integrity: "Beverly is always in compliance with our mission and vision. She is a very trustworthy person who holds high standards."

Boone added, "Beverly is willing to complete any task that is asked of her with a joyful attitude. You could not ask for a more dedicated volunteer."

On receiving the award, Owens said, "This is such a big honor, and it was a complete surprise. I truly enjoy working with the Foundation and the other teams at McLeod. It is very fulfilling, and I've learned a lot."

Prior to joining McLeod as a volunteer, Owens worked for 17

years at Francis Marion University (FMU) in Florence as an administrative assistant in the Department of Honors, Mass Communication and Modern Languages. She also previously served 21 years as an administrative assistant at Johnakin Middle School in Marion.

Owens began volunteering at McLeod to help her daughter, Tammy Turner, with the Annual Diabetes Health Fair. At the time, Turner served as the director of the McLeod Diabetes Center. "My mom assisted us with set up of the event and recruited FMU students to work at the health fair. She became a part of the McLeod family because I was part of the family," said Turner.

"She is very dedicated to her work with the McLeod Foundation—she especially loves working the pecan and jewelry sales," added Turner. "Mom has a great work ethic even after retirement. She is extremely organized and always looking to find a more efficient and effective way of doing things."

In addition to the Volunteer of the Year announcement, Bettina Buie was recognized with the High Hour Honor for volunteering 1,969 hours in 2019. Buie also received this honor in 2018.

More than 320 volunteers who contribute outstanding service to McLeod Regional Medical Center were honored during the luncheon. All these volunteers and the hospital's 88 summer junior volunteers contributed nearly 38,000 hours to the medical center in 2019. During the luncheon, certificates and pins were presented to the volunteers in attendance who worked more than 300 hours, and the program recognized all those with more than 50 hours of service.

McLeod Regional Medical Center honors its volunteers annually by presenting service awards to recognize their special efforts and outstanding contributions.

MEDALLIONS TO REVERED POLITICIAN AND HARD-WORKING PUBLIC SERVANT

Submitted by FMU



Stephen Wukela, the outgoing mayor of the city of Florence

Two well-known public officials from the Pee Dee Region were recognized for their tireless service to the people of the area at the 2020 Marion Medallion awards ceremony on Feb. 27 at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

Medallions were presented to Stephen Wukela, the outgoing mayor of the city of Florence, and Allen Floyd, the director of the City of Mullins Recreation Department.

Wukela was first elected mayor of Florence in 2008. Since then, he's become a key member of a coalition of community leaders that have sought to instigate growth at both an industrial level and through an unprecedented downtown revitalization effort. He was reelected in 2012 and 2016 with wide margins. Wukela's mayorship, and the policies and plans he initiated, have left an indelible mark on the city of Florence.

Allen Floyd is a public servant of the highest degree. A native of Mullins, Floyd serves as the director of the Mullins Recreational Department, where he works with and mentors children in his hometown.

Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

MEDALLIONS CONT'D



Allen Floyd, the director of the City of Mullins Recreation Department

Floyd is a 1976 graduate of Francis Marion University and a member of the University's Francis Marion University Athletics Hall of Fame, where he's lauded as one of the basketball program's greatest players.

Floyd's first stint was a full-time recreation director after graduation, and it lasted until 1987. In 2009 he took the reins as recreational director for a second time. He and his staff devote countless hours to providing recreational opportunities for area children. Floyd is also a member of the Marion County Council and a past member

of the local school board.

The Marion Medallion is an eight-year-old award, sponsored and presented by FMU and the Morning News of Florence. Officials of the two organizations work in partnership to select recipients. The medallions are awarded on or about Feb. 27—Francis Marion Day—each year.

The medallion is named for General Francis Marion, the namesake of FMU, a revolutionary war leader who guided the guerrilla forces in the Pee Dee Region.

Past winners:

- Kathy Baxley, executive director of the Darlington Free Medical Clinic,

and Henry Johnson and Hayward King, chief executives of the Lake City-based W. Lee Flowers Company (2012)

- Former Florence Police Chief Ralph Porter, executive director and founder of CHOICES Charter School, and Bill and Olive Timberlake of Hartsville (2013)

- Florence pastors Henry Badie Jr. of Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ and Clyde Odom of King of Kings Church in Florence and Henry Brunson of Latta, founder of Cooks for Christ (2014)

- John and Vicki Kirby of Latta and the founders of Camp RAE, Paige Alexander and Deana Huggins Strickland of Florence (2015)

- Carlos Washington of Florence and the Manna House of Florence (2016)

- Regi Armstrong of Armstrong Wealth Management, Carl Harmon of Sharing and Caring and posthumously to Courtney McGinnis Graham (2017)

- Wilbur Owens "Billy" Powers of HopeHealth and Help4Kids (2018)

- Charles "Chuck" MacNeil of the Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority and the Parking Lot Mission (2019)

About the Medallion:

The medallion award is an actual medallion. It is a gold-plated bronze piece that weighs 2.5 pounds and is six inches in diameter. Francis Marion's likeness is on one side. The recipient's name is engraved on the reserve side.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR by Jennifer Robinson



Cecilia Meggs

There are few things that feel better than the feeling of knowing that your efforts are appreciated. The time that you give and sacrifice towards things and events are sacred. Many people do not volunteer for selfish gain. They are not seeking accolades, but they are looking to fill a need within society that may not be met. But proper etiquette is to acknowledge when people use their time when they could be somewhere else and doing something else. Appreciation simply

means thank you for taking the time for being there. Executive Director Cecilia Meggs from Lighthouse Ministries said that Volunteer Appreciation Week in April is the highlight of their year. There would be no Lighthouse Ministries without its volunteers. It is a volunteer-based organization. "Volunteers have been an active part of Lighthouse Ministries since they opened in 1996," Meggs stated. When asked if there is a recruiting process, she stated the organization does have a person on staff who is responsible for volunteers, and her name is Veyounder (V) Brown. Brown is also the director of programs.

Volunteers must have stuff to do. It is important to keep volunteers busy. They cannot go in and sit around. This is one of the keys to volunteer recidivism. Meggs said they have a chart that lists the duties for each volunteer who attends on a regular basis. They are paired with the job they like. When they go in, they know what they are to do and which area they are to work. This also helps in keeping in touch with volunteers if they do not show on a day they are assigned.

Another part of recidivism, Meggs mentioned, is knowing each

volunteer's personality. You would not put an introvert at a front desk because he or she would not be comfortable interacting with other people. That volunteer would probably be more comfortable cleaning, in the back unloading donations or on computers.

If anyone is interested in volunteering with Lighthouse Ministries, there is an interview and training process. It is at this time that the trainee's skill sets and personalities are learned. If anyone is interested in volunteering, simply contact Lighthouse Ministries by calling 843-629-0830. What Lighthouse works to do is build comradery amongst volunteers. Meggs said this atmosphere of family is what keeps volunteers at Lighthouse Ministries going.

Volunteers vary in age from as young as high school age to 93 years old. The 93-year-old was one of the first volunteers with Lighthouse Ministries in 1996. He doesn't come as often as he did, but he comes when he can. "The high school-age volunteers do not have to be told what to do. They just come in and begin working," Meggs said enthusiastically.

To show volunteers appreciation in April during Volunteer Appreciation Week, Lighthouse Ministries invites all its volunteers to a breakfast and give them a gift. It also invites them to a lunch during the year. There is a potluck lunch during Thanksgiving and an opportunity to bring family during a Christmas gathering. It included many volunteer suggestions in making Lighthouse Ministries operations better. If suggestions are not used, Lighthouse makes sure to explain why they are not used. If they are not used for one event, they may be used at a later time. Inclusion is important to volunteer roles and is another way they feel appreciated.

Finally, Meggs said Florence is a very giving community, and the organization's volunteers are its biggest advocates.

Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

UNITED WAY RECOGNIZES AREA COMPANIES FOR VOLUNTEERING Submitted by April James, Intern, United Way



Two volunteers from Honda help pressure wash a resident building for the Florence County Disability and Special Needs Board

When people think of giving, many think of donating food or money. People hardly think about donating their time. They say that they are too busy or are worried about the fact that they are not getting paid for their time. Many of the non-profits in Florence County are in need of volunteers. It could be an hour or a whole day. They would be gracious for the extra help. Luckily, we have companies located right here in Florence County, filled with people who are more than willing to volunteer their time. The gracious people working in these companies take time out of their busy schedules to volunteer at our local non-profits.

The general manager of Pepsi Co. of Florence, Les Ward, and Emily Myers, an administrative staff member for Honda of South Carolina, were kind enough to sit down with us for an interview.



Pepsi of Florence has been a prominent supporter of the United Way's Day of Caring since the volunteer event was established

Why does your company support community volunteer efforts and allow their employees to volunteer?

Pepsi Co.- "It is really important for us to volunteer in a physical way because we are local. We are a local-based company. Our employees who work here live in this community, so volunteering in this community matters to us because it allows us to touch more people, have a broader impact and connect

with our community in general."

Honda of SC- "Honda strives to be 'a company that society wants to exist.' We want to give back to the community through our support of worthwhile causes and organizations through grants and volunteerism."

Approximately, how long has your company and its employees been volunteering in the community?

Pepsi Co.- "Volunteerism has been such a part of the culture of Pepsi that, even though there is no record of it, the company has been giving back one way or another since it was founded in 1936. In the last six years that I have been here, I have maintained that giving heritage, but I also felt like we could be doing more with volunteering and having

a presence locally. We want to keep that giving aspect and then add to it the volunteering by being a part of as many events as we can."

Honda of SC- "Honda has been volunteering in the community for over 20 years."

What are some of the volunteer projects the company and/or its employees enjoy working on?

Pepsi Co.- "Besides all that we do with the United Way's Day of Caring Event, we also volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, Help4Kids, and March for Babies. We ask our employees every year what organizations and events are important to them and get their input."

Honda of SC- "We do a lot of volunteering at Harvest Hope Food Bank and Manna House. Our associates also enjoy working on projects with or for children in the community."

What do you feel like the employees gain from volunteering?

Pepsi Co.- "When you actually get to do something hands-on, it just means more. You get that connection to the community, the connection to the event and a connection to the people you are impacting."

Honda of SC- "I feel like employees can gain two things from volunteering: 1) Joy from helping those in need and feeling like they are making a difference in their community. 2) It can be a humbling experience for those who do not realize what a great need there is in our community and how little some people have."

What would you say to encourage other companies to start volunteering in the community?

Pepsi Co.- "For me, it is about being part of the community. We are a small community, but we are very diverse, and we just have so many things going on. If you want to be a part of that, you have to be personally involved. If a company wants to volunteer, my advice is one: get focused. Find the two or three organizations that are important to you and your employees and get focused in those. Then, two is to get people involved, and three, is it gets dirty."

Honda of SC- "Volunteering in the community is a vital part of being a good corporate citizen. Not only does it show the community you care about them, but more importantly, it shows your associates that you care about their community."

The non-profits in Florence County are eagerly waiting for you. If you always wanted to make a positive impact on someone's life, then volunteering is a great place to start. The United Way has plenty of volunteer opportunities for you to participate in. We accept volunteers from any age group, young to old. For volunteer opportunities and to find out more about the non-profits in the area, go to www.uwflorence.org/initiatives/volunteer.



Celebrating Our Volunteers & Community Service

PIONEERS OF LAKE CITY

LAKE CITY-The Lake City Boys & Girls Club is excited to honor three extraordinary individuals as the 2020 Pioneers of Lake City. Mike Curry, Henry Johnson and Heyward King have all dedicated their lives to bettering the Lake City community. Their endless service has pushed Lake City forward, propelling it into a new era. The 2020 Pioneers were to be honored on March 13 in an annual ceremony, but recent health concerns have caused the event to be pushed back until further notice.



Heyward L. King Jr. and William Henry Johnson

Heyward King and Henry Johnson are honored as Pioneers this year for their work with W. Lee Flowers, which they purchased in 1978 from Heyward King's father, Heyward Sr. Over the 26 years that they owned W. Lee Flowers, it expanded as a wholesale, retail grocery and food distributor, providing countless jobs to many in the

Lake City area. The company, which was purchased by Alex Lee Inc. last fall, now distributes to over 75 grocery stores in the Southeast, 50 of which they own and operate. Over the years, King and Johnson have been deeply involved in community services initiatives, particularly with the Boys & Girls Club of Lake City. They have also been involved with service efforts for the Lake City United Methodist Church, the Lake City First Baptist Church, Boy Scouts of America and the University of South Carolina. Johnson has even been honored for his work with Boy Scouts of America as a 40-year veteran, Eagle Scout, and former Cubmaster and Scoutmaster. Their service has greatly benefitted the community over the years, creating a legacy that is still being continued today. Dr. Marion Fowler, president of the Darla Moore Foundation, speaks highly of both King and Johnson, saying they have been role models to many people, and their "integrity, loyalty and love for Lake City are to be admired."



Mike Curry

Mike Curry will posthumously receive the Pioneers of Lake City award for his entrepreneurship and community service to Lake City from the 1950s through the 1990s. With only a second grade education, he owned the Neighborhood Grocery Store in the Deep River Community, was a beekeeper, a landlord for several single-family homes, a volunteer driver for the Graham & Godwin Funeral Home and a volunteer poll driver for every major election. His granddaughter remembers him as a caring man who strived to make Lake City, especially the Deep River Community,

a better place. He stressed the importance of respect and kindness to everyone, even people you might not agree with. His memory is carried on by family and friends who were greatly influenced by his heart of service for Lake City.

The Lake City Boys & Girls Club is also excited to honor Pee Dee Area Youth of the Year, Asiana Gaskins-Nelson of the Lake City



Asiana Gaskins-Nelson and Tony Taylor, Lake City Boys & Girls Club unit director

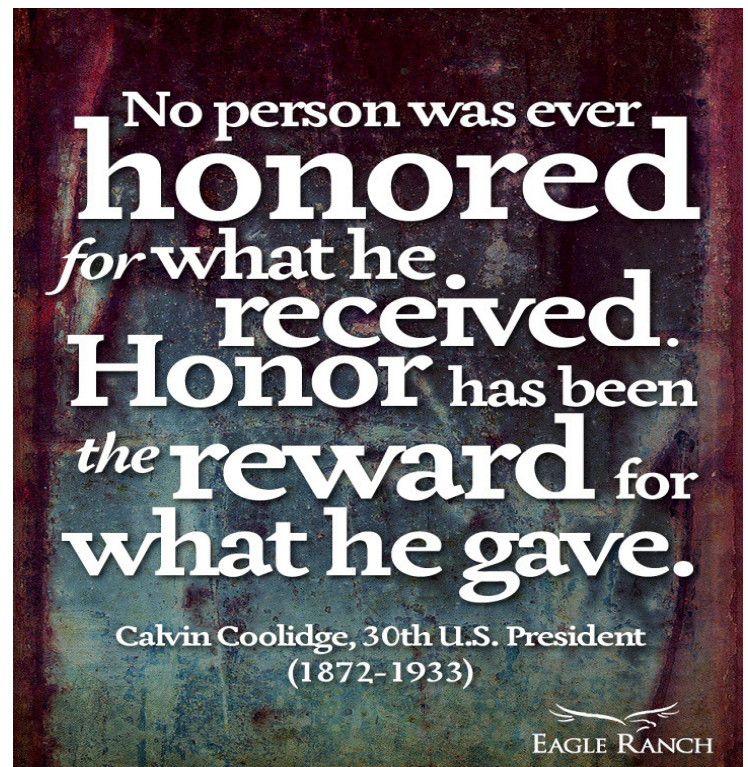
Club on her recent win at the Pee Dee Area Youth of the Year competition in February. She will go on to represent the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area in the state Youth of the Year competition in April. Gaskins-Nelson is a sophomore at Lake City Early College and CTE High School. As an aspiring performer, her favorite hobbies include musical theatre, dance, cheer, and creative writing. She also participates in Dramatic Coffee Beans Inc., LCH Cheer, LCH Ensemble, Beta Club, JOY Mentor Program, Columbia Urban League and Community Theatre.



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE PEE DEE AREA**

The Lake City Boys & Girls Club feels especially grateful to be able to recognize these wonderful people as the 2020 Pioneers of Lake City. Curry, Johnson, and King have all spent years of their lives working to better the community. The products of

their hard work can be seen on a day to day basis in the Lake City community. All three extraordinary individuals will join the "Pioneers Hall of Fame," which includes other community-minded individuals like Investigator Farrah Turner and Darla Moore.





ALCOHOL Awareness Month

DON'T LET UNDERAGE DRINKING RUIN YOUR PROM

Submitted by Triza Cox, CPS, MFA- Empowering Communities for Healthy Outcomes/State Opioid Response Coordinator, Circle Park Behavioral Health Services



Triza Cox

Many teens dream of their high school years being full of traditional and memorable events. Few are as eagerly anticipated as Prom Night and Spring Break and their associated rituals. Unfortunately, many teens and parents feel that including alcohol with these events is an acceptable rite of passage. Underage drinking, by far, continues to be the most common risky behavior challenging youth today. Although overall drug use by teens has been declining, underage alcohol use remains a significant threat to the health

and safety of teens. Alcohol remains the number one drug of choice for teens statewide, with 71 percent of high school students consuming alcohol at some point during their high school years.

Even though a lower percentage of youth are drinking today than in years past, those that are consuming alcohol are doing so at an alarming rate. In fact, the latest research shows that many youth are participating in the growing epidemic of binge drinking. Binge drinking is defined as consuming 4-5 drinks during one event causing the BAC level to rise to dangerous levels. Those who participate in this activity are much more likely to be involved in acts of violence, unwanted sexual activities and are more likely to drive a vehicle and be involved in a crash. Surprisingly to many, females participate in binge drinking at a higher rate than their male counterparts, leaving them particularly vulnerable.

In order to minimize the potential dangers and consequences involved with underage drinking during the prom season, Circle Park Behavioral Health Services and the Florence County Coalition for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention, along with local law enforcement agencies, have joined forces to support the "Don't Let Underage Drinking Ruin Your Prom" Campaign. This campaign emphasizes that it is illegal if you are under the age of 21 to purchase, possess or consume alcoholic beverages.

Prom night parties and Spring Break activities tend to provide an opportunity for many high school students to participate in this dangerous activity. In an effort to address and minimize these potential incidences in our community, the 12th Judicial Circuit Alcohol Enforcement Team (AET), a multi-jurisdictional team of various agencies throughout Florence and Marion Counties, will be utilizing a series of enforcement activities during prom nights that may include:

- Source Investigations – AET members will be utilizing their resources to identify the source of alcohol that is being possessed or consumed by underage youth at prom activities. Those found to be providing alcohol to minors will be charged and prosecuted.
- Party Patrols – AET members will be patrolling neighborhoods, rural areas, bonfire sites, etc. where before and after prom parties may be taking place.
- Parking Lot Patrols – AET members will patrol parking lots of local establishments and locations where prom activities may be occurring to ensure that underage alcohol possession and consumption is not taking place.
- Restaurant Walk-Throughs – AET members will be visible, making walk-throughs at local restaurants popular with prom-goers and interacting with them to ensure that they understand the importance of having an alcohol-free prom night.
- Compliance Checks – AET members will be checking local establishments to ensure that alcohol is not making it into the hands of underage consumers.

Underage youth also need to be aware of the constructive possession statute, in which anyone under the age of 21 can receive a citation or be arrested for possessing alcohol products, having them in their car, or being at a party or event where underage drinking is taking place, EVEN if they are not drinking themselves.

We hope that all youth and parents participating in this year's prom events will work together to make smart, legal and healthy choices to ensure that this year's prom events in our community are fun, safe and alcohol-free.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month



Responsible drinking means understanding moderation.

It's not what you drink. It's how much you drink that counts.

A standard drink of regular beer, distilled spirits or wine each contains the same amount of alcohol (0.6 oz).

To learn more, go to www.amwa-doc.org



American Medical Women's Association

DON'T LET UNDERAGE DRINKING



RUIN YOUR PROM



843-665-9349

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Developed with funding from the
federal Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
Block Grant (#3B08TI010048-18S1)



WHEN IS DRINKING A PROBLEM? Submitted by Brandi Shepherd, Prevention Specialist, Rubicon Family Counseling Services



The Coronavirus has been everyone's concern for the past couple of months and rightfully so. However, there is another public health concern that is even deadlier than this pandemic. Alcohol abuse accounts for 88,000 deaths and 2.5 million years of potential

life lost every year in the United States. It costs American taxpayers \$249 billion per year or \$2.05 for every drink sold.

With a lot of misinformation out there about this topic, Rubicon wants to make sure that you are well informed when it comes to alcohol use and your health. The information below has been gathered from the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We hope that this answers some of your more frequently asked questions.

What is a standard drink?

A standard drink in the United States is measured at 0.6 ounces of pure alcohol. This is the same as having

- 12 ounces of beer (5 percent alcohol content)
- 8 ounces of malt liquor (7 percent alcohol content)
- 5 ounces of wine (12 percent alcohol content) or
- 1.5 ounces of 80 proof liquor or distilled spirits (40 percent alcohol content)

This does not mean that every drink at a bar or restaurant is equivalent to a standard drink. For instance, when you order a Long Island Iced Tea, you may be ordering only one drink, but it has four servings of alcohol in it due to its four shots of liquor.

Are beer and wine safer to drink?

No, beer and wine are not safer to drink than liquor or other forms of alcohol. The above guidelines state that a serving of beer or wine has the same amount of alcohol in it as a serving of liquor. Therefore, it's not the type of alcohol that affects a person, but the amount consumed.

How much is too much?

There are two main types of excessive drinking: heavy drinking and binge drinking. Heavy drinking is defined as having eight or more

There are about 2,200 alcohol poisoning deaths a year in the US. These can be prevented.



alcoholic drinks per week for women and 15 or more for men. Binge drinking is having four or more drinks during a single occasion if you're a woman and five or more drinks if you're a man. Based on these guidelines, 67.1 million Americans drank excessively in the past month. While it's true that not every one of these individuals may have an alcohol use disorder, they do face an array of other concerns from their drinking.

Heavy alcohol use can contribute to at least 60 different health conditions. Some of the more common of these are dementia, vitamin deficiencies, liver disease, gastrointestinal complications, pancreatitis, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, osteoporosis, nerve damage, seizures, depression, anxiety and certain types of cancer. Just a single episode of binge drinking greatly increases a person's chance of having alcohol poisoning, an ischemic stroke, sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancy.

People who drink alcohol heavily are at a greater risk for injuries from falls and road traffic accidents. These accidents not only put the drinker at risk but everyone else around them also. Approximately 29 Americans die every day from motor vehicle crashes that involves an alcohol-impaired driver.

Due to alcohol's ability to impair a person's judgment, people

who drink excessively are more likely to experience certain social and legal programs. Heavy alcohol use has been linked to unemployment, poor academic performance, domestic abuse, DUI charges and homicide.

What about moderate drinking?

Moderate alcohol consumption is defined as having up to four alcoholic drinks for men and three for women in any single day or a maximum of 14 drinks for men and seven drinks for

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A "DRINK"?
U.S. STANDARD DRINK SIZES

- 12 OUNCES OF 5% ALC/VOL BEER
- 8 OUNCES OF 7% ALC/VOL MALT LIQUOR
- 5 OUNCES OF 12% ALC/VOL WINE
- 1.5 OUNCES OF 40% ALC/VOL (80-PROOF) DISTILLED SPIRITS OR LIQUOR (Examples: gin, rum, vodka, whiskey)



women in a week. While some researchers link this type of alcohol use to heart benefits, it is important to note that many of these studies are no longer credible. New research shows that moderate alcohol use can take up to two years off a person's lifespan. It has been shown to cause similar health conditions as excessive drinking.

What is recommended?

As of now, the guidelines within the United States for safe drinking practices are no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. However, new research suggests that this may even be too much.

The American Society of Clinical Oncology revealed that even a small glass of beer or wine a day could increase a person's risk for certain types of cancer by as much as nine percent. A single drink has also been shown to reduce the restorative properties of sleep by 9.3 percent. This results in chronic fatigue, poor mental health, and a weakened immune system.

The fact of the matter is that no pattern of drinking is entirely risk-free. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans urges people not to start using alcohol for any reason. Other recommendations include:

- Do not drink if you are pregnant or may become pregnant.
- Do not drink if you under the legal drinking age of 21.
- Do not drink if you are driving, planning to drive, or participating in other activities that require coordination and alertness.
- Do not use alcohol if you are taking certain prescription or over-the-counter medication that can interact with alcohol. If you are not sure, consult with your doctor or pharmacist.
- Do not drink if you are suffering from certain medical conditions such as depression, as alcohol use can worsen these conditions.
- Do not use alcohol if you are recovering from an alcohol use disorder or are unable to control the amount you drink.


How do I know if a loved one or I have an alcohol use disorder?

An alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a condition in which a person has a desire or physical need to consume alcohol, despite its negative impact on their life. It is a disease that is not caused by poor willpower or character flaws. If you or are a loved one struggles with limiting the number of drinks consumed, continues to drink despite personal or professional problems, needs to drink more to get the same effect, and/or wants a drink so badly that you can't think of anything else, then you may be at risk for having an AUD.

Know that you do not have to face this condition alone. Rubicon Family Counseling Services is here to answer any questions you may have, provide you with treatment, and connect you to other local agencies that may help. Please give us a call at 843-332-4156.


 84% OF AMERICANS ARE CONFIDENT THEY DRINK RESPONSIBLY	 54% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IT IS EVERYONE'S OWN PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ADDRESS THE HARMFUL CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL	 82% OF AMERICANS BELIEVE TALKING ABOUT ALCOHOL SHOULD BE A LIFETIME OF CONVERSATIONS
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April is **Alcohol Awareness Month**





According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, an estimated **88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually**

In 2010, alcohol misuse cost the United States **\$249.0 billion**




Approximately


and



62,000 men **26,000 women**

die from alcohol-related causes annually


Alcohol is the third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.
The first is tobacco and the second is poor diet and physical inactivity.



Moderate alcohol consumption, according to the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans,




is up to 1 drink per day for women



and up to 2 drinks per day for men

In 2009, alcohol-related liver disease was the primary cause of **almost 1 in 3 liver transplants** in the United States





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Teacher Appreciation

CHAPMAN NAMED 2019-20 DCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Cortney Chapman

HARTSVILLE-Southside Early Childhood Center's Cortney Chapman will represent Darlington County School District (DCSD) as District Teacher of the Year for 2019-20. The announcement came during the district's Back-to-School Convocation held Aug. 13 inside Hartsville High School's Arena.

Chapman is a 5K teacher at Southside Early Childhood Center. She earned the selection after an intensive judging period that included an application process and a face-to-face panel interview.

Superintendent Dr. Tim Newman made the announcement in front of all the district's educators and employees. "Mrs. Harless represents exactly the sort of nurturing and compassionate educator we want in the Darlington County School District," Newman said. "She recognizes the importance of 'meeting our students where they are.' On behalf of the district, I congratulate her on this prestigious honor, and I look forward to working with her as we continue to move our district forward."



Cortney Chapman, a kindergarten teacher at Southside Early Childhood Center, was named the 2019-20 Darlington County School District Teacher of the Year. Pictured are (from left) Chapman and Dr. Tim Newman, DCSD superintendent.

Chapman holds a Master of Education in Instructional Accommodations from Francis Marion University. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Youngstown State University. She began teaching in DCSD in 2017, and she has 11 years of early childhood teaching experience.

She explained her philosophy of teaching in an extended application required for consideration. "In many cases, my classroom is one of the first classrooms my students will ever

step foot into, not to mention the first classroom their parents will ever leave their 'babies' for the day," she wrote. "Therefore, I feel it is extremely important to develop a mutually respectful and honest relationship with my students and their families... a classroom is like an extended family, and once this foundation is established, I have the ability to accomplish several major goals."

Judges, which included former teachers, district administrators and community leaders, selected Chapman from five finalists. The four remaining finalists will serve as the district's 2019-20 Honor Roll Teachers of the Year. They are:

- Kinsey Johnson, Brunson-Dargan Elementary School
- Danielle Watkins, Mayo High School for Math, Science & Technology
- Carmen Blakney, Pate Elementary School
- Monique Brown, St. John's Elementary School

Judges selected the five finalists from the pool of 2019-20 School Teachers of the Year. These peer-selected teachers will serve on the district's Teacher Forum and Leadership Council, acting as teacher leaders and advisers for the district.

All 23 School Teachers of the Year are:

- Casey Sanders, Brockington Elementary Magnet School
- Kinsey Johnson, Brunson-Dargan Elementary School
- Lauren Prosser, Cain Elementary School
- Melesa Creamer, Carolina Elementary School
- Bert Beasley, Darlington County Institute of Technology
- Anitra Caldwell, Darlington County Intervention School
- Kristen Johnson, Darlington High School
- Nena McConnell, Darlington Middle School
- Cameron Watkins, Hartsville High School
- Marlin Ketter, Hartsville Middle School
- Tara Amerson, Lamar Elementary School
- Toni Anderson, Lamar High School
- Danielle Watkins, Mayo High School for Math, Science & Technology
- Bethany Perry, North Hartsville Elementary School
- Carmen Blakney, Pate Elementary School
- Karen James Wilson, Rosenwald Elementary/Middle School
- Cortney Chapman, Southside Early Childhood Center
- Phoebe Heustess, Spaulding Elementary School
- Shawntell Bull, Spaulding Middle School
- Monique Brown, St. John's Elementary School
- Patricia McKinley, Thornwell School for the Arts
- Jessica Lyerly, Washington Street Elementary School
- Jazziman Parker, West Hartsville Elementary School

DILLON DISTRICT III TEACHER OF THE YEAR



L to R: Nan Carmichael, Wanda Brewer, and Phyllis Hyatt

LATTA-Nan Carmichael was recently selected as Teacher of the Year for Dillon School District Three for 2019-2020. She was one of three school-level Teachers of the Year vying for the position of District Teacher of the Year. This year's school level representatives are as follows: Latta High School, Nan Carmichael; Latta Middle School, Wanda Brewer; and Latta Elementary School, Phyllis Hyatt.

Carmichael is a native of Latta and is a graduate of Latta High School. In May of 1985, she was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Columbia College. In 1988 she received a Master's degree in guidance from Francis Marion University. Carmichael was awarded a Master's degree in educational leadership from Winthrop University in 2013.


"Being selected as Latta High School Teacher of the Year and Dillon District Three Teacher of the Year has been a very humbling experience. Dillon District Three is comprised of an outstanding group of educators, and I feel blessed to work with such a caring and dedicated group. Words cannot express how honored I am to represent Dillon District Three as Teacher of the Year."

The selection as District Teacher of the Year qualifies Nan Carmichael as a participant in the selection of South Carolina Teacher of the Year. The South Carolina Teacher of the Year Program is coordinated via the Division of Educator Quality & Leadership and is designed to honor those who are representative of the state's many exceptional teachers.

Florence 1 Schools' 2019-20 Teacher of the Year

Nichole Scipio

West Florence High School



Nichole Scipio explains her path to becoming a classroom teacher began with an original desire to work in the medical field.

After graduating from the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, she began substitute teaching. "I enjoyed every day with the students," said Scipio. "Then I followed through to pursue a teaching career in the Critical Needs Program as a biology and physical science teacher."

Scipio said she found teaching fulfilling for the next three years and obtained a teaching certificate through PACE, or the Program of Alternative Certification of Educators, which is a collaboration between Coastal Carolina University and the SC Department of Education.

Scipio said, "I (still) longed to see what else was out there, turned in my resignation and pursued a career in pharmaceutical sales. For ten years as a pharmaceutical representative, I interacted with medical professionals of all types, traveled all over the United States and won awards for achieving sales goals. However, my most fulfilling moments were the times when I ran into my students whom I had previously taught while serving those three years in the classroom. After ten years in pharmaceutical sales, I believed it was time for a change."

Scipio said she returned to the classroom at West Florence High armed with the knowledge that education was where she belonged and where she could have the most impact using her talents.

A product of a long line of educators, Scipio explained how she came to admire the profession based on her family members' experiences. "To see the admiration in the eyes of their former students and the genuine concern for their former students' well-being is something that cannot be described but only witnessed first-hand. To observe those interactions growing up and to now have those interactions myself is why education is my passion," she said.

Scipio has worked at West Florence High School since 2012 serving as a biology teacher, a physical science teacher and currently as the Project Lead the Way Human Body Systems and Lead Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teacher.

"I believe that my role as a teacher has strengthened the teaching profession in the eyes of parents and the community. I find it an honor to meet parents who have so much to share about what their children have experienced in my classroom," said Scipio. "As a Project Lead the Way teacher, I have the opportunity to meet community members who visit my classroom. During their visits, community members usually engage in the lesson and leave with a better understanding of what teachers do in the classroom each day. These interactions with parents and community members provide a better understanding of what it is to be the teacher who fosters support and involvement. This support and involvement from parents and the community improve overall student outcomes," she added.

"Ms. Scipio is the type of teacher I want teaching my own children. She is fun and engaging in the classroom and builds a rapport with students that makes them want to achieve their best," said Matthew Dowdell,

principal of West Florence High.

Students in Scipio's classroom speak admiringly of their STEM teacher. "She allows us to think for ourselves and to figure things out on our own, and I believe that's important because that is what we will have to do in the future," said West Florence High School senior Dashanti Price.

"Ms. Scipio genuinely cares about every single student whether he is barely passing or a straight A student," said West Florence senior Jordan Cook.

"She is down to earth and very willing to help," said Meagan Reeves, "and I think that's admirable."


"Ms. Scipio is a fantastic teacher," exclaimed West Florence senior Christopher Blakeney-Brigman.

Scipio was chosen as School Teacher of the Year last spring at West Florence High. Teachers whose application packets received the highest scores became honor roll teachers. Scipio, along with three other Florence 1 honor roll teachers (Susan Bigham, Timrod Elementary; Katharine Bobbitt, Royall Elementary; and Valerie Church, McLaurin Elementary) all underwent classroom observations and personal interviews by an outside panel of four Teacher of the Year selection committee members.

At the 18th Annual School Foundation Gala, Florence 1 Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard O'Malley announced Scipio as the 2019-20 Florence 1 Schools Teacher of the Year.

As Teacher of the Year, Scipio said she believes the entire community has a role in public education, including teachers, parents, community leaders, community members, professionals and employers and entrepreneurs.

"Imagine what our students could do if they had the support of the entire community," said Scipio. "I encourage all stakeholders to call the schools, and reach out and ask what they can do today."



Florence 1 Schools
Students first
319 S. Irby Street
Florence, SC 29501
(843) 669-4141
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Teacher Appreciation

DAVIDSON NAMED LCSD 2019 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Mark Davidson

BISHOPVILLE – The Lee County School District (LCSD) named its district-level Teacher of the Year as well as those for each school at its Opening Ceremony this year.

Lee Central High School's (LCHS) science teacher Mark Davidson was named the District Teacher of the Year as well as the high school's. The Lee County native earned the master's plus 30 teacher's certification from Clemson University in Clemson, the master's in secondary education (secondary science), and the bachelor's in biology from Francis Marion

University (FMU) in Florence. Davidson's many accomplishments include his being named valedictorian of the Bishopville High School Class of 1981.

When asked what attributes make him a good teacher, Davidson said, "I believe that the main attribute that I have been blessed with is the ability to build relationships. I am honored to have many colleagues and friends in all walks of life and to realize an impactful influence for many students."

Reading Coach Greta Hutcheson of West Lee Elementary School (WLE) was named Teacher of the Year for her school. She earned a bachelor's in elementary education and an Interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree in Art Education from Converse College in Spartanburg.

To answer the question, "What do you feel are the greatest trends and issues facing public education today?" Hutcheson said trust is a big issue. "There must be trust between students, teachers, administrators, parents and the community in order for schools to thrive."

Kevin Luckey, English and language arts teacher at Lee Central Middle School (LCMS), was named Teacher of the Year for his school. He earned the bachelors from Morris College in Sumter and the master of education from Jones International University in Centennial, Colo. Luckey said it is his passion for teaching, his firmness and his stance as a life-long learner that makes him a good teacher.



Front L-R: Hutcheson, Davidson, McCall, Tate and Luckey
Back L-R: Principals Bradley, Turner, Stukes, White and Holmes

"Teachers must be relevant to their students and make sure real-life applications exist in learning," he added.

Capreshia McCall, a 5K teacher at Lower Lee Elementary School (LLE), was named Teacher of the Year for her school. She earned the bachelor's in early childhood education from FMU and the master's in curriculum and instruction (reading and literacy) from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Ariz.

A flexible teaching style is what McCall says makes her a standout. "I set high expectations while reassuring them that it is okay to take risks

and make mistakes."

First-grade teacher Tracey Tate is the Teacher of the Year for Dennis Elementary School (DES). Tate received her undergraduate degree from Benedict College in Columbia in early childhood education and the masters from FMU. Tate serves as a tutor to help struggling learners in her community and in the classroom utilizing cooperative learning.

"In cooperative learning groups, each person has a chance to offer something of importance and can learn from their peers," said Tate.

Perfect attendance employees were also recognized at the Opening Session. They are as follows: Mary Arthur, Verna Vanessa Bostic and Cheronda Scarborough of DES; Gwendolyn Frederick, Barbara Jackson and Charlesena King of LLE; Ella Wilson of WLE; Roslyn McElveen of LCMS; Anjennette James, Teriann Nash, Virginia Rogers and Lurma Swinney of LCHS; and Mary Boykin, Dayatra Kelly, Keyon Thomas and Walter Salter of the transportation department.

CAMERON: VIRTUS ACADEMY 2019-20 TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Rita Cameron

Virtus Academy of South Carolina opened its doors in August of 2018 as Florence's first public charter school. Virtus is geared towards helping students K-12 achieve academic excellence through project-based learning (PBL), rigorous academics, and leadership development. Along with awesome diverse students, Virtus houses some great teachers as well. This year's teacher of the year is none other than Rita Cameron.

Cameron's love for teaching started around the age of 13 when she would help teach Sunday school. As a little girl, she enjoyed helping little ones learn and grow. She would go on to continue her education at Maranatha Christian School, where her love for teaching would have her become a teacher cadet. She started off teaching the first grade.

When asked what is something people don't know about her, Cameron stated, "I have played the piano since the 1st grade, but I only play when asked." She can read music as well as put her own spin on pieces. Her favorite song is an old hymnal called "My Jesus, I love thee." "It's a peaceful song," she said. "If you're having a bad day, just read the words."

Cameron has been a teacher going on 15 years now. She taught in Marion County for four years, Lake City for a year, and the rest in Florence public schools. This is her first year at Virtus Academy.

"I hope the community understands how special our school is. It's unique. This is the best year I have ever had teaching. I don't dread coming to work. I have a wonderful group of kids, and the parents are awesome. Anything I need, they got it."

Her experience teaching at Virtus has been one of excitement for learning and a sense of community. She has had the privilege of teaching eager students and parents who are always ready to help.

"I love it! I love everything about it. We are able to look at our standards and intertwine them. My kids love their PBL. My kids who

Teacher Appreciation

CAMERON CONT'D

are normally shy get up and shine.”

Virtus Academy uses some project-based learning along with traditional teaching to help kids use practical life skills. Her classroom is geared toward giving kids the chance to grow and learn through independence and leadership. They recently took a lesson in math and made it a real-life lesson. Her third graders had to plan their own Christmas party. From the theme to food to a budget, the students had to figure it all out.

“Kids got to plan their Christmas Party apart of their PBL. They came up with the theme, and itemized list, and integrated adding and subtracting.”

Cameron also utilizes technology in her classroom in her third-

grade classroom. “We do STEM every other Friday. We use Google Classroom. They do math quizzes, social studies, and science.”

Cameron’s classroom structure has prepared her class for the state’s turn of events with the national COVID-19 pandemic. With daily use of technology, her students won’t miss a beat with their lessons from home.

While Cameron is recognized as this year’s Teacher of the Year, she feels that her title should go across the board for her fellow teachers. “They all work hard. They all work together. Any teacher at this school would deserve Teacher of the Year.”

Cameron’s humble attitude and love for her students have truly made her a valuable member at Virtus Academy.

MILITARY APPRECIATION

RECOGNIZING MCCLARY FOR MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

by Anna Bowman



LaChandra McClary

LAKE CITY - LaChandra McClary said that she enlisted in the Army in 2000 for one very important reason, “To protect and serve her country,” she said. “My first choice was to join the police force,” the former Lake City native acknowledged, but she became intrigued by the advantages she could receive as a member of the military. “There was a sense of instant pride that came with joining the Army, not

only for myself but for my family as well,” she recalled. “I realized enlisting would afford me opportunities to further my education and to see parts of the world that I could never imagine in my lifetime, like Kuwait and Iraq.”

Enlisting was the first step. Becoming a soldier would test her willpower, willpower she didn’t realize she possessed, but she quickly tapped into her strength with the help of other basic trainees and her drill sergeants. Upon arriving at Fort Jackson, her fears began to engulf her, but suddenly, individuals who were once strangers became her allies. “My fear was that I wasn’t going to make it, especially the first day I arrived, because I wasn’t able to follow the movement (commands) of the drill sergeant,” McClary recalled. “I knew I had to learn. Failure wasn’t an option,” she said. Her positive attitude and desire to learn attracted the attention of the other trainees. “I overcame by letting my ‘Battle Buddies’ assist me at night before the lights outcall. Additionally, my drill sergeants also never left me behind, and they never made me feel as if I couldn’t finish my basic training, and on time!” She said, “I loved my unit; we were once strangers but ended up being a big family!”

The second step, which was one that she didn’t truly expect after graduating from basic training, was having to take a nine-hour bus ride from Fort Jackson to Fort Polk in Texas. “I was extremely proud of my accomplishments, but the hardest part of moving forward was leaving everything I knew behind, including my family, especially my mother.” In fact, she confesses to crying all the way to Texas and only feeling better when her mother assured her that she would be a great soldier.

Call it a mother’s intuition, but McClary, indeed, made a great soldier during her 14-year career in the Army. As an Army human resources specialist (MOS-42A), she was given an amazing opportunity to view the inter-working of the Army by performing personnel and administrative functions, which allowed her to provide human resources support to all military members, regardless of rank or classification. Her job also ensured the readiness, health and welfare of all soldiers. “I had the duty of arranging soldiers’ travel, whether it was PCS, TDY, ETS or moving to another company. And for a couple of years, I was my unit’s comptroller,” she beamed with pride. “I truly had a rewarding career.”

McClary’s military career accomplishments while in the Army include The Service Ribbon, Combat Badge, Good Conduct Medal, as well as the basic AAM and ARCOM. But personally, for McClary, one of her greatest achievements was becoming a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) because soldiers obtain this position of authority by promotion through the enlisted ranks. The young girl, who joined the Army because she wanted to “Protect and Serve,” had positioned herself throughout her career to become a sergeant (E5), a goal she always wanted to accomplish.

Because of her military experience, McClary had been able to guide others who have questions about enlisting. “I didn’t have anyone to talk to about joining, but the recruiter did an excellent job of answering all of my questions. Today, I can offer guidance, especially to young women who may want to enlist in the Army. “Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with my cousin about my military experience and what to expect. He had already made up his mind about joining. However, he had several questions that he wanted to explore in-depth.”

Today McClary is happily married to David McClary, who she describes as her “Greatest Supporter.” They are the parents of four amazing children: Ja’Ziah, Jelerious, Jorrell, and MaCayla. LaChandra McClary is the daughter of Idella and Legrand Eaddy of Lake City. The McClary family attends St. Matthews Holiness Church in Lake City.

With an associate degree in criminal justice from Miller-Motte Technical College, McClary is poised to make her future career in the criminal justice field as successful as her military career.

MILITARY APPRECIATION

CHANGING THE MILITARY SERVICE NARRATIVE

Submitted by Ashleigh Bryson, Making Connections Project Coordinator, HopeHealth



Each May, the United States kicks off the summer season with Memorial Day. Red, white, and blue flood the streets and neighborhoods across our country. Barbecues bring together families and friends, parades bring excitement to communities, and people express their gratitude for the men and women who serve our nation and protect our freedom.

But what are we doing for our veterans on the other 364 days? Celebrating the courage of these

men and women does not have to be limited to 24 hours. After all, our freedom is not limited to just one day.

South Carolina is home to more than 400,000 veterans. And contrary to common belief, the faces of our service members are not just the retired men of the Vietnam era. They are both men and women. Some of these faces are painted with wrinkles that hold stories and wisdom that come only with age. Some are youthful and have only recently said “goodbye” to pimply, teenage years. Some see their own reflection in the faces of their newborn babies, while others can’t help but mimic the smiles of their grandchildren. Some of these faces have eyes that have seen things they wish they hadn’t. Some have eyes that spent hours looking at screens and counting numbers, while they did their part to keep their brothers and sisters in combat safe.

The stories of our service members are all unique, but they all share a choice that will always be worth celebrating—the choice to serve our country in whatever capacity they were needed, no matter the cost. The bravery that accompanies this decision is immeasurable. Yet, our culture often believes the myth that our veterans are broken. “Broken” should not be a word we associate with our service members. Integrity • Loyalty • Bravery • Leadership • Humility • Compassion.

These are the characteristics of our veterans.

What we often mistake as “broken” is the adjustment these men

and women have had to make to a “new normal.” This can be tough, especially if it is faced alone. Sometimes it might mean living every day with PTSD or an amputated leg. It might mean struggling to reconnect with family. Joblessness. Homelessness. Loneliness. Addiction. Self-harm. While each of these are very real and often traumatic, we must understand that these are symptoms, not character flaws.

Many of the experiences described above are problems that have solutions. In our own community, we have experts who work with service members to improve their physical and mental wellness. We have organizations that work one on one with veterans to help secure jobs and homes. Liaisons help navigate treatment options, family support, and VA benefits. Peer groups and gatherings offer a space of fellowship and community. There are resources available that acknowledge and honor the unique stories each of our veterans hold, no matter the branch or era in which they served, and meet each person where they’re at.

Let’s change the narrative of broken to one of gratitude and hope. Yes, thank a service member tomorrow. Greet them with a handshake and a warm cup of coffee. But let’s not limit the celebration and gratitude to one day. Each of these men and women made a choice that contributed to the freedom we experience every day. Let us make a choice to honor their sacrifice and their stories as well.

If you keep your eyes open, you’re sure to see people wearing veteran hats around our community. A smile and a “thank you” is a simple way to show your support. Allow the veterans in your life a space to share their experiences if they would like. Change the way you speak about our service members, shedding light on their stories full of bravery and hope. You can even stop by community events like the PeeDee’s Veteran Advisory Council or HopeHealth’s Veterans with Hope monthly gathering. And remember, our veterans are not broken.

To all of our current and former service members and their families: thank you for your service and sacrifice. Happy Veteran’s Day.

Ashleigh Bryson is the HopeHealth project coordinator for Making Connections, which focuses on improving the mental health and well-being of veterans in our community.

THE ANATOMY OF A SOLDIER’S STORY *by Anna Bowman*



Barringer F. Wingard, Jr.

Barringer F. Wingard, Jr., who was born and raised in Clinton,

American soldiers are known for their bravery and courage. Men and women, alike, have valiantly guarded the country in numerous wars, invasions and conflicts, all with a deep sense of patriotism. Even before the moment they take that deep breath and raise their right hands to recite the military’s enlistment oath, they have made a conscious and courageous decision to make the ultimate sacrifice: to fight to the death.

was like so many young people who were born into families whose parents had or were serving in the military. His father, Barringer F. Wingard, Sr., was no exception, having served in the Army and National Guard for 36 years and both WWII and Korea. On Nov. 2, 1966, just after celebrating his 19th birthday, the younger Wingard followed in the tradition of his father and enlisted in the South Carolina Army National Guard and, ultimately, active duty. The young man, who once held odd jobs in maintenance and as a bartender, was now a member of one of the most highly structured and disciplined institutions in America.

Wingard, one of the vivid memories of his first day of basic training was the ethnic makeup of the other enlistees, “We were a diverse group of people from the North, Puerto Rico, black, white, and Hispanic. Some had enlisted, and some were drafted. It was a mixture of

THE ANATOMY OF A SOLDIER'S STORY CONT'D



Col. Wingard was in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan, in September 2005 with some Afghan children who were herding goats. Wingard and the other Soldiers helped round up the goats that had scattered when the plane landed.

Americans,” he stated. Being the son of a soldier, he knew from the start that basic training would be demanding, to say the least. “I had always been an athlete in high school, so the fitness part took some adjustment, but I did pretty well,” he stated.” The mental part of the basic training was more of a challenge, he said, “I had to be careful with the mental part and understand what my superiors were doing—

making us soldiers.”

“My drill sergeants, Staff Sergeant Sinkfield and Sergeant Sargent were both Vietnam Veterans, and very memorable, more than other soldiers he had served with,” he recalled. “Another instructor that made an impression was Sergeant Money, who I met at Advanced Individual Training. SGT Money was about 21 years old, only about two years older than me, and already a veteran of Vietnam. He was more of a big brother type who seemed to know when to be tough and when to slack off a bit.”

After completing basic training, he stated that he served mostly up and down the East coast of the United States: Pennsylvania, Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia, including tours at the Pentagon. He had a few short, transitory assignments in the Caribbean, Central and South America, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Brazil and Argentina. In 2004, about two years after retiring, he was called back to active duty for 26 months, including about 11 months in Afghanistan, and 26 months as the provost marshal and chief of law enforcement, security and force protection for Army Material Command, headquartered at Fort Belvoir, Va.

While serving in Afghanistan, he was a part of a small unit of about 18 soldiers when he arrived and 70 soldiers when he left. “Our mission was to train Afghans to be police, highway police, and border police. It was challenging,” he recalled. All deployments bring with it numerous challenges, some of them minor (time zone differences), some of them major (language and cultural differences), but one of the greatest challenges is being separated from loved ones. There is a belief that when a soldier serves in the military, his family serves too, nothing could be more accurate than this concept, and during his deployments, Wingard made sure to keep this concept in mind in a way to protect his family. “When I first got to Afghanistan, I emailed my family once a week. After a few months in, I began calling home about once every 7-10 days. I avoided setting a scheduled time to call because I was afraid if I missed the designated time, my family would worry.”

While deployed in Afghanistan, Wingard would be faced with the awful reality of being in a combat zone when four people (two officers and two sergeants) he had worked with briefly were killed by an IED

while en route to a rifle range that the Afghan Police and Afghan Army shared. All four were members of the Indiana National Guard from Camp Phoenix near Kabul. “The memorial service was my first and made a lasting impression,” he said, recalling the heartbreaking experience in detail. “Four soldiers’ crosses, the M 16 rifles with bayonets inverted and stuck in the ground with boots, dog tags, and purple hearts...their commander and a chaplain spoke, and about four or five hundred soldiers filed one by one, came to attention and saluted. Five or six times a week, soldiers in my unit strapped on their body armor and traveled on hazardous roadways through big cities and into small villages. Even though my job did not put me in situations that required face-to-face confrontations with the enemy, the memorial reinforced that bad things could happen anytime.”

When he returned to the United States, he saw how appreciative people were to him once they discovered that he had served overseas. “When they saw me in my uniform, they seemed to be very appreciative. I was asked to speak to some civic clubs, like Rotary and Kiwanis, and churches and schools, and the reception was always positive.” Wingard has led quite an impressive full life. A graduate of Clinton High School, he attended the University of South Carolina, graduated from Georgia Southern College (University) and earned his master’s degree from Central Michigan University.

After relocating to Florence, he continued to serve his community through volunteer work. “I serve as volunteer chairman of the Florence Veterans Park. This is sometimes very demanding as our community tries to honor all veterans. I am very proud to be a part of our Veterans Park family, the number one tourist attraction in Florence, per Trip Advisor. Also, I help with the Veterans Honor Guard. This group does a great service to ensure no veterans are buried without a proper military funeral. I think last year, the Honor Guard conducted close to 300 funerals.” Wingard has also supported such organizations as the Veterans Resource Center, Veterans Honor Guard and the national Fisher House as well as the Friends of the Florence County Library.

Wingard is married to Carrington. She has a daughter from her first marriage (Meggie). From Wingard’s first marriage, he has a son named Barringer III (wife, Liz) and a daughter named Krista, (husband, Matt). “My children moved with me several times,” he said, “and they put up with a lot so I ‘could play Army.’ Both are successful, and I love them with all my heart.” Wingard and his wife attend St. Catherine’s Episcopal Church in Florence.



MILITARY APPRECIATION

APPRECIATING MILITARY PERSONNEL, BOTH PAST & PRESENT Articles by Ta' Meeka Epps



Grady Weaver colorize Infantry

DARLINGTON-May is a special month for the U.S. Armed Forces and its members, current and past. It has been designated as Military Appreciation Month. Military Appreciation Month is celebrated every May as a declaration to encourage U.S. citizens to observe the month in a symbol of unity. Through unity, we honor the members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom. The month of May is characterized by six national observances, highlighting the contributions of each branch of the Armed Forces.

Through unity and solidarity, we thank those who sacrificed, showed strength in the face of adversity, and lived a life of service to ensure our freedom and push the country to greatness. The Pee Dee Region has its very own hometown hero in Darlington's Grady Weaver.

Weaver enlisted in the South Carolina National Guard in September of 1970 after receiving his Bachelor of Arts Degree in History/Political Science from Shorter University. After spending four years as a college athlete (basketball), basic training followed at Fort Lewis in Washington, and then he was on to advanced training at Fort Sam in Houston, Texas.

Weaver initially served as a combat medic and medical specialist. His medical unit was to be deployed to Vietnam in/around 1973, but peace talks that occurred that year placed the unit on hold, which resulted in Weaver's entry into Officer Candidate School (OCS). After obtaining the rank of E5, Weaver received his commission as a second lieutenant in June of 1974 from the Palmetto Military Academy.

As a commissioned officer, Weaver served as platoon leader, company commander, S1 personnel, S4 supplies and equipment, S3 training operations planning, and finally, as a labor relations officer.

When asked why he chose to serve, Weaver spoke highly of the ones who went before him and blazed the trail. "Coming from a 'long-line' of Patriots had me viewing participating in the Armed Forces as a God-given-right/responsibility. My father was a Marine in the Pacific in World War II as well as my namesake (father's brother) lost his life



Grady Weaver at Farrow service Appreciating Military Personnel, Both Past & Present

flying 'the Hump'-aka Himalayas-during the CIB (China/India/Burma) Campaign of World War II."

Growing up and being educated in the South influenced Weaver's thinking and formed his view of the world and life. However, his service time broadened his view of life and of the world. "Some of my best comrades were an Apache

Indian and second-generation Mexican-American. I was also able to train/work all across the United States as well as in Europe, Central America and the Caribbean."

Weaver's command and staff positions were numerous and included Army National Guard units in Florida and Kentucky along with the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade (Reserves) at Fort Jackson. The span of his military career saw him with assignments in Germany, Panama, and Haiti.

In 1997 after 27 years of service, Weaver retired to devote his efforts to his daughter, who was about to embark on the next chapter of her life marriage and his civilian job with Sonoco of Hartsville.

While employed by Sonoco, he held positions in production, sales, and human resources. As a so-called "Weekend Warrior" Weaver's civilian job afforded him the opportunity by policy to continue his service by traveling to various states like Georgia, Florida, and Kentucky. "With my service time behind me, I sought out the comradeship that the American Legion offered where others that served still enjoyed fellowship."

Weaver is the present post commander of Darlington American Legion Post 13. He holds "Life Memberships" with the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels, the National Guard Association, the American Legion, the Military Officers Association of America and the National Rifle Association.

Weaver is married to Fran Wall Weaver (49 years), formerly of Darlington. They have one daughter, Lezlie; son-in-law, Gil; and a grandson, Rhett. The Weavers are members of St. Luke United Methodist Church while currently residing in Hartsville.

LIKE MILITARY FATHER, LIKE MILITARY SON



Sgt. Major Steven Holliday

REMBERT-As we celebrate those who choose a life of service through the Armed Forces, past and present, during the month of May in April we spotlight the military child. April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, a time to honor the sacrifices made by military families worldwide with an emphasis on the experience of the dependent children of military members serving at home and overseas.

Sgt. Major Steven Holliday enlisted at the age of 17 and reported to Fort

Jackson reception station for Basic Combat Training on Aug. 4, 1976, three days after his eighteenth birthday. He dedicated 27 years of his life to the United States Army and the South Carolina Army National Guard (SCARNG). With all his training and expertise, he knows his most valuable asset is his family: his wife and his two sons.

There are numerous advantages and disadvantages of being a military family, including opportunities to travel the world to receive extensive training and education. Yet, there may be lengthy separations, constant relocation, minimal family time and even lack of family support. However, the joy of serving a cause greater than self is a call too loud to ignore.

Holliday had heard the call since his youth, "I think I was born to serve, even when I was a little boy, all I wanted to do was 'play

LIKE MILITARY FATHER CONT'D



Sgt. Major Holliday's son receiving his rank

Army!' I think at one time I had the first G.I. Joe action figure when it hit the stores! I grew up watching 'Rat Patrol,' 'Combat' and every other war movie that came on television. The ideology followed me into my teenage years, and when I got the chance to enlist, I took it!"

His military career spanned 27 years and allowed him the

freedom to classify and reclassify between jobs and obtain certifications while advancing through the enlisted ranks retiring as an E9. Holliday initially was assigned as a Telecommunications Center operator (72Echo). He also functioned as a radio switchboard operator while in the United States Army.

Holliday cross-trained and went into administration when he joined the SCARNG for seven years as a part-time soldier. He was selected to become a full-time soldier in the Guard but had to reclassify again as a combat engineer (12 Bravo). Holliday spent six weeks in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., learning how to be a combat engineer.

In 1989, Holliday got back into "Signal" (the communications world in the Army). Once again, he had to reclassify and went to Fort Gordon, Ga., for nine weeks to learn how to operate the Army's communications and electronics equipment, which had integrated the technological advances of the times with computers and radar technology.

Holliday qualified in supply management and finance throughout his time of service. His ambition and drive to provide a life for his family greater than even he could have imagined possible kept him setting the bar higher. "I am a goal-oriented person. I was always traveling and spending time away from my family to better myself educationally and professionally to secure my family's position.

Holliday enlisted in the armed forces and shortly after met whom he refers to as his beautiful dream girl whom he ultimately made his wife. "It took me three years, two different jobs, giving up on my dream car (Corvette) to woo her, win her heart, marry her and begin a wonderful

and loving life and marriage together. Unfortunately, God called her home in 2013 from that union. We were blessed with two wonderful sons who are now grown men with children of their own," one who followed in his father's footsteps.

Steven Holliday III, also known as SSG Steven Holliday, recalls how he felt seeing his father in uniform. "As a child watching my father leave for 'work,' come home late in uniform, and him having this almost supernatural work ethic, was hard to understand. Now being a soldier and a leader myself, I can relate. It seemed as if he was almost super-human. If he ever tired, he didn't show it. If he was ever frustrated, we rarely knew."



Sgt Major and his sons when they were younger

SSG Holliday has spent his life chasing the ghost of his father not only as a soldier but also as a man. "He taught me through actions what I needed to be. I joined the South Carolina Army National Guard in 2001, and this year marks my 19th year of service. Looking back, I had ZERO intention of following Dad

into the military. However, almost 20 years later, it has been the best decision of my life. Not only has the Guard given me purpose, but it has also matured me as a person, as a father, and as a Soldier. My dad doesn't know it yet, (well I suppose now he does), but I WILL catch him, and I WILL surpass him during this life. Isn't that every generation's goal for their seeds to surpass them?"

The Holliday family knows and believes a strong family, community, and self are important to the success of a service member as training or certification. Sergeant Major Steven Holliday Jr. is a local, hometown boy who was raised in Rembert (originally from Brooklyn, N.Y.), who got to live out his very first dream. He became a successful team member to the greatest organization the world has yet to surpass: the United States Army.



ABB ANNOUNCES NEW TEAM MEMBERS Submitted by Susan Grant, VP Marketing Director



*Will Britton,
Branch Manager*

CONWAY-Anderson Brothers Bank is also pleased to announce the promotion of Will Britton to the position of branch manager. Britton will be based in the bank's Conway Church office at 2651 Church Street.

In his role, Britton will continue to assist customers with a full array of financial products and services offered by the bank including commercial and consumer deposits. In addition, he will provide administrative and supervisory support along with directing operations and staff within the Conway Church Office.

"We are fortunate to have Will in the role of branch manager," said Richard Carroll, vice president/Conway city executive. "Will's extensive background and banking knowledge makes him a perfect fit for this position and a great asset to our organization and our customers."



*Nita Tyson,
Bank Teller*

DILLON-Anderson Brothers Bank announces the addition of Anita Tyson as bank teller. Tyson will be based in the bank's Dillon Office located at 1006 US-301.

In her role, Tyson will be responsible for handling customer financial transactions while maintaining great customer service in the Dillon Office.

"We are excited that Anita has joined the ABB family," said Johnny R. Floyd, vice president-Marion/Dillon County regional executive. "She offers a wealth of customer service experience and has excellent people skills to help the bank grow in Dillon County and the Pee Dee Region."



*Patsy J. Lemon,
Bank Teller*

LATTA-Anderson Brothers Bank announces the addition of Patsy J. Lemon as bank teller. Lemon will be based in the bank's Latta Office located at 100 E. Main Street.

In her role, Lemon will be responsible for handling customer financial transactions while maintaining great customer service in the Latta Office.

"We are excited that Patsy has joined the ABB family," said Johnny R. Floyd, vice president-Marion/Dillon County regional executive. "Her knowledge of customer service and the Latta community will be an immeasurable asset to our customers as well as our organization as we continue to grow in Dillon County and the Pee Dee Region."



*Kimberly B. Driggers,
Branch Operations
Coordinator*

Anderson Brothers Bank announces Kimberly B. Driggers as branch operations coordinator in the Latta Office located at 100 E Main Street. In her role, Driggers will provide administrative and supervisory support within the branch to ensure effective and efficient customer service.

During Driggers' three years with Anderson Brothers Bank, Dillon County residents recognized her as 2017 and 2019 Best Bank Teller along with being instrumental in leading the Dillon County Relay for Life team by raising almost \$30,000 over the last three years. Driggers, a breast cancer survivor, is involved with the American Cancer Society Relay

for Life of Dillon County and served as the team lead for Dillon County in 2018 and 2019 along with continuing as accounting lead.

"We are very fortunate to have Kim as a member of the ABB family in Latta and excited to have her in the role of branch operations coordinator," said Johnny R. Floyd, vice president-Marion/Dillon County regional executive. "Kim is well versed in product knowledge, enthusiastic and sincere in her efforts to provide outstanding customer service. She is committed to community involvement while representing the bank and working closely with customers."



*Luther A. Gasque,
Assistant VP,
Mullins City Executive*

MULLINS - Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce Luther A. (Luke) Gasque as assistant vice president/city executive for the Mullins' offices. In his role, he will assist in the formulation of strategies and policies; arrangement and allocation of funds and resources; and supervision of people and processes while enhancing profits of the bank by handling various operations and personnel efficiently.

Gasque joined Anderson Brothers Bank in April 2013 as a loan officer at the Mullins Main Office and has over seven years of commercial and consumer lending experience. Throughout his career, he has been actively involved in numerous community groups and community organizations in Marion County. He is a member of Mullins First Baptist Church, Wild Life Action, Fork Masonic Lodge and the Marion Mullins Rotary Club.

Gasque is a graduate of The Citadel with a degree in business administration and is a graduate of the South Carolina Bankers School and Pee Dee Academy. He is a lifelong resident of Mullins, where he resides with his wife, Christy Gasque.

"We are fortunate to have Luke in the role of assistant vice president/Mullins city executive. His energy, leadership skills and banking experience are a great combination in serving our customers," said Johnny R. Floyd, vice president-Marion/Dillon County regional executive. "Luke is committed to community involvement and customer service. We look forward to his continued success with Anderson Brothers Bank."



*Kathy Cribbs,
Data Specialist*

Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce Kathy Cribbs named as marketing data specialist. In her role, she will work within our marketing databases to implement and support marketing initiatives.

Cribbs joined Anderson Brothers Bank in March of 2008 in the bank's finance department and has over 31 years of experience in the financial industry. Throughout her career, she has been actively involved in numerous community groups and community organizations in Marion County. Cribbs is currently a member of Mullins First Baptist Church and serves as a board member for Mullins Chamber of Commerce and Pee Dee Academy.

"Kathy has proven to be an important asset to Anderson Brothers Bank and our marketing team over the years," said Susan Grant, vice president marketing director. "We are proud to announce her promotion as marketing data specialist as we continue to grow and provide a more customized experience to our current and future customers."

ABB ANNOUNCES NEW TEAM MEMBERS CONT'D



Owen Willis,
Mortgage Loan Officer

MYRTLE BEACH- Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Owen Willis as mortgage loan officer. Willis will be based in the bank's Market Common Office at 2711 Agnes Lane.

In his role, Willis will assist customers with the various financial services offered by the bank while being involved in customer relations and market development. He joined Anderson Brothers Bank in July 2015. Willis is a graduate of Fayetteville State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. "With rates at an all-time low, our mortgage business remains very active. We continue to build our mortgage team in an effort to keep up with local demand," said Tim McCoy, VP of Mortgage Lending. "Owen is a great addition to our mortgage department," said Bryan Lenertz, vice president/Horry County executive, "and his extensive background and banking knowledge makes him a perfect fit for this position and a great asset to our organization and our customers."



Kurt Walters,
Mortgage Loan Officer

Anderson Brothers Bank announces the addition of Kurt Walters as mortgage loan officer. Walters will be based in the bank's HMC Office at 1136 44th Ave. N. Ste.3, Myrtle Beach.

In his role, Walters will assist customers with the various financial services offered by the bank while being involved in customer relations and market development. He joined ABB in June 2018 and is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a degree in finance.

"We are excited about Kurt's decision to become a member of our mortgage team," said Tim McCoy, VP Mortgage Lending. "Kurt has

a proven ability to assist clients with all their financial service needs," said Bryan Lenertz, Vice President/Horry County executive, "and he will make a significant impact in our continued growth in the Myrtle Beach and surrounding markets."



Tim McCoy,
Vice President,
Mortgage Lending

Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Tim McCoy as vice president, Mortgage Banking. McCoy will be based in the bank's HMC Office at 1136 44th Ave. N. Ste. 3, Myrtle Beach.

In his role, McCoy will be in charge of growing the mortgage department for all of ABB. He is a graduate of Coastal Carolina University and has an extensive background in the mortgage banking industry. McCoy has over 22 years of mortgage lending experience and plays a vital role in the mortgage department's day-to-day operations.

"Tim has an excellent reputation as a knowledgeable and experienced mortgage banker in the Grand Strand area," said Bryan Lenertz, vice president/Horry County executive. "His experience and skills are essential to the bank's future undergoing constant change in a competitive industry, and we look forward to his success with Anderson Brothers Bank."

About Anderson Brothers Bank

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

Anderson Brothers Bank offers 23 branches conveniently located in 17 communities throughout the Pee Dee, Coastal and Low Country regions of South Carolina. The bank's main office is located at 101 North Main Street, P.O. Box 310 in Mullins, S.C. For additional information about Anderson Brothers Bank, call 843-464-6271, or visit ABBank.com.

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TIPS TO HELP YOU PREPARE FOR AN UNEXPECTED CAREER CRISIS

We all know how important it is to be prepared for a fire, flood or other type of emergency. What about something that seems less dramatic but can be equally devastating, like unemployment? You can't dial 911 or stop, drop and roll, but you can take steps to help minimize some of the fallout from losing your job.

1. Stay positive. It's important to remember that the decision was probably based on the economy or other external factors.

2. Be professional. If you handle yourself with decorum, your employer may be willing to serve as a reference, recommend you to vendors, and even provide assistance with interviewing and résumé building. Plus, if their economic situation continues to improve, who's to say they won't hire you back?

3. Account for every penny. Review your terms of employment, and claim any money owed to you from bonuses, commissions—even unused vacation. Also, find out if you are entitled to a severance package. If not, file for unemployment benefits right away since it may take weeks to process.

4. Replace lost benefits. If your spouse works, see if you can add yourself to his or her health care plan. If not, you can apply for COBRA coverage within 60 days of termination and extend your health care benefits for 18 months. Similarly, you may want to purchase an affordable term life insurance policy to help replace any workplace coverage you may have had.

5. Evaluate your retirement plans. While some employers allow you to leave your 401(k) in place, it may not always be the right move. Have a financial professional look the plan over and see if you are better off rolling over the funds into a traditional IRA or Roth IRA.¹

6. Network-Network-Network. You never know where your next

job will come from, so take advantage of every networking opportunity. Also, be sure to use social media platforms like LinkedIn to help connect with people online and let them know you're looking.

This educational third-party article is being provided for information purposes only as a courtesy by Julie A Cord, MBA, MIM, CLU®, Agent, New York Life Insurance Company. To learn more about the life insurance and financial strategies, please contact Julie A Cord at 317-289-3010 or jacord@ft.newyorklife.com.

¹When considering rolling over the proceeds of your employer-sponsored retirement plan to an IRA, you have the option, among others, of leaving the funds in your existing plan, if permitted, or rolling them into your new employer's plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted. Each choice offers advantages and disadvantages, depending on the desired investment options and services, fees and expenses, withdrawal options, required minimum distributions, tax treatment and your unique financial needs and retirement plans. (Neither New York Life Insurance Company nor its agents provide tax or legal advice. Consult your own tax and or legal advisors regarding your particular situation.)



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HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

STEM CELL THERAPY EXPLAINED *Submitted by Emmanuel Quaye, MD**Emmanuel Quaye, MD*

Stem cell therapy has been growing in popularity over the last 30 years for many treatments. Since the beginning of stem cell therapy, when stem cells were used primarily for cancers, the use of stem cells has expanded to cover a host of treatments non-cancer. Ongoing research is discovering ways to apply stem cell therapy to common chronic conditions such as neurodegenerative diseases, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and

spinal disease. Because stem cells may be used to treat many chronic conditions, you may think that you could go to your doctor and ask for stem cells for your arthritis. Not so. Stem cell therapy falls within the purview of regenerative therapy, a branch of medical research involved in engineering our cells, tissues or organs to restore normal function.

Stem cells are “young” cells in the body that can grow up to be any kind of cell. By definition, stem cells must be able to do two things: they must have the ability to reproduce themselves forever, and they must also be able to change into different mature cells, such as liver, brain, muscle or skin cells. All these different cells have different functions, and each cannot perform the functions of the others. In this regard, because stem cells can grow up to be any kind of cell, they are very special. Stem cells are growing cells, so when introduced into damaged tissue, under the right conditions, they can grow into the specific cells of that tissue and provide healing of that organ at risk. In stem cell therapy, these cells can be manipulated to turn into the cells to heal the part of the body at risk. Interest in stem cells has been growing because of this potential to provide healing where regular medical therapy has failed.

Stem cells come from different sources within the body. Embryonic stem cells are derived from embryos and have the potential to generate more stem cells and to differentiate into any type of cell in the body. They are, however, involved in controversy because they are derived from embryos. Adult stem cells are found in small amounts in all types of tissue. Until recently, it was thought adult stem cells could only grow into the type of tissue they are found in. Recently, it has been discovered that adult stem cells can grow into more than one type of

tissue. Perinatal stem cells are stem cells discovered in amniotic fluid (the fluid that protects the baby in the womb) and umbilical cord blood. These stem cells also have the potential to develop into many specialized cells.

Stem cell therapy is the use of these cells to promote repair and replacement of cells in damaged tissue. The use of stem cells in such manner to cause regrowth of normal tissue from damaged tissue is known as regenerative therapy. Research has shown that stem cells can be injected into damaged tissue and cause repair of the tissue. Thus it is possible to create new organs from stem cells to replace damaged organs and create healing while avoiding surgery and the long process of recuperation. However, much of stem cell therapy is still in the research phase and not available to the broader population. To date, research is continuing on stem cell therapy for many diseases, including Alzheimer’s Disease and other brain disorders, diseases of arthritis and joint injuries, heart disease, liver disease, cancer, diabetes, lung disease, eye disease and kidney disease. As well, research has shown favorable results of stem cell treatments for chronic heart disease, acute stroke and chronic brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. The clinical potential for stem cell therapy extends to include diverse clinical issues such as Crohn’s Disease and diabetes, to treat bone and cartilage disease and to effect wound healing. Historically, men with hair loss have had less than effective treatments associated with ineffectiveness and adverse effects. Stem cell therapy has been shown to increase density and hair count in men with male pattern hair loss.

Advances in stem cell therapy mean that now adult stem cells can be manipulated to act as embryonic stem cells, making it unnecessary to use stem cells derived directly from embryos. These embryonic stem cells may then be used to regenerate any tissues within the body.

Side effects of stem cell therapy include fevers, headaches, chills, flushing and nausea at the time of infusion. Later side effects include nausea, insomnia, rash, mouth sores, diarrhea and lack of appetite. A major problem and hindrance for stem cell therapy is the development of a type of cancer called a teratoma. In spite of that, the use of stem cell therapy is growing in clinical practice and may be coming your way soon if you have a chronic problem. If you have a question, please call Magnolia Health Care, Inc.

Disclaimer: the potential clinical applications of stem cell therapy are vast, and this article does not provide a comprehensive review. If you have questions, please contact us with your questions at 843-432-2502.

Stem Cell Therapy A Natural Remedy With Impressive Results.



RECOGNIZING AND MANAGING COMPASSION FATIGUE

Submitted by Susan Carter, LPC, LPC Supervisor Director of Performance Improvement and Education, Pee Dee Mental Health



Susan Carter

Compassion fatigue refers to the emotional and physical distress caused by treating and helping patients, friends and family members who are deeply in need. Compassion fatigue desensitizes caregivers and leads to a harmful lack of empathy for those we care about. It differs from burnout but can co-exist. Compassion fatigue can occur due to a single exposure or can be due to a

“cumulative” level of trauma.

Who is at risk? High-risk occupations include paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), firefighters and health unit coordinators. Therapists, child welfare workers, nurses, radiology technicians, teachers, psychologists, and police officers are also at risk for compassion fatigue as are young and/or inexperienced healthcare professionals and medical residents, especially those who work overnight shifts and those who work more than 80 hours per week. Non-workers and other informal caregivers of people who are suffering from chronic illness often develop compassion fatigue as well.

In today’s world, where every tragedy is instantly accessible via phone, computer and television updates, compassion fatigue is no longer unique to certain professions. As Amit Snood, MD points out in his book, “The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress-Free Living,” “We are inundated with graphic images of the unimaginable suffering of millions. We can fathom the suffering of a few, but a million becomes a statistic that numbs us” (Cited in Sherry Bourg-Carter, “Are You Suffering From Compassion Fatigue?” Psychology Today, July 28, 2014).

Risk factors for Secondary Trauma Syndrome (STS) include personal attributes, such as being overly conscientious, perfectionist and self-giving. Low levels of social support or high levels of stress in personal life increase the likelihood of developing compassion fatigue. A previous history of trauma resulting in negative coping skills, such as bottling up or avoiding emotions and having small support systems, also increases the risk of compassion fatigue.

In healthcare, a culture of silence may exist where stressful events, such as deaths in an intensive care unit, are not discussed after the event, exacerbating CF. In addition, lack of awareness of symptoms and poor training in associated risks also contribute to CF among those with high-stress jobs.

Citing research from the University of Michigan and the University of Rochester Medical Center, which found empathy among students has declined by more than 40 percent compared to the late 1970s, Snood points out that we live in a world that desperately needs more compassion (cited in Sherry Bourg-Carter, “Are You Suffering From Compassion Fatigue?”). It is vitally important for those who are drawn to care giving not to lose that trait. Fortunately, it is possible to take steps to prevent and reduce compassion fatigue. By being aware of the warning signs in ourselves and our colleagues, we can prevent it, address it and enhance our personal and professional environments one act of kindness at a time.

What are the symptoms of compassion fatigue? Hopelessness, a decrease in the experience of pleasure, and a constant state of anxiety are common in this condition. Sleeplessness or nightmares and a pervasive negative attitude are also indicative of compassion fatigue. Workers may experience difficulty continuing to do their job. Sherrie Bourg-Carter, Psy.D. points out other common signs of compassion fatigue, including:

- Feeling burdened by the suffering of others

- Blaming others for their suffering
- Isolating yourself
- Loss of pleasure in life
- Difficulty concentrating
- Insomnia
- Physical and mental fatigue
- Bottling up your emotions
- Increased nightmares
- Feelings of hopelessness or powerlessness
- Frequent complaining about your work or your life
- Overeating
- Excessive use of drugs or alcohol
- Poor self-care
- Beginning to receive a lot of complaints about your work or attitude

Bourg-Carter emphasizes that denial is one of the most harmful symptoms of compassion fatigue because it “prevents those who are experiencing compassion fatigue from accurately assessing how fatigued and stressed they actually are, which prevents them from seeking help.”

This condition does not happen overnight. F. Oshberg, MD, author of “When Helping Hurts,” notes that compassion fatigue develops over time—taking weeks, sometimes years to surface. He describes compassion fatigue as “a low level, chronic clouding of caring and concern for others in your life—whether you work in or outside the home.” As time passes, one’s ability to feel and care for others diminishes through the overuse of skills of compassion. Some experience an “emotional blunting—whereby you react to situations differently than one would normally expect” (Cited in “The American Institute of Stress,” January 4, 2017. <https://www.stress.org/military/for-practitioners-leaders/compassion-fatigue>).

You can assess where you fall on the compassion satisfaction/fatigue continuum by taking the Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL), https://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English.pdf, which was developed by one of the world’s leading experts on compassion fatigue, Beth Hundall Stamm, MD. Even if you score high on the compassion fatigue scale, there is hope. Like burnout or any other stress-related condition, compassion fatigue is not terminal, though it can certainly impact quality of life. Awareness is the first step to recovery. Stamm explains that, through awareness and healthy self-care, those of us who experience compassion fatigue can start to understand the complexity of the emotions we’ve been “juggling and, most likely, suppressing.” For those who are experiencing symptoms of compassion fatigue, Stamm recommends:

- Enhancing your awareness with education
- Accepting where you are on your path at all times
- Exchanging information and feelings with people who can validate you
- Clarifying your boundaries—what works for you and what doesn’t
- Being kind to yourself
- Expressing what you need verbally, and
- Taking positive action to change your environment

If your compassion fatigue score is low or average, that is good news. Still, it’s important to take measures to protect yourself. To help prevent compassion fatigue, Snood recommends:

- Limiting the amount of daily news you watch or read about
- Trying to come to terms with the fact that pain and suffering are realities of life over which we have little or no control
- Being grateful for what is good in your life and the world
- Trying to find some meaning in the suffering you see
- If you must blame something, blaming the situation, not the person
- Showing compassion to yourself by being kind, soothing and

RECOGNIZING FATIGUE CONT'D

comforting to yourself

How can compassion fatigue be managed in the workplace? Healthcare institutions are recognizing that employees' emotional needs impact patient care. Mother Teresa understood compassion fatigue, writing in a plan to her superiors that it was mandatory that her nuns take an entire year off from their duties every 4-5 years to allow them to heal from the effects of their caregiving work.

Training in awareness of the compassion fatigue process, as outlined by Figley (2001) (cited in The American Institute of Stress), can help workers and home caregivers recognize unhealthy habits and reduce or prevent compassion fatigue. (See diagram)

Dos and Don'ts for managing Compassion Fatigue recommended by the American Institute for Stress

Do:

- Find someone to talk to
- Understand that the pain you feel is normal
- Exercise and eat properly
- Get enough sleep
- Take some time off
- Develop interests outside of work
- Identify what's important to you

Don't:

- Blame others
- Look for a new job, buy a new car, get a divorce or have an affair
- Fall into the habit of complaining with your colleagues
- Hire a lawyer
- Work harder and longer
- Self-medicate

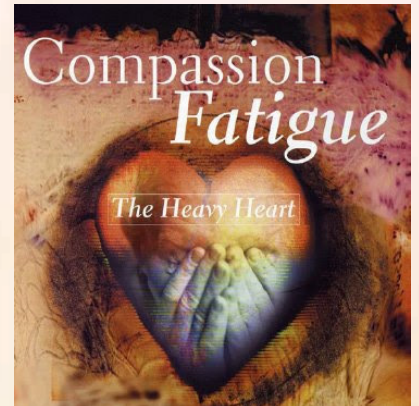
- Neglect your own needs and interests

Prevention through Awareness:

Ideally, compassion fatigue can be prevented through awareness of and positive coping with stressors that could otherwise potentially lead to destructive symptoms. Identify the situations that contribute to your stress level and increase your vulnerability to compassion fatigue. Think of events or situations that cause an unusually strong reaction and often overpower usual coping mechanisms. Ask yourself:

- Is my ability to function disrupted?
- Does the situation or incident feel out of the ordinary or traumatic?
- Do I regularly wake up tired in the morning and struggle to get to work?
- Am I working harder but accomplishing less?
- Am I easily frustrated or irritated?
- Do I feel routinely bored or disgusted?
- Am I experiencing frequent illness, aches and pains?

If you answer "yes" to several of these questions, increase your contact with supportive family and friends and/or consider speaking to a mental health professional. As healthcare providers and compassionate friends and family members, it is essential that we take care of our needs so we can continue to help others.



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CANCER PATIENTS GET CHANCE FOR PRE-DIAGNOSIS QUALITY OF LIFE

Submitted by MUSC Health

Betsy Davis, M.D., a maxillofacial prosthodontist at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), works with head and neck cancer patients to use 3D printing to build exact replicas of their teeth, nose, ear or jaw, offering the chance to return to the quality of life they had before their diagnosis. By taking precise measurements and scans of unaffected areas, Davis can build accurate prosthetic replacements that fit together like puzzle pieces.

One of her patients had been diagnosed with a form of head and neck cancer that required surgeons to remove his teeth and part of his jaw. But after treatment with the physician team at the Wellin Head and Neck Tumor Center at MUSC, he received new teeth and part of a jaw, all designed and built using 3D printing. This level of attention and precision can give a patient like hers the ability to do the small things they've missed—like eating pizza.

A rising epidemic

Head and neck cancer starts in the nose, mouth, throat, voice box and sinuses, and treatment may call for partial or complete removal of the affected area, which means that patients are not able to do everyday tasks. And while head and neck cancer comprises only four percent of all cancers, it has a high mortality rate. It was estimated that 64,500 people would be diagnosed with some form of head and neck cancer in 2019, and almost 14,000 people would die from it.¹

“Many of us take for granted that we can talk, eat, drink, smile and chew and even swallow and breathe without any problems,” explained Terry Day, M.D., endowed chair for the Wendy and Keith Wellin Head and Neck Tumor Center at MUSC. “But if you have an abnormality in those areas, it affects those things we use all the time.”

Most head and neck cancers are classified as squamous cell carcinomas, meaning the disease begins in the flat, scale-like cells that make up the thin layer of skin around the head and neck, as well as the linings of the respiratory and digestive tracts and hollow organs throughout the body. There are five main types of head and neck cancer, named for the areas they affect: laryngeal and hypopharyngeal cancer, nasal cavity and paranasal sinus cancer, nasopharyngeal cancer, oral and oropharyngeal cancer, and salivary gland cancer.¹

The two biggest risk factors for head and neck cancer in the past have been alcohol and tobacco use, and using these products in conjunction, whether through drinking, cigarettes or smokeless tobacco, also known as “chewing

tobacco,” creates an even higher risk.² But as cigarette use has declined over the last 30 years, so has the prevalence of related oral and oropharyngeal cancers, leaving room for a new risk factor: human papillomavirus (HPV).

HPV is best known for its association with cervical cancer, but HPV-associated head and neck cancers have been cropping up in new cases across the country, with the most common being HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer. It is estimated that between 70 and 90 percent of new cases can be linked back to the virus.³

This risk factor change brings a patient demographic change as well as a treatment and prognosis change. Patients with HPV-associated head and neck cancer are more likely to be white males in their 40s and 50s who do not smoke or drink excessive amounts of alcohol. They are almost three times more likely than women to be diagnosed with certain forms of head and neck cancer, like that of the back of the throat.

While HPV-associated cancers are becoming more common, they are also more responsive to treatment.⁴ For instance, the overall survival rate for HPV-associated oropharyngeal cancer is 95 percent after two years, while oropharyngeal cancer not linked to HPV has a survival rate of only 62 percent after two years.

A team effort

Treatment for head and neck cancer is complicated. The areas it affects are both highly visible and critical to quality of life, so the team of doctors needed covers many specialties. At MUSC, these specialists reside under the same roof, the Wellin Head and Neck Tumor Center, which is critical for ease of travel, treatment and treatment adherence.

From a treatment standpoint, the team consists of a head and neck surgeon, a radiation physician and a medical oncologist, but additional team members are needed to address the quality-of-life perspective, such as a dental expert trained in maxillofacial prosthodontics, speech and swallowing therapists and a physical therapist. Truly complex cases also require a highly specialized head and neck reconstructive surgeon.

At the Wellin Center, all of these physicians are in one place. They meet weekly at a tumor board meeting to review the CAT scans, PET scans, MRIs and pathology results for each individual patient before any kind of surgery. Then they come to a consensus on the best plan for treatment and work in tandem, both in and out of the operating room, to bring the best results, investing not only in their patient's cure but also in their life after cure.

“We focus on function, quality of life and cure,” said Davis. “I think those three things are equally weighted in a patient's mind. And our 3D-printed prosthetics give them at least a chance at all three.”

Modern treatment strategies

Each case is unique when it comes to treatment, which is one reason that the tumor boards are so effective. Patients will likely need some combination of radiation therapy, surgery, maxillofacial prosthodontics and physical therapy with voice, speech and swallowing specialists.

For instance, surgeons might need to remove the jawbone along with some teeth and the tongue of a patient with advanced oropharyngeal cancer. In that case, the team may decide to either bring in bone from the fibula to rebuild the jaw or place dental implants to serve as anchors for prosthetic teeth.

If the team decides to use existing bones, it will use the scans and the 3D printer to plan exactly where to cut the bone

By taking scans of unaffected areas, physicians can build precise prosthetic replacements like the one here that fit together like puzzle pieces. Photo by Brennan Wesley



CANCER PATIENTS CONT'D

and how to shape it before the operation. It will then slice the bone into pieces and attach the parts in the proper configuration by use of titanium plates. Joshua Hornig, M.D., a head and neck surgical oncologist at MUSC, said he is always surprised to see how well a patient's leg recovers after removal of part of the leg bone.

A more cutting-edge method for rebuilding the jaw is to print it out of a plastic called methyl acrylate. Using MUSC's specially adapted CAT scan machine, physicians can take a scan and convert it into a 3D model that can then be printed.

"We can hold it out to the patient," said Day. "And we can walk them through their upcoming procedure using a model of their very own jaw."

In addition to rebuilding the jaw, the team also uses free tissue transfers from muscles of the body to replace the teeth, tongue and lips that were removed, leaving the patient with a quality of life that extends beyond just a cure.

Both the tumor removal procedure, the surgical reconstruction and the placement of dental implants take place on the same day. With a potential total surgery time of 15 hours or more, Day starts by removing the tumor and any affected area, and Hornig follows with the surgical reconstruction of the fibula while oral surgeons follow with dental implant placement.

Hornig looks at the surgery as more than just a technical feat. "You have to be a great surgeon," he said. "But you also have to be a fellow human being and listen to them. You have to find out how this is going to impact their life and guide them through these changes."

Life after plastic

The goal of the team at the Wellin Center is to one day create a living piece of the patient's bone to implant. Physicians have successfully

implanted 3D-printed bladders and kidneys into patients, but they have yet to regrow a mandible or skull from the patient's own cells.⁵ That's where Hornig thinks this field is headed next.

3D printing first made its debut 50 years ago as stereolithography, which allows construction of a 3D model by use of a laser to etch a design into a specific photopolymer.⁵ Initially used to create industrial prototypes, the technology quickly moved on to large-scale manufacturing and engineering. Next, 3D printing advanced into health care, and its uses have expanded ever since.

MUSC started using 3D printing to assist physicians in reconstructive surgeries 20 years ago, and it has continued to advance this practice ever since. Initially met with skepticism from the medical field, 3D printing is now widely used for this method. Between 2016 and 2019, MUSC produced a total of 57 3D-printed models and prosthetics for patients.

Davis once had a patient who wore his best suit to the hospital on the day he received his prosthesis. He walked in and said, "Today I get my face back." And Davis's thought: "A feeling like that is priceless."



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STD AWARENESS MONTH

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth

April is Sexually Transmitted Disease Awareness Month, a month dedicated to bringing awareness to the prevention, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases which, since 2013, have been on the rise.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), between 2013-2017 cases of chlamydia remained at a record high, syphilis cases nearly doubled and gonorrhea cases increased 67 percent. In fact, diagnoses of the three diseases all increased for the fourth consecutive year. In 2017 alone:

- There were more than 2 million diagnosed cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis
- There were 200,000 more cases of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis than the previous record set in 2016
- South Carolina ranked fourth in the nation for cases of gonorrhea, fifth for chlamydia and 22nd for syphilis

If left untreated, these diseases can lead to other health issues including: infertility or pregnancy complications, long-term pelvic and/or stomach pain, and increased possibility of HIV transmission. Individuals can stand up for themselves and their health by proactively safeguarding their sexual health by talking honestly with their health care provider and communicating with partners.

Treat Me Right is a national campaign to improve patient and provider communications and increase the productivity of office visits. The campaign offers tips for working with your health care provider, including:

- Prepare to honestly answer provider's questions
- Get tested – Getting tested is the only way to know for sure if you have an STD; many STDs are curable, and all are treatable
- Get treated – Starting treatment immediately helps prevent long-term, irreversible damage
- Know the benefits of expedited partner therapy in which a provider may be able to give medicines or a prescription to partners of someone with an STD without seeing them first

Remember, testing is the only way to know if you have an STD or not. Free walk-in, rapid HIV testing is available at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Friday from 8:30 a.m. – noon and by appointment only from 4-8 p.m. Testing is also available at HopeHealth in Manning from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday.

When patients and providers work together, it empowers individuals to take control of their sexual health, and it allows providers to more quickly diagnose and treat any infections that occur. Let's all work together to reduce STDs.



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Rapid HIV & Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Testing



Rapid finger-stick testing
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4 Locations 

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Walk-in testing hours

HopeHealth Medical Plaza
360 North Irby Street, Florence
Mon – Thurs: 8:30 am – 4 pm

Fri: 8:30 am – 12 pm

Evening testing hours by appointment
from 4 – 8 pm

HopeHealth in Manning
12 West South Street, Manning
Mon & Tues: 10 am – 2 pm

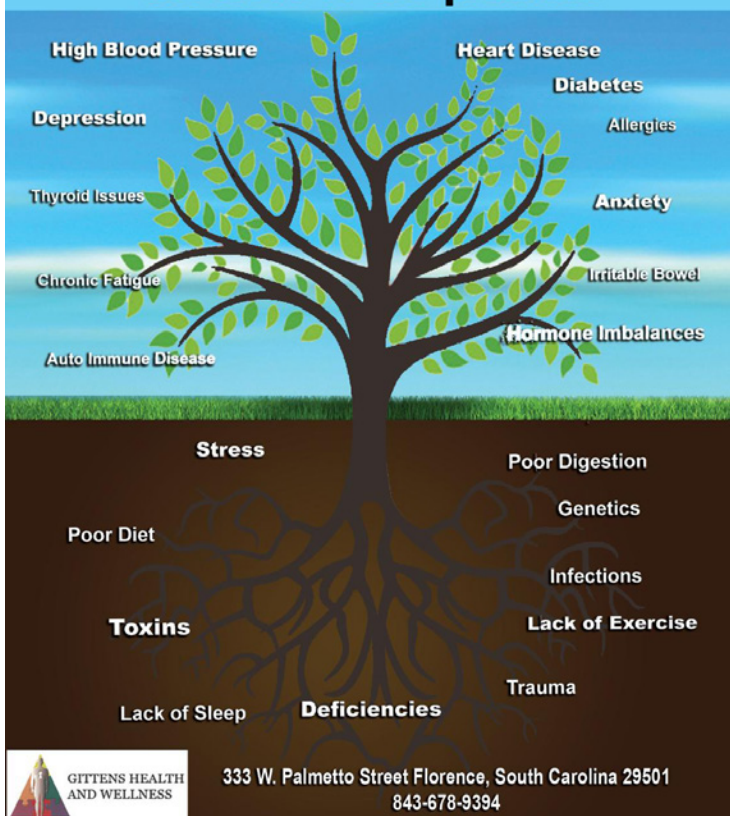
HopeHealth in Aiken
150 University Parkway, Aiken
Mon – Thurs: 9 am – 4 pm

HopeHealth in Orangeburg
1857 Joe S. Jeffords Hwy, Orangeburg
Mon – Thurs: 9 am – 4 pm



hope-health.org

Stop Chasing Symptoms and Get to the Root of the problem



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843-678-9394

CSC COMMUNITY PHARMACY SET TO OPEN IN MCCOLL Submitted by Andrew Boardwine, Communication Specialist



Look inside the McColl Pharmacy

MCCOLL—After months of development, CareSouth Carolina (CSC) opened its state-of-the-art pharmacy inside its 28,992 square-foot McColl facility. The CSC Community Pharmacy is a full-service pharmacy that looks to provide excellent care through consultation and affordable prices on prescriptions. Before the CSC Pharmacy’s opening, the town of McColl was without a local pharmacy for more than 30 years.

Ashley Singleton, chief of pharmacy at CareSouth Carolina, said the organization is looking forward to being invested in the McColl community for years to come. “This is an added benefit for everyone in the community,” Singleton said. “They can see their provider and get prescriptions filled all under the same roof. Adding this new building with the pharmacy is giving the residents of McColl and surrounding areas more access to care than they’ve ever had before.”

The community pharmacy takes all major insurances and is open to all, even those who are not patients of CareSouth Carolina. The McColl pharmacy also has a drive-thru to make things more convenient for patients getting their medications filled.

The pharmacist in charge at the McColl location is Terri Woodham, who is a native of Marlboro County. “I’m excited and can’t wait to serve the people of McColl,” Woodham said. “I know this is going to flourish and that the people of this area are going to take advantage of the opportunity to get their medications filled with more convenience.”

The CSC Community Pharmacy will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. The drive-thru will be the only way to drop-off or pick-up prescriptions from 5-6 p.m. during those days. Patients can also download the mobile app, Mobile Rx, which will allow them to manage and fill their prescriptions online.

In addition to McColl, CareSouth Carolina has pharmacy locations in Hartsville, Bennettsville, Bishopville, Latta, Society Hill and Cheraw.

CareSouth Carolina is a private, non-profit community health center delivering patient-centered health and life services in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. CareSouth Carolina operates centers in Bennettsville, Bishopville, Cheraw, Chesterfield, Dillon, Hartsville, Lake View, Latta, McColl and Society Hill.

Services provided by CareSouth Carolina include family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, women services, OB/GYN, HIV/AIDS primary care, dental, chiropractic services, pharmacy, geriatrics, social services, clinical counseling, laboratory, 4D ultrasound, X-Ray, migrant services and veterans choice provider.



Convenient Locations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Bennettsville Center
999 Cheraw Street
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843.479.2341 | Dillon Center
207 E. Monroe Street
Dillon, SC 29536
843.774.4337 |
| Bennettsville Pediatric Center
210 W. Main Street
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843.479.4200 | Hartsville Center
1268 S. Fourth Street
Hartsville, SC 29550
843.332.3422
843.339.5520 Chiropractic |
| Bennettsville Women’s Center
1076 Marlboro Way, Suite 1
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843.454.2294 | Lake View Center
103 N. Kemper Street
Lake View, SC 29563
843.759.2189 |
| Bishopville Center
545 Sumter Highway
Bishopville, SC 29010
803.484.5317 | Latta Center
122 Latimer Street
Latta, SC 29565
843.627.6252 |
| Bishopville Pediatric Dental
101 Harris Street
Bishopville, SC 29010
866.815.9845 | McColl Health & Wellness Center
3080 Highway 15-401 E
McColl, SC 29570
843.523.5751 |
| Hunt’s Family Practice
106 Hospital Square
Bishopville, SC 29010
803.484.5943 | Society Hill Center
737 S. Main Street
Society Hill, SC 29593
843.378.4501 |
| Cheraw Center
715 S. Doctors Drive Suite E
Cheraw, SC 29520
843.537.0961 | Public Employee Health Services - Marlboro County
100 Matheson Street
Bennettsville, SC 29512
843.456.7752 |
| Chesterfield Center
500 W. Boulevard
Chesterfield, SC 29709
843.623.5080 | |

Pharmacy Locations:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| HARTSVILLE
1268 S. Fourth Street
843.339.5530 | BISHOPVILLE
545 Sumter Hwy
803.588.7960 | BENNETTSVILLE
999 Cheraw Street
843.456.7777 |
| SOCIETY HILL
737 S. Main Street
843.378.4148 | CHERAW
715 S. Doctors Drive, Ste. A
843.865.4080 | MCCOLL
3080 Highway 15-401 E
843.523.6212 |
| LATTA
122 Latimer Street
843.627.6261 | | |

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MUSC TO BRING LIFE-SAVING STROKE TREATMENT TO REGION

Submitted by MUSC Health Florence and Marion Medical Centers

MUSC Health announced plans to bring thrombectomy, a life-saving stroke treatment, to Florence and the Pee Dee region this summer. This interventional procedure removes blood clots from a blood vessel, which helps to restore blood flow to organs and tissues that can save a patient's life in the event of a stroke.

"Although stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in North America, it remains the third leading cause of death in S.C., often referred to as the "Buckle of the Stroke Belt." We have been working hard for more than a decade to combat stroke in S.C. through the development of more comprehensive stroke centers and telestroke," said Christine Holmstedt, DO, associate professor of Neurology and Emergency Medicine, MUSC Health medical director, Comprehensive Stroke Program and Teleneuroscience Program.

Currently, 100 percent of the South Carolinians are within a 30-minute drive to a hospital with expert stroke care 24 hours a day. "Many of our patients will require a surgical procedure to open a blocked vessel in the brain, only performed at a handful of large centers around the state. More patients from the Pee Dee and upper Lowcountry regions will be eligible to receive this live saving procedure at MUSC Florence as we lose the opportunity to intervene when folks must travel long distances," says Holmstedt.

The ability to perform thrombectomies closer to home can save both time and money. "Offering this treatment to patients decreases the stroke burden for our community," says MUSC Health Florence Chief Medical Officer Dr. Rami Zebian, "Reducing the time to treat strokes also improves patient outcomes."

Alejandro M. Spiotta, M.D. MUSC director of Neuroendovascular Surgery, said, "This is just the first step of a multi-phase process in which MUSC will bring its profound stroke care expertise to places throughout South Carolina where more patients can benefit from disability-preventing and life-saving therapies."

MUSC Health in Charleston is recognized by The Joint Commission and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association as meeting The Joint Commission's standards for Disease-Specific Care Comprehensive Stroke Center Certification. The facility was the first hospital in South Carolina to receive this certification. Complex Stroke Centers are recognized as industry leaders and are responsible for setting the national agenda in highly-specialized stroke care. For more information on The Joint Commission and American Heart Association's Advanced Certification for Comprehensive Stroke Center, visit The Joint Commission website or Hospital Accreditation Certification website.

About the Medical University of South Carolina

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, MUSC is the oldest medical school in the South as well as the state's only integrated academic health sciences center with a unique charge to serve the state through education, research and patient care. Each year, MUSC educates and trains more than 3,000 students and nearly 800 residents in six colleges: Dental Medicine, Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. The state's leader in obtaining biomedical research

funds, in fiscal year 2019, MUSC set a new high, bringing in more than \$284 million. For information on academic programs, visit musc.edu.

As the clinical health system of the Medical University of South Carolina, MUSC Health is dedicated to delivering the highest quality patient care available, while training generations of competent, compassionate health care providers to serve the people of South Carolina and beyond. Comprising some 1,600 beds, more than 100 outreach sites, the MUSC College of Medicine, the physicians' practice plan and nearly 275 telehealth locations, MUSC Health owns and operates eight hospitals situated in Charleston, Chester, Florence, Lancaster and Marion counties. In 2019, for the fifth consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named MUSC Health the No. 1 hospital in South Carolina. To learn more about clinical patient services, visit muschealth.org.

MUSC and its affiliates have collective annual budgets of \$3.2 billion. The more than 17,000 MUSC team members include world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers and scientists who deliver groundbreaking education, research, technology and patient care.

Be Stroke Aware

Each year, stroke kills twice as many women as breast cancer. Yet, only 1 in 4 women can name more than two of the six primary stroke symptoms, according to the National Stroke Association. Taking time to learn the signs of stroke might save someone's life, maybe even your own.

6 Primary Stroke Symptoms:

1. Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
2. Sudden confusion or trouble understanding
3. Sudden trouble speaking
4. Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
5. Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
6. Sudden severe headache with no known cause

Stroke Symptoms Unique to Women:

- Sudden face and limb pain
- Sudden shortness of breath
- Sudden hiccups
- Sudden heart palpitations
- Sudden chest pain
- Sudden nausea
- Sudden general weakness

370,000 NUMBER OF MEN WHO SUFFER A STROKE EACH YEAR

425,000 NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO SUFFER A STROKE EACH YEAR

80% PORTION OF STROKES THAT ARE PREVENTABLE

Ways to Prevent a Stroke:

- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ✓ Control your blood pressure.
- ✓ Don't smoke.
- ✓ Get tested for diabetes.
- ✓ Have your cholesterol and triglyceride levels checked.
- ✓ Find healthy ways to cope with stress.
- ✓ Drink no more than one alcoholic beverage per day.

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Office on Women's Health; National Stroke Association



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MANAGING OUR COVID-19 ANXIETY

Submitted by Farrah Hughes, PhD, ABPP, HopeHealth



hope-health.org

COVID-19 Coronavirus

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has led to an increase in fear and worry among people around the globe. This anxiety is impacted by a number of factors, including our lack of previous exposure to this virus and the need for more research related to its course and treatment. Knowledge is power. However, this virus is something we have not yet experienced, so we feel powerless.

Two factors can increase our psychological stress response more than any other: unpredictability and uncontrollability. That is, we are most stressed when (1) we cannot foresee or foretell an event, and (2) we cannot stop it once it starts. COVID-19 has challenged us on both fronts. We are not sure how to accurately predict its spread, and we do not know how to completely prevent infection.

While this situation might cause us anxiety, the following strategies can help reduce it:

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage of COVID-19, especially sensationalized news stories.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, reduce intake of alcohol and avoid drugs or misuse of medication.
- Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings, such as fear and anxiety, will fade.
- Do activities that you enjoy to retain as much normalcy as possible in your life.
- Connect with others. Share your concerns and how you are feeling, but avoid catastrophizing or perpetuating overly sensationalized news stories.
- Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking. Remind yourself of the successes in humanity's response to this virus.

If you encounter a friend, family member or co-worker who is positive for signs, symptoms or risk factors, do not panic. Treat that person with kindness and empathy, as you would want to be treated.

Also, remember the facts about COVID-19:

- Signs and symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- A person must seek medical attention if he or she has symptoms AND may have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed or if they live in an area with known cases of COVID-19. When seeking medical help, call the provider's office first.

You can minimize the risk of infection to yourself and others by:

- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Staying home if you are sick.
- Covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throwing the tissue in the trash.

Stay positive rather than focusing what you cannot do. Focus on what you can do.

For more information, visit [cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19).

We are a federally
qualified health
center.



HopeHealth's primary care providers meet the needs of individuals across rural and urban areas of Florence, Williamsburg, and Clarendon Counties.

Because You Deserve to Get Back to Being You Again.

As a nonprofit, federally qualified health center, HopeHealth is committed to excellent health care and service that exemplifies our love for people and passion for their well-being.

Our health care providers offer access to both primary and specialty health care services and integrate a range of health resources to provide the very best in patient care,

prevention, and support services.

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

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Your Health Begins Here

(843) 667-9414 360 North Irby St. Florence, SC 29501 [hope-health.org](https://www.hope-health.org)

DR. MAY ON BEING FAST ABOUT STROKES Submitted by Greg May, M.D., MUSC Health - Cardiology



Greg May, M.D.

A stroke happens when blood flow to the brain is suddenly interrupted. This causes brain cells to die due to lack of blood supply most commonly caused by a sudden blockage in an artery leading to the brain. It is the fifth highest cause of death and one of the leading causes of disability in the United States. Strokes can be large or small, depending on which artery in the brain is blocked with a blood clot.

Symptoms of a stroke might include sudden speech difficulties. This includes slurred speech or inability to talk at all.

Sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body such as facial drooping or a weak arm or leg can be a sign of stroke. Sudden confusion, visual disturbance with “a curtain coming down into your vision,” double vision or a sudden severe headache can be signs of a stroke. A brief attack of these symptoms lasting for minutes to hours is called a “transient ischemic attack” or TIA.

The American Heart Association recommends that everyone be FAST in recognizing stroke. If you notice someone’s Face suddenly drooping, Arm weakness or weakness on one side of the body, or Speech difficulty, it’s Time to call 911. Anyone with these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention at the closest emergency room.

People over age 50 are at risk for stroke. If you have high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol or you smoke, you are also at a heightened risk for stroke. At particularly high risk are those with a history of atrial fibrillation, a heart rhythm abnormality causing blood to not be pumped out of the heart properly. This causes blood pooling to then cause a clot, which can travel

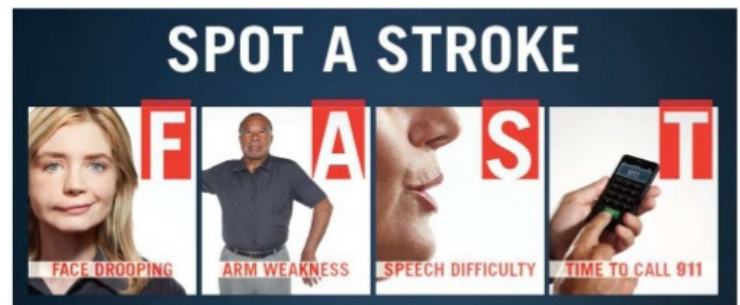
to the brain and block blood flow to your brain.

Stroke treatment is a medical emergency, and it is critical to get medical attention as fast as possible at a hospital. If a physician suspects a stroke, a CT scan of the brain will need to be performed to check for bleeding. If there is no bleeding, treatment with clot-busting drugs will be considered, and sometimes a clot can be removed from the brain artery.

It is crucial to get immediate care, and the amount of time between the onset of symptoms and treatment is critical. There will be less brain damage and more benefit if treatment occurs less than three hours after symptoms start. In select patients, treatment might still help up to 4 1/2 hours after symptoms begin.

The best advice I can give is to control risk factors for stroke by keeping your blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol levels under control. If you recognize symptoms of possible stroke, think and act FAST.

Dr. Greg May is a board-certified interventional cardiologist at MUSC Health–Cardiology located on the campus of MUSC Health Florence Medical Center. He is accepting new patients. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please call 843-674-4787, or go to MUSChealth.org/florence.



Congratulations to our 2020 Palmetto Gold Honoree!

Loren Graham, RN, Clinical Nurse Manager, Critical Care

With the announcement of the 2020 Palmetto Gold nurse awards, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center continues as the only hospital in the Pee Dee region to have nurses named recipients of the honor every year since the program’s inception in 2002. Given by a coalition of South Carolina nursing organizations, the prestigious Palmetto Gold honors the best of the best in nursing. muschealth.org/florence



Florence Medical Center

HOPEHEALTH PROVIDER EARNS DOCTORATE

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communication Coordinator HopeHealth



Christy Evans

Christy Evans, a provider at the HopeHealth Diabetes & Nutrition Plaza in Florence, has earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice from the Medical University of South Carolina.

Evans is passionate about her faith, family, friends and empowering her patients to take control of their health. She works with adult patients focusing on helping those diagnosed with diabetes manage health and reach their blood glucose measurement goals.

She received her undergraduate degree from Francis Marion University and her master's degree from the Medical University of South Carolina. Evans is a member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society.

In addition, Evans was recently named the first recipient of the HopeHealth Yvonne Van Camp Quality Award in recognition of her work to increase foot exam rates in type 2 diabetes patients from three percent to 35 percent and for reducing the incidents of foot ulcers.

HopeHealth is one of 23 nonprofit, federally-qualified health centers in South Carolina. We provide quality and affordable health care services to individuals in Florence, Clarendon, and Williamsburg Counties and infectious diseases services in Aiken, Clarendon, Florence, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414, or visit hope-health.org.



Care for You

Britni Brown



Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 10, Britni Brown is no stranger to the health care system. In fact, the care she received throughout her childhood inspired her to become a nurse.

In 2018, Brown had trouble finding an endocrinologist who accepted new patients with her health insurance—which she then lost in 2019 during her divorce.

"It was scary, as my diabetes requires on-going care," said Brown. "I didn't know what I was

going to without insurance, but then I discovered HopeHealth."

Brown sought primary care, dental, endocrinology, and rheumatology using HopeHealth's sliding fee scale, a program available regardless of insurance status to all who qualify.

"A patient benefits counselor helped me apply and made it easy. **HopeHealth makes getting care not only accessible, but affordable as well,**" said Brown.

A single mom of two girls, 7-year-old Madison and 6-year-old Sophia, Brown said caring for people is her passion.

"I take care of myself for my family and for my patients so that I can be the best caretaker I can be."

"HopeHealth makes receiving care not only accessible, but affordable as well."

Through HopeHealth's integrated care model, Brown has been able to manage her diabetes and preventive health needs. HopeHealth providers collaborate to provide comprehensive, synchronized care for patients. This also means that **a patient's medical records are all in one place**, which led to further help for Brown. At a routine dental appointment, Dr. Lydia Wright discovered a pattern in her dental and complex medical histories that prompted her to refer Brown to HopeHealth rheumatologist, Dr. Supen Patel.

"Trying to make a firm diagnosis with incomplete information is challenging, even for a seasoned practitioner," said Dr. Wright. "Our integrated electronic health records help. In Britni's case, we could combine dental signs and symptoms with her complex medical history to ensure she saw a specialist who could make an accurate diagnosis."

"I was diagnosed shortly after meeting with Dr. Patel with frozen shoulder. All of my providers at HopeHealth have worked together to help me feel better. They really communicate with each other about me and my health," said Brown.

"Get into care, even if you don't have diabetes or other conditions like I do. Staying on top of your health is essential to catching things early," she said.



CAROLINA PINES RECEIVES PSC CERTIFICATION

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Brian Sponseller, MD

HARTSVILLE - Diversity Works Magazine© is excited to announce that The Joint Commission has certified Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center as an advanced Primary Stroke Center (PSC).

"This is the way of showing quality outcomes and is a way of tracking and showing that you are providing the most evidence-based care and patients are getting the best outcomes," said Brian Sponseller, the chief medical officer at

Carolina Pines. He is responsible for outcomes, quality and monitoring metrics. Sponseller said that The Joint Commission facilitated the accreditation survey this past December. The survey covered the last year of outcomes, from which the Commission requests specific patient outcome charts in order to validate that the medical center accomplished those outcomes it stated it had accomplished.

According to The Joint Commission's website, the Primary Stroke Center certification program is "designed for hospitals providing the critical elements to achieve long-term success in improving outcomes for stroke patients." Having the certification means that a hospital is "making exceptional efforts to foster better outcomes." Not only that, but being a PSC also means that "the quality of care you provide meets the unique and specialized needs of stroke patients."

Sponseller said that being certified as an advanced Primary Stroke Center is of such significance to our community and the reason Carolina Pines went after this certification was because "a few years ago, the CDC released--by county, for all 50 states--health disparities." Specifically, per the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, in 2017 the fifth leading cause of death in our state was stroke, with 2691 deaths. This placed South Carolina fourth in the country.

Sponseller added, "Life expectancy for a male in Darlington County was in the bottom fifth percentile, so 95 percent of the county lives longer than us. Stroke is the bottom two percentile, so Darlington County's life expectancy rate is two years less for men in the rest of the state and seven percent less than the rest of the nation."

While a PSC certification is one of several certifications that Carolina Pines has, seeking this particular certification is another way that the medical center is showing how dedicated it is to the local community that it has served since 1933. All in all, the medical center is truly fulfilling its commitment by continuously seeking methods to provide the highest levels of care to patients.

About Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center

Our 116-bed hospital and medical campus provides complete comprehensive health services designed for the care and comfort of our patients. Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center offers the latest laboratory technology, advanced diagnostic imaging equipment, a 12-bed intensive care unit, a dedicated women's center, a pediatric wing, and a state-of-the-art emergency department. We have large patient rooms with private bathrooms, telephones and televisions, as well as spacious waiting areas for family and friends.

For more information on Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, please call 843-339-2100, or visit <http://www.cprmc.com>.



HighER standard of stroke care in Hartsville



The Joint
Commission



American Heart
Association
American Stroke
Association

CERTIFICATION

Meets standards for

Primary Stroke Center

We're a Certified Primary Stroke Center designated by The Joint Commission, which means our team has achieved a higher level of expertise to care for stroke patients.

To us, it's an important accomplishment. To stroke patients and their families, it's assurance that the right care will be right here when they need it.

Learn more at cprmc.com



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This facility and its affiliates comply with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-843-339-2100.

注意:如果您使用繁體中文,您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-843-339-2100。



Betha
Better Every Day!

Betha is a vibrant retirement community that embraces senior adults from all walks of life.

Residents enjoy varied interests from baking, sewing, and reading to thrilling adventures like skydiving and high ropes courses. More importantly, residents live as family in sharing meals, life, and the relationships that deepen among the residents and staff every day. A strong sense of family is evident, and current residents include a daughter and her mom who call Betha home. You may also see visiting grandchildren enjoying the campus with a game of billiards or water volleyball at the aquatic center with their grandparents.

Betha is more than just another retirement community... it is a ministry with a mission to serve senior adults with compassionate care so all they serve may thrive. Thanks to a thoughtful bequest by Dr. and Mrs. Percy Betha and the continued support of South Carolina Baptists, Betha Retirement Community opened its doors in 1960 and continues as a community of the SC Baptist Ministries of Aging. As a continuing care retirement community (CCRC), Betha offers a full continuum of living options for residents so their changing health needs can be met without requiring them to relocate.

Residents of all faiths are welcome. On campus, Betha Retirement Community has its own fully constituted Southern Baptist church that is open to residents and their families but also to the surrounding community as well. Dr. Jeff Cockrell, a beloved resident favorite, leads daily devotions and Wednesday and Sunday services and also provides pastoral care throughout the week.

Voted and recognized as Best of the Pee Dee for long-term care in 2019, Betha Retirement Community's tireless commitment to becoming better every day has no ceiling for providing the best living environment and care for residents. Executive Director Ben Spurling intentionally fosters an atmosphere of continued service and purpose in the lives of Betha's residents. Many current residents chose Betha because they served as pastors, missionaries, or very active church members and have a passion to continue in service, even in retirement. Many of Betha's residents volunteer in prison ministry, homeless shelters, college ministry, the local children's home, or with other residents.

Betha is also renovating and expanding its campus to better suit the needs of residents. In 2018, Betha Retirement Community expanded its dining options to include the Betha Bistro with a brick oven so residents can en-

joy burgers, hotdogs, sandwiches and pizza to satisfy those snack cravings. On August 27, 2019 Betha broke ground on a brand new state-of-the-art 60,000 square foot nursing and rehab center that is scheduled to open in 2020. The new nursing center will accommodate both long-term care and short-term rehabilitation needs. It will feature all private rooms, a 3,000 square foot rehabilitation gym, and a household design with residential living, activity and dining spaces, and access to outdoor courtyards built for the special needs of these residents. Executive Director Ben Spurling shares, "We are excited about what God is doing in our ministry and we are confident this expansion will enrich the lives of our residents as well as the surrounding communities of Florence and Darlington."



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A CHALLENGE TO OLDER AMERICANS: TAKE THE FLU SERIOUSLY

Alice Vaught skipped her flu shot one season. That was the year she got the flu.

“I felt like I was dying. Within a couple hours I was unable to move. It came on so quickly, and I wasn’t aware of how severe it was.”

Unfortunately, the flu often strikes quickly and without warning, potentially leading to severe and sometimes life-threatening health problems. It’s an infectious disease that must be taken seriously, especially by those who are most vulnerable.

Flu can take a terrible toll

Anyone can get the flu. However, some people have an increased risk of flu and flu-related complications, including young children, pregnant women, adults 50 years of age and older and people living with chronic health conditions, such as lung or heart disease, diabetes and cancer. This comprises a significant number of people. In fact, 70 percent of adults ages 50 to 64 have at least one chronic illness according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Flu can disrupt everyday life

The CDC estimates that the flu virus causes between nine million and 49 million flu-related illnesses each year. It can worsen symptoms of respiratory disorders, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Vaught is one of many who have caught the flu while living with asthma. “Everything was worse when I got the flu, especially my asthma. I remember losing seven or eight pounds and could barely lift my head,” she said.

It’s not too late to vaccinate

Vaccination is the best way to help protect against the flu. Health officials recommend all people ages six months and older, with rare exception, get vaccinated each year. This is particularly important for adults 50 years of age and older. That’s why the American Lung Association launched the MyShot campaign in collaboration with Sanofi Pasteur. The initiative empowers older

adults to ask their healthcare providers about which flu shot options may help offer a greater level of protection against the flu based on their age and chronic health conditions.

It’s not too late to get your shot. Vaccination throughout the fall and winter—and even into the spring—can help protect against the flu while the virus is circulating.

Help protect yourself and loved ones

Getting your flu shot doesn’t just help keep you healthy. It also helps protect others around you, including your friends, family, co-workers and people in your community.

O’Neal learned this the hard way when she passed the flu to her sister, who has COPD. “I’d never had the flu before, and my eyes are now open,” said O’Neal. “I started to realize that my health decisions impact others around me. I never want to go through that experience again.”

If you or someone you love is 50 years of age or older, go to GetMyShot.org to learn more and speak with your healthcare provider about flu shot options that may be right for you.



RESOLVING FOR A HEALTHY 2020? HERE'S A WAY TO START



Marjan Champine is a board-certified and licensed genetic counselor at Ancestry with a passion for family, health and helping others.

An estimated 130 million Americans made resolutions for 2020, with more than half of them focused on health. However, most resolutions were broken by February.

1. Small choices matter for a healthier you in the New Year.

Day in and day out, the small choices we make can end up making a big difference in how we feel and our overall health. The journey to better health can be as simple as to:

- * Find new, fun ways to exercise regularly
- * Eat more vegetables and fewer fried foods
- * Practice meditation and take time for

self-care

- * Talk to your relatives about your family history and risk factors
- * Find a primary care provider if you don't already have one, and go in for routine checkups as recommended

2. Talking to your family can unlock valuable insights into your health.

Understanding your family's health history and screening for common genetic conditions can provide information about some potential health risks. Armed with this information, there are powerful choices and actions you can take to improve your health and your family's health, now and in the future.

You don't need to be alone in trying to make sense out of all of this. Genetic counselors can help you connect the dots of your family health history and the results of genetic health screening tests.

3. Your genes don't need to be your destiny.

While genetics plays an important role in our health, the daily choices

we make about our activity, sleep, nutrition and how we handle stress can also play a role in our quest for better health.

Because families share genetics as well as other health-related risk factors such as diet, lifestyle and environment, family history is again important in this regard. Most people understand the health benefits of a good diet and exercise. But what's often overlooked is the importance of knowing your family's health history.

4. Specific, achievable, actionable and enjoyable.

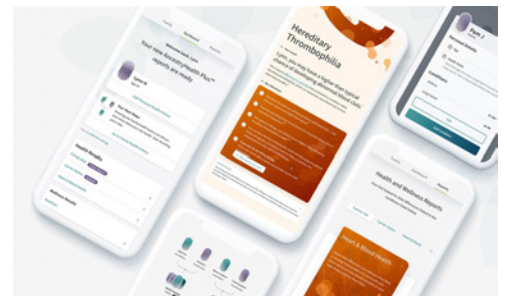
I am always looking for fun ways to improve my health. As part of that goal, my resolution this year was to spend more quality time with my family, share stories about our history and keep a record of our health history all in one place using Ancestry Health's family health history tool.

5. The time is now.

Now is the perfect time to jump in and begin tackling your 2020 health resolutions. Your family health history and genetic screening results could unlock important information that will allow you to manage your health.

The more you know about your genetic risk factors, including your family health history, the more you can take proactive steps in collaboration

with your health care provider. Taking this information and sharing it with your health care provider is important so that, together, you can create a personalized plan of action for a healthier 2020.



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WHY FINDING THE RIGHT SCHIZOPHRENIA TREATMENT PLAN MATTERS



Jason is a volunteer with the SHARE Network

Schizophrenia is a complex and chronic brain disorder that can interrupt every aspect of an adult's life. For adults like Jason living with serious mental illness, the journey to finding the right treatment plan, including medication and supportive therapies, can take years. During that time, adults living with schizophrenia may experience multiple episodes, breakthrough symptoms or relapse. While it can be challenging for many individuals to remember to take their daily medication, it can be especially difficult for adults living with schizophrenia, who after missing doses of their treatment may increase their risk for breakthrough schizophrenia symptoms or relapse.

Jason was diagnosed with schizophrenia when he was in his mid-twenties. Following his diagnosis, Jason struggled for ten years to consistently follow his schizophrenia treatment plan.

"At the time, my schizophrenia hallucinations and delusions were full blown. I thought I had special powers--that when I made eye contact with people, I could talk to them. I thought most people were out to get me, including my parents," Jason says. "When I was having a lot of challenges, it strained my relationship with my parents."

Unfortunately, Jason's story is not uncommon. Adults living with schizophrenia may experience a cyclical pattern with their schizophrenia treatment journey, consisting of beginning a new treatment which lessens their symptoms, followed by a lack of adherence with their treatment plan and missing doses and leading to worsening schizophrenia symptoms or a relapse. As a matter of fact, research has found that adults living with

schizophrenia experience on average nine relapses in less than six years. There are multiple factors that can increase the risk of an episode (breakthrough symptoms or relapse), including missing doses or stopping medication.

Finding the right treatment plan, often consisting of a combination of supportive therapies and medication, can help adults control their schizophrenia symptoms.

After trying numerous treatment options and being hospitalized multiple times due to his schizophrenia symptoms, Jason's doctor talked to him and his parents about switching his medication to a once-monthly injection to limit worrying about missing doses and to help Jason better manage his schizophrenia. Together, they reviewed the potential benefits and side effects of treatment options.

After being treated with a once-monthly injection and participating in supportive therapies, Jason's symptoms were more controlled.

"For me, it was important to get healthy, which included working with a psychologist and attending group therapy sessions early in my treatment journey, as well as taking my medication and exercising," Jason said.

By finding a comprehensive treatment plan that worked for him, Jason was able to focus on other things like friends, family and activities he enjoys like writing, kickboxing and spending time with his nieces and nephews. "Most importantly," he said, "I started working with those who were trying to help me. I began to see my parents as allies in my fight. Now I am closer to them than ever."

Reflecting on his past experiences, Jason now wants to share his personal story to help other adults with schizophrenia navigate their own treatment journey.

"I didn't ask for this, but I am dealing with it. I want to help other people. Don't give up!"

A Message to Our Community

These are uncertain times for all of us here in the Pee Dee and across the nation as we progress through issues surrounding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). It will be incredibly tough on our small business community. This category of business is truly the backbone of our local economy and represents nearly half of the private-sector workforce being employed nationally.

With that in mind, the Chamber encourages you to support the local businesses and non-profit organizations during these unprecedented times. We are urging people to spend their money strategically as our small businesses brace for a difficult few months and our non-profits begin being stretched thin in their resources. We want them to survive and be operational when the COVID-19 concerns wane.

So, please continue to patronize local businesses as much as possible. If you can purchase a gift card from your favorite small business or offer donations to local non-profits, please do so.

Here are some possibilities to consider:

- Buy a gift card to use later or for an upcoming celebration or birthday. Try to order them online or by telephone if possible. Most of our local retailers, restaurants and hospitality businesses offer some form of gift card or certificate.
- Check the local media, social media and newspapers for businesses offering pickup and delivery options. Call your favorite restaurant to see what take-out choices are being offered. This is critical for our local businesses to survive.
- Offer support to those that earn their living in the restaurant and food business. Those working as hostesses, servers, waitresses and waiters are going to have a very difficult time making ends meet.
- If you can, donate to area non-profit organizations since most of them are helping to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be faced with depleted resources and funding shortfalls. Consider contributing to programs like the Pee Dee Disaster Relief Fund offered by the Eastern Carolina Community Foundation.

**Again, please be mindful and spend your money locally.
It will make a difference in how we manage our way
through these extraordinary times.**

This message is being sponsored by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce.



LOCAL AUTHOR HELPING WITH WORKPLACE ADVANCEMENT by Mallory Brayboy



Keyon Michelle James

DARLINGTON - Accomplished. That's the feeling Keyon Michelle James has now after authoring and publishing two books. "Writing just one book has always been a goal of mine, so it's one thing I can check off my to-do list," says James, author of "What Grandma Didn't Tell You: Minding Your Business" and "The Right Balance to Your Brew: A Guide to Working in Corporate America."

James, of Darlington, boasts a strong background in psychology coupled with a diverse work history. The author earned a B.S. in psychology from Johnson C. Smith University and later obtained an additional degree in industrial organizational psychology from Capella University. She has previously worked for major companies such as Wells Fargo and Blue Cross Blue Shield and currently lends her talents to the Florence One School District.

Her works were originally released in 2014 with her first book, "What Grandma Didn't Tell You," providing insight on how businesses operate and why they operate in such a way. James found inspiration for this writing from her own workplace experiences and also the desire to inform and prepare others for entering the workforce.

The latter, "The Right Balance to Your Brew," was relaunched in 2019. It provides readers with details and first-hand tips on advancing in the corporate workplace. "I wrote this book for those who are entering the workforce or feeling stuck within a particular job role. I wanted a guide for current employees, but most definitely for students who are just beginning to work professionally," says James. She recalls experiencing some frustration in her first "professional" job. "Sometimes when you begin working you can feel that it's hard to progress with a particular company. It's all about

finding the right balance to everything that you're doing - from completing your work in a timely manner and definitely having the right attitude while completing those job duties," she says.

"The Right Balance to Your Brew" is applicable not only to those working in corporate industries but also to any employee. One reader describes it as follows, "Like an employee's perfect cup of coffee, James informs the reader that finding the perfect balance to one's behavioral brew in the workplace takes skill, discernment and the proper judgment. Whether the reader is employed in a local fast-food restaurant, a manufacturing company, a school system, retail, the judicial system, the banking industry, local government or any location where there is contact with co-workers, this book is for you."

James is confident that readers of all backgrounds will be left with a great understanding of what it takes to progress within any industry. "I'm providing the perfect blend to employees for a successful workplace experience and/or career by balancing every personality or topic that is discussed in the book."

"The Right Balance to Your Brew" is currently available on Amazon. James says readers will find her book "relevant, relatable and applicable." The republishing of "What Grandma Didn't Tell You" is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. For updates and more information on the author, follow her on Instagram at @KeyonMichelle.



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8 GIFT IDEAS FOR ENERGETIC ENTREPRENEURS



Entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly common career as passionate and creative people start successful businesses on their own. But entrepreneurial endeavors aren't easy. The lifestyle requires long hours, hard work and dedication.

The best gift you can get for the entrepreneurs in your life is one that shows support for their business. Here are eight ideas to treat your business-minded loved ones:

Home office supplies

Add to the comfort and function of their home office. Entrepreneurs are often working on their laptops from various places, so a lap desk is a very practical gift that will get a lot of use. A portable standing

desk can also be a game changer for at-home work. Help transform their workspace into a standing desk area.

Closet steamer

Whether they're traveling the country or going meeting to meeting, entrepreneurs are always on the go. A closet steamer, like the LG Styler, is an at-home steam closet that reduces light wrinkles and odors and sanitizes fabric items in 20 minutes with the gentle power of steam--no chemicals. It's perfect for refreshing suits, dress shirts and more.

Bluetooth speaker

No more dealing with tangled headphone cords. For those that work from home or in an independent space, a Bluetooth speaker lets you listen to podcasts, music or audiobooks with crystal-clear sound.

Essential oil diffuser

Whether you need a boost of energy or want to relax after a long day at work, an essential oil diffuser is a great addition for home or office. Choose from so many essential oil blends with therapeutic effects to help you stay calm, focused and crushing goals.

Education courses

Entrepreneurial types are constantly learning and developing to grow their business. Show your support with a specific education course or gift card to purchase the course of their choice. From marketing and design to basic accounting and other business-related areas, the learning possibilities are endless.

Coffee-making set up

Entrepreneurs are working hard, both day and night. To make life easier, give the gift of high-quality coffee. First, find out how your loved one likes his or her coffee. Then, choose from options like espresso makers, a French press, single-serving coffee machines and more. And don't forget to add in some actual coffee beans.

Back-up phone charger

Running or starting your own business involves a lot of time talking on the phone or answering and checking email. Avoid the hassles of a dying phone with a portable battery charger that will easily fit in any work bag or briefcase.

Workout class pass

Help your favorite entrepreneur blow off some steam and relax with a tough workout, peaceful yoga class or both. Head to your local yoga studio or fitness center to see if they offer gift cards or class passes.

Show your support and appreciation for the diligent worker in your life. Choose from any of these sensible gift ideas.

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LIP SYNC TO BATTLE ILLITERACY

Submitted by Christina Lawson, Executive Director, Florence Literacy Council



Les Echols and team feel good performing a James Brown Classic



Frankie Humphrey and team took it back to the 80s, performing "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go" by Wham



Charlotte Smith, the first place winner and Fan Favorite award winner for raising the most money

to participate in their children's education, and most importantly, they want to better their lives. This fundraiser makes it possible for us to offer instruction and educational materials for our participating learners. This fundraiser is an essential part of raising funds so that the Florence Area Literacy Council can continue to help adults struggling to live their day-to-day lives because they are undereducated," says Lawson.

Contestants performing in the Lip Sync Battle will fundraise leading up to the night of the event. Every \$1 donation will count as one vote. The team that raises the most money will receive the Fan Favorite award. Jai Jai Spann and Chad Patterson will emcee the evening. Performers from all over the community will take the stage to win the judges over and win bragging rights. Judges Gary Finklea, Jumana Swindler, Ken Ard and Octavia Williams-Blake will score lip sync performances, and awards will be given for first, second and third-place. There will also be a silent auction and grub grab during the event. The grub grab is a Spin the Wheel game played by guests at the Lip Sync Battle. Participants make a \$20 donation to the Literacy Council and spin the wheel to win a gift card to a local restaurant or grocery store. The gift card amount may be higher or lower than the donation.

Tickets are \$50 per person. Guests will enjoy a great meal prepared by Smokin-n-Carolina, an open beer and wine bar, Silent Auction, Grub Grab and a very entertaining show. According to Lawson, "It's a wonderful way to support the work of the Florence Area Literacy Council and join the fight against illiteracy in our community. You do not want to miss this fun event. The laughs are guaranteed, and you will be planning to attend next year before you leave."

Sponsorships are also available. For questions about sponsorships or to purchase tickets, contact the Florence Area Literacy Council by calling 843-667-1908 or by email at florencealiteracy@yahoo.com.

The Florence Area Literacy Council will host a Lip Sync Battle fundraiser at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology (SiMT) at 6 p.m. on June 11.

A Novel Event, Lip Sync Battle 2020 will help the Florence Area Literacy Council raise funds for educational programs offered to adults functioning at low literacy levels. This event is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the FALC according to Executive Director Christina Lawson. The non-profit organization is a United Way of Florence County Partnering Agency, and it receives funding through grants and donations. However, this event helps the non-profit bridge the gap in funding needed to operate annually.

"The Florence County community has a 33 percent illiteracy rate. The need for literacy services is so very important. Our adult learners want to become educationally qualified to work. They want

Novel Event 2020

LIP SYNC BATTLE

TO BENEFIT THE FLORENCE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL

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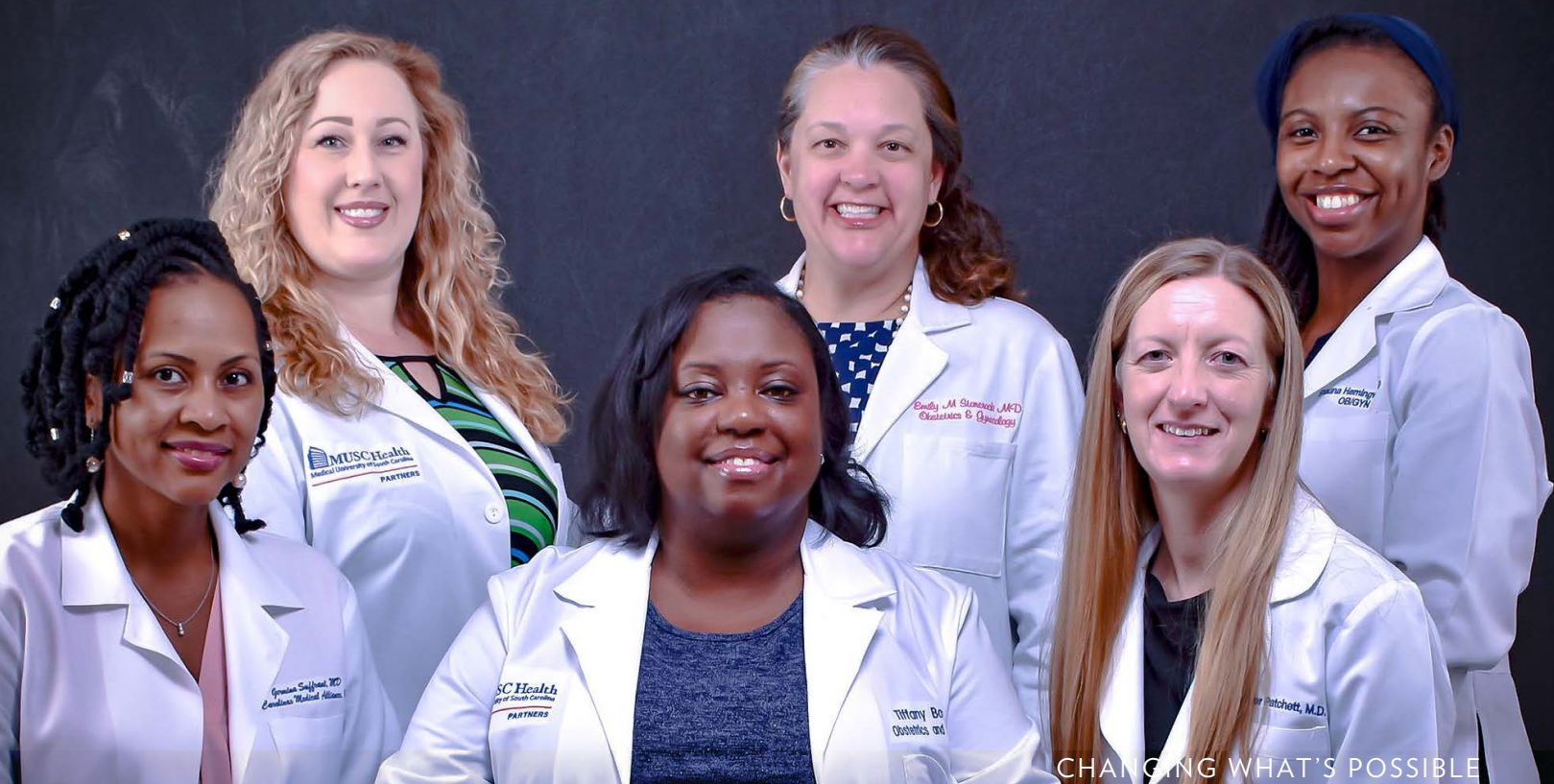
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Dr. Tiffany Boyd has more than 10 years' experience and is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology. She received her medical degree from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and completed her residency in Obstetrics & Gynecology at the Medical College of Georgia.

Along with providing prenatal to postpartum care for expectant mothers, she specializes in high risk obstetrics, adolescent care and management of menopausal symptoms. Dr. Boyd is accepting new patients.

For an appointment, call [843.665.9581](tel:843.665.9581) or visit MUSCHealth.org/florence.

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