

# DIVERSITY WORKS

JULY 2020 VOLUME 10 ISSUE 3

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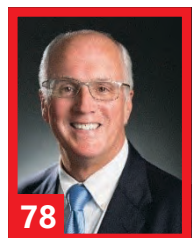
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## MISSION AND VISION

### 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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## EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT MATTER



*Dawn "D.A." Goodwin  
Editor*

Black lives matter. When the sound of this declaration rings out amongst diverse crowds that include people of all races, do you feel urged to rebut, "All lives matter"? If so, then you are in the right place to gain a better understanding of why the declaration is emphasized and repeated so often these days. If not, you are still in the right place because it is beyond time for all people to unite and declare with one unwavering voice that racism and injustice will not be tolerated or ignored. Diversity Works Magazine® exists because of individuals and organizations in our community operating

according to the principles of equality and inclusion of all. Therefore, in this edition, we continue to spread the good news of diversity and inclusion in practice locally and teach you how to become more inclusive and diverse in your own life.

Lives have drastically changed over the past few months, leaving many on edge because of unforeseen new challenges. If you feel as though you have nowhere to turn, please know that we have the help you need. As we recognize National Recovery Month, we share honest paths to recovery to encourage you that there is hope. Maybe you or someone you know has been dealing with suicidal thoughts or even the loss of a loved one to suicide. Survivors are here today to remind you that you are not alone and that your life does matter.

"Matter" can be defined in a few ways. According to Merriam Webster, its noun form refers to "a material substance of a particular kind or for a particular purpose." In the verb form, "matter" means "of significance." Just think about this for a moment. When we state that your life "matters," we mean it in both ways: your physical being is comprised of "substance," and you have "significance" in this world. So although we are built differently, never forget how equally significant we all are, and let's embrace and celebrate one another.

Because of our ever-changing, unpredictable world, we must continue to take the time to celebrate. In honor of American Artist Appreciation Month, we bring to you several talented individuals known for many forms of creative expression. Get ready to be introduced to Wilbert "Infinite" Rice, Kalea Jackson, Ayo Muhtasari and Te'Quan Coe, to name a few. For Hispanic Heritage Month, we introduce the "Queen of Spanish Cuisine," and you'll meet Evelyn Roman and Jessica Hernandez Singh, a bilingual legal assistant at the Finklea Law Firm, which is excited to announce its new name. Then, I'm excited about our cover story, which features a law firm that has been a fixture and huge supporter of the community since 1969. Jebaily Law Firm shares how it's been serving others even during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Local and national education has changed tremendously since COVID-19 hit. Yet, the changes do not stop some of our youth from being excited about getting back to the classroom--students like Trè Leonard, who looks forward to returning to sports at his school, Trinity Byrnes. Find out what Trinity and other local schools and colleges are working on and have been doing to prepare for the new academic year. For the second year in a row, FMU is freezing the cost of tuition, and Marion County School District's superintendent shares the impact COVID-19 has had on education. Understanding this is imperative as the question we face now is if schools should reopen amid rising infections. You'll also hear from the Darlington County School District, CCU, Claffin, Florence School District One and FDTC. And HGTC educates us on the

misconceptions about financial aid.

Misconceptions about finances can be costly, but we have the expert advice to keep you financially fit. Take, for instance, the articles on how to spend your stimulus and on sound financial tips to help you through the COVID-19 pandemic. We caught up with Anderson Brothers Bank, which recently donated \$5000 to the Medical University of South Carolina Foundation's emergency response fund to meet needs caused by the pandemic. In addition, the bank has exciting news about expansion. In other financial news, New York Life's Julie A. Cord advises you on how to protect your employees and your business.

Businesses are back open and are still moving forward. Some include Leaf Cigar Lounge, BirdsNest, El Agave, King Jefe, Town Hall, Jazz on Dargan, Thai House and The Loft. In other business news, find out what Ruiz Foods has been doing in the area as well as which organization encourages creating a culture of inclusion through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Euro Mobile's Chris Green is a strong example of how your life can flourish if you diversify your mentality and your business.

Leaving your mind open can help you to better comprehend the need for diversity and inclusion. Be open to Simma Lieberman's suggestions for how to support the fight against racism and Dr. Nika White's tips for addressing racism. The Better Business Bureau's Dr. John D'Ambrosio speaks out about ethics and diversity while Doris Lockhart, the owner of Spherion Staffing, speaks on diversity in the workplace. Then, Tonita Perry educates us on the first step needed to be taken for all citizens to fully celebrate diversity, be inclusive and have safety and equity in education, hiring practices and wages. Maybe you simply never knew the connection between race, these factors or others. For instance, did you know how race and health disparities relate? Read on to get the full breakdown.

More stories feature local health facilities sharing information as well as great news, ranging from MUSC's DAISY Award winners to HopeHealth's newest providers. MUSC also discusses sickle cell treatment and food allergies. Carolina Pines informs us about why minutes matter when it involves heart health. See which physicians and hospitals were recently recognized for excellence practices and where CareSouth Carolina opened a new pharmacy. In recognition of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, faithful men of God who have beaten prostate cancer tell their triumphant stories.

Biblical perspectives provide us with the faith-based solutions to handle life's battles. Therefore, we have those too. You'll hear from one voice that is "crying out in the wilderness" for change, but that same voice lets you know how to break the cycle of racism as she asks you to look at this topic as God would. Aretha Grant tells you eight ways Satan wants you to respond to the coronavirus, and Robin Lewis gives seven strategies to build strength and resilience as you deal with the pandemic.

Let's not forget how dire it is that you remain in a healthy mental and physical space through tough times for not only yourself but also for your families. Feel and look your best by stopping at More Than Skin Beauty Bar & Spa, and help your children avoid boredom by visiting one of our many parks that are open and awaiting them. This year, we are excited about National Parks and Recreation Month, probably like never before as many of us have been anxiously waiting to get outside. Meet department leaders and their teams from area parks and recreation, who are welcoming you to fun-filled outdoor spaces in the area.

Much more is within this issue of Diversity Works Magazine®, so whatever you do, stick with us, and remember to show others how they, too, matter. As always, thank you for being such dedicated readers! Enjoy!



# 4 TIPS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM DURING THESE TIMES

*Submitted By Dr. Nika White, President and CEO, Nika White Consulting, 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** - Right now, the world is experiencing a tough, emotional, and taxing time—especially for Black people.

Many people don't realize that doing the work of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) every day is already very emotionally taxing and that discomfort and pain is only growing with the recent murders and international protests. So many businesses, organizations, and leaders are frantically reaching out to seek help navigating the race crisis. These

requests include critiquing their statements and communication strategies concerning #BlackLivesMatter and racial injustice—all compounded by the looming effects of COVID.

It makes work and life exhausting.

With the national protests over systemic racial injustices, the murders of George Floyd, Breona Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many other Black Americans, the United States is activating, responding and expressing their anger in a myriad of ways.

In regards to DEI, I know there is intense historical trauma and emotional weight that goes along with the work I do. And I believe there is also extreme value to this work.

To start off, I'm making a request: please have some extra grace, and hold space for your Black friends and coworkers who have been fighting this fight for a long time. Even though we are grateful for support, this burden is heavy.

For this post, I want to share some tips, thoughts and resources on how a non-Black leaders, can be an ally and advocate during these difficult times. And I want to share how you can better understand what is going on with the Black community.

What are the right words?

First off, the right words about this situation don't exist. The situation, which has been going on far too long, is traumatic, trying and difficult. What's disheartening is that it's hard to separate political issues now because it's exasperating. Our current leadership is not supporting or encouraging major efforts of unity. This is creating greater challenges in business and society.

I would love for us to take this out of the political situation and make it just about humanity.

Although what's going on right now seems like it has everything to do with the murder of George Floyd, it actually has everything to do with the past 400 years of institutionalized racism in the United States. George's life was extremely important, and what happened to him is so tragic, but this current situation is just a by-product of a longer, more complex history. The best thing I know to do during these times is to share a small bit of insight and direct people to key resources that can help them understand better the lived experiences of Black people.



Here are four things people can do to get a better grasp of the current situation:

1. Educate Yourself
2. Speak Out About The Facts You Learn
3. Sit With Your Discomfort
4. Take Action

## EDUCATE YOURSELF

Right now, a lot of Black people are not in a position, emotionally, to help educate White people about the topic of racism, protest, riot and reform. That in and of itself exacerbates the emotionally taxing ordeal.

There exists an already pent-up frustration that we as Blacks have to constantly explain why we need to protect our freedoms and lives and demand equality and equity. So when people come to us for education (even if they are 100 percent well-meaning) it can be taxing and tiring. When the conversation is broached, it needs to be handled with a heightened level of sensitivity that allows the person you're trying to assist knowledge from to have space.

For those who don't know what to say, try this: "I don't have all the answers but I am committed to being a voice for the unheard." This is important because it is unassuming and does not place the full burden of responsibility on the person you are seeking direction from. Say those words—and we can figure out the rest together.

This is an excellent opportunity to explore your own self-education on the subject. It's incredible that within a week of the protests, some top books like "White Fragility" by Robin DeAngelo and "How To Be an Anti-Racist" by Ibram X. Kendi are already sold out and backordered across the Internet.

Besides the most popular books, there are still hundreds of other resources. Anti-racist resources abound. If people aren't willing to go the extra mile to learn for themselves, they are using that as a crutch and an excuse. I have seen posts where people have shared tons of articles and books. There are already many thought leaders directly in this space who produce rich content routinely. It's easy to seek out and begin to learn. To make it even easier—here is a thorough variety of resources from books to documentaries to podcasts, articles and more: [bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES](http://bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES).



**We All Have a Race: Addressing Race and Racism**

## SPEAK OUT ABOUT THE FACTS YOU LEARN

Two famous MLK quotes are: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter" and "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." To be silent right now is not an option. Silence means complicity in the institutions that have created disenfranchisement and, frankly, death for minorities.

Say something about this situation, but be thoughtful in how you are engaging people. You need to be aware of the burden that POC experience, even when trying to educate and support those who want to educate and support. It can create even more oppression and suffering by having to explain why we are so angry, hurt and scared for our lives.

Here's an example of a positive way to speak out or reach out. I have a former client and colleague, who is a White man, and he sent me a note saying: "I acknowledge my privilege, and I acknowledge the path forward cannot remain the status quo. What can I do—that you can't do or don't wish to do—to protect your peace that would be useful?"

This brought me to tears. It was a thoughtful, considerate, and

## 4 TIPS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM CONT'D



caring message that made me feel seen and valued, showed support and solidarity and provided opportunity for him to learn and act. It was recognition from his perspective that “hey, this is on me as the person of privilege, but I don’t want to just go do anything. I want to stand in

solidarity and support and I don’t want to be silent. So let me take that burden off of you.” That meant a lot.

I would encourage others who are well-meaning to reach out to those you wish to support with similar messaging. There is so much hatred and anger out there. Right now, there may be many Black people who are coming from a place of anger and hurt and categorizing all White people as bad or racist.

For me, this client and colleague’s message highlighted that even as emotional as I am about what’s happening to my people, I can never let any person make me forget about the good in people. I know those people exist. Even in my exhaustion, I remain hopeful in the goodness of good people.

So, if you want to say something, you need to carry a part of that burden. Speak out, and learn on your own so you don’t have Black people even more oppressed by having to explain the so-called extreme measures being perceived as unruly and downright intolerable.

Yes, acknowledgement of racism is uncomfortable. Riots and violence are uncomfortable—but racism is also uncomfortable. It’s hard for people to not understand how someone could be led to certain measures of what’s perceived as extreme because they’ve been privileged from being shielded to ever having to think about those things.

So, as you learn, and feel more discomfort, share this with your non-Black friends. Share that list of resources, and speak up and start to spread the awareness and education of this situation.

### **SIT WITH YOUR DISCOMFORT**

Perhaps, the trickiest part of my advice is for you is to sit with your level of pain and discomfort for a while. This pain needs to permeate. This pain and discomfort is probably the closest a non-Black person can get in order to experience the pain that Black people have always experienced.

Don’t try to rush to a fast solution. Sometimes the inner sensation of moving past to a fast solution is that we’re hearing, “I want to stop feeling guilty. I want to stop feeling shame.” I believe those feelings can be powerful to move people toward a more intentional, thoughtful and productive behavior and mindset.

So, I do think this discomfort is what we need. We need everyone feeling this. Change often comes from discomfort.

Today, I spent my day reading supportive posts and messages from White friends who want to support. Rather than respond, I’ve been asking my friends to respect my time to sit with this and experience it. And then I can direct them to resources.

Don’t try to escape this too quickly. Be willing to sit with this for a moment. Hopefully, this pain and discomfort can help create a shift and change.

### **TAKE ACTION**

This can often be the most difficult step. But it is the most important. It can be hard enough for many people to sit with discomfort, educate and learn about the system of institutionalized racism and the disenfranchisement of Black people. But taking action is an even larger step. And you must do it.

It is one thing to speak out and denounce racism, along with the recent unjust acts that have occurred. It is another thing to speak about advocating for Black and Brown lives if your organization does not

have the optics in place for society to see that you do in fact value Black and Brown people. This can be seen in regards to your actions in hiring, leadership and company communication.

What does taking action look like, especially in a DEI scenario?

- Hire and have Black people on your leadership team, in senior positions, on your board
- Pay Black people the same wages
- Promote Black people
- Listen to Black people
- Value Black people
- Vote and promote for a more just and equitable policies
- Ensure cultural competency in your business and organization

We need to speak up more and act more. We need to realize that anytime a voice speaks up, no matter the voice, it is slowly chipping away the power that has been attached to structural racism.

Organizations can try to dance around racial injustices by putting it in the context of DEI. But you can not truly celebrate DEI if you are denying the disparities exist, if you are denying the injustices that happen every day.

What are we doing to impact children and those who are in our sphere of influence? How can we raise a generation that is more thoughtful about antiracism?

A lot of people like to turn a naked eye to our history and think it’s “over and done with” and ask, “Why can’t we just move forward?” This current scenario in our country is why we can’t. It’s systematic, deeply entrenched and ingrained in culture. And only through education and action can this change.

I think it’s time for us as citizens to call out those organizations that are just producing to “jump on the bandwagon” and not ringing true. And it’s time for us to support Blacks in the business and political world and make sure our actions align with our integrity.



### **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

I’ve always tried to be a DEI practitioner who is very objective. I would never want someone to look at my work and see it as pushing one main agenda. For me, the one main agenda is humanity.

I’ve seen some people comment on playing the race card and try to bring up a long history of systemic racism, and I think that’s just a threat—a threat to make people silent.

There’s no denying that what’s happening now is that our race relations have not gotten to a place where they should be.

I want people to stop dismissing our pain and our experience as people of color—to expect someone to remain calm under these circumstances is a direct reflection of privilege. Honestly, I’m exhausted from debating people. There are things I could’ve shared here that I’m tired of sharing. I’m tired of justifying my thoughts. It requires too much emotional toll on the oppressed person.

We are in a global pandemic, and you have people protesting to fight for their lives because they see that systemic racism and murder of Black lives as a bigger threat.

When people are more concerned about Black lives than distancing because of the pandemic, they are doing it because they realize the stakes are HIGH for us right now.

With all that said, I do think we can make a change. We can still move forward. If non-Blacks can take some of these steps I’ve shared, I think it will continue to chip at structural racism and move the needle toward a more just and equitable world.

So, what are you doing to educate yourself, sit with the situation and take action in these times?



Success  
comes  
from the  
**Diversity**  
of our  
People

We all saw this unconscionable act. A commonality in thought, yes, but does it provoke further thought? We all start to realize, maybe, this is where it stops.

This is where diversity and inclusion should take hold. Many seem to have believed with our first Black president that we were living in a post racial society; therefore, diversity and inclusion was a concept that had become a reality. The reality was subtly becoming nightmares, as incidents of discrimination and non-inclusion were taking place more and more with the police, at the workplace and simply in doing everyday tasks; here we are today. The notion of a post racial society was not bad, but the notion

Black people in the U.S. make-up 13.4 percent of the U.S. population and 12.3 percentage of the United States workforce, with spending power of \$1.3 trillion, which makes them a key contributor to the U. S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These are the facts from reliable sources—the U.S. Census, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Selig Center for Economic Growth at the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business, with the accompaniment of my conclusion. If I had to say, with this significant conclusion, the only request of Black people in the U.S. is a universal one, which is safety, a good education and opportunity based on equity that will lead to a living wage. Sound familiar? These are the same simple asks of all humans across the world.

In the wake of George Floyd’s death primarily, the simple asks of every red-blooded American have exposed the supreme “ism” of them all, making everyone try to figure out where they stand, what their beliefs are, as well as if they are a contributor to the problem or solution. While we all continue self evaluation, we arrived at the belief that no human, or living thing, should suffer death by knee, let alone by those who took the oath to protect and serve. Harshly said, but true.

that we were actually there without doing the real work is what was, and still is, in question.

When I say “real work,” I mean to really look at workforces representing what the community it serves looks like, mainly in the C-Suite where decisions are being made--real work in hiring practices that is not necessarily based on codes of locked doors such as the university one attended, what club membership one may have, who one is related to or even what church one may attend. With all of these, people around you continue to look, think and work just like the one in power. As you can see, none of these codes are solely owed by any one group, creed, gender, religion or race.

So, what am I saying? I am saying Floyd’s death should really have us take the first step, which is to admit that we all have an “ism” that is the basis of our implicit bias. It is only when it is explicit that we can do the real work to fully celebrate diversity and be inclusive in providing safety to all citizens, equity in foundational education for all public schools and the populations they serve, and hiring and paying living wages based on qualifications, continuing in an equitable way to contribute to the U.S. GDP.

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*Not People.*



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# THE HEART OF BUSINESS by De'Angela Haynes



Jesse Wiles, III

It is quoted by Thomas Watson, Sr., that in order “to be successful, you have to have your heart in your business, and your business in your heart.” This is certainly relevant to Jesse Wiles, III, owner of the Leaf Lounge.

The Leaf Lounge (better known as “the Leaf”) opened in November 2019 as Florence’s first cigar bar and lounge. The owner is a cigar aficionado, who decided to turn his passion for quality cigars and spirits into a business venture.

When asked why Florence, Wiles said, “My father has been working with the City of Florence to help the City launch a neighborhood development project since 2015. He is the one who suggested that I check

out what was happening in the City’s downtown Historic District. I spent about a week in Florence in January of 2019 and fell in love with what the City was doing downtown, and I decided that I wanted to be a part of it.”

Wiles has been pleased with the growth the business has experienced in Florence and was feeling as though the Leaf was on track to settle in for an exciting 2020 season of festivals and downtown events. However, the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic set in, closing the business for over a month. Because of the way it was growing and establishing a loyal customer base, the impact of the pandemic on the company was tough to accept: “We were grateful to

be allowed to open with curbside service, but our business model is for the Leaf to be a place where people who enjoy cigars and fine spirits will come in to smoke a cigar, listen to music, converse, and most importantly, they can relax. Now that we have reopened with social distancing guidelines, we are glad to see our loyal customers slowly returning, and new cigar lovers are discovering our store. We want to establish ourselves as an institution in downtown Florence! We know this means delivering quality services and products. When you stop in, you will always receive excellent service and be able to select from the finest cigars and spirits,” said Wiles.

The Leaf offers great food and is introducing a new food menu that features food designed to complement cigar smoking. Wiles said, “A lot of thought has gone into how we can provide our customers with a great experience each time they come in, and that is the reason we open each day!”

A person with passion demonstrates innovative ways to help others through skills and abilities. The passion of business is seen in Wiles’ life by his creativity in entrepreneurial strategic planning and building of business in this Pee Dee Region. Although this pandemic has thrown lemons towards his business, Wiles and his family remained optimistic, taking those lemons and making lemonade in order to remain loyal and of service to their customers! That’s demonstrating the Heart of Business!



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# DIVERSIFY YOUR MENTALITY AND YOUR BUSINESS by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



2016 Cadillac Escalade needs front end repair. Dealership or repair shop giving you an appointment weeks out. Don't even worry about it. Euro Mobile can get repairs done at your home.

**LATTA** -With race relations now being at the forefront of headlines and conversations more than ever, some organizations and individuals are doing more to practice diversity and inclusion, but what about the ones that had already been embracing it and excluding no one when it comes to business? Euro Mobile Auto Repair LLC's Chris Green is not new to the idea of diversity. Instead, regardless of your culture or who you are, he goes above and beyond for all of his clients and treats them the same.

As an African American male in today's society, in and outside of doing on-site vehicle repairs, Green believes in being treated fairly and treating others the same. Not only that, but he wholeheartedly believes in the recurring process of helping others, regardless of who they are. Therefore, he lives by the creed to "never look down on a man unless you're trying to help him up." And he says, "A person will remember how you treated them and not what you've done."

When Green first started out in the business in a smaller town where he grew up, he found himself limited in what he could do, mainly taking on the smaller repair jobs and not having a more diversified portfolio until he learned about higher-end vehicles. He had been stagnant because he was afraid to fail, but once he got the mindset to be a family man first and to have more for himself and his family, he had to take the leap of faith. And he'd had enough of the same environment. Once Green changed his environment and began doing more than what he was accustomed to, he



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realized he had more skills inside of him than he had ever known.

Being stagnant and sticking only to what he knew might not have allowed Green to see the level of success he is experiencing throughout the Pee Dee today as the only European mobile vehicle

repair service in the area. Therefore, he advises others to not limit themselves in their business or their lives. Just imagine your mind also being too big for where you currently are. Green's success is proof that there is absolutely nothing wrong with thinking larger than your status, situation or what you only assumed you could accomplish. If you, too, open your mind to the world of possibilities outside of your sight, you could "normalize" a better life and future for yourself as well.



Is your portfolio diversified enough?



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# A TIME FOR CHANGE

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



Dr. John D'Ambrosio

**CONWAY**-If you're a regular reader of this magazine, then you know that I regularly talk about how to protect yourself against scams or how to grow a business, etc.--the kinds of things that you expect from the Better Business Bureau. However, this month, more than ever, I need to speak out about more than scams and business problems. I need to speak out about ethics. And diversity.

I looked up the word "diversity." I know what it means, but I wanted to reacquaint myself with it. Here's what I read online in a Google search. "There are primary and secondary characteristics of diversity. The primary characteristics are age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, race and physical ability. Secondary characteristics can either be acquired or changed in life. They affect an individual's view of the world and how others view them."

The secondary characteristics are what I believe we are working toward now as a community and as a country because, in many cases, dare I say "most cases," our view of the world is what has to change. The events that have happened over the past several weeks have caused many of us to take a look at the world we live in and how we can make the changes needed to make this not just a racial issue, but a human issue. Black lives matter. And until we as a society start to believe that, change won't happen.

At the BBB of Coastal Carolina, we want to be a part of that change. We've always stood for an ethical marketplace for consumers and businesses, and that doesn't change.

We've written a new statement for our BBB and the way we plan to look at our communities and to make them a better place. To be ethical demands a commitment to equal justice. I hope you'll help us make it come true.

For more than 40 years, the Better Business Bureau of Coastal Carolina has rejected discrimination in any form. As a standards-based, mission-driven organization, we seek to take actions that are true to our core values of fairness, ethics and integrity, while fostering trust, diversity and inclusion among our many constituents.

Our Standards for Trust guide our actions. The recent social unrest has further illuminated the racial inequities that have historically plagued our communities for far too long. We condemn discrimination, exclusion and marginalization based on race and ethnicity in our communities and anywhere in the world. And we stand with those peacefully protesting and speaking up to have their voices heard as

they march for justice.

Building a diverse, inclusive and respectful culture begins in our workplaces. We are compelled by our standards to help build better and more equitable diverse businesses and to ensure that all businesses can reach their full potential in our communities. These local communities, where we live and work, are also where we must serve with a heart of inclusion, acceptance and belonging for all citizens.

As we work to develop a Diversity Panel within the BBB of Coastal Carolina, its primary mission will be to provide assistance with strategy for the growth and development of minority-owned businesses within our region, as well to help us develop educational plans to support our business partners with implementation of programs to spread awareness of racial and social injustice.

BBB of Coastal Carolina is committed and invested in our communities. As an organization, we continue to listen and learn so that we can do better in the days, weeks and years to come.

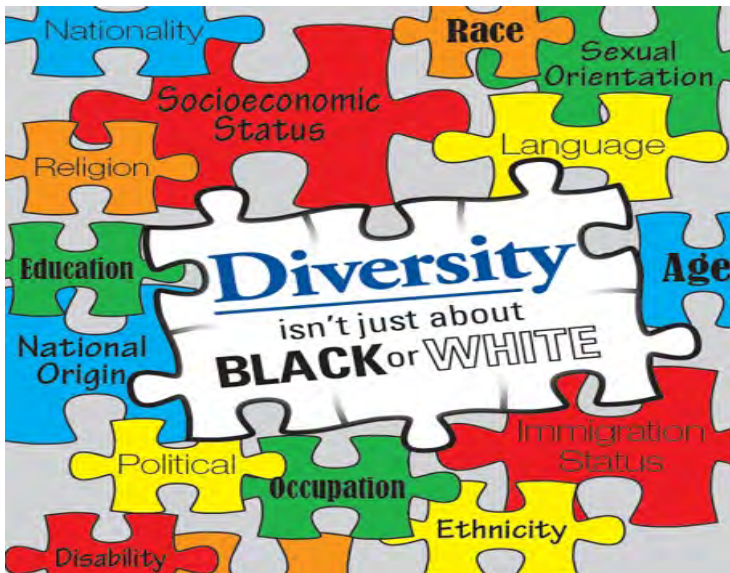
**About the BBB:** The Better Business Bureau of Coastal Carolina is located at 1121 Third Ave., in Conway, S.C. and covers the counties of Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion and Williamsburg in South Carolina and Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Cumberland, New Hanover, Pender, Robeson 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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# RUIZ FOODS...COMMITTED TO THE FLORENCE COMMUNITY Submitted by Ruiz Foods



Sample of food given to Harvest Hope

This year...2020...is a year most of us will never forget. As we take time to reflect on what we're experiencing, however, what's important to remember is how much we remain committed to each other—our family, our friends, our co-workers and our community.

For Ruiz Foods Florence, our commitment to each other and to our community is as

strong as ever. "We care about the Florence community," said Pete Mayadag, director of Operations, Ruiz Foods Florence. "And we're pleased to be able to give when and where we can...helping others who need a hand during such unprecedented times."

With this commitment to giving in mind, one recent contribution made by Ruiz Foods Florence was to Harvest Hope: 145,650 plus servings of El Monterey® Burritos and Chimichangas and a variety of breakfast, lunch and dinner flavors of Tornados®. "We recognize food banks are an important resource for many families right now," adds Tommy Pruitt, human resource manager, Ruiz Foods Florence, "and we're pleased we've been able to offer support to Harvest Hope since 2016."

Then, through the Company's Ruiz Cares Program—a program designed to assist Ruiz Foods Team Members give back to local community organizations of their choice—Ruiz Team Members gathered and gave 895 pairs of "cheerfully inspiring" socks to the children staying at McLeod Children's Hospital. "The thought of bringing a little smile and comfort to the children who stay there was great motivation for our Team Members to bring in so many socks,"



Pallets of El Monterey Burritos for Harvest Hope

said Mayadag. When the socks were presented to McLeod Children's Hospital, yes, there was an additional surprise. The total donated to McLeod Children's Hospital by Ruiz Foods and Ruiz Cares is \$110,000 since Ruiz Foods became a member of the Florence business community.

Another example of recent support for the Florence community is through Ruiz 4 Kids, the non-profit organization that is organized and managed by Ruiz Foods Team Members. Each year, Ruiz 4 Kids sponsors the Louis F. Ruiz Golf Tournament with proceeds going to scholarships for graduating high school seniors and junior college transfer students in communities where Ruiz Team Members live and work. This year, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Ruiz 4 Kids cancelled the Golf Tournament.

"But that didn't end the distribution of scholarships this year because many of the Ruiz Foods vendors, suppliers and other supporters who typically support and sponsor the event reached out indicating they still wanted to support our scholarship program," said Krista Meekins, Ruiz 4 Kids Florence, board of directors member. "As a result, we were able to award a \$1,000 scholarship each to 50 high school graduates in the Florence, S.C. area and a \$2500 scholarship to one junior college transfer student. We couldn't be more pleased."

Finally, a Ruiz 4 Kids donation for \$5,000 has also been awarded



McLeod Sock Drive

to Help 4 Kids. It will be used for school districts and local churches to distribute bags of food each week to 17 different sites throughout Florence County. Help 4 Kids anticipates distributing approximately 2,000 bags of food each week. "This is the first time Ruiz 4 Kids has made a donation to a locally-run children-supported program," said Tyler Beck, President Ruiz 4 Kids and member of the fourth generation of the Ruiz family. "We decided to make this commitment to help support

the children in our communities because, after all, this is an unprecedented time we are all facing. There's nothing more important than helping when you can."

"I'm so proud of our Team Members when I hear about these decisions of giving," said Kim Ruiz Beck, Ruiz Foods chairman and member of the third generation of the Ruiz family. "It's so important to give back to the communities where we live and work...it's a commitment my father, our co-founder, taught us and one I am proud to support and nurture as I work with Ruiz Team Members and future Ruiz family generations."



# SENATORS SCOTT AND GRAHAM ADDRESS RACE RELATIONS

Submitted by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina



Emily and Senator Scott

**COLUMBIA**—Recently, Senators Tim Scott (R) and Lindsey Graham (R) spent time with students from across South Carolina as part of the Virtual Youth Experience.

Scott, one of only three African Americans in the U.S. Senate, took a question regarding the removal of Confederate monuments across the nation from Emily Rabon,

a rising senior at Aynor High School. “I think we should be very careful of our strong desire to purge all reminders of how evil the heart can be,” said Scott. “I think instead of tearing down statues, I’d like to see more statues of people other than Martin Luther King, Jr.—who happened to be African American. I’d love to see statues of Rosa Park, Booker T. Washington and Washington Carver. There are so many people in the African American community who we know so little about.”

Graham also took a question about the issue of race and policing from Lando Leyva, a student from Hilton Head Island High School. “We’ve got to admit we have a problem in policing,” said Graham. “I think most cops are great, but we need to change our system to reinforce the idea that police officers need to look more like the communities they police. We need more minority officers, we need better training, and we have to impress upon cops that deadly force is available, but it should be your last resort.”

You can view highlights from Sen. Scott’s dialogue here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcnrUgcTWqY>

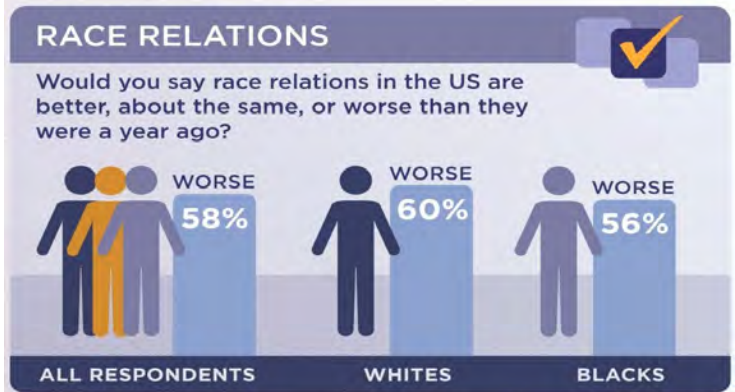


You can view highlights from Sen. Graham’s dialogue here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBivaNUDuD8>

A total of 79 students—all rising high school juniors or seniors—are participating in the Virtual Youth Experience. These students represent 19 electric cooperatives across South Carolina.

**About:** The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc. is the state association of independent, member-owned electric cooperatives.

More than 1.5 million South Carolinians in all 46 counties use power provided by S.C. electric cooperatives. Together, the co-ops operate the state’s largest electric power system with 75,000 miles of power lines across 70 percent of the state. Find more information at [www.ecsc.org](http://www.ecsc.org).



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# DOWNTOWN FLORENCE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS Submitted by the City of Florence Development Office



Flow Town Yoga's use of our public plazas (Photo provided by Flow Town Yoga)

But this isn't a story about down times and hardships. It's about resilience of people and place.

Florence has a long history of picking itself up, uniting its people and moving forward. Downtown restaurants, shops and service providers are no different. From the start of COVID-19, the City of Florence Development Office and its network of South Carolina Main Streets across the state banded together to support not only small businesses in our downtown districts but also citywide through the development of a COVID-19 resource webpage; implementation of curbside pick-up zones; provision of technical assistance for small business owners challenged with navigating various federal aid programs; and by ensuring access to resources to keep business owners and employees afloat.

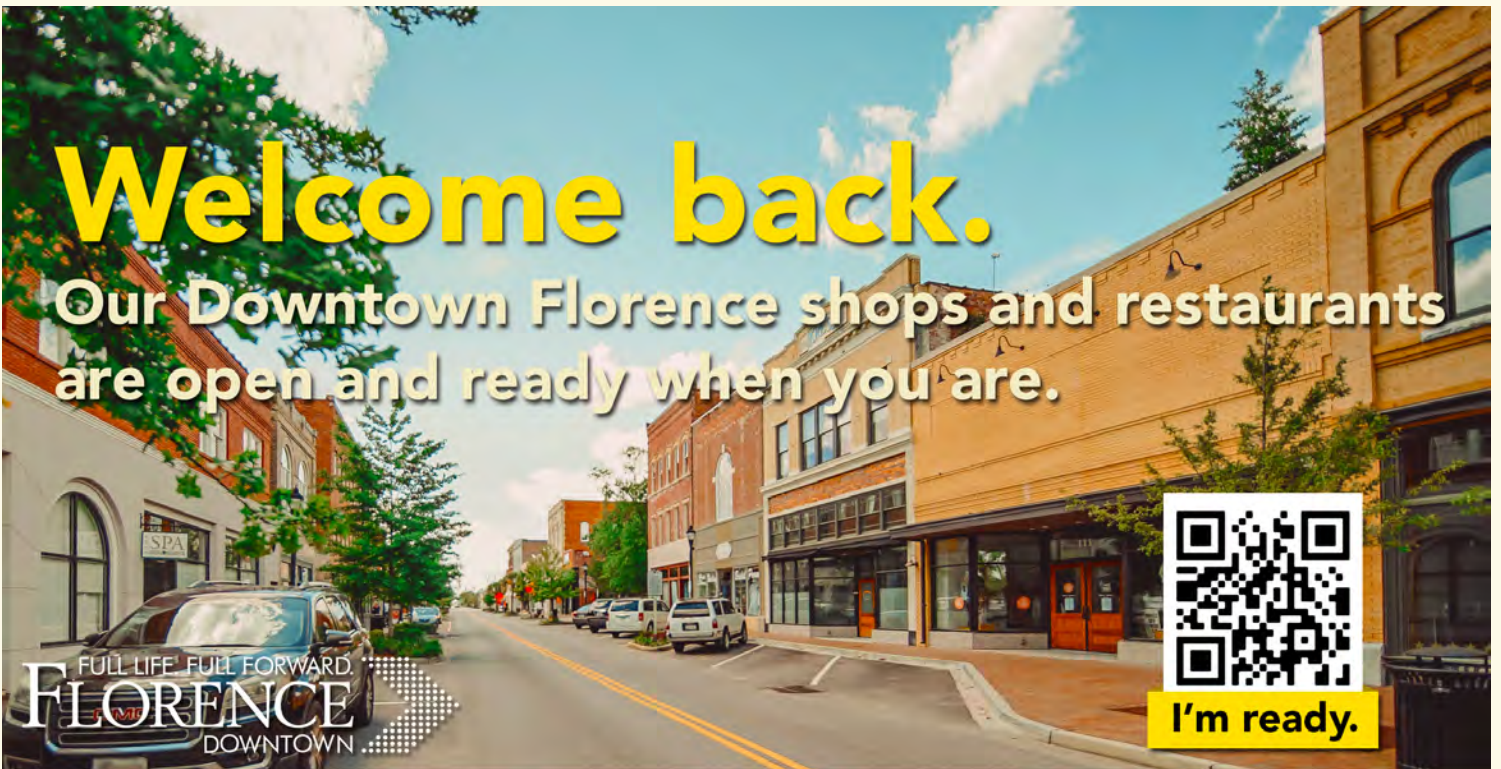
Small businesses have proven their strength, creativity and resiliency as they have pivoted to offer new products, created special promotions and new services and figured out how to operate during a pandemic—we've even welcomed two new businesses Downtown. GiGi's Treasures,

a brand new antique shop located at 392 W. Evans Street opened in May, and K.Niccole Salon and Spa at 166 W. Evans Street opened in March.

Restaurants BirdsNest, El Agave, Victors and Top Hat Special Teas remained open through the mandatory closure of dining rooms, adapting by using curbside pick-up and delivery services, launching new products and even turning into an essentials-focused bodega in the case of BirdsNest. As soon as dining rooms re-opened at half capacity, Wholly Smokin', Leaf Lounge, King Jefe, Town Hall, Jazz on Dargan, Thai House and The Loft sprang back into action with family-style meals, unique dining experiences for small groups and new menus.

Our retailers were no exception to adapting in adverse circumstances. Many took advantage of curbside pick-up zones and brought in new product lines to help the community get through the pandemic. Several also moved their sales online through social media, and a few have even ventured into traditional e-commerce with the development of brand new websites. Downtown salons persevered with home care kits for clients and electronic gift cards to support stylists out of work during the mandatory closure of close-contact businesses. Downtown's only yoga studio, Flow Town Yoga, has also made a strong comeback despite the barrier of a small physical space, leading the way for creative place making in Downtown Florence's outdoor plaza spaces so participants can socially distance and come together for healthy physical activity.

Our local restaurants, shops and service providers have been working hard to create safe, comfortable and inviting spaces to welcome you back. Downtown Florence is here when you're ready. For a complete list of businesses open and waiting for you, visit [www.florencedowntown.com/openforbusiness](http://www.florencedowntown.com/openforbusiness). If you own a small business and are looking for resiliency resources, visit [www.florencedowntown.com/COVID-19resources](http://www.florencedowntown.com/COVID-19resources).



Downtown Florence is rolling out the welcome mat and reopening our doors. Our local shops, restaurants, salons, and spas are creating safe, comfortable, and inviting spaces to welcome you back. For a complete list of downtown businesses open and waiting for you, visit [www.florencedowntown.com/openforbusiness](http://www.florencedowntown.com/openforbusiness).



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# GREATER FLORENCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Submitted by Mike Miller, Executive Director

The Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce has announced next year's executive board and 10 new board members, effective July 1. The Executive Board includes:



Mike Reichenbach, Chairman  
Reichenbach Automotive

Ken Jackson, Past Chair  
Re/Max Professionals

Brian Fast, Chair-Elect  
First Citizens Bank

Keith Buckhouse, Treasurer  
Synovus Bank

## The 2020-2021 Division Chairs Include:

Jamie Carsten	Chair of Education & Leadership	South State Bank
Bailey Dabney	Chair of Comm. & Marketing	The Morning News
Jill Lewis	Chair of Member Service	Signature Wealth Management
Paul Seward	Chair of Budget & Finance	First Bank
Mindy Taylor	Chair of Government Affairs	Duke Energy
Charlene Wages	Chair of Community Dev.	Francis Marion University

## The New Board Members Include:

Drew Chaplin, Palmetto Real Estate	Diana Murphy, Diversity Works Mag.
Kristy Fowler, Raines Hospitality	Chad Patterson, Raldex Hospitality
Mike Fuller, Pee Dee Electric Co-Op	Chad Patterson, Community Times
Jim Ivey, Dedicated Community Bank	Larry Smith, Community Times
Robby Hill, HillSouth	Caroline Toniolo, Edward Jones
Paige Hollis, Assurant	

## Continuing to Serve on the Board are:

Starlee Alexander, State Farm	Scott Collins, Collins Architecture
Kyle Baxter, MUSC Florence	Kevin Gause, Wells Fargo
Brian Nunn, Encompass Health	Ed Hoffman, Trinity-Bymes

Marie Saleeby, McLeod Health  
Linda Mitchell Johnson, Senior Citizens Association  
Tyron Jones, FDTC

Departing Chamber board members include Lucinda Fountain, Vera Herbert, Chip Munn, Paul Saunders, Elaine Sealey and Irby Wilson.

Mike Miller, president of the Chamber said, "The growth and effectiveness of today's Chamber shows the impact of a great staff working with an engaged chairman and a supportive board of directors, while respecting the diversity of our communities and area businesses. Last year the Florence Chamber experienced a record-breaking year in program participation and project expansion under Ken Jackson, and we expect to see other exciting projects develop under incoming chairman Mike Reichenbach."



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**THE CITY OF FLORENCE - UTILIZING EXISTING EMPLOYEE TALENT** *Submitted by the City of Florence*



*Randall Osterman as the new City Manager*

In its first year competing, the City of Florence received the Top Work Place 2019 award as one of the best places to work in South Carolina. The City was also recognized for its forward momentum as a recipient of the Direction Award, but while the City has received recognition at the state level, does the community have an accurate depiction of how it operates internally? Growth and development is ongoing for city staff. Employment opportunities and the progress of our future leaders allow the City to continue focusing on its mission and

core values. Investment in employees for the betterment of the organization and the community is just one of many reasons why the workplace is successful.

Growth within the City is strongly encouraged, whether it is an internal transfer opportunity or a training experience. Last year, under the direction of City Council, City staff worked with consultants to identify high potential performers in the current organization. Once leaders were selected, training for the future began. This exercise assisted in the development of a succession plan for the organization.

Success within the organization means creating opportunities for employees to grow and develop into future leadership roles, as well as demonstrating the importance of diversity and inclusion. This type of work environment allows for the development of strong-minded individuals, a distinct culture, collaboration and effective communication. This fosters a commitment to and focus on the City's mission. The City of Florence adheres to the core values of Collaboration, Professionalism and Ownership.

The City of Florence recognizes the importance of utilizing

existing employee talent. City leaders are encouraged to develop leadership principles and a leadership creed to share the information they learned throughout the organization. On June 1 of this year, City Council selected Randall Osterman as the new City manager. Osterman previously served as the City's fire chief for 12 years.

Osterman is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, and grew up in Knoxville, Tenn. He completed his undergraduate studies at Eastern Kentucky University, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Fire and Safety Engineering Technology, graduating in December of 1994. He also received a Master of Science in Fire and Emergency Management Administration at Oklahoma State University in December of 2000.

Osterman started his career as a firefighter paramedic in Knox County, Tenn., from 1981–1986. He then worked as a police officer in Knoxville from 1986 to 1993. In the years following, he worked as a fire marshal and then as the deputy fire chief for Hilton Head Island from 2000–2008. After serving for Hilton Head, he began his career with the City of Florence.

Osterman is challenge motivated and willing to insert himself wherever he can benefit the organization. In efforts to move in the right direction, he has always attempted to understand what was best for the City. Osterman said, "As a leader, the City manager must admit and inspire others to accept that the goal is larger than them."

The development of future leaders has become essential in the City's culture, as well as continuing to advance the community forward. The City accepts change with open arms to maintain the success of the organization by encouraging our future leaders! Full Life. Full Forward.



# UNITED WAY OF FLORENCE COUNTY ALLOCATES OVER \$1 MILLION

Submitted by Jenna Nance, Marketing Manager for the United Way of Florence County



As COVID-19 continues to take a toll on our community, providing services to those in need is more crucial now than ever. As of June, South Carolina DHEC estimates that Florence County has witnessed over 5,000 cases of COVID-19. With businesses still closed, employees furloughed and less access to services, individuals in our community are desperately in need.

To help combat the needs of individuals in our community, United Way of Florence County has allocated over \$1,000,000 through our annual campaign and FEMA funding during the month of June.

Last year, agencies and programs funded through the campaign provided services to over 19,000 local individuals in need. Of those services, 78,050 meals were provided to senior citizens to prevent the threat of hunger; 7,719 individuals received financial assistance to prevent eviction or keep utilities connected; 5,146 youths were provided with programs to develop character and leadership skills; and 4,874 individuals received life-changing medical, dental, hearing or therapy services.

This year, we are honored to have the ability to reach even more individuals and are partnering with 22 agencies. Through donations raised in our previous United Way campaign, we are able to allocate \$850,750 to our partner agencies which fund a total of 30 programs that reach

individuals in the education, youth, health, special needs, financial stability and emergency service sectors.

Of our 22 partner agencies, we have added four additional agencies this year, including Foster Care Clothing Closet, Harvest Hope Food Bank, The Naomi Project and Tenacious Grace. Each agency provides a unique service for individuals in our community. The Foster Care Clothing Closet provides support in the form of clothing and supplies for families that open their hearts and homes to foster children looking for a sense of belonging. The Naomi Project is designed for individuals who need long-term housing as well as educational, financial, emotional, mental and spiritual support. Harvest Hope Food Bank strives to eliminate hunger and food insecurity, and Tenacious Grace provides relational and financial support to women during incarceration at FCDC and upon their release.

Not only was United Way of Florence County able to allocate funds from our campaign, but we were also able to allocate funds through the FEMA Phase 37 and CARES Act. This amount totaled \$150,248, which supplemented local emergency food and shelter programs in Florence and Darlington Counties.

Our ability to fund services in our community relies entirely on the support of donors like you. The best way to support our community is through giving to the United Way of Florence County. You can either make a personal gift, or you can help us organize a company campaign within your business or other organization. Additional ways of supporting the United Way of Florence County and your community include advocating on United Way's behalf and having you and your employees volunteer at one of our local agencies.

If you are interested in donating to United Way of Florence County, please call 843-662-2407, or visit us online at [uwflorence.org](http://uwflorence.org). Individuals can also donate by texting FLORENCE to 56512.



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**FINKLEA LAW FIRM TO CHANGE NAME TO "FINKLEA, HENDRICK & BLAKE, LLC"** *by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin*



Partners pictured left to right: Charlie J. Blake, Jr., Gary I. Finklea and J. Greg Hendrick

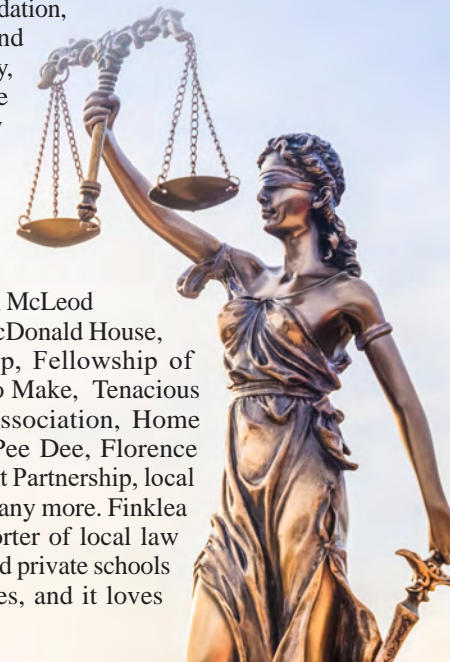
his colleagues have made to the firm, to its clients and to the community." Those colleagues include Charlie Blake, who joined in 2006 and Greg Hendrick, who joined Finklea Law Firm in 2007. The organization had recently hired three staff members, taking it from a humble beginning of only one attorney and one staff member to now having 16 staff members and six attorneys.

It was always Finklea's vision to operate a business where he could serve the community where he was born and raised and make contributions, both legal and benevolent. This partnership is not only a culmination of Finklea's vision, but it also allows his colleagues to achieve their professional goals and the firm to continue its mission through other attorneys for decades to come as it anticipates a large building expansion at the Florence office. The first office was at 814 West Evans, but the organization has expanded into buildings at 816 and 820 West Evans. It also opened an office at 2554 E. Hwy 76 Marion in 2017 and one at 101 South Main Street in Hemingway this year.

Finklea, Hendrick & Blake, LLC is a local firm with lawyers who

work and live in the Pee Dee area. Attorneys are always available to meet with clients, unlike other firms with no real presence in the area. Committed to exemplary representation of its clients through hiring experienced staff members that excel in their practice areas, the firm utilizes what most in the industry consider the best legal software available. This technology, combined with a competent staff, allows the team to deliver legal services in a timely manner and at an affordable price.

The firm has a rich history of supporting local charities and events, such as The School Foundation, Palmetto Project, The Boys and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, House of Hope, Lighthouse Ministry, Florence Area Literacy Council, Salvation Army, Cooks for Christ, Florence Humane Society, The Connie Maxwell Children's Home, South Carolina BBQ Shag Festival, Carolina Classic Sporting Clays, McLeod Children's Hospital, Ronald McDonald House, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, A Choice to Make, Tenacious Grace, Pee Dee Realtors Association, Home Builders Association of the Pee Dee, Florence County Economic Development Partnership, local Chambers of Commerce and many more. Finklea Law Firm is also a vast supporter of local law enforcement agencies, public and private schools and countless church ministries, and it loves serving families in need.



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*Increase Production & Profitability Through Diversity Focused Training*

# DORIS B. LOCKHART SPEAKS ON DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE Submitted by Doris B. Lockhart



The majority of employees, of every generation, believe their employer sees value in diversity and inclusion. That's a good thing since Spherion research findings indicate that nearly two-thirds of all workers and more than three-quarters of younger workers consider the composition of the workforce a significant factor in their desire to work for a company.

An employer's ability to attract, engage and retain the best talent depends upon its ability to embrace diversity, promote inclusion and provide a workplace that is reflective of what job candidates and employees really want.

As important as diversity and inclusion are to all employees, younger workers tend to place greater value on a workplace that fully embraces diversity and inclusion. Millennials value diversity and inclusion even more than Gen Z, whose feelings seem to be a bit more

tempered. Perhaps due to their experience level (or lack thereof), Gen Z believes their employer values diversity.

The best strategy for building a high-performance workforce is to tap into the broadest and most diverse pool of talent available to you, regardless of race, gender, generation, ethnicity, disability or any other trait that differentiates one human from another. To prosper, employers need to create teams that are reflective of the diversity of the customers and the communities they serve. When your workforce is both diverse and inclusive, your business is more likely to excel in sales and profitability, market share and talent management.

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## EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS Submitted by Dr. Cynthia James Walters, Prisma Health



*Dr. Cynthia James Walters,  
Director, Diversity and Inclusion,  
Midlands, Prisma Health*

**COLUMBIA**—Creating a culture of inclusion is inherent to building strong organizations, particularly considering recent events. Employers and employees must be committed to performing their best for each other, customers and the diverse communities served. The more everyone within a business understands and appreciates the rich diversity of one other, the greater the outcomes: internal cohesiveness and external community engagement. Current events such as COVID 19, Black Live Matters and a desire to improve social injustice have caused us to become even more committed to being respectful while seeing each other as visible and valued.

One way to do develop a culture of inclusion is to establish Employee Resource Groups (also known as ERGs, affinity groups, or business network groups). Employee resource groups are employees who join together in their workplace based on shared characteristics or life experiences. ERGs are employee-led groups who support organizational goals and initiatives, identify career development opportunities and contribute to personal development to ensure equity of all employees. ERGs can also enhance job responsibility, promote environmental advocacy, provide community service through volunteerism and enhance workplace wellness. Exploring the topic of employee resource groups can provide insightful information for businesses seeking to create a culture of affirmation and belonging.

### **How to start employee resource groups:**

- **Leadership buy-in.** While it is not mandatory to have buy-in from senior leaders, it certainly helps with ERG implementation. The resource group should also have an executive sponsor, which ideally will be someone who holds a leadership position within the organization.

- **Assess company needs and set goals.** After getting buy-in from leadership, it is necessary to assess the organization and decide which ERGs are needed. Which diverse groups are represented or underrepresented in the organization? Is your company having trouble recruiting women? Are there retention issues with millennial employees? Are you looking to attract Black and Hispanic employees? Figuring out which ERGs to develop is based on company needs. Once you have determined which ERG(s) is needed, then it is time for goal setting (be strategic, deliberate and intentional).

- **Start small.** “You don’t need significant numbers to start—it may be quite small at the beginning, but if it’s filling a need for you, then that’s fine. You can grow with time.” It is also beneficial to have allies in the group, who are individuals that do not necessarily share the group’s characteristics but are passionate about the group, want to learn more and want to show their support.

- **Promote the group.** For other employees to be aware that an ERG has been created, the group should be advertised. This can be done through the intranet of the company, the organizational newsletter, new employee onboarding and other means of sharing within the company.

- **Measurement.** After you have successfully implemented an ERG into your organization, the last piece of the puzzle is measurement. Quantitative data such as retention rates, employee engagement levels and promotion rates should be measured before and after ERG implementation to understand how the ERG(s) are impacting the organization.

Employee Resource Groups are an asset strengthening and sustaining a culture of inclusion. They help to support and engage employees now and in the future. The ERGs are a fundamental component to driving your organization’s goals, diversity and inclusion initiatives, fostering wellness and building positive networks. ERGs help a business to focus on understanding each other better as well as the communities served. Now is the time when both understanding and serving each other is critical!



## PANDEMIC SPURS INNOVATION FOR SMALL- TO MID-SIZED BUSINESSES



As COVID-19 continues to disrupt normal day-to-day operations of small- to mid-sized businesses and nearly half of the U.S. workforce hangs in the balance, employers are taking creative measures to reset their go-to-market strategies and offerings. By changing

their operations to meet the demands of their customers, businesses can not only stay relevant but keep their staff employed and thrive in the new economy.

This pandemic offers business owners, investors and solopreneurs the opportunity to take a critical look at their overall business model, offerings and operations and reset the entire business structure, creating new opportunities to serve and prevail. This is the perfect time to explore new legal solutions to the most common business obstacles to help companies preserve and protect their brands and prosper for generations to come. There are great examples of resets happening within many industries.

With the pandemic closing summer camps throughout the country, ACA-accredited Adventure Links, a 23-year-old summer camp in Virginia, has found a way to replace its usual summer adventure camp programs with The CampCloud (TM), an experiential online alternative. The company is now offering its virtual camping programs to individuals and employers to assist employees working from home by keeping their kids engaged, learning and delighted all day from virtually

anywhere. The program is being offered to other camps as a customizable, online option for their campers.

Ensuring the health and safety of employers when stay-at-home orders are lifted and business resumes is critical. Thanks to a team of entrepreneurs, Disinfect & Shield (TM), an FDA-registered, EPA-approved and eco-friendly disinfectant used in surgical suites for the last decade, is now available to businesses worldwide to kill SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and other dangerous organisms. It works by creating a permanent anti-microbial shield, preventing the virus from attaching to surfaces where it has been applied without risk to humans, animals or crops. With Disinfect & Shield (TM), employees, customers and visitors can feel safe knowing that their space has been properly disinfected and treated for optimum health and safety.

**Here are two tips to help entrepreneurs and small business owners:**

\* **Know how to use loans:** CARES Act loans have specific guidelines like having to use at least 60 percent of the loan within 24 weeks of receipt for payroll expenses. Concerned that money would dry up, many small business owners applied with no way of utilizing them because their business cannot reopen under the strict guidelines imposed on the industry.

\* **Alternate cash sources:** Borrow from a 401(k) or IRA to keep businesses afloat, as it does not need to be paid back for at least 3-6 years. However, pulling money out of a retirement plan comes with some risk, such as if the business does not see profitability, then retirement funds were wasted on a failed business venture.

COVID-19 has shown that many businesses aren't prepared for worst-case scenarios and make common mistakes that can affect their ability to grow and borrow money. If approached strategically, small- to medium-sized businesses can take this time to implement changes and help their operations succeed and thrive.

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## THE FRAIDY CAT & THE CRISIS by Robin Lewis



**HEMINGWAY** - May I say it? This has just been weird, this whole “coronavirus–stay home–no job–masks and gloves–what are the symptoms–toilet paper–homeschooling” global crisis! Add to that the awful murder of George Floyd at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer resulting in protests and rioting around the nation. Many people are marching to demand change while others are afraid for their lives. The current situation in most major cities is enough to upset the most stalwart of believers.

As someone said, “We have never been this way before!” Most of us would add, “And I hope we never travel this way again!”

It reminds me of the kitten named Ollie who recently joined our family.



### Ollie, the Fraidy Cat

We recently discovered a ridiculously small kitten inside the engine of my car. Shining the flashlight, we could see that he had crawled up into a narrow space so tight we decided to leave the hood open all night to help him find his way out. Of

course, he crawled up in there because he was so afraid of us. Compared to him, I am a 5’3” giant. But I am also the one with the food. He has a need for us to connect.

We don’t know where he came from, but we are his reality and new family in a really big world.

For the past week, I have been talking to him and coaxing him out of his favorite hiding places so he can get something to eat. He is now courageous enough (or possibly hungry enough) to come within about three feet of where I sit in the carport.

He needs tons of love, attention and care, but fear is holding him back. Fear is stopping him from having the cat life of his dreams! When new situations, the unknown or the “never before” strike, it can leave you spinning and running for safety. Whether it is a job loss, sickness, or the rampant fear on social media, being afraid strikes the heart and mind and can be paralyzing. It can even, like Ollie the Fraidy Cat, make you want to run and hide! After life as we know it has changed overnight or been shut down right before our eyes, we can feel powerless and small.

No one likes feeling powerless. In fact, you were not created to be powerless but powerful in Christ. So, how do we rise above the fear, gain courage and even grow our strengths during a time of crisis?

### Choose Your Focus

We each have a God-given superpower: the ability to choose our focus. We can either focus on negative, fearful, hurtful thoughts, or we can focus on positive, thankful and faith-filled thoughts. But here’s the thing to remember: whatever you focus on always grows larger, for better or for worse.

Ollie cat hisses and acts all big and bad trying to prevent the worst from happening. He is ready to run at the first sudden movement! I know people who do the same thing.

The Fraidy Cat will always focus on the what-ifs, the fearful possibilities and hope to be prepared when the bottom falls out. Because that’s exactly what they expect to happen.

But the wise person knows to use her God-given superpower to choose her focus in faith:

- First to focus on God and remember that he is for her (Romans 8:31).
- Second to focus on praying for a good, positive outcome, remembering that God has the power to work all things for good for his children (Romans 8:28).
- Third to focus on her personal power to step forward and make a positive difference (2 Timothy 1:7).

In the April issue, I asked the question, “Are you a prayer warrior or a panicked worrier?” I wrote that we aren’t meant to live in fear even when the world is struggling. The answer is always to be found in our focus. And our focus will direct our life.



### You Have Strength & Resilience

Little Ollie cat doesn’t know his strengths yet, so he shows his teeth and hisses hoping I’ll leave the food and walk away. He’s showing his strengths! But what he doesn’t realize are the strengths he still has to discover like peace, poise, grace and wisdom. Once my little fraidy cat settles down and comes to believe that I am not a threat, then he can enjoy the love he so desperately needs.

We can do that too. We can realize that all the people who are upset by the current set of circumstances just want to feel safe and loved. They want to make a difference. Some are just hissing and showing their teeth, and they need a voice of calm.

Maybe you have strengths inside that someone else needs? Here are some ways to rediscover your strengths and resilience during trying times.

You may be feeling unsettled, anxious and fearful too, but your opportunity lies in how you choose to respond to the crisis. Life Coach Karen Lukanovich writes, “We can control ourselves, our attitudes, mindset, efforts, what we do and don’t do, how we look after ourselves--and how we respond to adversity. Coping with stress and maintaining a positive affect or mood is key to determining our feelings, thinking, behaviors and outcomes.”

### 7 Strategies to Build Strength & Resilience

1. Establish a Quiet Time Each Morning to “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Maintaining your God-connection is designed to be your source of strength, insight and discernment.
2. Practice Self-Acceptance. Self-care and self-acceptance are pillars of strength that help you better accept others’ struggles too. Identify and accept your emotions. Express them to God, and then listen.
3. Reframe Your Mindset. Can you see your stress as a challenge instead of a threat? Viewing difficult circumstances as a challenge frees up the space in your brain to discover solutions and direction for you and your family.
4. Get Good Sleep, Eat Healthy Food & Exercise. While this might sound like what your mama told you, these three will keep you in condition to manage stress and build resilience more effectively.
5. Maintain Healthy Relationships. While we’re all socially distancing or concerned about tensions in our nation, find time to connect with a friend by phone, Facetime or over Zoom. Having friends who will listen helps

## THE FRAIDY CAT CONT'D

us all feel accepted and a lot less crazy.

6. **Take a Break from the Media.** Turn off the news and take a break from social media. With so much fear and anger, we need to remember not to believe everything we hear or read, which leads us to the final strategy...

7. **Watch Your Words.** The words we speak over ourselves and others are designed by God to be powerful and creative. Instead of repeating or sharing frightening words, instead speak words of faith and trust, hope and strength.

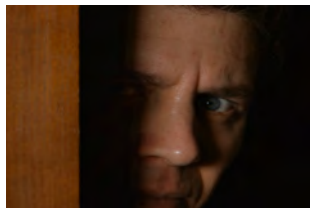
And finally, instead of hissing and showing your teeth like Ollie the Fraidy Cat, let yourself be loved, keep yourself safe and keep refocusing on God. He truly is always working in your life and will be able to help you turn the negatives into positives like greater inner strength, resilience and wisdom for others.

One of my favorite verses to combat fear is Psalm 56:3 that reads, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You." It doesn't tell us to never feel fear, but when we feel fear to return our focus to trusting in God.

Contact Robin Lewis, Certified Empowerment Life Coach at robin@robinlewislife.com, and visit the website at www.RobinLewisLife.com. Thank you!

## 8 WAYS SATAN WANTS YOU TO RESPOND TO THE CORONAVIRUS

*Contributed by Aretha Grant*



### 1. Fear

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7, NKJV). Fear causes us to do and say things that are contrary to the word of God. Fear will cause us to spread conspiracy

theories, furthering fear-mongering amongst our families and friends. God doesn't want us to respond by fear. He wants us to respond to the Coronavirus by faith, knowing and believing that he is with us and is protecting us.

### 2. Anger

"A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute" (Proverbs 15:18, NASB). Another way Satan wants us to respond to the Coronavirus is anger. Over the past two and a half months, I've seen people get angry with their family and friends, politicians and medical experts. Anger is one of Satan's best tools because an angry person doesn't listen to wise instruction, choosing instead to close their hearts and minds. We must be careful about anger taking root in our hearts. We can do that by nurturing our relationship with Jesus Christ. We can press into him and confess everything we're feeling and experiencing because he desires to help us.

### 3. Distrustful of Doctors and Specialists

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm" (Proverbs 13:20, NASB). In addition to becoming angry with medical experts, Satan also causes us to distrust doctors and specialists. There are many people on social media dispensing unsound medical advice. Perhaps they heard the information from a friend, family member or leader. They choose to take dangerous advice instead of the advice of those who attended medical school and are practicing physicians. I believe God placed doctors on this earth, and I think he wants us to heed their wise instruction (as long as it doesn't run contrary to his word). He doesn't want us to ignore sound medical advice. He wants us to pray about the information, lift it up to him, and follow his instructions.

### 4. Lack of Faith

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1, NKJV). Satan wants us to lose hope and faith in God. He knows if we lose hope and faith, we'll succumb to his tricks

and schemes. Further, when we don't have faith and hope, we'll engage in sinful behaviors. God wants us to cling to our hope. Hope is an anchor that keeps us "sure and steadfast" (see Hebrews 6:19). He doesn't want us to lose our faith during a pandemic. He wants our faith to increase.

### 5. Immoral Coping Mechanisms

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts" (Romans 13:14, NASB). There's no denying the social distancing and stay-at-home orders were stressful to Americans. I'll be 50 this year, and I've never experienced anything like the Coronavirus pandemic. Stress causes us to seek coping mechanisms. Although we should seek God through prayer and his word, many people turn to drugs, alcohol and other sinful vices. Satan wants us to respond to stress without turning to God. He wants us to become addicted to these vices. However, God wants us to cope with stress by pressing in closer to him, trusting him with all our troubles. 1 Peter 5:7 encourages us to cast our cares on God because he cares for us. So, stop holding on to stress and anxiety, and cast them on God. He's better equipped to handle them.



### 6. Hoarding & Selfishness

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11, NASB). I remember going into Sam's Club on a Monday and seeing plenty of toilet tissue, paper towels and bottled water. I went back Wednesday, and the shelves were completely empty of these items. I

started seeing reports on social media of people buying out stores' complete inventory of toilet tissue, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. God wants us to use wisdom, but Satan wants us to be selfish and hoard items that we know our neighbors and others will need. Don't allow Satan to cause you to hoard items. Trust God. He knows what we need, and he will provide it (see Matthew 6:33 for comfort).



### 7. Becoming a Hypochondriac

"The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death" (Proverbs 14:27, NASB).

One day I coughed and thought, "I wonder if that's the Coronavirus." I know other people who were thinking the same thing whenever they coughed, sneezed or experienced shortness of breath. Satan wants fear to creep into our hearts and cause us to think and act irrationally. He wants us to become hypochondriacs. Instead, speak the word of God over your life, trust the Lord and use wisdom.

### 8. Walking Foolishly & Putting Yourself in Harm's Way

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel" (Proverbs 12:15, NASB). Early in the pandemic, I personally knew three people who'd contracted the Coronavirus. One of them died. It was then that I knew the dangers of the virus. Further, I'm a breast cancer survivor who takes medication for high blood pressure. So, I'm high risk. When Maryland's governor issued the stay-at-home order, I stayed home. And I was diligent about my husband and kids thoroughly washing their hands when they returned home from being in the public. Unfortunately, I also witnessed many people taking the Coronavirus as a joke, foolishly putting themselves and others in harm's way. I believe that was a trick of the devil to sicken as many people as possible. The book of Proverbs is full of advice on walking wisely. Instead of walking foolishly, Christians should study the book of Proverbs and learn how to walk wisely, understanding that faith and wisdom go hand-in-hand.

Aretha Grant serves her local church as a bible teacher and elder. She loves writing and is the author of "Overcomer: 25 Keys to Walking Victoriously." Aretha resides in Hagerstown, M.D. with her husband and two youngest children. You can read her blog at [www.arethagrants.com](http://www.arethagrants.com).

*Photo Credit: © Getty Images/AaronAmat*



## HGTC FOUNDATION SUPPORT FROM HORRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S FOUNDATION



*Pictured (left to right): Neyle Wilson, HGTC Foundation president and CEO; Phillip Thompson, Horry County sheriff; Dr. Marilyn M. Fore, HGTC president; and Tom Fox, Sheriff's Foundation president*

**CONWAY** – The Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) Foundation was recently presented with a \$10,000 check from the Horry County Sheriff's Foundation. This latest donation from Sheriff Phillip Thompson and Foundation president, Tom Fox, added funding towards the \$25,000 endowment for students attending HGTC in the Criminal Justice program.

“On behalf of the HGTC Foundation, I would like to thank the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County for their support in helping our students reach their educational goals,” said Neyle Wilson, HGTC Foundation president and CEO. “The Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County has been a supporter of the HGTC Foundation and the Criminal Justice program at HGTC for many years.”

The donation will help numerous students for years to come achieve their goals of attending HGTC and pursuing their criminal justice degrees. Many of the highly skilled graduates will proudly serve their local communities whether in law enforcement, the courts, corrections or juvenile justice.

Thompson proudly added, “We are committed to the support of the Criminal Justice program and the HGTC Foundation. Through our partnership with HGTC, we will continue to increase the existing endowment of \$25,000 to \$100,000 over the next couple of years.”

“We are so appreciative of their continued support by increasing the amount in their endowed scholarship fund,” continued Wilson.

The purpose of the HGTC Foundation is to raise funds to support the programs, services and activities of HGTC, its students and employees and to create and cultivate positive relationships between the College and the community.

The HGTC Foundation invites the community to become involved as the College continues to foster its reputation as a high quality learning and teaching institution with a student-centered environment. The community can enhance this vision with financial support for scholarships, programs, facilities or other needs; donation of equipment or technology; mentoring students; providing internships; and service on various academic or foundation advisory boards.

To reach the HGTC Foundation, call 843-477-2105, or visit the website.

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[www.HGTC.edu/HR](http://www.HGTC.edu/HR)

# HGTC PRESIDENT CHOSEN AS 2020 SCATCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore

CONWAY—Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is proud to announce that HGTC President, Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore, has been recognized as the 2020 Chief Executive Officer of the Year by the South Carolina Association of Technical College Commissioners (SCATCC). The award honors the tremendous services of and contributions made by a technical or community college chief executive officer.

Fore was pleasantly surprised as HGTC Chairman Tommy Branyon and other commissioners notified her of the award at a special called meeting of the Area Commission.

The official award presentation will take place at the SC Association of Technical College Commissioner's Academy on Jan. 26, 2021.

Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore became president of HGTC on April 1, 2017. Prior to this appointment, she served as the senior vice president and in a variety of leadership positions over the last four decades. During her years of service to the College, Fore's purpose and vision has always been improving the lives of her students, which is evident in her personal and financial commitments to HGTC. She has established numerous scholarships for students and consistently contributes to the HGTC Foundation. She has personally ensured that students who didn't think higher education was an option for them not only attended HGTC, but also succeeded in school and after graduation.

Fore holds a doctorate of public service from Coastal Carolina University, an education doctorate in curriculum and instruction, a Master of Arts in economics and a Master of Arts in educational administration from the University of South Carolina. Her husband, Dr. Fred Fore, shares her passion for higher education and was the first president of Florence-Darlington Technical College. Fore, or "Murph" as she prefers to be called, is the first female president of HGTC. She has set quite the precedent over the last 46 years, designing and developing academic programs on the college's three campuses, including the increasingly popular online classes, the Early College High School for high school students and international placements. She also had a hand in designing several campus buildings, such as the Georgetown Center for Advanced Manufacturing and the Robert Speir Jr. Healthcare Center. For her efforts, the science building on the Grand Strand campus was named in her honor. But, really, she feels the honor has been hers to give of her time, energy and passion over the last four decades to a school that gave her a chance.

Fore has been a leader in the educational revolution at HGTC for decades. Her passion for students and the mission of the College drives

her innovative spirit to find creative solutions that meet the demands of the modern student and our local economy. The launch of HGTC's Distance Learning Institute made higher education more accessible not just for South Carolina residents, but also for students across the country. Her collaboration with four-year universities like Coastal Carolina University, Clemson University and Francis Marion University has continued to strengthen HGTC's relationships across the state and opened more pathways for HGTC graduates.

She was instrumental in the creation of Early College High School (ECHS), a secondary option that allows students to receive two years of college credit during high school. A model for the nation, ECHS also encourages underrepresented students to attend college, serves highly-capable students and removes barriers to higher education by helping students prepare for and meet college readiness standards. Fore is innovative in the way she builds relationships with regional stakeholders—county officials, school officials, elected representatives and business leaders—by serving as both an advocate for HGTC and by adapting to our local workforce's educational needs.

Fore has been a leader in the state for her efforts to ease both the admissions requirements for students and regulations for the approval of new academic programs, in turn making education more accessible for many and ensuring HGTC continues to meet the needs of industry in a timely manner. She has led the implementation of digital classrooms, developed more than 80 programs of study and served on 30 accreditation teams across the Southeast.

HGTC has been a major part of Fore's life. She has worked to achieve its mission, which is to serve as the foundation of this community and as the heart and soul of business and industry in terms of supporting the workforce here. That drives her to the passion she has within her, and it all started with teaching. She still loves to walk into a classroom and make an impact. She wants to give students a thirst to achieve on their own—to give students confidence. Because, many times, two-year colleges draw students who need to start a career in a short amount of time, the school is in their neighborhood, and it's affordable.

For more information about financial aid, scholarships, important deadlines, processes and support available, please visit the HGTC website.

## About HGTC

HGTC offers college transfer and skilled associate degree programs in more than 65 fields of study, and many with online class options. Nearly all programs feature internships that lead to jobs. Ninety-five percent of students either transfer to earn advanced degrees or start careers in their respective fields of study. Horry-Georgetown Technical College prohibits discrimination against students and employees. Please direct discrimination and accessibility issues to the Office of Student Affairs at 843-349-5228.

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- 1. Diversity expands worldliness**
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- 3. Diversity prepares students for future career success**

# WE ARE VIRTUS

Virtus Academy of SC grew an astounding 75% in enrollment during the 2019-2020 school year. Now, we are recruiting and hiring the best of the best! Meet some of our new talent that will be shaping the minds of our students.



*Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.*

Annette Hill-Rivers will be teaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science. She has numerous degrees including a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Master of Science in Health Administration and is pursuing a Doctorate in Educational Technology. Annette has taught Automation and Robotics, Medical Detectives, and Computer Science. She enjoys watching and coaching sports, spending time with her family, and being a volunteer firefighter.

*Be strong and courageous.* Joshua 1:9

Julie Zammit will be teaching our new Gifted and Talented program, as well as Latin. She has a Bachelor of Arts from Salem College, a Master of Education from USC, and an Education Specialist from University of Memphis. She has taught a wide array of subjects from Latin and English to Computer and Logic, etc. Julie loves reading and writing and is currently studying Italian.

*The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.* ~ Mark Twain

Jordan Washington will be teaching PE and will also serve as our Athletic Director. He has a Bachelor of Science in Sports Management and Business Management. He has been a Unit Director and Program Director for the Boys and Girls Club of the Pee Dee area. Jordan has also been the assistant basketball with a few different area schools.



*Shine your light while you've got one.*

Kristy Padgett will be teaching 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade science. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. She is also a German certified Neurophysiologist. Her teaching background is at Francis Marion University in the Pre-Nursing program. Kristy enjoys reading, going to the beach, and being a boymom to her three sons.

*For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack.*

Kevin Helmer will be teaching 4<sup>th</sup> grade Math and Science. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts in Literacy Studies. He is certified in STEM and Read to Succeed. He has taught Digital Media, 6<sup>th</sup> grade math and science, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Kevin enjoys writing, reading, watching movies and spending time with his sons.



*Tis better to sit on a round pumpkin and have it all to yourself than to sit on a crowded velvet cushion.*

Kaymeo Davis will be teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary and Early Childhood Education and a Master of Education in Literacy Studies. She has taught 4K, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the past. Kaymeo loves to bake and spend time with her three children.

*You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose.* ~Dr. Seuss

Darrian Love will be teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade for the 2020-2021 school year. He has a dual degree in Arts Exercise Science and Psychology and is a candidate for his Master of Education for Curriculum and Instruction Certification – TESOL. He has a teaching background in ABA therapy and early intervention. He enjoys kayaking, gardening, and raising chickens on his family farm.



*As an educator, I aim to reach every student that crosses my door and hopefully spark a passion for the field of science.*

Lakesha Meredith will be teaching our brand-new science lab. She has a Bachelor of Science in Biology. Her teaching background is in teaching elementary science lab. She has received a stellar staff member award for three consecutive years. Lakesha loves to read, garden, and has a passion for science.



## Facility Update

In addition to expanding our faculty, staff, and student enrollment, VA of SC is moving into our new home in August. The new school site will be located at 2407 Pisgah Road. This facility is over 65,000 square feet and will have 30 classrooms, a full-size gymnasium, full service cafeteria, independent science laboratory, and the capacity to serve 850 students.

Important milestones are being met to keep construction on track to open on time for the 2020-2021 school year, including:



- The school name and logo being installed
- The entrance canopy completed, and the canopy covers over exterior doors installed
- Duke Power has added more poles and strung additional wiring along Pisgah Road
- Casework installation began in the classrooms, lab, art room and reception desk
- Grading and stone base for the entrance driveway and parking lot is being applied
- Forms are being set for the concrete walkways at the front of the building
- Sidewalk has been poured

## DCSD TO ALLOW SENIORS TO PURCHASE MACBOOKS Submitted by DCSD



**DARLINGTON** - Graduating seniors of the Darlington County School District will be allowed to purchase their district-issued MacBooks this year, the Darlington County Board of

Education recently decided.

In most cases, the laptops were assigned to the seniors when they were freshmen, and the students used the same laptops throughout their high school careers. Graduating seniors who paid their technology fees all four years while in high school will keep their devices with no extra fee, as long as the MacBook was purchased in the 2016-17 school year. Newer devices will be exchanged for devices purchased during that time.

“We are pleased to be able to offer this to our seniors as a way to honor them in this difficult year,” said Dr. Tim Newman, district superintendent. “Our seniors and their families have faced many challenges, and this is one way we can recognize their efforts. Our students will need computers as they enter the workforce or move on to college. This will hopefully help ease some of the financial burden parents face. I can’t think of a better investment than in our own graduates and their families.”

Seniors will be required to turn in their laptops to have school district programs removed and the computer reformatted. When the laptops are returned to the students, the students will sign an agreement relieving the district of all responsibility for the computers. Laptops that are not turned in for reformatting will be disabled and reported as stolen.

If a graduating senior has not paid the technology fee all four consecutive years of high school, a fee will be due in order to keep the MacBook:

- \$200 for no years of technology fees paid
- \$150 for one year of technology fees paid

- \$100 for two years of technology fees paid
- \$50 for three years of technology fees paid

Damaged devices can be sent to the insurance company prior to the insurance expiration date of June 30. Graduating seniors with damaged devices should contact their school as soon as possible, as the repair process may take several weeks. Students may also need to come back during the summer to pick up a repaired device.

## DCSD ANNOUNCES SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM



**THE DARLINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS PLEASED TO AGAIN OFFER A FREE SUMMER NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN.**

All sites are open with hot, delicious meals available for pickup from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Both breakfast and lunch will be available for pickup at the same time.

The curbside pickup locations are listed below. The district reserves the right to make changes to the location list, pending on-site participation.

- Rosenwald Elementary/Middle School
- Lamar High School
- Darlington High School
- Mayo High School for Math, Science & Technology
- Hartsville Middle School
- Thornwell School for the Arts

The meals are free to anyone 18 years old or under. The child must be present to receive the meal. For more information, please contact 843-398-2315.

## See What The Darlington County School District Has To Offer

- Our community actively supports public education.
- Our administration recognizes and values dedicated teaching professionals.
- We believe in excellence in teaching and learning for all.
- Our district prepares students to be college-and career-ready through rigorous academic courses and countrywide real-world opportunities.
- We are conveniently located between the beach and the mountains, a small town community with easy access to Columbia and Charlotte.



## PURPOSE FOR EDUCATION by De'Angela Haynes

According to Merriam-Webster.com, there is more than one definition of an educator: “one skilled in teaching: TEACHER” and “a student of the theory and practice of education: EDUCATIONIST sense” or “an administrator in education” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/educator>).

The latter of these definitions certainly fits the descriptions of Antonio McFarland, M.Ed. because he is an educational consultant, speaker and admissions professional that helps students

evaluate opportunities, while also helping them navigate the admissions process. He captivates audiences with his contagious energy, insight and humor. His overall mission is to inspire the minds of people globally, to make a positive impact on communities around the world and to encourage youth to dream big and understand the power of education.

McFarland's ability to educate while entertaining audiences at all levels has earned him the respect of industry leaders in the non-profit, government and private sectors. He continues helping students achieve their dreams and goals of attending college. In the last ten years, he has facilitated hundreds of college planning seminars along with inspiring motivational speeches to schools, universities, organizations and companies. His background includes over 15 years of service to students. He has five years in the public schools and over 10 years of experience in higher education within the two-year public colleges and both four-year public and private colleges.

McFarland recently published his book entitled “College Is Possible!” which is a college planning guide for students. His form of art manifests through writing and creative ways to assist and facilitate others, especially students. Not only is he respected among those that he serves, but he has also touched the lives of many others. Alacya Jefferson, Gear Up College Specialist at Westwood High School, said concerning him, “Antonio hit a home run for our event. He is entertaining, engaging and helps make your students understand the power of education and the college planning process better with the unique ability to blend humor, inspiration and meaningful content into a great presentation.”

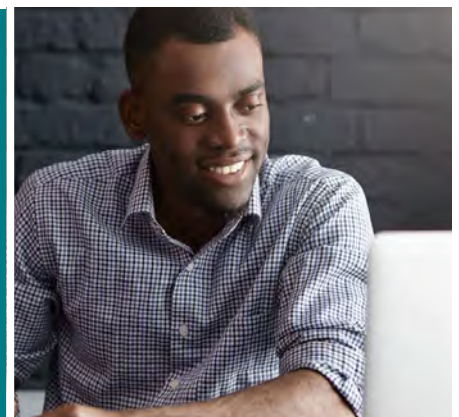
McFarland resides in South Carolina and is a member of the Southern Association of College Admissions Professions and the Carolinas Association for Recruiters, Admissions, and Registrars. He is a graduate of Clafin University and has a master's degree in higher education administration with a specialization in enrollment management. He also has a professional certificate in enrollment management from Ruffalo-Noel Levitz. Education, to him, provides opportunities to empower students as well as adults because he doesn't do what he does just to get a paycheck. He does it because he understands that there is a Purpose For Education!

<https://www.antoniomcfarland.com/about>



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# ADVANCING THE CCU EQUITY AGENDA Submitted by Dr. Cassandra D. Boyd



*CCU students between classes on campus*

**CONWAY**—Students enrolled in higher education classes during the spring 2020 semester have been transformed by an unprecedented public health awakening juxtaposed with a social movement of epic proportions. No other generation has faced such a radical shift in their day-to-day lives felt in tandem by everyone around the world. As students adjust to their new normal, they may question returning to campuses and continuing their path to a four-year degree. But, despite the global pandemic and the uncertainty of the job market, a college education remains a constant measure of defining success.

Now more than ever before, higher education institutions are challenged to not only provide students with equal access, but to also provide them with the skills and knowledge to engage across differences in our multicultural world. Coastal Carolina University (CCU) is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. Created in 2019, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was created to stand at the forefront of providing the CCU community with leadership, support and resources needed in the 21st century.



Intercultural and Inclusion Student Services (IISS), Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) comprise the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These offices cultivate a sense of belonging and build rapport with students who may grapple with core inequities and identity development. For example, due to the demand for increased heritage celebrations, IISS expanded its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration in 2020 to a weeklong celebration that included a night of the arts; an African drum and dance seminar; Ella Baker Day; MLK teach-ins; and a keynote speech by Beaufort native, actor and writer Simeon Daise, known for his roles on “American Soul” (2018) and “Gullah Gullah Island” (1998).

In concert with IISS, ADS launched the Neurodiversity Advisory Council (NAC) to create educationally relevant and supportive environments and programs. Five students were nominated to serve as NAC advisors to share their unique perspectives and identities with campus administrators and other students during panel sessions and monthly meetings. NAC students continued to meet even after the transition to distance learning in March, which occurred due to the University closing over concerns of the spread of COVID-19. Such feedback and individual insights on the lived experiences of neurodivergent students offered CCU employees and students the grounding educational prowess needed to create inclusive spaces and diversify the curriculum.

In addition, ADS continues to adopt best practices for online learners, assisting students with disabilities who were making the transition to remote learning. One adopted practice was to forgo a

paper form process where students would collect signatures and drop off their accommodation sheet with ADS staff. Instead, the ADS team implemented an online accommodation request platform to make it easier for both faculty and students needing accommodations. Now, all incoming students who are approved can petition for classroom accommodations using a more convenient method.

CCU is genuinely committed to furthering its long-time goal of ensuring a welcoming and diverse environment with the development of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion exists as an administrative office that encourages individuals



*CCU student studying in a residence hall commons area*

to thoughtfully listen and discuss issues pertaining to racism, sexism, discrimination and other politically-charged arguments that allow individuals to open up and set intentions to positively change conditions. As such, the Diversity and Inclusive

Excellence Professional Development Series invites CCU employees to engage in civil discourse. Although customized as training for faculty and staff, the three-part series fosters awareness of barriers that impact campus climate and addresses issues that range from implicit bias and microaggressions to cultural competency and allyship. Faculty, staff and students determined that such discussions are deeply relevant both inside and outside of the classroom, as depicted in the campus climate report. So far, more than 60 CCU employees have completed the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence Professional Development Series.

Another ODI initiative for faculty and staff, in collaboration with the Center for Teaching Excellence to Advance Learning (CeTEAL), is the Inclusive Pedagogy and Leadership workshop. This series was fashioned with the CCU mission statement in mind, recognizing that all students have the ability to succeed, and that learning “empowers productive, responsible, healthy citizens with a global perspective.” Considering the significance of how divisive issues such as transgender rights or campus student activism can quickly polarize individuals, this workshop allows participants to examine the critical roles that staff and faculty play in building relationships with students, inspiring engagement with different cultures and exploring the benefits of more inclusive practices.

Without question, no one could have imagined that the spring of 2020 would have united citizens around the world to scrutinize what is essential. Coastal Carolina University and the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are essential to providing opportunities that change communities. The uncertainty of this historic moment calls for more inclusive learning environments where all voices are heard and valued. As CCU continues to advance its equity agenda, the next generation of students will have the potential to be transformed by the power of education.



# HOW TEACHERS CAN PREPARE FOR SUCCESSFUL DISTANCE LEARNING



The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most disruptive event in the history of K-12 education, closing 120,000 schools and affecting 55 million students in the U.S.

And educators have been challenged like never

before. According to a survey commissioned by University of Phoenix, K-12 teachers often felt overwhelmed and under-supported. Teachers reported spending almost as much time prepping for virtual teaching (3.13 hours) as they spent actively teaching (3.97 hours), and less than half (47 percent) felt that available training was good or excellent.

Having too much information could be as taxing as not having enough, making it difficult to determine which tools were best. Forty-one percent of teachers felt overwhelmed by the many resources provided to help them navigate virtual learning.

During the next 90 days, schools and teachers will develop their resources for teaching this fall. Most schools are beginning their preparation by learning from what they experienced when schools closed, what were they prepared for and more importantly, where they fell short. There are a number of learning and communication tools available that provide methods and space for education to happen, but tools are only as good as the teachers who are managing them.

Here are a few tips for educators preparing for the upcoming year:

## Conduct a needs assessment of yourself

Before diving into the sea of free resources, apps, etc., first decide what you already know and then what you need to know to better serve the needs of your students.

Stay positive, and be open to adapting to changing needs and

circumstances. Be willing to readjust plans when something isn't working.

## Learn from peers

Talk to colleagues, sharing notes about what worked this past term, and what didn't. Explore articles and resources from educators who faced similar challenges.

Tap into one of the best free resources--your peers--and take this time to learn what sound distance learning looks like.

Collaborate with administrators and school counselors to focus not only on teaching methods, but also on supporting the mental wellness of students during this uncertain time.

## Use resources designed in response to current circumstances

For example, the Virtual Teaching Academy, is a free resource for K-12 educators, leaders and administrators who are seeking expert guidance and tangible insights on best practices for navigating the upcoming school year.

The Academy is hosted by The Alliance for Virtual Learning, a new initiative spearheaded by University of Phoenix and Blackboard--a leading education technology company for teaching, learning and student engagement--that unites a network of educators, experts and administrators who are shaping the blueprint for new education models that combine the best of virtual and classroom teaching.

Virtual Teaching Academy attendees will acquire necessary insights to create a blueprint to help their schools and districts prepare for the uncertain school year ahead.

## Create a plan to stay connected to parents regardless of technology access level

During this challenging time, parents and teachers rely on each other to educate their kids. The parent-teacher relationship is crucial for success of a child's virtual education. Make a plan to stay connected with even the least technologically well-equipped homes.

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Contact:

Fredrica Brailsford @ 803.484.5327 or [brailsfordf@lee.k12.sc.us](mailto:brailsfordf@lee.k12.sc.us)

# Census 2020



*Dr. Kandace Bethea, Superintendent*

**MARION-** The closing of schools because of COVID-19 has forced educators to reach outside of their comfort zone to explore new and exciting changes to the learning environments. Our schools in South Carolina were shut down on a Sunday afternoon with no warning, but by Monday, educators were finding ways to meet the educational needs of their students.

From this challenge, we are now exploring and using more engaging techniques with online learning. We know that face-to-face learning is the best way to teach students, but COVID-19 has hindered that delivery. Faced with the task of moving forward, districts may very well need to be more prepared for a permanent presence of a blended learning experience. A blended experience would have students attending school both physically and virtually, thus reducing the number of students on campus by half, allowing for social distancing. Developing lessons that draw from both worlds, teachers will create new learning experiences that will be able to teach students in any given situation. This is a new paradigm for many of our students, our teachers and our families. Educators are networking at a higher level seeking to create online lessons drawing from a vast array of trusted learning resources. And it isn't just teachers who are seeking access to quality materials to help students when they are not in school. It is parents and caregivers as well. This new shift in presenting lessons will allow learning to continue when faced with other obstacles including those created by major weather disturbances, which we've seen a lot of in recent years in the Pee Dee area.



Blended learning can only be effective if all students have access to online learning. When schools were closed for such an extended amount of time, the inequities of Internet access were brought to light. Communities realized that adequate infrastructure wasn't reaching homes on the outskirts of towns and even within the cities, and the lack of family resources prevented students from accessing the World Wide Web. The educational community responded by deploying devices to specific groups of students, and for the many students, learning packets were created. The grab and go collection of activities were designed for students to practice skills already taught, but few new skills were taught, which expanded the learning gap. If every child had access to adequate connectivity, there would have been less of an interruption in the continuity of instruction.

The Internet access gap has been recognized by leaders in both the public and the private sectors. We were very fortunate to be able to partner with local businesses and faith based organizations to broaden connectivity for our students. Discussions are being held in state and federal governments on ways to fund a comprehensive response to this need. Private companies are reaching out to join the effort to bring access to all homes, in all communities, to help not just students but any person that is able to work from home in trying situations. As citizens we need to join the conversation and support legislation that would even the playing field. COVID-19 has taught all of us we can come through tough times by working together.





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**FORMERLY CREEK BRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL**

## FMU FREEZES TUITION, FEES FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW Submitted by FMU



Francis Marion University (FMU) will freeze tuition and fees for a second straight year.

The university's trustees affirmed that action at a regular meeting at FMU, and they also heard from FMU President Dr. Fred Carter about plans to resume classes on campus this fall.

FMU's fall semester is scheduled to begin Aug. 17. Most classes will be in person on the FMU campus,

but new policies and procedures will be in place to keep the entire FMU community safe during the continued threat from the coronavirus outbreak.

FMU was one of just a handful of universities in South Carolina that froze tuition last year and has long maintained the lowest net cost of attendance in the state. The recent vote assures that won't change.

Carter applauded the trustees' unanimous decision to affirm the freeze and said it shows FMU's commitment to its core values. "This university was created to make a great education accessible to the people of this region and the state, and to us accessibility has always meant affordability," said Carter. "It would be unconscionable for us to even think about raising tuition right now in these uncertain times when so many are struggling. Our trustees understand that. Many are our alumni. They know what we stand for."

FMU's undergraduate tuition remains at \$5,192 per semester for in-state students. The vast majority of FMU students are in-state students.

Carter also told the trustees the planning was proceeding apace for the re-opening of the campus in August. FMU was closed by the governor's

executive order in mid-March, and all classes have been held online since then. But that will change in the fall semester.

Traditional in-person instruction will resume in most classes. FMU will offer more online classes than in the past, and some classes will be "hybrids," which combine online and in-person instruction. Hybrid mixes will vary, depending upon the subject matter and the instructor.

Additionally, FMU will reduce classroom capacities and utilize some large spaces on campus not previously used for instruction as classroom space. These strategies combined will improve distancing during instructional time.

Capacity will also be reduced in FMU's residence halls. All residence halls will be open but more single rooms will be available. New dining procedures — more spacing and more takeout dining — will be in place as well.

FMU's more than 200 athletes will engage in new protocols for practice, training room visits and games. All are designed to ensure the safety of the athletes and athletic personnel.

Additional safety measures include increased sanitization on campus between classes and on weekends; contracting for enhanced campus health services through HopeHealth; contracting additional mental health counselors; and instituting a number of special procedures to safeguard the health of FMU athletes.

Details of the plans are being fine-tuned by university staff and will be made public soon.

Carter also noted that FMU is making a slight alteration to its normal fall schedule. The last day of classes will be the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Students will not return to campus after that for fall semester. Final exams will be given online or administered during one of the final class sessions. The rest of the schedule is unaltered.

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# EARN COLLEGE CREDIT AT FDTC WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL Submitted by FDTC



*The 2019 Darlington High School dual enrollment graduating class.*

Attending Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) will not only help you find your place in the workforce faster, but it will also save you tens of thousands of dollars during the process. In fact, if you take advantage of dual enrollment (Early College) classes while still in high school, you can be ready for employment upon high school graduation or have already completed a significant portion of your coursework toward your degree.

Dual enrollment is quite simple. If you qualify for the program, you can earn college credit while still in high school. In fact, you can earn so many college credit hours that it is possible to finish your entire freshman year of college while you are still attending high school. Thanks to the Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA) program and the SC Workforce & Industrial Needs Scholarship (SC WINS) at FDTC, a high school student can participate in dual enrollment courses for free if the classes are offered at their high school or on campus at FDTC. Students receiving LTA and SC WINS funding must also be enrolled in six or more credit hours (only two courses per semester), but LTA and SC WINS will also pay for more than two courses.

Many students that have completed their first year of college by taking dual enrollment courses have entered FDTC and completed their associate degree program in one year. A few students have even completed their entire associate degree program while in high school. Students who choose to attend FDTC after graduating high school still qualify for LTA and SC WINS funding at FDTC. However, those at four-year institutions do not qualify for funding.

"Each course in our dual enrollment program is taught by extremely qualified instructors," said Angie Hayek, FDTC's director of K-12 Relations. "While some courses are taught by high school teachers, who are also FDTC adjunct instructors, most courses are taught by FDTC full-time faculty."

FDTC's current full-time tuition is \$185 per credit hour. LTA funding will award \$110 per credit hour while SC WINS will award \$100 a credit hour plus a \$150 book allowance per semester for those who qualify. If a student meets all of the qualifications for both LTA and SC WINS, he or she can earn college credit for free while still in high school. High school graduates attending FDTC in their first and second years of college also qualify for LTA and SC WINS funding.

"The SC WINS and lottery funding together make going to FDTC very affordable," said FDTC interim president Edward Bethea. "These programs make a huge difference for South Carolinians struggling to afford a college education."

Ashley Griffin, a graduate of Wilson High School, was the first student from Florence 1 Schools (F1S) to graduate from FDTC's Early College Program. While Griffin was enrolled in the Early College Program, she lived in New England, attending the Boston Ballet School, and only came home from time to time. Thanks to online courses, she was able to complete all of her requirements and earn an associate in science degree at 17 years old.

"Online classes gave me the flexibility I needed, and they were rigorous," Griffin said. "This is important to me because, although I aspire to be a professional ballerina, I also plan to further my education with a

bachelor's degree in a health-related field and possibly go on to a medical program. It's hard to believe that I graduated with an associate in science degree at the age of seventeen. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity that allowed me to pursue my future dreams."

More than 10 students from Darlington County have graduated from the Early College programs with an associate degree.

FDTC offers an array of career pathways for high school students as well. High school students can pursue a pathway in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC); welding, industrial maintenance technology (IMT) or machine tool technology (MTT) through dual enrollment at FDTC. In the fall 2020 semester, FDTC plans on expanding to health science pathways as well.

FDTC offers many pathways to four-year institutions. Upon graduating or completing a pathway at FDTC, a student can often enter a four-year university with junior standing. By transferring credits from FDTC to a four-year school, students can save thousands of dollars in tuition costs. Working with your high school counselor will help you with the process of enrolling in classes that transfer to four-year institutions.

"The program offers a rigorous collegiate experience for students and a substantial financial savings for students and their parents," Hayek said. "Early College students have the opportunity to earn credits guaranteed to transfer to any public college or university within the state of South Carolina."

Students can check out the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center's website at [www.sctrac.org](http://www.sctrac.org) to see a current list of FDTC courses that will transfer to any public college or university in South Carolina.

This year, (between Darlington High School, Lake City High School and Wilson High School) more than 30 graduates of FDTC's Early College program are projected to graduate from the program. While Darlington High School and Wilson High School have produced graduates before, this will mark the first time that Lake City High School has ever had a graduate (projected 13) from the program.

In 2021, Mullins High School plans to see its first FDTC Early College Program graduates as well. In the fall of 2020, all F1S high schools (West Florence High School, Wilson High School and South Florence High School) will feature at least 25 students per cohort in the Early College program for the first time. This new opportunity will open the door for even more students to get involved in this unique opportunity.

So, how do you qualify for FDTC's Dual Enrollment and Early College Program? Early College students may start as early as the ninth grade and must meet all program requirements to ensure academic success.

A dual enrollment student must be a high school junior or senior, and the student must have approval from a parent and the high school. The student will then submit his/her SAT, ACT, or ACCUPLACER scores to FDTC. The final qualification is to submit proof of South Carolina residency.

For more information, please call the Dual Enrollment Program Office at 843-661-8025, or visit [www.fdtc.edu](http://www.fdtc.edu).



*The 2019 Wilson High School dual enrollment graduating class.*

# THE SIMT SUPPORTS LOCAL HEALTHCARE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Submitted by Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing and Technology



When the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread in mid-March, people from across the country jumped in to assist hospitals, nursing homes and other healthcare providers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and other supplies. One such group was the SiMT Additive Manufacturing team at Florence-Darlington Technical College.

Additive Manufacturing, also known as 3D printing, typically allows for the rapid development and manufacture of new products. Andrew Fox, the SiMT Additive Lab manager, was contacted by McLeod Health and MUSC-Florence regarding the printing and manufacture of face shields. SiMT Manufacturing manager Jonathan Melton's wife Denise works at McLeod and was able to quickly provide verification on the design of the shield. Soon, the entire Additive team was printing face shields and extender bands for masks. Fox ran a printer in his home office, and Steven Broach and Patrick Boska brought theirs from home while other SiMT team members began running the 3D printers in the Maker Space located in the Gould Business Incubator.

The SiMT team ran printers all hours of the day and on weekends and were able to provide PPE to both hospitals, as well as several nursing homes and dental offices, allowing them to remain open and

provide critical protection for the employees and clients.

According to Melton, "Every day we provide services to our local businesses, but it really hits home when you know you're helping to protect your family, friends and co-workers."

Tressa Gardner, associate vice president of the SiMT stated, "The SiMT exists to support our students, the college and our region's business and industry. We're thrilled that we were able to assist so



Face Shield

many of our graduates and the hospitals and businesses that have always supported us."

Dr. Mark Roth, VP of Manufacturing and Technology said, "Every day, members of the SiMT team step up to provide services to local business and industry, in support of the Pee Dee region and to fulfill the mission of the college. We're proud to help."



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## ZOOM AND CLAFLIN LAUNCH 5-YEAR PARTNERSHIP Submitted By Claflin University



**ORANGEBURG**-Zoom Video Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ: ZM) and Claflin University recently announced a commitment to a five-year strategic partnership. The video communications provider and Historically Black University have developed a multifaceted foundational program that represents \$1.2 million in educational and financial investments. Program components include internships, scholarships and curricula development.

A member of Zoom's product and technology leadership team will join the Claflin Computer Science and Mathematics Professional Advisory Board, and Aparna Bawa, Zoom chief executive officer, will join Claflin's Board of Trustees.

"I want to thank my colleague, Congressman Ro Khanna, whose relationship with Silicon Valley tech companies in his district and interest in supporting minority-serving institutions led to this exciting partnership between Zoom and Claflin University. In 2018, he joined me in South Carolina on a tour of HBCUs to learn more about their untapped talent and unmet financial needs. The resulting partnership between Claflin and Zoom will demonstrate the mutual benefits of corporate investments in minority-serving institutions and the profound impacts it can have on the students and the companies that help empower them," said Congressman James E. Clyburn, an HBCU graduate who represents Claflin University in Congress.

"I want to thank Democratic Whip Jim Clyburn for his leadership in helping bring tech opportunities across the country and to South Carolina. I saw his passion for this firsthand when he took me on a tour of his Congressional District. Together, we toured Claflin University. I'm so proud to see Zoom announce a \$1.2 million partnership over the next five years with Claflin," said Khanna.

"This partnership strengthens Claflin University's commitment to student success and our STEM agenda by providing scholarships, internships, and other career development initiatives," said Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack, Claflin University's ninth president. "Zoom's innovative technology has revolutionized video communications in industries and organizations across the globe. We are extremely grateful that Zoom selected Claflin for its first-ever partnership with a college or university, and we welcome Aparna Bawa, chief operation officer at Zoom, as the newest member of our Board of Trustees. We also express our highest appreciation to Congressman James Clyburn. His persistent support for Claflin and programs that enhance access to technology throughout South Carolina was critical in establishing this partnership."

"I am proud of this powerful new partnership between Zoom and Claflin University and humbled to join the Claflin Board of Trustees," said Bawa. "Zoom understands the historical, present and future importance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority serving institutions across the U.S. We are committed to supporting these institutions via innovative partnerships that are relevant, holistic and sustainable."





## TRINITY-BYRNES HONORS FACULTY MEMBERS



Bill Truman, "Love of Teaching Award" winner

**DARLINGTON**-Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School, the premier college preparatory school in the Pee Dee Region, recently honored two of its faculty members.

Each year, the board of trustees at Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School honors a teacher with the "Love of Teaching Award." The awardee is determined by votes cast from the student body and parents. The recipient this year was Bill Truman.

Truman joined Trinity-Byrnes in 2019 after 32 years of working as a data specialist in the computer technology field. He was president and head coach of the Florence Track Club from 2001-2015 and the founder and president of the Darlington Track Club from 2017-18. In addition to coaching, he was recognized by the United States Track and Field Association of South Carolina as Volunteer of the Year in 2011 and was awarded the National Youth Chair in 2015. Also in 2015, he was recognized for exemplary volunteer service by the city of Florence.

Truman, who is in his first year in the math department at Trinity-Byrnes, has brought a wealth of professionalism and experience to the classroom. He is a conscientious, dedicated and innovative educator who refuses to leave any student behind.

The "Love of Teaching" award honors a faculty member whose passion for teaching uniquely inspires his or her students. The faculty member embodies the school's motto, "Loyalty, Honor, Perseverance."

The faculty of Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School vote each year to determine winner of the "Teacher of the Year." The 2020 recognition went to Jessica Iseman.

"Teacher of the Year" is an award that honors teachers who have outstanding qualities

both in and outside of the classroom, an engaging teaching style, great communication skills with students and parents and demonstrate extensive subject knowledge.

Iseman, a member of the science faculty, earned her bachelor's in chemistry from the University of South Carolina where she also attended graduate school for organic chemistry. In addition to teaching, Iseman coordinates the school's prom, co-sponsors the National Honor Society, serves as the certified Apple educator and Google trainer, and was instrumental in the successful transition to distance learning this spring. Iseman will go on to represent the school in the SCISA Teacher of the Year search in 2021.

Both awards were presented on May 23 during the school's commencement.

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School is currently accepting applications for students entering grades 6-12. Please contact April Munn at [amunn@trinitybyrnes.org](mailto:amunn@trinitybyrnes.org) or 843-395-9124 for more information on middle school or high school.

Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School is a coeducational, non-discriminatory, college-preparatory day school serving students in middle and high school, located in Darlington, South Carolina. The school's mission is to operate exclusively as a college preparatory school of academic excellence, preparing its students intellectually, physically, and socially to be well-rounded citizens able to lead productive lives in a global society.



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Honor Graduate: James Laurie Lawson, Clemson University

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## JEBAILY LAW FIRM SERVING IN THE PEE DEE COMMUNITY Submitted By Kayla Jebaily Adams



*AHA Heart Walk*

Jebaily Law Firm has been a fixture of the community since 1969, priding itself in providing top quality care to clients all over the Pee Dee area. In addition to quality legal service, the Jebaily Law Firm family is dedicated to helping the community through service and involvement in community projects. Whether it's the American Heart Association Heart Walk, the Pecan Festival or various projects at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee, Jebaily Law Firm is there to lend its support.

Brothers Ron and George Jebaily have dedicated their lives to helping people, particularly in the Pee Dee area. Their parents, John and Sylvia Jebaily, moved the family to Florence in 1963 and quickly immersed themselves in the community. They taught their five sons about the importance of service, giving back and community comradery. These values have been seen in the firm's 50-year history. Over the years, Ron and George, along with the other firm partners, Rangeley Bailey and Brian Yost, and associate Suzanne Jebaily, have been a sponsor of many organizations and campaigns, including the American Heart Association, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area, Harvest Hope Food Bank, All 4 Autism, UNCF Masked Ball, End Distracted Driving, the Florence Area Humane Society's Bone-E-Fit, the South Carolina Pecan Festival, Colors of Cancer at McLeod Hospital, Miss Florence Teen Scholarship Pageant, Masterworks Choir, Red Wolves Baseball Team, St. Anthony's Catholic School Run for the Heroes, South Florence Booster Club and Volleyball Team and various events at Trinity Byrnes Collegiate School.

Over the past few months, in response to COVID-19, the firm has made an effort to target organizations that need the most support, specifically the Harvest Hope Food Bank and Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area. As Harvest Hope has been supplying parts of the community that find themselves food insecure, both George and Ron felt it was necessary



*Waccamaw Heart Walk*

to lend their support during this time when so many had been laid off from their jobs and unable to afford healthy and nutritious foods. George even spent time delivering over 700 meals to members of the community who needed it most, in addition to 300 homemade facemasks to protect individuals in the ongoing health crisis. The firm believes that one of the basic building blocks of small business in the Pee Dee is providing community support.

By reaching out to all parts of the community, it is able to show that it's a business that cares about more than just providing legal services. It cares about the community's wellbeing and sees it as part of its civic responsibility to do its part.

When Boys & Girls Clubs were significantly affected by school closures on March 13, forcing them to shut down their own Clubs and turn to finding other creative ways to serve their members, Jebaily Law Firm stepped in as one of their major sponsors for their virtual Club program, A Club Without Walls, and their 2020 summer programs. As the Clubs re-opened to kids in the summer, Boys & Girls had to make significant changes to their in-Club programming, which has put a great strain on their budget. Jebaily Law Firm helped offset some of

these costs by providing individual bags of activities and supplies for members as shared items among members cannot be used. This is just one of many projects the firm has been involved in with Boys & Girls Clubs. Other projects include the Pepsi Carolina Classic Basketball Tournament, where they have been the Score Table Sponsor for the past two years, the Lake City Boys & Girls Club mural painted in August of 2019, the Night of Hope auction and fundraiser for the Hartsville Boys & Girls Club and a regular sponsor of the Champions for Youth Tribute that honors a member of the community who has dedicated his or her time



*Free Library*

to helping kids in the Pee Dee.

In 2019, Jebaily Law Firm established the Ronald J. Jebaily Endowed Scholarship at Francis Marion University. Ron was the first in the family to go to college, and his parents couldn't have been more proud. A scholarship that was awarded to him on academic merit tremendously eased the financial burden of school and ultimately changed the trajectory of his college years. He has often thought back to that time, wondering what would have happened if he had not been given that opportunity. Ron's four younger brothers then followed in his footsteps, going to college to forge successful futures. Ron wanted to offer the same opportunity that was given to him to college students who are facing financial struggles as they try to put themselves through school. The requirements for the Ronald J. Jebaily Endowed Scholarship at Francis Marion University will be given to a first-generation college student with a need that has an interest in the legal professions.



*Pee Dee Heart Walk*

Jebaily Law Firm looks forward to continuing its tradition of helping the community through volunteerism, sponsorships and community leadership in addition to continuing to provide top-notch legal services to clients, whom it considers to be part of the Jebaily Law Firm family. Its 50-year history has been one filled with compassion, service and care. Ron, George, Rangeley, Brian, Suzanne and the rest of the firm are here to serve their community and find justice on behalf of their clients.

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# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER *by De'Angela Haynes*



Mayor Curtis Boyd

and recreation are some of his top goals besides beautification and clean up.

Beautification can be seen in the lifestyle of this great man. Not only does he care about making an impact in this Pee Dee Region through fitness, but he also cares about how the community looks in which he serves. In fact, he helped start the creation of a Fallen Officers Park. He stated, "I often get asked why I wanted to become mayor of Darlington. At first, my wife didn't want me to run for office, but as I told her many times, becoming mayor would give me the opportunity to share my faith and make a difference in our community. In every decision I make, it is improvement that I work towards and words I communicate, I always pray that Jesus would use it to share His love and light with others."



Darlington Park

Gyms, he has striven to make improvements within the towns where they could open facilities. With Darlington as his home, he has been committed to the beautification and clean up of our great city before he ever even thought of running for mayor.

Much of Boyd's investment in the community over the years has been with Jesus's command in mind. "In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus tells us that the greatest commands are to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself,'" Boyd said. "I have the honor of calling the people of Darlington my neighbors."

"This call to love is at the core of every project I work towards in our city. John 3:16 tells us, 'God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.' I know that God loved us so much that He sacrificed His son to save us, so I can't simply sit on the sidelines and talk about how much I love my city unless I am willing to put in the blood, sweat and tears to demonstrate it. I must sacrifice of my time and resources to make a positive impact for the people here—people from all races, backgrounds and beliefs."

"One of the recent Parks and Recreation projects that I am most

DARLINGTON-The phrase "Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder" first appeared in the 3rd Century in Greek, and it literally means that the perception of beauty is subjective. What one person finds beautiful, another may not. Mayor Curtis Boyd, certainly, majors in the area of beautification. He currently serves as mayor of Darlington County but is also the owner of Fitness World Gyms. Along with serving in these various realms of leadership, the trail project

excited to be working towards is a Sports Complex Darlington is developing on a 111 acre property on Harry Byrd Highway. The vision of this facility is not only to draw more people and economic opportunities to our city but also to invest into the children and families who live here by providing children from all walks of life with a safe and fun place to play sports and spend their childhood."



SC District 5 Champions

police officer who embodied what it means to protect and serve — Terrence Carraway. Local businesses (including his business, Fitness Worldwide Gyms) and individuals have come together to invest in the building of this memorial for our community. It will be a place where people can honor the South Carolina officers who lost their lives in the line of duty and also a space where family and youth can gather for picnics or even a game of basketball.



Sgt. Terrence Carraway Park

Boyd said that another project very near to his heart is the Sergeant Terrence Carraway: Fallen Officer Memorial Park on Main Street. This park is being built in memory of a friend, a Darlington resident and an honorable

Another goal for our city is to fully connect a walking trail — providing a safe and scenic view of Darlington.

He stated, "Parks and Recreation is one of the most revitalizing components to any town. As I continue to invest in and champion these projects in our city, I pray that Jesus will bless every resident of Darlington through these spaces. I pray that He will use

them to unify our residents, strengthen our families, and communicate to every man, woman, and child in our city that they matter and are loved by God." Isaiah 61:3 says "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes..." Boyd has proven that becoming mayor is not just some selfish ambition, but he delights in taking ugly situations and transforming them into beauty. He truly demonstrates that Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder!

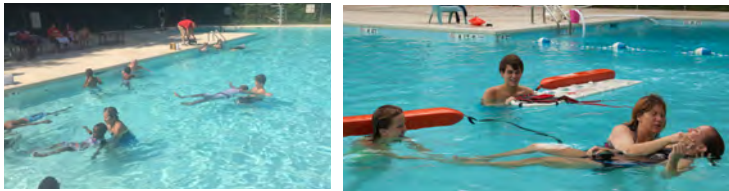


Sergeant Terrence Carraway: Fallen Officer Memorial Park

# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## DARLINGTON POOL OPEN FOR SUMMER FUN

Submitted by The City of Darlington



Photos are from past swimming lessons at the pool offered by the City of Darlington. More than 200 have benefited from these station-to-station classes since 2014. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and limited schedule, the City will not be holding such lessons this summer.

**DARLINGTON**-The City of Darlington opened the Gandy Pool for the season on July 8. Hours will be from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., weather permitting, on Wednesdays through Saturdays at 115 Gary St. The pool is open to the public, and the cost is \$1 for the day.

Concrete work has been completed, and the ADA wheelchair lift has been installed. Randy Weatherford and Poolwerx will staff the pool again this year. The City pool offers residents and visitors a good value to enjoy the summer outdoors.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the City asks those who may be ill or have been exposed to the virus not to enter the pool area. Patrons should maintain social distancing in and out of the water with those not living in the same household.

City pool rules:

- All children age 13 and younger must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older, and that adult must supervise the child 100 percent of the time.
- No adult may sign in more than two swimmers.
- No weak swimmers or non-swimmers allowed in the deep end of the pool.
- All children and adults who cannot swim must wear a wrist band identifying them as a non-swimmer.
- All swimmers must shower before entering the pool.
- When signaled, all swimmers must exit the pool immediately upon lifeguard's request.
- All swimmers who wish to swim in the deep end must be approved by the lifeguard before entering.
- No diapers allowed in the pool. Children must wear a swimmer's diaper if needed.
- All swimmers must wear swimsuits.

### Directions to the Gandy Pool

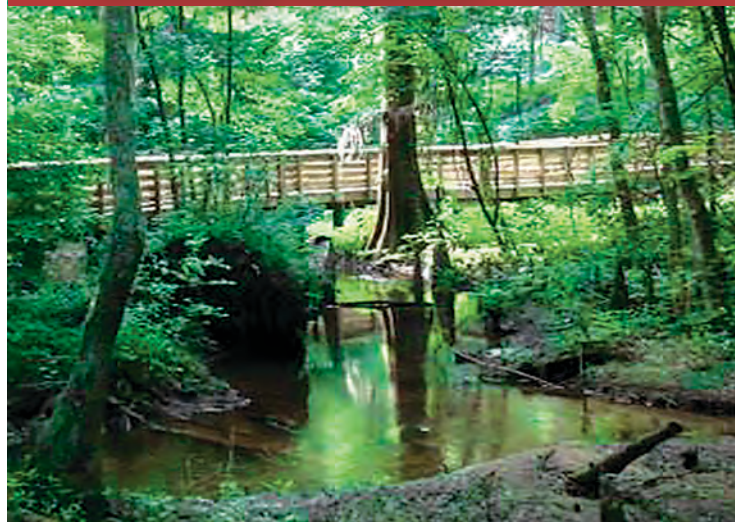
#### 115 Gary St., Darlington

From Hartsville (US 52 Bypass / US 401): Take S.C. 151 into Darlington. Continue on Pearl Street approximately 1 mile. Turn right at the light at Piggly Wiggly onto Edwards Avenue. In about 6/10th of a mile, the road ends in front of Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology. Turn right onto Chestnut Street. In about 1200 feet, take a left onto Lighty Street. Continue straight about 500 feet, and turn right into the parking lot on your right adjacent to the City Pool.

From Florence (I-95 & US 52 Business): Take U.S. 52 Business into Darlington. Continue on South Main Street approximately 1 mile. You will see a sign for Mayo School and a planted median at Chestnut Street. Turn left at Chestnut Street. On Chestnut, you will pass in front of Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology. In about 1200 feet, take a left onto Lighty Street. Continue on about 500 feet, and turn into the parking lot on your right adjacent to the City Pool.

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Darlington, SC

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[www.WilliamsonPark.org](http://www.WilliamsonPark.org)  
[www.DarlingtonSConline.com](http://www.DarlingtonSConline.com)

# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## PLATFORM CAMPSITES BOOST CAMPING ALONG LYNCHES RIVER Submitted by FCVB



*SC Revolutionary Rivers Paddling Trail*

The Friends of Revolutionary Rivers (FORevR) group has built a screened campsite platform on Lynchés River. Truly secluded and accessible only by water, the screened room ensures an open-air campsite free of forest critters.

The campsite concept was brought to the FOrEvR group by the National Park Service, following best practices of the Tar-Pamlico Water Trail in North Carolina. The project follows the overall mission of FOrEvR to protect and promote through active conservation, education and responsible use, the natural, historic and recreational resources of the SC Revolutionary Rivers National Recreation Trail along Lynchés Scenic River.

Thanks to fundraising efforts, the first platform campsite is complete and is already being rented by nature lovers. It was built by WC Dennis Construction and is located between Indigo Landing and Cockfield Landing around mile 38, which is only accessible by water. This first site was built on the property of Barry Frick, owner of RiverRat's Canoe Rentals and chairman of FOrEvR. "Lynchés River is amazing to paddle, with many people camping overnight to maximize the experience," states Frick.

The platform campsite has a wood frame, which is equipped with hooks inside to accommodate hammock sleeping bags (or people can simply sleep on the floor, which is far warmer than sleeping on earth). There is also a ring with a grill attached and a primitive enclosed bathroom

facility. These platform campsites also minimize the impact on the environment, as campers do not have to jeopardize vegetation and are provided an easy means to camp and dispose of trash.

FORevR has plans to build campsites every 10 miles along the SC Revolutionary Rivers trail. Pee Dee Tourism Commission is sponsoring the second site which will soon be built approximately 20 miles downstream from the first. Platform campsites can be booked for \$25 per night by visiting [forevr.us](https://www.forevr.us).



*Pictured is the first of six planned campsites alongside the SC Revolutionary Rivers Paddling Trail. The campsite, accessible only by water, includes a screened-in room, open porch, primitive restroom and a fire pit. The campsite can be reserved for \$25 per night by visiting <https://www.forevr.us/>. Photos provided by Christopher Neal Photography.*

Keep up with Friends of Revolutionary Rivers on Facebook, and to be a part of the Friends group, contact Barry Frick at RiverRat's at 843-389-4656 or Jade Perkins at the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau at 843-664-0330, or email [jade.perkins@visitflo.com](mailto:jade.perkins@visitflo.com).

Florence County has been awarded a grant through the National Park Service to develop a county-wide master trails map highlighting accessible trails open to the public.

The map will include municipalities and unincorporated areas throughout Florence. Individuals interested in participating in a friends group for this project, which will highlight walking, biking, and paddling trails, may contact the Florence Convention and Visitors Bureau at 843-664-0330.

## South Carolina's REVOLUTIONARY RIVERS



### Don't just read history, paddle history.

[visitflo.com/revolutionary-rivers](https://www.visitflo.com/revolutionary-rivers)

# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## LITTLE PEE DEE PARK IS OPEN AND IMPROVING *by Les Echols*



*Emily Nicholson*

and maintaining quality of life and in contributing to the physical, economic, and environmental well-being of communities. Diversity Works had an opportunity to catch up with one of those dedicated professionals.

Emily Nicholson is the park manager at Little Pee Dee State Park in Dillon. On her seven-year journey into her current role, Nicholson has worked at other parks, including Oconee State, Santee and Little Pee Dee.

Due to an unforeseen natural disaster, Little Pee Dee State Park, which is seen as a great asset to the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina, did not

**DILLON** - July is National Park and Recreation Month with this year's theme being "We Are Parks and Recreation." Parks and recreation professionals consistently showcase their selfless work, promoting the benefits of healthy, vibrant communities and recognizing the importance of parks and recreation in establishing

have water in the lake for a few years. "When Hurricane Matthew hit in 2016, it took out the dam at the lake...completely wiped it out," explained Nicholson. "It took several years to get all of the repairs done and get back up to 100 percent, which hurt our visits. People wanted to be lakefront and also wanted camping, kayaking and canoeing, which they could not do while we were down. People are super happy now," she concluded.

The next step is improving campsites and repaving the park entrance, which Nicholson stated could stand to be replaced. According to her, "Improvements are a work in progress at our 835 acre park, and we are always looking to be and look better."

Unfortunately, with the advent of COVID-19, the park now faces a different set of challenges. On-site vents and programs have had to be cancelled or postponed in order to adhere to and comply with social distancing guidelines.

Emily Nicholson is originally from the town of Seneca in upstate South Carolina. She attended Southern Wesleyan University in Central, S.C. where she graduated with Bachelor of Arts in recreation and leisure.



*Little Pee Dee State Park Sign*



*Natural Trail*



*Spillway Bridge*

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Attractions



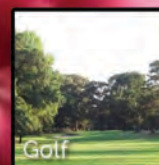
Camping



Top Events



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## MAJORS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS IN PARKS & REC Articles by Ta'Meeka Epps



Jennifer Majors

**COWARD**-Park and Recreation Month is celebrated every July across the country in every community, big or small. This year's theme for the month-long celebration is "We are Parks and Recreation." This theme was chosen to highlight the diversity of park and recreation professionals and showcase their selfless work. During this month, there is no better way to celebrate than by

lifting up the people who make it happen all year long through their service of others.

Parks and recreation provide intrinsic aesthetic, environmental and recreation benefits to the communities in which they belong. They offer a source of positive economic benefits and enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in home buyers and workers to the area and attract retirees.

Coward, known as a quiet and peaceful place, is a small town in Florence County and home to Lynches River County Park. This park is in the Pee Dee Region and is located on Lynches River. The park encompasses 676 acres of land surrounded by towering cypress trees and sand hills, providing a variety of vegetation and wildlife for all outdoor enthusiasts to explore. At the helm of the team providing world class service to the patrons of Lynches River County Park is Jennifer Majors.

Majors' official title is park superintendent. She also holds the certified parks and recreation professional (CPRP) certification, which is obtained through the National Recreation and Parks Association. The CPRP certification is the national standard for all parks and recreation professionals who want to be at the forefront of their profession. Attaining the CPRP designation shows you have met education and experience qualifications while illustrating your commitment to the profession as well as your knowledge and understanding of key concepts within parks and recreation.

As the superintendent, Majors is responsible for planning, organizing and directing overall operations of the park. She also has the responsibility of management, leadership, preservation, interpretation, maintenance and safety of Lynches River County Park, which provides multi-use recreation and overnight accommodation services and facilities.

Majors has been the park superintendent of Lynches River County Park since August 2017. However, she has been employed with Florence County Parks and Recreation for 10 years having celebrated the milestone anniversary in April 2020. When Majors is not at Lynches River County Park you might find her over in the Biology Department of Francis Marion University where she is a part-time instructor imparting knowledge to those eager or not so eager to learn.

Her journey to her current career path begun in her youth and has blossomed and sprouted into a mighty oak tree. "My parents instilled a love of nature and wildlife at an early age. I grew up just outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park, in Western North Carolina where we camped and hiked in our free time," Majors explained. "Because of my love of nature and the environment, I got my undergrad degree in environmental science and my master's degree in



Lynches River County Park

environmental policy and management concentrating in natural resources. My master's program included a month in Gweru, Zimbabwe, where I did research with African lions for my thesis. I feel like it was always a very natural progression to work in the environmental-related field and have been in the environmental/natural resources industry for more than 20 years now."

Majors and her service-oriented staff embody the spirit of the theme "We are Parks and Recreation." They are always looking for ways to bring people to the park to enjoy the programs and activities planned. Their reward is seeing the enjoyment on the faces of the patrons as they experience the park and all it has to offer.



Canopy Walk

The team's resilience and creative spirit shined through during the COVID-19 pandemic as they created innovative ways to ensure members of the community were still able to enjoy services offered by the park. They offered virtual summer camps June 15-17 and June 29-July 3. The camps were offered free of charge and were open to the public. Lynches River County Park will also offer one in-person camp, which is open for one adult and one child to participate together. The Amazing Park Race camp will be held July 13-17. To register or for additional information about Lynches River County Park, please visit the Environmental Discovery Center website at [www.lynchesriverpark.com](http://www.lynchesriverpark.com), or call the office at 843-389-0550.

## WELCOMING YOU TO THE SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG HEART



Lauren Baker

**HARTSVILLE**-The tourism industry offers an important benefit on the local, state and national level. It boosts the economy in its role as a commercial activity, driving the demand and growth for all the other industries. The industry's contributions are not solely economic. They also generate additional employment, revenues and are a significant contributor to growth and development of an area.

Tourism, although not directly tied with parks and recreation, is an essential component within a community and therefore deserves to be in the spotlight during National Park and Recreation Month. Hartsville's unofficial slogan reads, "A small town with a big heart." This South Carolina jewel is flooded with southern hospitality, and when you visit, you are sure to be greeted with a smile and a hello.

Director of Tourism and Communications for the City of Hartsville is Lauren Baker. As director for the city, her duties and responsibilities vary from day to day. "I have the honor of being able to promote our wonderful city to visitors from afar that are interested in what Hartsville has to offer while reminding residents about the many things which they love about their hometown of Hartsville."

Baker's office is located in Hartsville's Visitor Center, the key to your Hartsville. This downtown office allows her immediate access to greet so many of the downtown guests and point them in the direction of local



# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## WELCOMING YOU CONT'D



Lauren and children from the community

places to eat, shop and explore. "I absolutely love getting to have conversations with people who visit our wonderful city to find out what brought them here and help them personalize their stay to fit their needs and wants while they are visiting Hartsville," exclaimed Baker.

The downtown aesthetics are lovely with pretty brick hardscaping, manicured flower beds and beautiful aged trees. The rich history of Hartsville is an easy sell to help promote the town, ensuring visitors return time and

time again. Hartsville is also home to Sonoco (a Fortune 500 company), Coker College and the Governor's School for Math and Science.

Prior to Baker accepting the role as director, she served as the City's public information officer. "While I still hold the responsibility of information officer, I am so thankful for the opportunity to expand the role to incorporate more interaction with visitors of Hartsville."

Baker has been employed with the City of Hartsville for nearly two years, and she has carried out the responsibilities of director of tourism for a year. Her department is not classified as parks and recreation. Still, she works closely with the department to ensure its facilities are promoted throughout the city and to ensure tournament guests enjoy the experience while staying in their beautiful city.

In addition, Baker has always had a passion for helping others. Working for a municipal government has proven to be a very rewarding experience allowing her to build a career while being driven by a heart of service. "Whether I am helping visitors plan a trip, tournament or outing to our city or helping residents enjoy their time in Hartsville with people or activities, each experience is different but equally rewarding. There is just something special about the feeling that you get when someone's eyes light up as they realize how much fun they will have with family or friends while in Hartsville. I am so proud to work for a city that value's a high quality of life for residents and visitors alike."

Tourism is so vital to the community of Hartsville because it helps sustain the local businesses that have made the small town home. The city limits of Hartsville consist of just over 7,000 residents, but their businesses service so many people outside of the city, and that is due to the strength of the community in the region and throughout the state.

Hartsville is known as a welcoming and vibrant town, which is what tourists value most about it. It serves as a getaway from their life but has such a strong hometown feel. The people you meet along the streets always greet you with a smile. Before COVID-19, you may even be greeted with a handshake or a hug from a stranger that made you feel like family. These are all important aspects of the community that help draw in tourists and keep them coming back year after year seeking more.



Byerly Park Playground

Lauren Baker was born and raised in Bishopville. She has recently purchased a home in Hartsville and is now officially a resident of the beautiful city. For more information about programs and events, such as the Pickle Play, offered in Hartsville, visit [www.harstvilleesc.gov](http://www.harstvilleesc.gov).

## HARTSVILLE AS AN INCUBATOR AND FORUM

by Les Echols



Suzy Moyd

**HARTSVILLE**-With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic creating change in protocols and how we do business, development continues to be a vital aspect of our communities. We caught up with Suzy Moyd, executive director of Main Street Hartsville. A North Carolina native, Moyd spoke passionately about development, growth and event in Hartsville.

**DW:** Tell us a little about yourself.

**SM:** I have been the executive director for Main Street Hartsville for the past seven years. Originally from Winston-Salem, I'm a Tarheel who met a boy on the beach and followed him home to Hartsville, where we have lived on a historic farm and raised three incredible kids for the past 27 years. My degree from UNC-CH is in journalism and advertising, and helping small businesses is my passion. I've owned several businesses and worked for several marketing firms.

**DW:** Tell us about your position and what it entails as it pertains to the development of Hartsville.

**SM:** Hartsville is a Nationally Accredited Program, and we have enjoyed helping over 50 new businesses open in our downtown. Walking the block and listening to merchants and restaurant owners, and possibly connecting them to help each other, is the best part of my day. Reaching out to potential new businesses and touring new business hopefuls around our downtown is always a great way to spark economic development, and I love seeing the energy in the eyes of entrepreneurs.

**DW:** What are some changes and adjustments you have had to make with COVID-19?

**SM:** In May and June we had a drive through service set up at our farmers market, which served many, specifically the elderly. Citizens were able to drive through for produce needs. This turned out to be a valuable service to our community at a time when there was limited access to grocery stores because of the pandemic.

**DW:** How do diverse and inclusive events contribute to a robust community?

**SM:** While events like our farmers market and downtown block parties are not the main focus of my position, they are a good way to build our community, and give us a forum for gathering together over a cup of coffee, while enjoying live music, bubbles and hula hoops. Many people enjoy coming into our downtown on golf carts or pushing strollers or walking dogs. I think events are successful when they engage a diverse age-group, including students from Coker University and SCGSSM, along with our local Hartsville High School. Events act as a forum for people to talk about their hopes and hobbies and sometimes act as an incubator to great ideas.



# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## LEADING AN ESSENTIAL TEAM IN THE COMMUNITY *by Ta'Meeka Epps*



*Victoria Nash*

A recreation department helps to develop a culture of physical wellbeing, mental health and nutritional education in a city. With intelligent programming and effective community outreach, a recreation center can be a central component to enact change at the community level. Recreational services provided by a city are a reflection of the quality of life within a community. As such, those services are often cited as one of the most important factors in the perception of how livable

communities are.

The City of Florence Recreation Services Department is comprised of 16 full-time employees and eleven part-time employees. At the helm of the City of Florence Recreation Services is Victoria Nash, serving as interim recreation manager.

Nash was born in Manning and raised in Summerton, which is a rural town in Clarendon County. She now resides in Florence, where she is able to combine her joy of recreation, which she has enjoyed since her youth, and her desire to serve. "I've always wanted to serve others which is what brought me to work at the City of Florence at the recreation department. I've always held an occupation that served the community in some capacity."

In her position as the City of Florence interim recreation manager, Nash's responsibilities include but are not limited to providing direction, leadership and oversight to the city's recreational and community health and fitness programs. She facilitates the development of strategy and policy for the department and ensures the city's mission, core values and goals are incorporated into activities and services. She also performs a variety of administrative, supervisory and professional duties in the management of recreation services for the city. Nash has been employed by the City of Florence Recreation Services Department for approximately four years. She possesses a wealth of knowledge in recreational services.

A leader is only as strong as the team he or she leads. Nash and her team are committed to being essential to the community. "We meet weekly to discuss how we can make our community a better place for the citizens. We provide resources and services to the public for leisure and entertainment. We will continue to do this while listening to the members of the community to keep Florence moving forward."

The City of Florence Recreation Services Department offers a wide variety of programs and classes in order to enhance and enrich the lives of youth, teens and senior adults. Throughout the year the department offers afterschool programs, spring

break camp, summer camp, Thanksgiving dinners, awards banquets and many more family events: "Our Afterschool Program allows staff to assist over 120 kids throughout the school year. The Spring Break Camp offers 165 kids a chance to participate in games, programs and trips. The department hosts 270 kids during the eight-week summer camp. These kids enjoy weekly trips, games and activities. We also provide a vast array of programs and activities to the adult population.



*Victoria Nash and staff*

Camps, programs, arts and craft activities and fitness classes are all offered to throughout the year to adults. Our recreation department has over 520 seniors that actively participate in activities specifically designed for this unique population."

One recent initiative Nash and her team implemented brought vegetable gardens to the communities, which beautified and nourished it. "We planted vegetable gardens, which are located throughout our communities." Mid March was the start of the campaign to grow vegetable gardens. The team used onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, okra, squash, beans and various herbs for their first crop. "These vegetables are now coming to harvest and are free for the community."

This initiative is forward thinking and is one of several examples of the excellent programs provided by the City of Florence Recreation Department. For more information about the services and programs offered by Victoria Nash and her team, visit [www.cityofflorenceathletics.com](http://www.cityofflorenceathletics.com).

## Week of Wellness



Mental  
& Emotional  
Wellbeing

SEPT 11



Environment  
& Culture

SEPT 12



Physical  
Activity &  
Movement

SEPT 13



Fulfillment  
& Purpose

SEPT 14



Food &  
Nutrition

SEPT 15

# Celebrating Our Parks, Recreation & Tourism

## MAINTAINING FLORENCE'S PARKS & FIELDS

by Anna Bowman



*James Matthews - Facilities/Turf Management Supervisor*

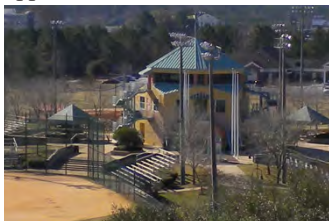
James Matthews has been the Facilities/Turf Management supervisor for the City of Florence Parks and Recreation Department for the past 7½ years.

His love for the outdoors led him to pursue a degree in turf management from Horry-Georgetown Technical College. "After working in sales for several years, right out of college, my employer was acquired by a larger company, and lay-offs were eminent," he said. Instead of waiting for the inevitable,

he took full control of his future. "I used that opportunity to try something else. I wanted to be outside. I had worked in lawn maintenance and landscaping growing up and while in college and as a hobby after college. It was something that I had always enjoyed. The golf industry was booming and there were a lot of turf-related job opportunities. So I left the company I was working for and went back to school full time while working at a golf course. I earned my degree and began growing grass!"

Before joining the staff at the Parks and Recreation Department, he was the golf course superintendent at The Country Club of South Carolina. Additionally, he operated his own turf services company, doing contract work for smaller golf courses and some homeowners. His exceptional work ethic with former area employers was the reason he was chosen as the Facilities/Turf Management supervisor.

The maintenance team works out of the Public Works Department as a part of the Beautification and Facilities Division. Matthews supervises the grounds maintenance of all city parks facilities as well as sports turf management for all city athletic facilities, which includes mowing, trimming, pruning, and removal of shrubbery as well as fertilization/pesticide application and aerification, among other maintenance responsibilities.



*Freedom Florence Complex*

The current staff that Matthews supervises is comprised of a 13-member team that maintains 13 parks and 40 athletic fields with more planned for the near future. He said, "We also maintain the Rail Trail, which is the city's network of hiking/biking/jogging trails. There is also a mountain bike course nearing

completion. There are approximately 25 members of the streets maintenance and beautification teams that are in our division that we work with regularly. We also help on neighborhood revitalization projects with the Community Services Division."

Matthews and athletic director, Tim Wilson, communicate regularly to coordinate activity schedules with maintenance practices. Wilson, in his role as athletic director, is to set up leagues and schedule activities and Matthews' team provides a facility that is in as good a condition as possible so each participant can enjoy whatever sport they are playing and are able to learn and compete on a safe, well-conditioned playing surface. The surrounding environment must also be comfortable and enjoyable for parents and fans as well.

Matthews and his wife, Marla, are the parents of three sons: Cole, 25; Ethan, 20; and Mason, 16. The family attends Hoffmeyer Road Baptist Church, and love spending time on Lake Wateree along with their extremely spoiled Boston terrier, Eli. A native of Lake City, Matthews is a graduate of Francis Marion University with a degree in English and mass communications. The Matthews family resides in Florence.

## MEET THE CITY OF FLORENCE'S ATHLETICS STAFF



*Timothy Wilson*

Timothy Wilson has been the athletic director for the City of Florence Parks and Recreation Department for the past 2½ years. A native of Greenville, N.C., he is a 2001 graduate of High Point University with a degree in business administration. He coached on the collegiate level as the Assistant Women's Basketball coach at Western Carolina University, and in 2010, Wilson, became a member of the Women's Basketball coaching staff at Francis Marion University.

As the athletic director for the City of Florence Parks and Recreation, the department has continued to thrive under his supervision. Wilson said the most exciting aspect of his job is that it changes day to day. "I work closely with each of our volunteer boards to assist them in making each league successful and to provide guidance from the city's standpoint," he explained. "This includes, but [is] not limited to registering participants, creating game schedules, making sure safety guidelines are followed, [and] meeting with coaches and parents, if situations arise."

He is also responsible for supervising the athletics staff and overseeing the athletic budget. But one of the most important perks of his job, he explained, is the fun aspect of getting to watch games and seeing the kids participate and have a good time. "I also work daily with developing the sports tourism market in Florence by actively recruiting tournaments to come to the city."



*Dr. Eddie Floyd Tennis Center*

The City of Florence has seven athletic facilities: Dr. Eddie Floyd Tennis Center, Freedom Florence Sports Complex, Pearl Moore Basketball Complex, Florence Soccer Complex, Maple Park Baseball Park, McLeod Park Baseball Park and

Northside Baseball Park.

He stated, "We have a great Athletics/Sports Tourism Department staff that works hard to ensure everything is successful." The following are the outstanding staff:

- Charvis Brown oversees the Florence Soccer Complex and the activities of the individual youth leagues.
- Tony Nesmith oversees the Pearl Moore Basketball Center and Adult Basketball League and assists with the activities of the youth leagues.
- Rob Hill is the director of tennis and manages the Dr. Eddie Floyd Tennis Center and the youth/adult tennis programs. He also assists with the sports tourism and schedules tournaments. Alexandra Morillo and Laszlo Leiter also assist with the day-to-day operations.
- Rocky Rietkovich is responsible for the Freedom Florence Sports Complex. He oversees the adult leagues at Freedom and works with the sports tourism aspect by scheduling softball/baseball tournaments at the complex.
- Alex Holiday and Symone Bennett have established a strong gymnastics program.
- Mark Laug, Andy Jones and Dane Glass are the grounds/maintenance crew.

"I believe the City of Florence's Parks and Recreation Department gives residents a safe release from life that we all desire," said Wilson.

Timothy Wilson and his wife, Karah, are the parents of Bailee Wilson, 20, and Drew Wilson, 10. The family attends New Spring Church. For additional information about the City of Florence's Parks and Recreation Department, contact via phone at 843-667-0920.

## FRAA ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS Submitted by FRAA

Since 1997, the Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) has awarded 61 Florence County students with the prestigious Betty Ann Darby Scholarship. This year three more students have been added to the list of deserving recipients. They are Jaydon Wright, Klya Moses and Kara Snowden.



Jaydon Wright

**Jaydon Wright**, a recent graduate of West Florence High School, was accepted into Winthrop University. He has an extensive list of school activities he has been involved in including WFHS Marching Band, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, Club Knight Nation, Teacher Cadet Program, South Carolina Winds Ensemble, USC Band Clinic and Conductors Symposium and Furman University Band Orchestra Camp. He

was also awarded SCBDA All State Honor Band all three of his high school years. His involvement in the community includes as a participating member of Coker University Band, Florence Youth Symphony Orchestra and Florence 1's Artistic and Musically Exceptional. His immediate goal is to receive a Bachelor of Science in music education and later a master's degree. His ultimate career goal is to become an elementary school music teacher or band director at the middle school level. In regards to his talent and future goals, Wright states, "[I've] always found enjoyment from music itself. My inspiration to teach comes from the educators that I have had throughout my time as a student. My passion for music is what drives me to do more and succeed in my musical career."



Kara Snowden

**Kara Snowden** is a graduate of South Florence High School who plans to attend Berklee College of Music in the fall in order to study commercial music. Snowden has participated in South Florence High School Choir Concert and Show Choir concerts, band, dance and theatre and was a member of National Honors Society and Beta Club. Snowden's ultimate career goal is performing as a singer-songwriter. She has also written

and performed her first song, "Pray." Snowden's first encounter with the arts was an audition for seventh grade honor choir: "Since that audition I've been involved with the arts and continue to be involved in the arts because I love the arts. It's what keeps me going," she gleams.



Kayla Moses

**Kayla Moses** plans to attend Furman University. Moses recently graduated from the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities (SCGSAH). Her experience includes performing with the Greenville County Young Artist Orchestra, First Presbyterian Church Chamber Orchestra, Florence Youth Symphony Orchestra, SCGSAH Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra and SCGSAH Wind Ensemble. Moses was



Florence Regional Arts Alliance

also elected SCGSAH Senior Class vice president. Moses has always had a love of music. Her acceptance into the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities solidified that music was her future. She credits, "music

teachers, band directors, clinicians, and mentors for teaching me the joy of music. I would not be where I am if it were not for the educators who pushed me along my path." This experience decided her music education career choice. Commenting on this study choice, Moses says, "The classical world is in great need of more musicians of color. One of my goals is to give back to the African American community and bring the joy and education of music to those in the African American community and everyone else."

The Betty Ann Darby Scholarship Program is named in honor of one of South Carolina's most distinguished music educators. A former member of the South Carolina Music Educator's Hall of Fame, Darby served Florence Public School District One for 39 years as a much beloved and highly revered music administrator and music teacher.

This year the Betty Ann Darby Scholarship Program awarded two \$1,000 scholarships and one \$500 to graduating seniors who will be pursuing advanced academic or professional degrees in an arts discipline or in arts education. To be considered, a senior's primary residence must be in Florence County or be graduating from a Florence County public or private high school.

The Betty Ann Darby Scholarships are merit scholarships awarded predominantly on the basis of demonstrated talent, passion for the arts and intention to pursue a career in an arts discipline or in arts education. They are made possible by the generous support from Honda of South Carolina to the Florence Regional Arts Alliance. For more information on this program, visit the Florence Regional Arts Alliance at [www.florenceartsalliance.org](http://www.florenceartsalliance.org), or contact the director, Sandy Cook, at 843-407-3092 or by email: [director@florenceartsalliance.org](mailto:director@florenceartsalliance.org).



# Artist Appreciation

## AN ARTIST WITH INFINITE GOD-GIVEN GIFTS by Les Echols



Wilbert "Infinite" Rice

From longevity to range and quality of work, many factors define what we regard as a great artist. Artist interpretation is often a broad representation of people, places and values that move them. There are few artists in South Carolina with the talent, skills and range of Wilbert "Infinite" Rice. From murals to portraits to logos, he has a diverse range of skills and a vast body of work that perfectly complements his humble personality. We had an interview with "Infinite" to find out more about this gem in the Florence community.

**DW:** Thank you for joining us. Tell us a little about yourself.

**WR:** My name is Wilbert Rice, and I'm affectionately known as Infinite AKA Doc Divine by family, friends and clients. I'm an artist, and I live in Florence, S.C. I grew up in Columbia, S.C. and eventually moved to Florence back in 2001. I opened a clothing store named Mekqahouse (pronounced Mecca House) in downtown Florence at 109 N. Dargan St. In my store, I had trending fashions and customized items that I designed with my artwork along with books, oils, African jewelry and a healthy helping of positive culture. Mekqahouse started gaining a buzz for customizing sneakers, doing paintings-drawings and logos. Since I was young, I've always been drawing, so it came natural to me. Later in life, I learned that I have a passion for writing as well. I term them as my God-Given gifts.

**DW:** You have a diverse range of genres, from paintings to logos. Tell us about your art and how you are inspired.

**WR:** My inspiration in art and writing comes from my imagination and creative spirit on how I can help build a perfect world through subtle suggestion in my art. So, to me, art is like a blueprint or instruction manual. Instructions often require you to gather your tools to complete the task at hand. The tools that I incorporate in my art are the use of primary shapes, colors and numbers that create rhythm and pattern. I'm drawn to texture, contrast and exaggerated realism that can eventually be achieved in one's life.



"Infinite" painting of Joe Frazier

**DW:** How does art translate into economics?

**WR:** For me, art translates into economics by way of services. I've learned through my years of business that the people I catered to also had the dream and desire to have their own businesses. In business, one of the things that makes you get noticed quicker are iconic logos accompanied by a strong slogan. So I've carved a niche for myself by creating concepts and designs that utilize art in as many practical ways possible, from logo and slogan to uniforms and

merchandise to websites and social media. Another way is through community mural projects where I get donations for my service, portrait drawings and paintings. I have my own personal brand that I have been building called NUBEUZ (pronounced "New Be Us"). From me building my brand has become another service that I provide for others to build their brands.

**DW:** What would you tell up-and-coming artists?

**WR:** The advice I have for artists that are on their path is to not overthink things, learn as much as you can in areas that interest you, and don't box yourself in. Give yourself room to grow through freedom of expression, and then you'll see how the environment responds to your work, and that will open doors for future work.

**DW:** Tell us about the Ed Robinson and Fred Jolly mural and what they



"Infinite" standing between the mural he painted of Florence's finest, the late Bobby Jolly and Ed Robinson

meant to Florence.

**WR:** Well, the Ed and Fred mural came about by way of local DJ "VooDoo Child" reaching out to me to participate in a community artist project in Florence. I was excited about the project and contemplating my subject when I decided to ask my art comrade "Jason Best" his opinion.

He told me that I should paint something that had sentimental value to the communities in Florence. That is when the idea of the late Ed Robinson popped in my head because I vividly remember how active Ed Robinson was in the communities, on the news and at city council...Ed was a stand-up City Councilman, and the community loves him. So, I painted Ed, and that created a buzz with all the people that loved him. Shortly after I painted Ed, another community pillar, Mr. Fred Jolly, passed away. Ed Robinson and Fred Jolly were very good friends. Fred Jolly was over the Weed & Seed in North Florence and was very involved in the community with everything from helping people with their living conditions and legal matters to helping guide the youth in a positive direction. Ed Robinson and Fred Jolly were neighborhood heroes, so it was inevitable for me to paint them together. One day I hope to have lived up to their achievements in helping the community to grow in a positive light.

**DW:** Anything else you want to add?

**WR:** I am an artist that is at your service. Feel free to contact me for all your artistic needs and consultation: Infinite, 843-230-3491, or Facebook--Wilbert Rice. Thanks for allowing me to share my insight and experience. Hopefully, it will inspire like I've been inspired to do something that you are born to do...stay positive...stay blessed. Peace! "Infinite Allah" W. Rice

## 2020 EXCELLENCE IN ARTS AWARDS



The Florence Regional Arts Alliance would like to thank the administration, staff and faculty of Florence County public high schools for helping us recognize and support the young artists in

our community by presenting to them the Excellence in Arts Education Awards. These awards are presented in conjunction with Honda Of South Carolina.

Students were nominated on the basis of their superior achievement as well as for their participation in school and community arts activities. It is our hope that such awards will encourage recipients to make their artistic pursuits a life-long endeavor.

We, Honda of South Carolina and the Florence Regional Arts Alliance, were pleased to present the awards to the following recipients in their respective disciplines:

**Band:** Maleyah Burroughs, Timmonsville H.S.; James Jaydon Wright, West Florence H.S.; and Tripp Diggs, Wilson H.S.

**Chorus:** Joshua Barrett, West Florence H.S., and Kara Snowden, South Florence H.S.

**Drama:** Olivia Hauer, West Florence H.S., and D'Mawn Williams, South Florence H.S.

**Dance:** Hailey Rodgers, Hannah-Pamplico H.S.

**Orchestra:** Alex Stepp, West Florence H.S. and Bishop Ridenhour, South Florence H.S.

**Visual Art | Media Art:** Alexis Pierce, West Florence H.S.; Madelyn C. Parrot, Wilson H.S.; Madison Gregory, Hannah-Pamplico H.S.; Chloe Powell, Johnsonville H.S.; Meredith Baxley, South Florence H.S.; Aubrey Crawford, South Florence H.S.

## THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ART OF SWING DANCING by Adalia Ellis



Larry Falck

Social dancing is a powerful tool for building community, wellness and self-care. Florence is fortunate to have multiple social dancing groups, and one of them is the Florence Swing Dance Association led by Larry Falck. Pre-COVID 19, they met two Saturdays per month in the social hall of Beth Israel Congregation on Park Ave. Falck would start the night off with a dance lesson after which people were encouraged to stick around for dancing and socializing.

“There are many positives to dancing,” states Falck. “I’ve made friends from all over the country dancing. It’s a social dance, so besides dancing, you also socialize at the dances. There’s a friendly competition. If you see someone doing a move, you can go up and ask how to do the move, then make it your own. All your problems can drop away when you’re dancing. You’re there to dance and have fun. Your politics, race, age, sexuality don’t matter on the dance floor. The swing dance community is all-inclusive. It also doesn’t matter who learns to lead or follow. Anyone can learn either. And, it’s wonderful exercise! It really gets your heart beating.”

Falck didn’t grow up dancing and, actually, was afraid of doing it in public. In high school, he began doing theater where he learned choreographed dance routines. It was when he was in college that he became comfortable publicly dancing non-choreographed dances. He first got involved with swing dancing in the late 90s to early 2000s when there was a resurgence of swing. He and his then wife learned some ballroom dancing, which included East Coast Swing. “We would also go to the House of Blues in Myrtle Beach on Friday nights. They had swing dancing that started at midnight. We would stay until around 3 a.m. and then drive back to Florence.”

Falck has been endeavoring to build a swing-dancing scene in Florence since the early 2000s when he tried teaching lessons at a local

club. However, it didn’t catch on initially, and he got away from dancing for a while. Some years later, while watching unrelated video clips and when a Lindy Hop video popped up he was reminded of how much he enjoyed swing dance. “I asked around my group of friends if they would like to learn as a group. So, in February 2016, a group of us got together to start to learn. I was able to look around the Internet and find other swing dance groups in South Carolina. After a while, we decided to become the Florence Swing Dance Association and open the lessons and dances to anyone who wanted to come.”

It hasn’t been easy to grow a dance “scene.” None of the people involved are full-time swing dance instructors, so they can’t have a regular schedule of dances. They mostly dance two to three times a month. “Social dance is tough as well because it takes at least two people to dance. This isn’t really a solo dance. There’s also a learning curve, so people have to have patience getting beyond the basics. But once the basics are gained, it’s really fun to throw in flair!”

They also have to compete with the established Carolina Shag and Line Dance scenes. But, swing dance compliments them well. They were averaging right around 20 people per dance before the pandemic hit. They have also taken trips to other scenes in both Carolinas, and he has been able to dance in many places across the U.S.: California, Baltimore, Charlotte, Wilmington and Atlanta.

Like other local social dancing groups, such as Aroha Afro Latin Dance and Palmetto Ballroom, COVID-19 has brought the dance community to a standstill. Large events have been cancelled, and although there are efforts to offer online events, people are itching to get back out on the dance floor. “I hope, once it’s safe, we can get back to our normal routine and dancing again. I would love to see our scene grow a little more...maybe even have a few swing bands come play for us. The Florence Area Big Band played for us once, and it was fantastic. Hearing a really hot band take a song and swing it hard, hits you in your soul. Or, watching a room full of dancers all swinging out to a live band or song is one of the coolest things to see.”

## SPIRIT INSPIRED by Jennifer Robinson



Carolita Cantrell

**SUMTER**-She cherishes her history, she cherishes her path, and she cherishes her artistic journey. Carolita Cantrell cherishes every part of her life, and it reflects in all of her art. From her birthplace of Atlanta, Ga. to Sumter, S.C., she has left an indelible mark of artwork throughout the southeast and the Caribbean.

Cantrell’s love of art, she said, began when she was three years old. She started drawing because she was nearsighted. This led to her enjoying doing everything up close. She eventually grew to love painting and has painted murals and portraits. Her love for drawing has afforded her careers publishing maps and creating them for South Carolina Judicial circuits.

Her extensive background includes studying at Richland Art School, the University of South Carolina, Columbia College, Atlanta Art Institute, New York Academy of Art and the Student League of Artists in New York. Cantrell’s paintings have been shown in various shows including most recently in January 2020. The exhibition, entitled

“Spirited Vision,” ended January 10 at the Sumter County Gallery of Art. Those pieces reflected her preferred choice of art form, abstract figurative.

Abstract figurative art is art that retains aspects of the real world. In fact, Cantrell explained her real world aspect of her art is spirit. She said, “It is that after I ‘stop’ on a painting, I do not care what happens to it: whether it sells or not. It is not to sell, but to create. That is what is important to me. I am in love with the creative process, and IF someone likes it enough to live with it, fine, but otherwise, the painting has already fulfilled its purpose for me.” Her paintings on canvas are created in oil, and Cantrell says she paints daily because she is inspired by something daily and wants to put what she feels in her spirit on canvas. Therefore, her work is very spiritual.



Lady with a Fur

Cantrell’s piece “Lady with a Fur” was exhibited virtually at the ArtFields 2020 competition. Her artist’s statement about her piece read:

Living on the island of Nevis for 11 years

## SPIRIT INSPIRED CONT'D



Lady with a Fur

had a profound influence on my work in various ways. One way was to develop a method, which would allow me to ship my work to the States more easily.

A true mosaic piece is extremely heavy and fragile for shipping so I created a method, which I adore. The “mosaic tiles” in this piece are replaced by cardboard cut into the shape of mosaics that I either painted or left as is to show the writing. Cereal cartons and gift boxes, among other items were utilized

to create this piece, which makes it very lightweight. Look closely and you may find various lettering from the original containers. The painting is protected with several layers of polyurethane.

I began with the face and thought, hmmm...it needs a hat. The rest of it just happened as I worked. My work is much like the novelist, who once said that while writing, at one point the characters take over and go in their own direction. My painting happens the same way and I try not to interfere.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cantrell's piece could not be viewed in person, but anyone can visit [www.artfieldssc.org](http://www.artfieldssc.org). Though people were not able to attend Artsfield as they have been in previous years or able to view her exhibitions through any events right now, she says, “[The pandemic] has not affected my work, except for having much more time to devote to it, but the current tempo of injustice has greatly affected my heart, and I feel that my sadness of it will definitely reflect in my work.”

What is fortunate is no matter what occurs in the world, art is forever. Art is a world soother, and art is a world binder. This is why August has been set aside to appreciate its beauty.

## APPRECIATING THE NIGHT by Jennifer Robinson



Christopher Neal

During the month of August, Diversity Works Magazine© is highlighting artists for what is known as American Arts American Appreciation month. Throughout history there have been many artists who have contributed various forms of arts, and the arts have been pivotal and synonymous with significant events in time. From Andy Worhol's famous abstract paintings of celebrities to Norman Rockwell's painting of family life in the early to mid 1900s,

Americans remember these artists and their work not only for their brilliance but because they represent a period in time that may hold memories. When conversations are had about American artists, we know that many have derived from South Carolina. And we cannot forget that many of the artists in the Pee Dee area have created art pieces that have invoked feelings of passion, happiness and nostalgia and are known throughout the nation. Local photographer Christopher Neal is one of those artists.

When you visit, [www.christophernealphotography.com](http://www.christophernealphotography.com) your breath is instantly taken away. The posted images are ones that will have one asking if what was photographed was from another world.



Sunset Beach-Meteor

His images elicit emotion, and that is what separates taking pictures from fine arts photography. Fine arts photography is a form of photography that is used to express the artist's vision and make an artistic statement. Neal said there are two photographers' works that he has grown to admire: Nick Page, landscape photographer, and Ivo Kerssemaker, super long exposure photographer.

Neal stated he began his hobby in film with cameras in the 1980s. He stated he has many years of experience behind a camera, but it wasn't until 2016 that he became fascinated with the denseness of the stars and the milky look of the collection of stars. He travels to beaches throughout the east, southeast and the southwest and to the mountains to capture those Milky Way images. He states shooting those images was when he first knew photography was an expression of art.

He turned to photography as an outlet. As a deputy sheriff for the Florence County Sheriff's Office and former crime scene investigator for many years, seeing the crime and all the detriment, made Neal feel like he needed an escape. He stated that photographing wetlands and night sky helped him appreciate what is often overlooked on our earth. “There is so much biodiversity, he said, with birds, fish, snakes who look to our swamps and wetlands as the ‘lungs’ of our planet. They help filter to what we have as clean water.”



Sandbar

He also acknowledges and celebrates the beauty of storms. He says that he and some of his photography colleagues gather (before social distancing, of course) to take pictures of the Milky Way, the sea and other happenings with nature that mostly occur at night. Neal states throughout the month from February to October each year he has some unconventional sleeping hours because these are the months when the Milky Way is most visible.

Mostly Neal tends to shoot alone, and it's his preference considering our world is taking precautions against a pandemic. When asked whether it has affected his work, he stated, “During the pandemic I had several people tell me they would love to purchase prints, but they had lost their job or they didn't want to spend money with the economic outlook what it was. I was also unable to get to the beaches where I do most of my photography because they were closed, and there was a home/work order in place that I felt I needed to observe.”

If there is ever a time to appreciate the beautiful things in life, it's now. Art and the perspective of artists are two of the most beautiful and natural gifts we have been given.

## MUSICIAN'S INSPIRATION IN THE MIDST OF PANDEMIC

by Yette Crawley



Nicholas Alexander Small

Nicholas Alexander Small, musically known as AquilaBeats, is a musician, producer, singer-songwriter and lyricist based in Florence. At 31 years old, he has been a self-taught musician for 29 years and a professional musician for 11 years. He is a multi-instrumentalist who also enjoys playing acoustic and bass guitar as well as keyboard/piano. Small considers himself to be a student of life, devoted to learning, studying and discovering new things and interest areas, including but not limited to languages, cooking, martial arts and content creation (filmography, videography, animation etc.)

His talent was first discovered by his mom who said she would often find him in his crib, making tapping sounds by lifting his entire lower body and then lowering it against the bottom of the crib in rhythm. What she saw was rare as most kids make kicking sounds while lying on their backs, but Small did the opposite. While on his stomach, he would flap his lower body from his chest down in rhythm.

Small's music journey officially began when he was two years old. He would often watch his older brother, Rick, drumming and would learn what he was doing just by watching him. His parents bought them their first drum set when Small was around the age of three, and he's been drumming ever since.

When asked of his influences, Small replied, "The first and foremost influence in my life is definitely Elohim/God. He is my Heavenly Father, so I call him 'Abba.' I follow His voice, always seeking to emulate and exude His essence through my personality and self-expression. His Spirit is the eternal flame of inspiration and creativity that is the genesis and revelation for every passion, skill or talent within my hands."

Small's mom has been a huge inspiration to him. She instilled a sense of pride in him and his brother with these words: "There's no one on this earth that is better than you. They may do things differently or say things differently, but they are no better than you."

His final big inspirer is Bruce Lee. He and his brother were exposed to Lee by Small's father, who would take them to see martial arts movies when he was a child. Small was always mesmerized by Bruce Lee's martial arts ability and his strength. However, it wasn't until he became a teenager that he was exposed to his teachings and philosophies. Two of Small's favorite sayings from Bruce Lee are:

- "Having no way as a way and having no limitation as a limitation."
- "Absorb what is useful, discard what is useless and add that which is essentially your own."

These sayings helped prepare Small in his formative years, and Lee's open-minded curiosity, tenacity and ability to overcome hardship and opposition continue to strengthen his own personal resolve when dealing with adversities from without and from within.

When it comes to the pandemic, Small tries not to form too many opinions or thoughts on things like global pandemics as he feels it takes up too much mental real estate, which clouds his focus and misaligns his energies and essence. His thought process is simple when dealing with crisis. He believes that one should:

1. Face reality
2. Be aware of every way it is affecting you and others

3. Embrace the feelings and the cognitive dissonance that comes with external opposition and inner conflict. Then give yourself grace and space to deal with and resolve those conflicts so you can fully heal

4. Recognize that happiness and suffering are two sides of the same reality of the human condition

5. Never, under ANY circumstance, lose your center and surrender your inner peace



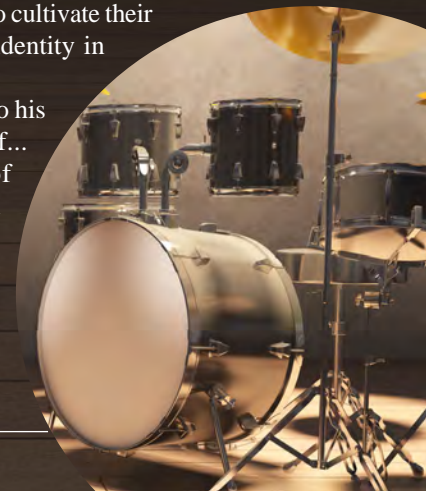
Nicholas Small on the drums

Being self-employed and an independent contractor, COVID-19 has caused Small to lose all sources of income for the past three months. He has had no assistance or unemployment. The only thing that has helped him financially during this time was the generosity of family, friends and a few of his students, who

have given donations. Still, he doesn't view these as negatives as money and possessions are just "stuff." Daily, he wakes up and chooses not to be overwhelmed by those difficulties and just does what he can to improve himself. The way he showcases his talent has changed because drumming is the primary vehicle he uses within music to showcase his brand, yet he hasn't been behind a set of drums in nearly three months. He hasn't gotten any studio or live bookings because of the shutdowns. Even though he has office space with a small recording setup, he hasn't been able to do any new drum content, which is one of the biggest avenues he uses to attract new partnerships and commissions. He hasn't been able to push his business forward with live videos because he doesn't have the equipment currently needed to get the job done. Through it all, he has had to adjust and adapt to reality, so he's been finding other ways to keep up engagement on his social media platforms, like doing more documentation of his cooking, martial arts, music production and gaming.

Small says he hopes to reach everyone universally with his music and passion for learning by sharing the experiences and skills that have helped him develop into who he is today. He primarily wants to inspire those who may feel overlooked, underachieved, conflicted and in angst about the lack of clarity they may have in knowing themselves, their purpose or how to cultivate their voice of expression and artistic identity in the world.

So what is Small's message to his audience? "Truly know yourself... truly love yourself. Out of knowledge and love flow all realizations and actualizations of beauty, virtue and goodness. Always create. Always learn. Always evolve. There is ALWAYS more to discover...about yourself, others and the world."





# Artist Appreciation

## FROM THE HEART TO THE ART by De'Angela Haynes



Kalea Jackson

When there is authenticity and passion in one's life, art is discovered, developed and cultivated in that person's life. This is definitely true in the life of Kalea Jackson. Jackson is truly passionate in whatever she does. Jackson attended Wilson High School, where she was a member of the track and field team for the Tigers, and she was the varsity hurdles captain. In the classroom, she was a member of the National Honor Roll and a McLeod Health Careers student. She studied sports communication at Coker University, and she serves as the Residence Life coordinator/Cross Country and Track & Field coach at South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics.

Jackson said, "Art has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. My mom always had great music playing and is the person who introduced me to art in the first place. I would see her drawing and painting and would think, 'I want to do that too.' She helped me see my potential, while also allowing me to develop my own style. I always found myself drawing in class, making things for my friends and giving some of the best, in my opinion, DIY gifts to my family for holidays. I think that support from those around me is what made it easier to turn my passion into a business. I started Krafts by K.Rose LLC so that I could share my work while also giving people customized art and gear. I like to think that having a piece of art created just for you has so much meaning. I feel like my work is very free spirited. I always make sure to put good energy and love into everything that I create. I want my clients to feel what I felt while creating their pieces. I love what I do, and I love seeing the reactions of my clients."

"It never really feels like work to me because I am able to have so much fun with it," she said. "That has been one of my favorite parts about being a business owner. It was scary at first, especially starting an art business, but I am so glad that I took that leap of faith. Art is truly an escape, a place of calmness and pure joy for me. I am able to clear my head, be free and unapologetically express myself. I have done a lot more of that during this pandemic. Despite all of the uncertainties and misfortune that have come with the pandemic, I can say that I have appreciated the time. For what feels like the first time, I've been able to sit and be one with my craft. I have been given so much space to learn new tips and tricks to make my work even better. I've also had a lot of time to practice things so that when business starts rolling again, I can have even more to offer. Overall, this pandemic has allowed me to grow as an artist. I look

to keep learning and growing and sharing with other artists. The artist community is so important, and I want to do my part to keep it alive and help it grow."

When you have someone like Kalea Jackson, who is genuine from the heart, you certainly can trust what comes out of her in the form of art! She's making an impact in this Pee Dee Region and beyond by sharing her artistic gifts.



## I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY by Jennifer Robinson



Ayo Muhtasari

**TIMMONSVILLE**-The world in which we live is filled with stories. Each region, each culture and family can share treasured tellings of history and heritage. But within each region, culture and family, there are very few people who can actually tell those stories with passion, animation and enrichment. Ayo Muhtasari is a stem from a family of storytellers. Her first and favorite medium in arts is thinking, which grows to speaking. Her speaking sets itself in the memory bank as writing, and she writes and practices oration. She is Ayo The Orator.

Ayo has been an orator for audiences since the fifth grade, performing speeches for classes and churches. When asked how oration became her favorite form of art, Ayo stated, "It's the subtleties in language. Body language. Where speakers take breaths. Words that are emphasized. And how smoothly the Message conveys itself...and this Life, is a whole show for me. Be wholesome."

Oration tends to bring life, but unfortunately, the pandemic that is currently plaguing our world has brought death. Ayo said the pandemic "gives artists the chance to throw away Grandfather Clocks. We don't need time where we're going. Just know this: We create the stories. Pandemia gives artists opportunity to pinpoint beauty with ease. This time we're in is a W.A.L.K. through brush and broken glass. And then there's eye-spy a golden ladybug."



Ayo in her art classroom at the Boys and Girls Club of the Pee Dee

This time of stillness has also taken away the labor part of performing art and given Ayo more time to be whimsical as she has the freedom to express more creative topics.

In knowing what it means to be cultured, Ayo stated, "Cultured is filling the self up with essentials for a desirable outcome. An example, the loquacious child, who is a motor-mouth, gets sent to the corner for talking out and from the corner does not stop. Cultured is the child channeling speakers with the same message and attentively 'hear' where chaos lays its sensitive ear. Cultured is using your favorite parts in the story, not solely for your benefit, but to observe care for those who enter the environment.

Ayo's favorite speaker is the iconic activist Angela Davis. She said "Oh, to stand on the laces of Angela Davis' Converse. She knows how to present her cry."

One could then conclude that Ayo is inspired by the current protests that are occurring across our nation in response to racial discrimination, police brutality and policy reform with various systems. She plans to use the message of the protests in her art, but she says she wants to do it beautifully.



## CAPTURING PERSONALITIES ON CANVAS

Articles by Ta'Meeka Epps



Dale Carlisle Weatherford and his masterpieces

possesses a refined appreciation for art in its various forms or genres.

Dale Carlisle Weatherford of Darlington is an artist using oil, graphite and charcoal to bring life and meaning through his art form, telling his story and the stories of others. When asked what he feels it means to be cultured, he responded, "A cultured person lives with a sense of history and purpose. He or she thinks deeply and avoids superficial judgment. They weigh different perspectives and recognize that both outcomes can have significant consequences. They recognize their own ignorance and limited knowledge in certain subjects. They are also open to being wrong and corrected. Above all, people of culture are well educated in the arts. They seek out the best education and accept the wisdom from their teachers."

Weatherford's preferred art form is painting and drawing. "I was first introduced to oil painting by Debbie Melton, Lynda English and Jaelyn Wukela of Lynda English Gallery in Florence, S.C. in 2011." Nine years later Weatherford's talent has him making plans to study at the Academy of Realist Art in Boston, Mass. The academy specializes in the style of nineteenth century painting and drawing from life.

A creative such as Weatherford often has a person or personified force that serves as a source of inspiration and is referred to as a "muse." "My muse is people. I love painting portraits and figures, trying to capture their personality on canvas. I want the person viewing



Painting Andrew

the art to feel as if they know the subject of the painting personally, invoking a connection with the art piece," he said. Also, as a creative, interacting with the public is a necessity at some point during the creative process. While the COVID-19 pandemic has created some difficulties due to the need to practice social distancing, Weatherford has been fortunate to have access to his personal studio where he has been able to create without interruption: "Having my personal studio and being able to walk into an environment where I am immediately inspired continues my ability to create, even during this pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected me in the way where some clients were not commissioning me for work. However, I've been fortunate enough to find new clients seeking to expand their art collection."

Art is the expression of a creative's skill and imagination. Weatherford believes art is for the community, and it is a language that transcends barriers. Art also influences society and can change opinions and impart values into the viewer as well as create the opportunity for political, religious and moral expression. Visual and

**DARLINGTON**-August is American Artists Appreciation Month. The 2020 Artist Appreciation Month theme is "Knowing What it Means to be Cultured." A cultured person can be defined as someone who is well-read in books, who has watched and engaged with classic films or who

performing arts enhance special events within our community, and the proceeds from shows or sales are then capable of helping to fund local events or programs.

Weatherford has been influenced by many artists, both living and deceased: John Singer Sargent (portrait painter), Ilya Repin (realist painter), William-Adolph Bouguereau (realist painter), Cecilia Beaux (American society portraitist), Rembrandt (prolific master in three mediums), Elisabeth Le Brun (portrait painter), Frederic Edwin Church (American landscape painter), Norman Rockwell (American painter and illustrator), Igor Babailov (American painter and portraitist), Daniel Graves, Michelle Dunaway and many others. Weatherford's style is his own. However, the works of all those who inspired him influences his approach and the creative process to each individual art piece.

He uses his creativity and experiences to make the art world inviting to those who may feel art at times is intimidating. He explained, "I understand people can be intimidated about viewing and buying art. My job is to make art relatable to my clients and to the viewers. I want them to feel comfortable and welcomed by the artwork. When it comes to discussing art, I am always kind and detailed about what a client requests from me. Many clients know they want the artwork to have something or speak something to them, but oftentimes are unable to articulate [what] they want through words; I take the opportunity to discuss with them the ideas behind the painting and gain a better understanding of what they are seeking in their painting."

Dale Carlisle Weatherford's art work can be found at [www.dcwpaintings.artspan.com](http://www.dcwpaintings.artspan.com) or on his Instagram account @dcwpaintings. If you would like more information about his art work or are interested in commissioning him, he can be reached through email [dalecarlisle11@gmail.com](mailto:dalecarlisle11@gmail.com) or by phone at 843-409-4588.

## THE PERFECT COMBO FOR PERFORMANCE



Te'Quan Coe

**HARTSVILLE**- SteezyStringz is the moniker this violin aficionado is affectionally called. However, he was born Te'Quan Coe and was raised by a single mother in Hartsville as the youngest of eight children. "Steezy" is a childhood nickname he is still called today. Once his love for the strings matured, some of his peers started calling him "Stringz," based on his involvement in orchestra and playing the violin. It was only natural for him to combine the two

to create his performance name as it was the perfect combination of two separate stages of his life, creating a path for his professional expression.

SteezyStringz' love for the performance arts was sparked when he was in the fifth grade attending Thornwell School for the Arts Elementary and was introduced to orchestra and the violin by his music teacher, Rosa Kelly. "Being introduced to the string instruments, namely the violin, through orchestra gave me a creative outlet I didn't know I needed. I now look back and understand the impact it had on making me cultured. Being cultured is being unique to yourself and

## THE PERFECT COMBO CONT'D



Te'Quan getting ready for a performance

true to yourself while not limiting your exposure or experiences to things unfamiliar to you...also, maintaining your heritage and where you come from,” SteezyStringz explained.

The 22-year-old has been perfecting his art

form since the tender age of nine. For nearly 13 years, he has been expanding his musical repertoire and honing his skills, and he owes it all to the one he says blessed him with his gift: God. “My main plan to continue growing in my career is always making sure I keep God first in all that I do. I want to make sure every step I take is led by him, not by me. He is my muse. Knowing that I am blessed with a gift from God that no one can take away is one of the unique things about me that I hold dear. Even though many may play the violin, no one can do it quite like I do. No one possesses my style, my grace or my flair. Knowing this helps me to be able to play freely, clear my mind and not worry about what others have to say.”

SteezyStringz knows the importance of giving back to the community that supports you. He said, “In my community, I believe in order to impact the community as a whole, you must impact the



Te'Quan playing in concert

youth first. I took the initiative to become involved in many youth leadership programs in my community. I have offered free violin lessons to counteract some of the violence occurring in my community. A new program that I am currently involved in is The Hartsville Peace Tribe. This group of young adults were raised and educated in Hartsville. The group promotes peace and healing through peer guidance. We connect youth with local opportunities to give them positive experiences to help them grow and learn because we believe no opportunity is out of reach with the right amount of exposure.”

This God-fearing Christian wants the readers to know, “No matter what you do in life or what you go through, there is someone named Jesus who loves you. He has plans for all of our lives, plans for good and not evil. If we will trust in him, he will direct our paths.”

If you are interested in learning more about SteezyStringz or to inquire about booking this young talent, head over to his business page on Facebook, Te'Quan Coe, or follow him on Instagram @Steezy\_stringz\_official. His YouTube channel is Te'QuanSteezyStringz Coe. He can also be reached for bookings at 843-639-7268.

## SHOWCASING DIVERSITY THROUGH MUSIC by Yvette Crawley



Emontie “Montie” Dears

Emontie “Montie” Dears is a 25-year-old music maker who is located and grew up in Florence. Growing up he was into sports, but he realized he had a passion for music at the youthful age of nine. Enjoying the music played by his parents, he found himself often pretending that his grand mom’s porch was a stage as he performed his rendition of songs sang by artists like Luther Vandross and Michael Jackson, to name a few. It was also at this age that he started to “freestyle” and knew that music would play a larger part in his life

other than dancing and performing on his makeshift stage.

After graduating from West Florence High School, Dears went on to attend Methodist University where he continued to play sports and graduated with a degree in exercise science. He continued to embrace all genres of music, listening to artists such as Drake, Outkast and J. Cole. These artists as well as the music he grew upon drove his passion to get off the sidelines and start doing more. At 23 years old, he picked up a notepad, started writing, and he hasn’t looked back since. Dears writes, raps and sings hip hop, R&B and reggae.

When asked of his thoughts on the pandemic and how it’s impacted him, he stated, “It all seems theatrical. I’ve never seen anything like this before, and this is something I will discuss with my kids and

grandkids. It will definitely make history.” Dears says that because he makes music as he lives, he’s had to slow down because of the pandemic. “Everyone is at home, and nothing is happening; everything is at a standstill,” he says. However, the pandemic hasn’t stopped his lyrical flow. It has given him time to reflect on himself and grow a new appreciation for life and creativity. He never considered his music surface level, but the pause in this part of his life has caused him to dig even deeper which, in turn, makes him become an even better writer.

The message Dears wants to relay to his listening audience is that it is okay to be who they are while finding that much-needed balance in life. He wants people to feel like it’s okay to “turn up” on Monday and read a good book on Tuesday--that there’s no shame in brandishing your intelligence or simply being yourself. He said his music can’t be put into a box because his desire is to relay his message to all age groups, no matter where they are in life. Dears says that the music he grew up on is timeless, and it is his goal to write, sing and rap music that is just as timeless. He wants his music to be remembered and enjoyed for generations to come.



Emontie “Montie” Dears

His work can be found on all streaming platforms. Hits like “In Front of Me,” “Came to Play” and “Ugly Truth” are just a few examples of his music that showcase his diversity.



## A MAN OF MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS by Anna Bowman



Reverend Dr. Mack T. Hines, Sr.

During his lifetime, Reverend Dr. Mack T. Hines, Sr., has been known for being an awesome husband, father, grandfather, educator and politician. He has also been known for outstanding community service, and he is the recipient of the Order of the Palmetto from the state of South Carolina. But one recent accomplishment he is proudest of is surviving prostate cancer. Hines, known for his tireless zest for life and helping his fellowman, was caught off guard in 2013, when his colonoscopy results revealed two polyps. He stated, "Days after having my colonoscopy, I initially received a letter stating that everything was fine, but, three days later, I received a call indicating that the polyps were cancerous!" His doctor informed him that he was going to schedule surgery to remove the polyps. "I was upset, naturally, and concerned," he stated, "but as a pastor, my faith took center stage." In fact, within days of the diagnosis, he was on his way to the National Baptist Convention in Atlanta, as scheduled, fully aware that upon his return to Florence he was scheduled for surgery.

On the morning of the surgery, Hines arrived at McLeod Regional Medical Center, anticipating positive results once the polyps were removed. However, he could not have imagined the outcome of his surgery. "I awoke to the news that no colonic polyps were discovered. I've always felt that God is a miracle worker, and this was one of many situations where God had stepped in on my behalf and eliminated my fears," he recalled. "Leaving my diagnosis in his hands gave me great comfort," he added.

Upon learning that he had prostate cancer, he did tell his immediate family but kept his diagnosis "low key" from other people, including his congregation at Saint Paul Baptist Church in Mullins, where he'll have been the pastor for 36 years this December. "My wife and my mother were my two pillars of strength; their love and prayers were always a part of my life, but during my health ordeal, their love was amplified beyond measure, every day, and kept my mind at ease while nursing me back to health."

It is estimated that one in six African American men are diagnosed with prostate cancer. However, Hines never thought it would happen to him. "I had a couple of friends who had prostate cancer and had heard of other men being diagnosed, but somehow, I just never saw in my mind's eye how this statistic would become my reality, even though my father had previously been diagnosed with the disease and had the seed procedure."

The reverend stated that he did not join an official support group offered by McLeod but leaned on the knowledge of some of his friends who had already been diagnosed with prostate cancer and had gone through their journey with the disease and were there to offer guidance when necessary. He was blessed that he did not have to depend on harsh drugs or life-altering treatments. He was able to return to his full life with only minor interruptions. In the past seven years since his initial diagnosis, his doctor has kept a careful watch on his health, and his two subsequent colonoscopies have also had favorable results. From his humble beginnings, being born on a sharecropper's farm in

Claussen and migrating to Florence with his family at the tender age of six years old, Hines has truly lived an extraordinary life and has accomplished the following:

- A graduate of Wilson High School, chairman of the Wilsonian Clergy and a member of the Wilson High School Hall of Fame
- A graduate of Allen University, Bachelor of Arts degree
- A graduate of Morris College School of Religion, Bachelor of Divinity degree; honorary Doctor of Divinity degree; member of the Morris College Hall of Fame
- A graduate of Hood Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry degree)
- School teacher for Florence School District 1 for 12 years
- Director of the Pee Dee Community Action Agency, where he instituted a transitional home for the homeless for them to become self-sufficient
- A member of the South Carolina House of Representatives for District 59
- Moderator of the Pee Dee Baptist Association and president of the Mullins Area Ministerial Alliance
- Moderator of the Florence and Affiliated Counties of Baptist, Missionary and Educational Union
- Lifetime member of the NAACP
- Member of Omega Psi Phi
- West Temple Masonic Lodge #419
- He was instrumental in initiating the development of the Genesis II Housing Apartment Complex, which is named in his honor
- St. Paul operates an adult day health care program licensed by the state Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). Hines started the program.
- A 2006 recipient of the Order of the Palmetto by Governor Mark Sanford
- He was honored by the S.C. General Assembly, which named a highway after him that begins at Pee Dee in Marion County. Being diagnosed with prostate cancer was never used as a justification to cease being his authentic self. "I just want to serve humankind," he said. Reverend Hines' motto is: "We're not responsible for the action of others, but we are responsible for our actions, and if you keep the faith, the faith will keep you."

Hines and his beloved wife, Gladys, are the proud parents of three sons: Michael Hines of Florence; Mack T. Hines III, a professor at Tennessee State University; and Gregory Hines, an electrical engineer who resides in Goose Creek. They have a granddaughter, Shi Jena Hines, and four grandsons: J'Shon Hines, Michael Timothy Hines, Grayson Hines and Ty Hines.





# PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

## HEALTH DISPARITIES PROVE TO BE MULTIDIMENSIONAL Submitted by Vagney Bradley



*Dr. Chanita Hughes-Halbert,  
photo by Sarah Pack*

Health disparities negatively impact racial and ethnic minorities as well as other medically underserved groups and can stem from a range of factors besides healthcare access.

MUSC Hollings Cancer Center researcher Chanita Hughes-Halbert, Ph.D. said this is illustrated in two recent health disparity studies reported online in April in the medical journal *Ethnicity and Disease* that are a part of work being done by the Transdisciplinary Collaborative Center in Precision Medicine and Minority Men’s Health at the Medical University of South Carolina.

The studies conclude that it is important to have effective strategies for chronic disease prevention and management for male minority prostate cancer patients and male veterans who have experienced various health issues.

The focus of the studies is on minority men’s health and also precision medicine in which doctors select treatments most likely to help patients based on a genetic understanding of their diseases.

COVID-19 has brought health disparities into the spotlight. “COVID-19 is showing all of the ways in which racial and ethnic minorities and individuals from other medically underserved groups are disadvantaged,” Hughes-Halbert said.

Better chronic disease management is needed among prostate cancer survivors, and training programs are needed to help veterans recover from health issues based on social determinants, such as marital and economic

status. Health disparities can stem from multiple factors, including poverty; exposure to environmental hazards, such as heavy pollution; inadequate access to health care; individual and behavioral factors; and educational inequalities.

In the prostate cancer study reported online in *Ethnicity & Disease*, Hughes-Halbert examined the rates of comorbidity, or the presence of two chronic diseases or conditions in a patient. The research investigated how the health of prostate cancer patients was managed. These patients were each treated with a radical prostatectomy, the surgical removal of all or part of the prostate gland.

The researchers examined the association between patients who had two chronic diseases and their race; clinical factors, such as high blood pressure; and health behaviors, such as patients who exercised regularly and ate a balanced diet, for cancer control. Nearly half of the men in the study who were either short-term or long-term prostate cancer survivors had at least one other chronic disease that was not effectively managed.

The study showed that 51 percent of participants had an underlying health issue, with high blood pressure being the most common. Diseases such as hypertension, heart disease and diabetes tend to be more prevalent among African Americans. Interestingly, the findings from this particular study suggested that a prostate cancer survivor’s race did not contribute to his health issues. Rather, it may be more related to geographic disparities.

Hughes-Halbert plans to extend her research to look at the nature of distribution of chronic diseases based on certain groups of people who have restricted access to social resources, which is also known as social deprivation. Her team also will focus on developing clinical strategies to improve the chronic disease management of cancer survivors.

## Bringing our world to yours.

We are now offering online virtual care screening as well as fixed and mobile testing sites for **COVID-19** throughout South Carolina.



 **Virtual Care**  
Make an appointment at [musc.care](https://musccare.com)

Virtual COVID-19 screenings are free. Just use the code COVID19 when you log in.

 **Fixed and Mobile Testing Sites**  
Find our locations at [musc.co/testing](https://musccare.com/testing)





## ROUTINE TESTING FOR PROSTATE CANCER COULD SAVE LIVES Submitted by Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center



*Dr. David Horger*

**HARTSVILLE**-Prostate cancer is the second most common type of cancer among men in the U.S., behind only lung cancer, and about one in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. Though most men diagnosed with the cancer will not die, some will not discover its development until it is too late. September is Prostate Cancer Awareness month, and health experts and advocates work to inform the public about the gravity of this cancer and the importance

of its early detection in an effort to save as many lives as possible.

Dr. David Horger, urologist with Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center in Hartsville, says about 25 percent of his job involves treating or checking for prostate cancer. He finds that men with the highest risk of developing the cancer are those over the age of 65, African-Americans and those with a family history of prostate cancer. The typical treatment received by patients is surgery to remove the prostate or radiation to radiate the prostate and leave it in place. "It all depends on the patient's health and wishes," says Horger.

The cause of prostate cancer is unknown, and because symptoms do not appear until the cancer is in advanced stages, Horger asserts it's important for men to be tested annually or biannually. He warns against misleading press downplaying the severity of the cancer, noting

that it can be deadly if not treated in some cases. "Sometimes, even if you do, it can progress and kill you. Not one size fits all for everybody," he says. In the past decade, the U.S. Preventative Task Force recommended that men ages 70 and older not be examined for prostate cancer. "Now, eight years later, we are beginning to see the result of what happens when we don't test," states Horger. "We see more men who come in symptomatic and with advanced cancer. This, maybe, could have been picked up five years earlier if they had been screened." Horger recommends that men over age 40 ask their health care providers for testing. The screening can be performed by a prostate exam and blood test, and is also provided free to those on Medicare.

Horger added that health professionals sometimes see healthy older men in their late eighties being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Because symptoms do not appear until the advanced stages, these men often experience complications such as back pain, blood in their urine and/or obstruction of the kidneys. "At this point, they have most likely missed their opportunity for treatment and are just in a management process trying to keep complications at bay," he says.

However, there is still a bright side to the situation. "Because there are so many men who have it, there's a lot of research dollars trying to find treatments for prostate cancer," reveals Horger. "Our old treatments would work for a number of years. Then they would stop working, and we didn't have anything else. Now, every couple of years we are getting new treatments to block the growth of the cancer." With a number of new medications released in the past decade working to control metastatic prostate cancer, Horger is encouraged.

## USING FAITH TO FIGHT TRIBULATION by Anna Bowman



*Reverend Dr. Waymon Mumford*

Dr. Waymon Mumford was once accustomed to facing his share of dangerous situations as the chief of police for the City of Florence during his 25-year career with the Florence Police Department. But some dangerous situations lie in wait with no sign of the tribulation that lies ahead.

In 2007, Mumford, like so many men, would discover he had prostate cancer during a routine checkup. Prostate cancer is cancer that occurs in

the prostate—a small walnut-shaped gland in men that produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. It is one of the most common types of cancer in men with an estimated three million being diagnosed each year in the U.S. Usually prostate cancer grows slowly and is initially confined to the prostate gland, where it may not cause serious harm. While some types of prostate cancer grow slowly and may need minimal or even no treatment, other types are aggressive and can spread quickly, according to data from the Mayo Clinic.

The cancer is common for men ages 50 and older, and African American men have about a 15 percent chance of developing it in their lifetimes, compared to about a 10 percent chance for white men.



Researchers have discovered that an inherited mutation increases risk of prostate cancer in men of African descent. The good news is prostate cancer can be cured when it is detected and treated early.

As an African American male over the age of 50, Mumford stated that he was aware of the statistics about prostate cancer in the African American community, but he was still stunned when he learned the results of his PSA test—a blood test used primarily to screen for prostate cancer.

"My first question to my doctor was what must I do?" Mumford's initial shock was replaced with concerns for the treatments he would have to endure because of the disease. "I wanted the best treatment and the best, medically, to guide me throughout my treatment," he said. He selected the Duke Cancer Center in Durham, N.C., with its state-of-the-art patient care facility for his treatment.

Mumford, along with his wife, Senora, and children, were united in their faith that God would see him through his journey with the disease. One of his favorite Bible verses, Proverbs 3:5-6, became his



## USING FAITH TO FIGHT CONT'D

guiding light during his ordeal, “Trust the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.”

He said the diagnosis changed his outlook on life as well. He began to seriously take charge of his diet and exercise routine, and started walking three miles a day, five days a week. Mumford was not alone in his fight with the disease. “I had a remarkably close friend who had a prostate cancer diagnosis at the same time, and we went through the journey together. This was a great help for me,” he stated. He was extremely happy that his treatment did not have any harsh side effects.

One thing that his prostate cancer diagnosis was not able to achieve was to break his spirit and halt his desire to live a full life. Mumford’s accomplishments read like a “who’s who” in family, faith and community service. The Florence native is a graduate of Wilson High School (1967), FDTC (1980); The 133rd FBI National Academy (1983); Limestone College (1992); and the Interdenominational Theological Center (2003). In addition, he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree in law from Morris College (2012).

He served on the Florence County Council, District #7, (council member/chairperson); chief of police; court security office (Ret.) for the District Court of South Carolina. He is the moderator for the Pee Dee Missionary Baptist Association; past moderator for the Florence and Affiliated Counties Baptist Educational and Missionary Union;

member of the Trustee Board for Morris College; and member of Wilsonian Clergy, Executive Board of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. In 2019, he was appointed vice president of Region Five for the Baptist E&M Convention of South Carolina.

Mumford is married to the former Senora Davis of Sumter. The couple are the proud parents of three adult children: daughter, Tena, and sons, Raymond and Steve. They have been blessed with 17 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Mumford has served as pastor of Central Baptist Church in Florence for the past 21 years.

**MEN'S HEALTH**

### The Truth About Men's Health

Men's health (and mustaches) are top of mind this month, thanks to the global Movember Foundation. Here are some hairy stats about men's leading health issues.

This year, more than **233,000** men will be given a prostate cancer diagnosis.

Nearly half of testicular cancer diagnoses occur in men age **20 to 34**.

Top three cancers for men in Utah:

- 1 Prostate
- 2 Skin
- 3 Colorectal

Half of American men will receive a cancer diagnosis during their lifetime.

PROSTATE CANCER FOUNDATION

# STEP UP FOR BLUE

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

LET'S FUND THE CURE

## TALKING ABOUT PROSTATE HEALTH

Submitted by Dr. Ronald W. Glinski, McLeod Urology Associates



Dr. Ronald W. Glinski

One of the concerns many men encounter as they age is prostate health. The prostate is a gland found only in males that sits below the bladder in front of the rectum and wraps around the urethra. Simply put, four things can happen to a prostate over time in the aging male: nothing, inflammation, enlargement of the prostate or prostate cancer.

Enlargement of the prostate, or Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), can begin as early as age 40 in some men. By age 55, as many as 25 percent of men may have signs of BPH, and that number increases to 50 percent by age 75. As the prostate grows, it obstructs the bladder, which can lead to various voiding symptoms. Those symptoms may include: decreased urinary flow, sudden urgency to urinate, greater frequency of urination at night, post-void dribbling, the sensation of not completely emptying the bladder after urination or the inability to void at all, which is known as urinary retention.

The treatment for enlarged prostate usually begins with a physical exam, and a urologist may recommend one of many appropriate medications that either shrink, relax or dilate the prostate and bladder. Should medications not improve the symptoms, there are also office procedures and surgical options your urologist may discuss as an effective step in your care.

Nearly 192,000 cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed in the United States each year. It is the most common cancer diagnosed in men except for skin cancer and is also the second leading cause of cancer death among men, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS). It is estimated that 33,330 deaths from this disease will occur this year. However, the death rate has dropped by more than half from 1993 to 2017 as a result of screening and treatment advances.

The American Cancer Society recommends that men have a chance to make an informed decision with their health care provider about whether to be screened for prostate cancer. ACS adds that the discussion about screening should take place at:

- Age 50 for men who are at average risk of prostate cancer and are expected to live at least 10 more years.
- Age 45 for men at high risk of developing prostate cancer. This includes African Americans and men who have a first-degree relative (father or brother) diagnosed with prostate cancer at an early age (younger than age 65).
- Age 40 for men at even higher risk (those with more than one first-degree relative who had prostate cancer at an early age).

Prostate cancer can often be detected using a simple blood test called a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test and a physical exam. Most men without prostate cancer have PSA levels under four nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL) of blood. When prostate cancer develops, the level usually goes above four, but a level below four does not guarantee that a man does not have cancer. If your PSA level is high, and/or your prostate exam is normal, a doctor may advise repeating the test or performing a prostate biopsy to find out if cancer is present. Factors such as your age, race and family history may affect this decision. Should the test results indicate cancer, most treatment plans include either radiation therapy, surgical removal or a combination of both. If surgery is appropriate, a urologist can help you decide the best course of treatment for your specific diagnosis. With the

help of genetic testing of a patient's particular cancer, many patients' condition can be monitored closely and not require initial active treatment. One of the most advanced treatment options for prostate cancer is robotic urologic surgery. Also known as robotic prostatectomy, this minimally invasive surgery is performed using a robotic interface. The surgeon controls the robot's every move while seated at a console in the operating room. The surgeon's hand, wrist and finger movements guide the robot as it becomes an extension of the physician's hands. The surgeon views the operating area through High-Definition, 3-D imagery that provides greater magnification and improved visualization and precision than traditional surgical techniques. For the patient, the robotic approach provides less pain, smaller blood loss and a quicker recovery time.

The evolution of technology that has led to robotic urology surgery is exciting for both physicians and patients, but it may not be the best option for everyone. The most important factor in the success of any type of surgery is the surgeon's experience and skill. A highly trained and skilled robotic surgeon can provide robotic surgery as a safe and effective option for patients whose diagnosis is appropriate for the procedure.

The key feature in deciding on the best treatment option, in all patients with prostate cancer, is early detection and diagnosis. Each person is unique, and it is important to talk to a health care provider about the uncertainties, risks, and potential benefits of prostate cancer screening before deciding whether or not to be tested.

Ronald Glinski, MD, FACS, is board certified in urology with subspecialty certification in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery. He is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a member of the American Urological Association, the S.C. Urologic Association, Society of Urodynamics, Female Pelvic Medicine and Urogenital Reconstruction as well as the American Urogynecologic Society. McLeod Urology Associates welcomes new patients by appointment. For more information, call 843-777-7555.

### When should I discuss prostate cancer screening with my doctor?

Routine prostate cancer screening is not recommended. The decision to undergo prostate cancer screening is based on your prostate cancer risk and your age.

For men at <b>AVERAGE RISK</b>	and expected to live at least 10 more years	starting at age <b>50 y</b>
For men at <b>HIGH RISK</b>	including African Americans and men with a first-degree relative (brother, father, son) diagnosed as having prostate cancer at an early age (younger than 65 years)	starting at age <b>45 y</b>
For men at <b>VERY HIGH RISK</b>	including those with more than 1 first-degree relative (brother, father, son) diagnosed as having prostate cancer at an early age (younger than 65 years)	starting at age <b>40 y</b>

Source: American Cancer Society





# SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

## DON'T ASK WHY!

*Submitted by Meredith T. Graham, MSW, LISW-CP, CCTP, CCATP, FPHW*



*Meredith T. Graham, MSW, LISW-CP, CCTP, CCATP, FPHW*

A few years ago, I was planning a program for suicide awareness and prevention. In preparation, I assembled clients' thoughts on the topic of suicide. One of the most poignant statements that continues to ring in my ears is "DON'T ASK WHY!" This statement challenges us because suicide and attempted suicide leave family and friends with many questions and few answers.

"Don't ask why" asks us to become intentionally aware, compassionate and honest in our discussions about suicide, suicidal attempts or suicidal thoughts.

As a community, we must unashamedly and empathetically recognize and listen to the stories of those whose lives encompass inescapable pain, sadness, and unbearable loneliness. It is our common duty to help those suffering with thoughts of suicide and families who are left to pick up the pieces.

Data shows that acts of suicide have increased over the past decade and leave our homes, schools, communities and churches devastated. Suicide impacts Americans regardless of economic level, ethnicity, gender, social status or education. According to the National Institute of Mental health (NIMH), suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S., following the trend of twice as many deaths by suicide than death by homicide. NIMH reports that suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals ages 10-34 and the fourth leading cause of death for ages 35-54.

To make a difference, we must stop viewing suicide as a taboo subject. It is essential that we understand the signs that may precipitate acts of suicide in order to save lives. Warning signs include:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Misuse and abuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Mental disorders, particularly depression and other mood disorders
- Access to lethal means
- Knowing someone who died by suicide, particularly a family member or close friend
- Chronic disease and disability
- End of a significant relationship or marriage
- Death of a loved one
- An arrest or legal issues
- Serious financial problems
- Lack of access to behavioral health care

Life is precious and our commitment to the awareness and prevention of suicide requires us to dismiss our ignorance, apathy and bias. If you recognize any of the above signs in yourself or other person, please contact the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) immediately.

Meredith T. Graham is a behavioral health consultant at HopeHealth

with experience in mental health issues including depression, anxiety, grief, sexual trauma, vicarious trauma and other mood disorders. She is a licensed social worker in South Carolina and Illinois.

## SPEAK OUT AND PREVENT SUICIDE

*by Adalia Ellis*



*Ruhiyyih Ellis*

Many times we hear stories about people who took their own lives, but we rarely hear of those who tried and failed. If there is any failure to rejoice about, it is someone not being successful at taking his or her own life.

Ruhiyyih Ellis first attempted to take her own life when she was very young. "I've thought of death ever since I was able to understand death at about five or six. I first attempted by tying myself to a bedpost until I could no longer take it." This may have been the

first, but it was not the last time. She attempted suicide again in her teen years.

When Ellis reflects back on that time in her life, she describes her emotional state. She was angry and lost and felt very alone as a child. It was because she blocked things from her childhood that she chose not to share. Instead, she kept it inside. "I was angry at the person (people) who put me there. My innocence was taken from me, and I didn't know how to handle that at my age. My psychological state was that I blamed myself and felt in my little mind that I was making things up. The guilt was hard to bear."

At the time, she felt ending her life was the only option so that the truth wouldn't come out. The truth about the person that was supposed to protect her actually broke her. Ellis dealt with this more in her teenage years after that person became very ill, and she blamed herself for their illness.

For Ellis there were very obvious signs that she was suicidal. She was a cutter and self mutilated to keep from suicide but always pictured cutting deeper. She was angry a lot and welcomed darkness more than often. "Not succeeding was the best thing that ever happened to me. I am now a mother, a fiance and have a bond with my family that is very strong. If I could talk to my younger self, I would hold me and say, 'It's not your fault! This is not right! You have to be strong and talk about it!'"

One thing she wished she had done was talk more about what she was feeling with her family over a therapist. She says, "It's important to remember that your family is always a good source for comfort. I do also suggest support groups and mentoring others. Talking about it, I feel, is the best support!"

Ellis' healing process started out with therapy and medications but at some point, she talked to herself and said that there was more to life than medication and sitting on someone's couch. At some point, she had to accept what made her feel suicidal and forgive.

"If I could talk to anyone contemplating suicide, I would tell them that they are enough, that there is so much to look forward to if you can just hang on. I would tell them anytime they feel like stepping on the edge, I am here to talk you off. I would tell them, 'I love you!'"



# SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

## FINDING JOY IN THE MIDST OF STORM Articles by Adalia Ellis



Sarah Travis

When speaking about suicide, Sarah Travis encourages using phrases such as “died by suicide” or “lost their life to suicide.” Travis has very personal reasons for understanding this. On August 31, 2017, she lost her father to suicide. She remembers feeling completely numb and feeling disbelief that such a thing could happen to her and her family. The presence of friends and family who surrounded them with love, compassion and support is what got her through the first couple of days.

When thinking back on that time she recalls, “I couldn’t eat. I couldn’t sleep. I couldn’t even cry at first. I was empty and felt nothing. But once that passed, I felt everything. The weight and severity of the loss felt like it might crush me.”

For Travis, there were no direct warning signs. In this day and age, a lot of people are stressed and worried, particularly small business owners. Being a small business owner himself, Travis’ father shared that he was tired and stressed, but he didn’t share with her the deepest, darkest parts of his struggle. Her last memory of her father is from the morning he died. “He was smiling. He hugged me. He told me he loved me. I am grateful that the last memory I have of him is a happy one.”

Sometimes, when a family loses a loved one to suicide it pulls them apart. Fortunately, this was not true for Travis’ family. They came together and found strength in that relationship. “The day we lost dad, my mom, brother, and I made a promise to each other that we would get the help we needed to work through this and attempt to find a way to heal.” In an effort to keep that promise, Travis decided it was not an option to push away or hide from her feelings. In addition to the promise she and her family made, she confided in a trained counseling professional to help her work through the massive trauma and tragedy experienced by the sudden loss of her loved one.

“One of my favorite tools I was given through the counseling experience was to keep a ‘joy journal.’ Each day I was tasked with writing three things that brought me joy in that day, even if it felt fake at first. Ultimately, it allowed me to see that joy was possible even in the midst of immense sadness,” Travis said.

In addition to the support of family and counseling, friends showed great love and support by providing her a safe space to grieve. “They may not have always understood what I was feeling, but their open arms and ears were and continue to be some of the greatest gifts I’ve ever been given.”

While Travis feels so blessed with the support system she has, she also tries to understand why someone wouldn’t want to share their feelings with their friends or loved ones. She wonders if the reason more people don’t come forward about their struggle is because of how society reacts about suicide. She says it’s common to hear people make jokes about suicide or speak with disdain and disgust about people who die by suicide. She imagines people might be afraid of the ridicule, shame and stigma and that people will look at them differently, mock them, joke about them, or not take them seriously. To counter this narrative these are the words Travis would say: “For anyone who is living with losing a loved one to suicide, I first want to say that I love you. I grieve with you. I hurt with

you. I am here for you. You are not alone. For the person who is struggling with suicidal thoughts and ideations, I want to say that I love you. My heart hurts imagining the pain you’re feeling. I am here for you. You are not alone.”

If Travis could tell her dad anything, she would first tell him that she loves him, misses him, and is heartbroken that he felt unable to confide to her his struggles. She wants him to know that she will be getting married at the end of July, and she hopes that he is proud of her and the woman she’s become. She would also tell him that she is trying to find ways to help people who are struggling with suicidal thoughts and ideations.

“Dad may be gone, but there are still wonderful experiences to have and memories to make with my family and friends who I do still have here on earth with me. My biggest lesson as of late is the following: While I miss my father deep, deep in the pits of my soul, I cannot be overcome by anxiety and sadness of what life might be like IF he were here, but rather I must celebrate what IS here. If I spend all of my time focused on what’s absent, I will completely miss what is present. And then I will have missed my life, and I don’t want to miss my life. I want to use the life I have left on this earth for good and for helping and supporting as many people as I can.”

**IT’S TIME. LET’S TALK.**



## THIS IS FOR THE ONES LEFT BEHIND



*To protect the identity of the family, names have been changed.*

With genuine hope that this will save a life or help heal one, “Ms. Dewitt” shares the experience of losing her husband, Chad, to suicide. The feelings of shock, horror and disbelief that immediately followed gave way to emptiness. As she was working through her own trauma she had children to care for and to try to help understand that they would never see their dad--and not just that they would never see him again but that he did not want to be here anymore. She spent so much time, as she said, “Wondering how we could’ve helped, years of nightmares of made up scenarios for the kids and me, years of the kids being worried I would die, and they would be alone.”

Dewitt says that in hindsight she realizes there were signs that he was suicidal. He had had a car accident in which he had broken his arm, and he’d made a comment during a conversation with her that he should’ve ended things then. It wasn’t until later that she realized that the car accident was a failed attempt to die by suicide. There were also unusual conversations in which he would talk about his past behaviors



# SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

## THE ONES LEFT BEHIND CONT'D

Many people who choose suicide do so to end their pain not realizing that their pain becomes the pain of all those they leave behind.



and making things right.

For those left behind there is “anger, lots of anger and abandonment, wishing we could have saved him, let him know how loved he was and that he wasn’t alone, and most importantly, that we were not better off without him!” Years later the Dewitt family is still working through it. Her son still cannot share with people about his dad unless it emotionally builds up, and he just can’t hold back. Her daughter still finds it hard to process that he will never walk her down the aisle. But as they continue to heal they find that talking about great times with him helps. When they are ready to be vulnerable, they talk about their feelings. “We like to visit the area we spread his ashes and remember how funny he was and that even though he did not love himself much, he loved us as much as he could.”

For families that are reeling with the loss of someone to suicide, Dewitt strongly encourages them to get help. Talk to someone when the pain is overwhelming and the emptiness is more than you can bear. “Talk about your loved one. Scream about how much you wanted to save them! Shout about how angry you are that they chose to leave!”

In the aftermath of suicide, choose to not be a victim. By understanding what your loved one was going through, realizing you are not alone in your pain, you free yourself from being a victim. Letting go of the anger is essential to healing.

Hopefully, these words of Dewitt to her husband will change the mind of someone who is having suicidal thoughts to think about those who would be left to stare into that empty space: “Chad I love you, honey. Your life had so much purpose. You made everyone laugh, and you gave the best advice for accepting people for who they were and loving them for being themselves! But your kids and I didn’t sign up for a life without you. We loved you so much we would have helped you overcome any obstacle, and we could have gotten over any hurdle together. You robbed us. You took away dreams and hopes we had for our family. You caused undue harm to the kids--years of therapy needed for them to feel safe again and still working on being whole again... years of insecurity and unworthiness. You could not have known all the damage losing you would do to us. I saw the demons you battled; I know that life was hard for you and a continuous battle, so I hope you have peace and that you are in a place of never ending peace and quiet. We miss you dearly, and we keep your memory alive by telling all your funny jokes! Till we meet again, love peace and chicken grease.”

**FAMILY**  
PUTTING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER

## TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION: HOW TO HELP

Submitted by Triza Cox of Circle Park Behavioral Health Services



Emmy Boring

Most people would be alarmed to discover that the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24 is suicide, according to the Center for Disease Control’s data. Emmy Boring, clinical counselor for Circle Park Behavioral Health Services, shared that “for every death due to suicide among young people, the Department of Health and Human Services states that there may be as many as 100 to 200 suicide attempts.”

Mental health organizations note that certain populations are particularly vulnerable, including LGBTQ+ (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/questioning) youth who are twice as more likely to commit suicide than their peers. Native American youth and military service members also present with higher incidents of suicidal behavior. Suicide is a mental health and public health issue that can be ameliorated with the access to information and treatment.

Risk factors for suicidal thoughts and behavior may include mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. These mental health problems affect over 3.3 million teens in this country. Alcohol and substance use, impulsive behaviors, history of trauma or abuse, family history of suicide and previous suicide attempt(s) are also risk factors. Many survivors of suicidal behavior state that it is a way feeling control in situations that are uncontrollable, such as mental health problems. These issues are compounded due to the terror of suicidal people that they will be stigmatized for being “crazy” if they ask for help.

There are incidents of suicidal behavior that show no signs, and in many cases, these are some notable warning signs:

- Physical changes in appearance or hygiene
- Increase in alcohol or drug use
- Sudden drop in grades
- Social withdrawal
- Self-harm behaviors such as cutting
- Talking about suicide or preoccupation with death
- Risky or reckless behaviors (such as reckless driving or unsafe sex)
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having nothing to live for
- Researching suicide methods and/or acquiring weapons

Studies have shown that 81 percent of people who attempt suicide tell someone what they’re going to do and when they’re going to do it. Therefore, these conversations should be taken seriously.

When parents, teachers, peers and others note these warning signs in a teen, they can begin to help by expressing concern, actively listening, maintaining connections, displaying compassion and prioritizing safety. Proactively seeking treatment for teens who exhibit these warning signs is a critical first step to helping a young one in crisis. Organizations such as Circle Park Behavioral Care have counselors specializing in adolescent mental health and treatment of substance use disorder.

Parents and loved ones can help teens with suicide prevention through utilizing some of the national and local resources available for teen suicide prevention such as these:

- Circle Park Behavioral Health Services; [www.circlepark.com](http://www.circlepark.com) ; 843-665-9349
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; <https://afsp.org/>
- Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide; <https://sptsusa.org/>

During this time period where we raise awareness for suicide prevention, we hope to ensure wellness in Florence County by providing as much information for suicide prevention and mental health treatment as possible.

# Recovery Awareness Month

## RUBICON TEACHES HOW TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE

Submitted By Theresa M. Curtis, ECHO Coordinator/Director of Prevention Services Rubicon Family Counseling Services



Theresa M. Curtis, ECHO Coordinator/Director

**HARTSVILLE-** Naloxone, also known by the brand name NARCAN, is an antidotal drug that temporarily counteracts the effects of opioid overdose. It is only effective on opioids such as pain pills or heroin but has no effect on drugs such as cocaine, crack, Benzodiazepines, amphetamines or methamphetamines. When given at the first signs of overdose, which include slowed or shallow breathing, severe sleepiness or unresponsiveness, Naloxone restores breathing by blocking the effects of opiates on the brain.

Available in two forms, injectable and a nasal spray, the nasal spray was developed with first responders, family, friends and caregivers in mind to provide easy administration with no formal medical training needed. It is, most times, packaged in two doses and is only effective if opioids are present in the body. It is safe for practically anyone to use and cannot cause someone to get "high." Once administered, Naloxone should begin to work within two to three minutes. If there is no response after this time, a second dose can be given. Remember, Naloxone is not a replacement for medical attention, so emergency medical services should be contacted immediately.

### Steps to Administering Naloxone

1. Look for signs of overdose (shortness of breath/labored breathing, sleepiness, pale skin, unable to awaken or no

responsiveness)

2. Call 9-1-1 (Inform operator of unresponsive person. Speak clearly, give complete location, and address)
3. Administer Naloxone (Follow directions of supplier)
4. Begin rescue breathing (Follow proper CPR procedures)
5. Wait on emergency medical services

Rubicon Family Counseling Services is a community distributor of Naloxone. No prescription is needed. You can get free Naloxone at our office at 510 E. Carolina Ave., Hartsville.

To prevent accidental opioid overdose always follow directions on the medication bottle. Take medication that has only been prescribed to you. Do not alter or stop taking medication without talking to your doctor. Do not mix opioids with alcohol, street drugs or other medication that causes drowsiness, and do not sell or give away unused medication. Store medication in a safe place, such as a locked drawer or cabinet. Dispose of medication at drug disposal sites or by using medication disposal packets. Drug disposal locations can be found at [www.justplainkillers.com](http://www.justplainkillers.com). Medication disposal packets are available at Rubicon Family Counseling Services.



## Rubicon Family Counseling Services

*Counseling Families Since 1973*

Counseling Services for children, adolescents & adults  
Preventative Services  
Intervention Services  
Addictions Counseling and Behavioral Health Counseling  
MAT (Medication Assistance Treatment for persons with opioid addiction)

**We offer drug/alcohol screenings Monday - Thursday**

510 E. Carolina Avenue • Hartsville, SC 29550  
Office 843.332.4156  
24/7 Helpline 843.861.27400  
*Like us on Facebook or check out [rubiconsc.org](http://rubiconsc.org)*

1-844-SC-HOPES

### Mental Health & Addictions Support for Challenging Times

<p><b>Mental Health Support</b> You are not alone! Our team is available to listen, provide resources, and connect you to treatment services.</p>	<p><b>Addictions Help</b> Concerned you may have a drug or alcohol problem? Our addiction experts will assist you in finding the help you need.</p>	<p><b>Healthcare Workers</b> Our clinical team offers specialized support for those providing direct care services to COVID-19 patients.</p>	<p><b>24/7 Availability</b> Our experienced team of mental health and addiction counselors are available day or night. Call us anytime!</p>
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### CALL US TODAY AT 1-844-SC-HOPES

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on all of us in South Carolina, and we are here to help! The **South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH)** and the **South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS)** have teamed up to offer a 24/7 support line to address the challenges we face in today's world.

Please call and speak with one of our experienced helping professionals today - they will offer guidance, support, and resources to help.

(Note: SC HOPES is not a crisis line. If you are experiencing an emergency, please call SCDMH's crisis line at 833-364-2274)



# Recovery Awareness Month

## SC HOPES: JUST A CALL AWAY

Submitted by Wendi Sutherlin, Rubicon's Clinical Director, and Brandi Shepherd, Rubicon's Prevention Specialist

**HARTSVILLE-** On June 1 The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) joined forces with The South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drugs (DAODAS) to launch SC HOPES. This statewide support line was created to assist individuals who have experienced changes within their mental health or substance use because of COVID-19.

SC HOPES is being made possible by an emergency COVID-19 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMSHA). Approximately 58 million Americans are living with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and experts from SAMSHA believe that this rate will increase as a result of this COVID-19 crisis. In order to meet South Carolina's growing need for counseling and treatment, a phone line was established with the primary goal of addressing new or increased symptoms of mental health or substance use disorders.

The support line can be reached 24/7, toll-free, at 1 (844) SC-HOPES (724-6737). This phone line is available to the entire state of South Carolina, covering all 46 counties. All calls will be transferred to a trained clinician who can address the caller's specific needs.

Rubicon Family Counseling Center is pleased to announce that our own clinical director, Wendi Sutherlin, and peer recovery specialist, Chris Bullard, are answering calls for the support line.

Sutherlin has been an addictions therapist since 2008. She completed her undergraduate degree at Columbia College and then proceeded to earn her master's from the University of South Carolina. Go Gamecocks! She joined Rubicon's treatment team in 2012 and quickly became an asset to our agency. When asked about SC HOPES, she said: "I immediately wanted to help. The pandemic has been difficult for everyone. Many of our lives have been turned upside down. Some have lost loved ones, jobs and/or homes. Parents had to juggle work, parenting and school. We had to cook dinner, bathe kids and complete reports on our computers all simultaneously. We had to distance ourselves from family members to protect them from the unknown. Our children are unable to go to school and attend weekly play dates. Colorful and decorated facemasks have become a fashion accessory. These changes can absolutely ignite symptoms of mental health issues as well as substance use disorders."

As a peer support specialist, Chris Bullard not only offers valuable insight into our clients' lives and their struggles with addiction, he is able to form a special bond with them based on empathy and shared experiences. Our clients know that Bullard will work as hard for their recovery as he has for his own. When asked about his own battle with substance dependency, Bullard had this to say: "After 12 years of addiction, I found myself at a crossroads. I decided to try and make a change with the help of others who knew what substance abuse could and had done to my life. I entered detox with the help of family and friends, and my journey began. I began to learn about what it meant to be an addict and that there was a road for me to find myself again. This road was not easy, or a smooth one, and at times especially early on, I would doubt if it could be possible. With those around me who had traveled it before, it gave me hope that I may be able to experience freedom from this place I had found myself hopelessly in. I began to learn that recovery takes time, and I attended meetings and classes. I found that I was comfortable with those who shared a common peril. I began to share my experiences, fears [and] hopes

with these people who, otherwise, I would not have anything in common with. This common peril became motivation to begin a long journey to find who I was supposed to be. It was almost like I had lost myself and was scared to begin to feel again. Everything was new, and I didn't know what to do with a lot of feelings since it had been over a decade since I let myself feel anything at all. I found myself a twelve steps group. I finally got the courage to follow their instruction and lean on those who were there to begin to rebuild. Step by step, I found myself growing. Day by day, I repeated the previous process and grew a little bit each time. I realized that for the first time in my life, I could feel myself and be comfortable with whom I was to be. My worldview began to change. Things I took for granted were now centers of my life."

When asked how his recovery led him to becoming a peer recovery specialist, Bullard explained: "My growth was directing me to now show others what I had learned, from a different perspective, with people who had also lost their way and faced that common peril of substance abuse. I started with one person, taking them step by step along the same path I took with my sponsor, then another, until I realized that each time I helped someone else, I was helping myself. Recovery became, not a burden in my life, but a joy. As my growth continued, I began to start meetings in other places, places where there were no other resources, and they began to grow. So as the need would present itself, I would go to the next place and start meetings there to help others find their way. I spoke weekly at the local detox center where it all began for me and eventually was contacted by Rubicon. My role as peer recovery specialist is to do what I love: help others who are lost and let them know that change is possible. Sometimes they may feel like their world is a cell that they cannot free themselves from, but we all hold the key and can make it day by day."

Sutherlin and Bullard have always had a special bond with our patients at Rubicon. That's why we knew that they would be perfect at answering these crisis calls and getting people the help and relief that they need during this pandemic. Rubicon wants everyone in South Carolina to know that help is just a phone call away.

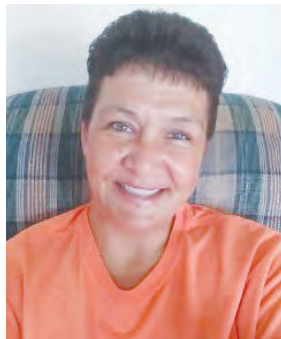
## ABC's of recovery

**A** is for asking for help

**B** is for bravery

# Recovery Awareness Month

## AN HONEST ROAD TO RECOVERY *by Adalia Ellis*



Loretta Rucker

Years ago I went at an AA meeting with a relative of mine who was going through the program and was in recovery. As someone who had never drank a drop of alcohol, I was a little apprehensive, but I wanted to support her. The one thing that has stayed with me for years afterwards is the honesty I witnessed. Never, in any group setting, had I seen such compassionate, authentic honesty. I have thought about it often, and the conclusion that I came to is that when

someone is trying to cut themselves off from something that is harmful, honesty becomes about survival and is the surest means of experiencing success. Loretta Rucker's story of her road to recovery exemplifies this honesty. Rucker is celebrating nine months sober, and the road to recovery has been hard won. Service is an integral part of her recovery to find her better self and a sense of her own strength.

To understand how a person may have become addicted to drugs and alcohol, it is important to listen to his or her story. For Rucker, emotional pain was the biggest motivator for using drugs and alcohol. "I wasn't taught very good coping skills as a child, but as I looked back [on my life] my parents did the best they knew how. Just to escape the reality of life, I crossed that imaginary line that we addicts do, and it was the point of no return. I lived, breathed and slept to get high and stay that way."

When asked what inspired her to get help, Rucker says, "I woke up in an abandoned house not knowing where I was and how I'd gotten there. Sleeping in those types of dwellings wasn't uncommon to me, but I knew I wasn't put on earth to live like that." Her road to recovery started when she came to Florence eight months ago. She has been paying rent on a one-bedroom apartment for six months. Although she came here with nothing, now she has furnishings, pots

and pans, clothes and undergarments and toiletries, and she even has a cat.

The process of recovery has had its ups and downs. Her drug of choice is crack cocaine, but she is an alcoholic, and she smoked marijuana as well. Yet, Rucker is extremely grateful that she didn't experience serious withdrawal from the substances she was on. The awakening of emotions and feelings was tough enough. In addition to feeling emotions she had masked with substances, it was also a challenge to live as a productive member of society again. "Responsibilities and priorities were scattered, not intuitively knowing how to settle issues that were constantly baffling me," she says.

While Rucker was using, she was disowned by everyone. Since going into recovery, she now has a relationship with the daughter she walked away from when she was four years old. She isn't close to her other children but hopes that someday she will be. Her mother passed away in 2008, but Rucker feels her smiling down on her. For weeks at a time, she visits her father in his home where she has her own room.

Her advice to friends and family of people who are addicts is to "get assistance through Alanon and Mental Health. I would suggest to never constantly throw past wrongs in a recovering person's face. One thing is for sure, we know what we did, and a constant reminder only slows the process. 'Love, Tolerance, and Patience' is our motto these days."

What is Rucker doing with her time these days? She chairs AA meetings at the local chapter clubhouse, is an Alumni of Oxford House Inc. and was recently elected as the Chapter 6 Treasurer for that organization. She is working with a sponsor to go through the 12 steps of recovery. Rucker said, "Service work is a HUGE part of my recovery. I'll begin ADSAP on the 30th of June to get my driver's license back. I work a part time job within my community and always show great customer service. I love Me today, so therefore, I can love my neighbor as well."

## MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR SHARES RECOVERY STORY *Submitted by Susan Carter*



Doretha Hickson

Today, Doretha Hickson is a happy, healthy and outgoing peer counselor for Pee Dee Mental Health (PDMH). Growing up, however, she describes her life very differently. From an early age, she felt that she was different from other people. She was extremely quiet at home and in school, concerning both her teachers and parents. She could not explain what was wrong but believed that she was "an outcast" and didn't fit in with

others. When Hickson was ten years old, her mother passed away after a long illness. However, she states that this loss affected her greatly: "My whole world just crumbled. Everything just went black and dark for a while, and nobody even noticed."

She describes her home life with her father as difficult due to his emotional distance: "I started to feel rejected by my dad. He kept me at a distance, and because I feared him, we did not talk about what I

was feeling." She felt that he strongly favored other siblings and only "tolerated" her.

Although her home life was stained, Hickson enjoyed school and was a good student. She had a part-time job cooking and dishwashing at a local restaurant and "earned her own way" from a young age. However, she became pregnant at 17, and her father insisted that she stay at home with her child rather than complete her senior year of high school. She did manage to complete her degree by going to summer school. The rejection she experienced from her father increased during this time: "It was like his life was disrupted--not mine." She found a job at a paper company so that she could support herself and her daughter and enjoyed the work. "I found this was something I was good at doing, and I enjoyed the people I worked for," she said, although she still was not talkative.

"During this time, I had one faithful friend who helped me with taking care of my daughter until I moved, and we lost contact. My daughter's father was of great help to me because we would split time with her. She would spend the school year with me, and all her summers would be spent with him and his family. There was nothing that she

# Recovery Awareness Month

## MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR CONT'D

needed that he would not try to get for her, and I am grateful for that. I met someone, and I thought it was love, and we got along great. However, he introduced me to drugs. At first it was new and a feeling I never felt before, but just like most things, I lost interest in it and just didn't want it or him around me and my child anymore," Hickson said.

A serious health concern was the next challenge that she faced. At 30 years of age, Hickson was diagnosed with sarcoidosis, a disease that was stealing her eyesight and lung functioning. Because her lungs "looked like those of an 80-year-old man who had smoked all of his life," she was also diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Hickson's father was ill also, so she was able to visit him often. On one visit, they were able to "clear the air" about how she felt about her childhood and her father apologized and stated that he did not realize that he was doing those hurtful things. She was grateful for that conversation because she had always felt like she was "hated or unloved" but could now look at her childhood differently.

But a turbulent home life with a new husband and unhappy stepdaughter added to Hickson's stressors. Moreover, a physician told her at age 40 that she could never work again. She remembers that a disability judge even told her that she "needed to be living in a bubble somewhere" because of what the doctor's report had said. Further, the arguments at home made her "feel like a criminal."

Faced with increasing health concerns and emotional fragility due to the deaths of both her father and stepmother within a six-month period, Hickson was referred to Pee Dee Mental Health. She was treated



Doretha Hickson

effectively for anxiety and depression through medication and counseling.

Hickson credits individual and group counseling sessions with putting her on the road to recovery: "It made me realize that no one was worth me losing my sanity over, so I left [my dysfunctional relationship]." A PDMH psychiatrist told her he believed that she could be productive, and this gave her the encouragement to try. She reached out to the Individualized

Placement Services (IPS) program at PDMH and was provided with a job coach who found a good position to help her ease back into the working world but in a low stress environment.

When the Peer Support program became active in South Carolina through the Department of Mental Health, Hickson was selected to be one of the first counselors in the state due to her enthusiastic and professional work ethic and the success she has achieved in recovery. Today Hickson is one of the longest working peer support counselors in the state, and she takes pride and joy in instilling confidence in her peers that they can achieve similar outcomes: "There is nothing else that I would rather be doing than helping people with mental illnesses or disabilities work toward a meaningful and fulfilling life." Her mantra is, "No matter what, keep it moving. Your recovery is worth it! KEEP SMILING."

## HOLDING ON TO HOPE Submitted by Susan Carter



Ricardo Powell

Ricardo Powell grew up on John's Island in Charleston. He graduated from West Ashley High School and briefly attended Benedict College. Powell describes his childhood as "very pleasant" and reports that his parents were well respected within their community. They taught him "tradition and morals and values" that he still uses every day. He has faced life challenges, including being dually diagnosed and involved with the

judicial system, but now he is in active recovery.

In his preteen years, Powell experimented with alcohol, marijuana and tobacco. This led to abuse of and addiction to these substances and caused him to drop out of college. He also developed mental illness at that time. While taking anti-psychotic medication for mental illness, he continued to use alcohol and drugs, a dangerous combination that led to more chaos in his life. He also cycled between jails, hospitals and psychiatric institutions and battled the challenges of everyday living along with symptoms of mental illness and emotional extremes.

Powell remembers that he felt "misunderstood" then, and he did not know how to deal with his auditory hallucinations, which left him feeling like a "social outcast." To deal with his loneliness, he self-medicated with alcohol and drugs, which he saw as his "only way to escape" the discomfort of his symptoms. The depression and anxiety

that accompanied his substance addiction caused him to lose confidence in himself. This poor self-esteem was exacerbated by a series of losses. He lost housing, vehicles and the trust of his closest relationships. At times, he could not distinguish reality from fantasy due to the strength of his hallucinations.

Soon, Powell lapsed into a period of untreated psychosis and noncompliance with medications prescribed to treat his mental illness and was committed to a behavioral health center where he acted out physically and assaulted someone. Following the shocking incident, he slowly regained his mental health and awareness of how his untreated conditions had resulted in actions that had hurt others. He had an epiphany and realized that he could never use drugs again and had to comply with prescribed medications "no matter what."

Today, Powell is on a "Road of Recovery," and he accepts himself and his mental illness. He credits "effective clinical therapy" along with Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous for helping him succeed on this journey. He explains that he "has learned to deal with shortcomings and to utilize coping skills" to help him avoid relapsing. Above all, he relies on his spirituality, which helps him put his past and present into perspective. In addition, he uses his wisdom in his work as a peer support specialist at Pee Dee Mental Health in coaching others with mental illness to adapt to their condition and live healthy lives. He enjoys giving back to the community by helping others develop and maintain a new way of living in recovery. As Powell counsels his peers, "There is hope; just hold on to it."

# Recovery Awareness Month

## A CELEBRATION OF RECOVERY THROUGH A PERSONAL LENS

*Submitted by Circle Park Behavioral Health Services*



*Maxine Quillen, coordinator for Residential Services at the Chrysalis Center*

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSHA) of the United States designates every September as National Recovery Month. This designation aims to “increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and celebrate the people who recover.” SAMSHA uses this month to remind Americans that recovery is possible and that treatment is available, effective and can be lifesaving.

Assistant secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz (M.D. Ph.D.) states, “We know that over 23 million Americans are in recovery for substance use disorders.” McCance-Katz acknowledges the courage it takes for these individuals to obtain and maintain recovery.

Having a substance use disorder means that there is a use of alcohol or drugs (or both) that is compulsive or dangerous or both. This disorder is a disease and not a weakness of character that has extraordinary reach and affects the rich and poor, males and females, the educated and uneducated and all races. An effective way to see the effects of substance use disorder and how the process of recovery works is to become familiar with someone’s recovery journey.

On July 26 Maxine Quillen, coordinator for Residential Services at the Chrysalis Center, will celebrate 30 years clean and sober. “When I was

younger, I loved the night life and dancing,” says Quillen, “and that’s where I was introduced to cocaine while living in Jacksonville, Fla.” Quillen describes how she first became fully aware of how her substance use went from a social habit to a full-blown addiction. The wakeup call came when she started spending money designated for other responsibilities on her drug use. Her substance use disorder led to a downhill spiral that included causing hurt and pain to her family members.

The path towards recovery began when Quillen entered an in-patient treatment center in Philadelphia, Pa. Adjusting to living drug free and taking on duties at the center eventually aroused bitterness and anger in Quillen, but upon further reflection, she realized that the time spent there was preparing her for her work at the Chrysalis Center. The hard work, organizational and management skills would be essential in her current position of serving pregnant and post-partum women with an acute substance use disorder diagnosis.

Shortly after completing the treatment program in Philadelphia, Quillen’s grandmother passed away, and a few years later, both parents also died. She states she knew she could continue to live clean and sober for the rest of her life after surviving those losses without using. Her life now centers on her work with the Chrysalis Center where she has a passion for the women she serves.

“I realized that recovery is a personal commitment you make every day,” states Quillen. She wants her life to be a demonstration of that commitment for the patients of the Chrysalis Center and for the larger community.



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# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

## KEEPING THE CULTURE Articles by Jennifer Robinson



*Evelyn Roman*

Festivals, art, music, tradition and dancing are all rich parts of Puerto Rican culture. Its history is interwoven with Tiano, African and Spanish traditions. One can experience the cultural identity of the island with all of his or her five senses. It is important to note Puerto Rico is a United States territory: “After the Spanish American war ended in 1898, Puerto Rico and Guam were ceded to the United States as part of the terms of the Treaty of

Paris and Puerto Rico maintained its provincial status to this day.”

Understanding the history of Puerto Rico is important to understanding who Evelyn Roman is with her being a first-generation Puerto Rican in the United States. As an American, she is very much in touch with her Puerto Rican roots. She said, “I am very proud of my grandmother. She did not speak any English in front of us (her children and grandchildren), and we could not speak it to her.” Her grandmother did not want her family to lose their culture.

Roman learned to speak English from her father while her grandmother taught her to cook. The family met at her grandmother’s house, which was in the United States, every Friday. Her grandmother even loved to dance. Her favorite performer was Chubby Checker, so she and the family danced to his music when he came on the Dick Clark Show. It was also the only time they were allowed to speak English in the presence of their grandmother. Roman said this tradition was a special time in her family and was how it kept their culture alive. “Even today,” Roman exclaimed, “I mainly cook Spanish food,

five days out of seven!” For her recipes, she can find some food items here, but mostly she has to travel to North Carolina and Florida to purchase those spices not available in South Carolina. And she only drinks Spanish coffee.

There are also special meals for special holidays such as the New Year, Easter and Christmas. Roman’s mother and father made patty-like meals that contained no flour but were mostly vegetables and meat-wrapped paper. The process of putting them together was very long, and there were usually about 300 made. Because the process was long, and they were for the holiday, Roman said they started making the meals around September or October. They would make these for her seven older siblings, which would be divided into a dozen per family. She raised her two grandchildren to celebrate El Dia de Reyes or Three Kings Day. This is the Puerto Rican celebration of the Three Wise Men celebrated in January. Roman stated, “Whatever Santa doesn’t bring the children for Christmas, the Wise Men will bring them one thing in January.” She continues to hold onto those special times because her grandmother was about keeping tradition and culture alive.

It is also important to keep culture alive for future generations. Though Roman was born in the United States, she is aware of what is happening in Puerto Rico because some of her family is still there. She said, just as it is in the states, there is a political divide. But what continues to drive her is remembering what her grandmother, mother and father taught her. Roman says she owes her career as an interpreter to her grandmother, and she closed with this declaration: Her parents were her inspiration. Her mother built the foundation, and her father built the structure of their family.

## MY CULTURE AND MY HERITAGE



*Jessica Hernandez Singh*

When people think of Hispanic culture, they tend to think of exotic locations and festive celebrations, especially Cinco de Mayo. It is not often that people think of work lineage when describing Hispanic culture. For Jessica Hernandez Singh, migrant workers’ work ethic and contributions to society remind her of her culture and heritage.

Singh was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, which is known as the Land of Enchantment. She has been in South Carolina for 19 years. Her father, Roberto P. Baeza, is from Chihuahua, Mexico, and her mother, Isabel Mendoza, is from Texas. Singh shared cherished memories of stories of her father coming to the United States when he was very young. He was the oldest of six children, and he worked very hard to make sure his family was provided for. Singh’s voice rang with pride as she told how he sacrificed meals for himself so his siblings would have food. At a very young age, both her parents worked very hard in the fields. But Singh said this is the heritage of Hispanic people. They have very strong work ethic, and they are loyal, courteous, welcoming to all, and they love to dance as music is a big part of their lives.

The wife and mother of four (21, 16, 1 and 8 months old) keeps

her culture alive by attending Spanish mass at church, cooking authentic meals, and teaching her children Spanish. Although there are not as many Hispanic festivals and public celebrations in the Pee Dee, Singh attends the yearly Cinco de Mayo celebration downtown. She says she is familiar with the Hispanic celebrations that occur in her hometown, such as The Whole Enchilada Fiesta, where the world’s largest enchilada is made, and Dia de Independencia (Sep. 16), the day marking the launch of Mexico’s struggle for independence from Spain.

Though food and fiestas are a big part of Hispanic culture, Singh spoke more about her appreciation for the laborers within the culture. Her appreciation stems from her response to her parents work ethic and the work ethic of all the Hispanic workers. There are agriculture workers and farmers who are often overlooked. Even during the pandemic we are currently in, not much is known about their health statuses. Singh said migrant workers inspire her because they work no matter the conditions.

Having been a bilingual legal assistant at the Finklea Law Firm since 2011, she finds her own work to be extra rewarding as she is able to help people to communicate with their lawyer. This is what makes her proud, for too often migrant workers are taken advantage of, but they need legal assistance just like anyone else. Therefore, it is gratifying to give back to the Hispanic community, and Singh is proud to be Chicana (Mexican-American).

# HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

## INTRODUCING THE "QUEEN OF SPANISH CUISINE" *by Anna Bowman*



*Maria Blanco*

Born in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, relocating to America was easy for Maria Blanco because she was fluent in English, Spanish and French. "I did, however, miss my family and the food, so I would cook as many recipes as my mother taught me as a child and teenager growing up in Spain."

Blanco is proud of her Hispanic heritage and her love of family, food and culture. "My love of food and family has always been at the forefront of everything I have done. I tried to instill that in my children and show them how important culture and traditions are as they grew up. One tradition that we have kept until today is we still celebrate Three Kings Day every year. It is a wonderful tradition in Spain, and my grandchildren love it. We cook, bake and open gifts...sing songs and play games."



*Cheryl Moore*

was being with family and being surrounded by Spanish food like Spanish tortilla, croquettas, Nocilla sandwiches (basically the equivalent of Nutella) and playing card games like la brisca and ronda robada while eating sunflower seeds."

Hispanic Heritage Month, held each year during Sep.15 through Oct.15, gives the world a view of the traditions of people of Hispanic and Latino heritage, but within the culture, expressions of love and family are an everyday experience. Sharing love, laughter, family and food are not merely celebrated during Hispanic Heritage Month, but it is a way for other American cultures to have an opportunity to witness the extraordinary cultural traditions during the month-long celebration. Blanco said, "I am able to embrace my Spanish culture and traditions from Spain as a proud American living here in Florence, S.C. I enjoy showing my family and others the importance of family and food so that they can pass it on to the community where we live."

The family bond is extremely strong in the Hispanic culture. In fact, Moore stated, "We've always been a very close family, and when my sister Rebeca accepted a nursing job in 2006 in Florence, S.C.,

Maria Blanco was just 21 years old when she met a young U.S. Marine named Billy Ray Moore, who was from Columbus, Ohio, and was stationed in Rota, Spain. The young couple soon married and began raising their two daughters, Cheryl and Rebeca. She said she was fortunate that her family fell in love with him as well. "They loved him from day one, and they supported my decision to marry him."



*The wedding of U.S. Marine Billy Ray Moore and Maria Blanco*

Florence, S.C., and in 2009 received an associate in nursing and became a registered nurse."

Moore refers to her mother as the "Queen of Spanish Cuisine" and says she is the reason why she is currently writing a cookbook entitled "Ladies of My Round Table." The book is a collaboration of recipes from family and friends. It is also a tribute to her mother's passion for her Spanish culture and to her late maternal grandfather, who died before she was born but owned a bakery in Spain and passed down his recipes to his family.



*Maria Blanco; her daughter, Rebeca; and husband, Doug, on their wedding day*

Baptist Temple where she sings in the choir, participates in the jail ministry every week and serves at the Beacon of Truth, putting together Bibles. She is the mother of two daughters, Cheryl Marie Moore and Rebeca Sue Andrews, and four grandchildren (Kayla Maria, Michael, Isabella Grace and Logan Anthony), for whom she loves cooking and baking her delicious Spanish cuisine.

we all moved down together and have been South Carolinians ever since. Even though I had a Bachelors of Arts in political science from Rutgers State University in Newark, N.J. in 2000, upon relocating to Florence, I followed in my sister's career path and enrolled in the nursing program at Florence Darlington Technical College in

Moore said that she is also an admirer of various artists and actors of Hispanic ancestry like Julio Iglesias; Placido Domingo; actors Antonio Banderas and Jordi Molla; Nina Pastori; and Isabel Pantoja, to name a few.

Blanco is proud to see her family flourish in America and embrace their Spanish ancestry equally. She attends Florence



## 6 WAYS TO SPEND YOUR STIMULUS RESPONSIBLY



You should have received your COVID-19 stimulus payment or are expecting it soon and have started spending it or thinking about how you will spend it.

It's tempting to think about all of the ways you could spend an extra \$1,200 or \$2,400, depending on your filing status and the number of dependents you claim. Before you get that list finalized, we want to give you some tips to help your money stretch as far as possible.

**1. Prioritize.** Look at your bills. What are essential—rent or mortgage, car payment, utilities—and what bills are non-essential—entertainment, streaming services, unusable memberships? Make a list of what you need and what you can live without. Focus on paying the essential bills first.

**2. Save. Save. Save.** Don't miss an opportunity to pad your savings account with some of your stimulus money. It's a one-time payment, so think of your stimulus as a mini emergency fund. You may want to set aside some of the payment as "in case" money.

**3. Divide and conquer.** You only get one stimulus payment, but your bills will still come monthly. If you're currently unemployed, it's especially important to be strategic in how you spend your stimulus payment. Take this opportunity to divide it up into smaller chunks to help cover some of the essential bills you pay each month. Also, talk to your landlord or mortgage lender, your utility company and Internet service provider if you're having trouble meeting your monthly obligations. A lot of companies

are finding ways to help their customers during this unprecedented situation.

**4. Don't hoard cash.** Hoarding cash is a bad idea in general. Your money is much safer at your credit union than it is in your home. The National Credit Union Administration insures amounts up to \$250,000. So, bring it to us, and let us keep an eye on it. Plus, if you have a checking account that has a cashback option, you could make money on it while it sits in your account.

**5. Pay down debt.** Paying off debt is almost never a bad financial move, but think about it and prioritize carefully. Even in these uncertain times, paying off your highest-interest debt isn't a bad idea. But, don't feel like you need to be in a hurry to spend all your stimulus money on paying off debt. Look at your options for forbearance, payment deferrals or even the option to skip a monthly payment. If you can get some relief on your debts in the coming months, let that stimulus payment sit in your savings account.

**6. Splurge Smartly.** We're all feeling the weight of stress, grief and uncertainty as we wonder when this pandemic will end and when life will return to normal. No matter how you decide to spend your stimulus check, set aside a little bit to spend on something fun for yourself. Maybe even shop at some of your local businesses to offer support. Remember, the government is hoping these stimulus payments will put some cashflow back into the economy to stimulate it.

While the stimulus payments will certainly help and offer some relief to most, please know that Palmetto First Federal Credit Union is here for you.

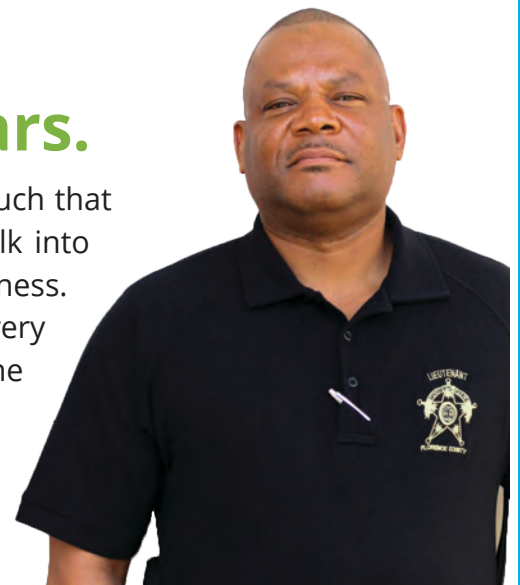
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— *Vince Hanna*



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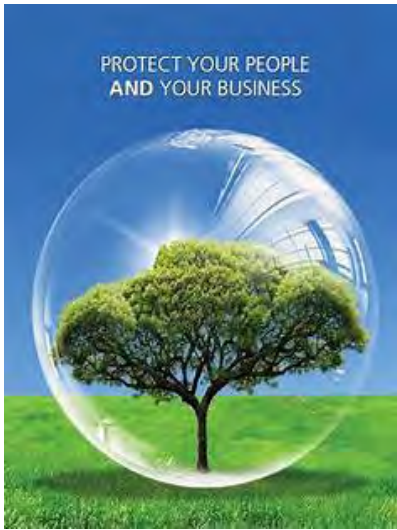
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# PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS AND EMPLOYEES



If you have employees, you know firsthand that the loss of a key employee can have a profound impact on business operations. When an employee leaves, customers who dealt directly with that person may worry about receiving their goods or services in a timely manner; suppliers may be concerned about getting paid for their deliveries; and staff morale can also take a dip as remaining employees worry about assuming a heavier workload.

That's why it's important to make sure that your business is prepared to deal with the unexpected departure of a key employee, which usually happens for one of three reasons: the employee chooses to resign, the employee becomes disabled or he or she passes away.

While life insurance cannot protect against employees choosing to leave, it is often used as a tool to help incentivize them to stay; deferred compensation plans are powerful vehicles for doing just this. Deferred compensation arrangements allow you to provide retirement income to select employees. The way it works is that you and the selected employee enter a contract that specifies the compensation you will pay out to him or her in the future. Since you may not set

up a specific reserve fund in which a participant has a vested right, a life insurance policy is uniquely suited to informally finance a deferred compensation plan. The future of your business depends on attracting and retaining the right talent with the right tools.

It's also important to protect your business against the economic losses it may face as the result of a top employee's death with the use of key person insurance. The way it works is that the business applies for and becomes the owner and beneficiary of a life insurance policy covering the key employee. If the insured employee dies, the business receives the policy proceeds.

Deferred compensation and key employee insurance are benefits that are related exclusively to your top employees, but New York Life also has options that you can offer your entire team to help cultivate a rewarding work environment, such as life and disability insurance. These benefits can provide employees and their family's peace of mind and added financial security, which can go a long way toward attracting and retaining valuable employees.

As a business owner, you've worked hard to get where you are today. Having a contingency in place will allow you to focus on making the best possible decisions for the future your business.

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



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**Julie A Cord, MBA, MIM, CLU<sup>®</sup>**  
Agent  
New York Life Insurance Company  
P.O. BOX 13809  
Florence, SC 29504  
200 Meeting St., Ste 401  
Charleston, SC 29401  
317.289.3010  
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# 8 KEY TIPS: FOCUSING ON YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH DURING CRISIS



It will take some time to adjust and recover from the major disruption experienced because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many consumers are figuring out how to cope with challenges when it comes to their financial health.

A lot of people are feeling the financial strain of not being able to go to work or operate their businesses normally, and many more have had to rethink personal plans and goals for the year. But there are proactive steps you can take to stay focused on your long-term financial health. Consider these suggestions moving forward.

**Use tech to your advantage.** It is always important for consumers to be aware of the digital banking resources available to them, but now with social distancing measures in place across the country, it is more important than ever to know how to use your bank's website or mobile app to manage your finances from home.

Generally speaking, financial technology can help you with managing your bills, setting up direct deposits or making and receiving payments from friends and family. Also, if you are still expecting a stimulus check, check your banking app for mobile deposit capabilities.

**Stay alert to scams.** Experts suggest triple-checking your social messages, emails or other solicitations for potential fraud. For example, a scammer trying to steal your stimulus check may claim the IRS needs personal information such as your name, password, PIN or account information. Legitimate financial institutions will never ask for such confidential information when reaching out to you. Be especially alert to messaging that mentions COVID-19 and/or includes either an urgent call to action or contains suspicious links. If you are in doubt, check out official resources like the Federal Trade Commission's consumer website for information on common scams and how to report them. Also, be sure your financial institution has your latest contact information so they can reach out to you if they detect any suspected fraud on your account.



are allowing delayed payments and/or waiving late fees during the COVID crisis and whether opting in on those options could adversely affect your credit score. If you must delay payments, contact the payees to discuss your payment plan. They may be able to negotiate better terms.

**Review what money is available to you.** You're bound to feel more financially secure if you're aware of all sources of cash and credit you could draw upon to help you through difficult times.

**Adjust and readjust.** Keep evaluating and changing your budget

to account for income reductions and changes in expenses. Recording all purchases can help you pinpoint exactly where your money is going. You may find you're now spending significantly less on transportation, clothing and entertainment and can reallocate that money toward other essential needs. Don't have a budget currently built? The free Budget Builder template from Chase can help you get started.

**Keep current on credit.** Understand which of your financial actions can impact your credit score. That can be particularly important if you're applying for a loan or credit card or refinancing debt on your home loan. The free Chase Credit Journey tool can help you understand your overall credit health.

**Rebuild when you can.** If you're using savings to help you right now, start to rebuild when you can, setting up a safety net to help you cover your everyday needs. If you are expecting or have received a lump sum or relief funds, think about setting some aside for savings if at all possible. Financial health is a journey, and financial institutions can help you deal with today's challenges while establishing a solid plan for the future.



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## SOUND FINANCIAL TIPS DURING COVID-19 UNCERTAINTY

The current COVID-19 financial landscape is unpredictable, causing anxiety for people of all ages. With layoffs, unexpected medical expenses and an ever-changing and uncertain economy, it's easy to worry. Now more than ever is the time to take an active approach with your finances to position yourself for success. Knowledge is power during unpredictable times.

Emotions are running high with coronavirus concerns. Being informed helps you resist gut reactions driven by emotion so you don't make a move you later regret.

Here are important financial tips to empower you to make wise financial decisions today and in the future:

**Budget and be proactive.** Create a budget, and identify which bills are locked-in and which are discretionary. Then decide what can and can't be cut. For those who have lost significant income, contact providers as soon as possible to explore options.

Many companies are waiving late fees, establishing payment plans or deferring payments. Foreclosures and evictions have been suspended in many cases. Contact your financial institution for relief on mortgages and other loans in the form of payment deferrals or forbearance to ease the pressure. For business owners, review the rules of CARES Act loans as well as the requirements for loan forgiveness to ensure you're taking care of both your employees and your company.

**Manage medical costs.** Medical costs including over-the-counter drugs and menstrual care items are now considered a deductible medical expense. You should consider using money in your flexible spending account on these items to reduce the burden on your monthly income.

**Get your stimulus check.** If you haven't filed a tax return for 2018 or 2019, file one as soon as possible to qualify for a stimulus check provided by the federal government as part of the CARES Act. If your 2019 income

was lower than 2018 or you added a child to your family last year, file your 2019 return now to potentially qualify for a higher stimulus check.

### Access emergency funds

If needed, use emergency cash, or sell bonds to fund your living expenses. Now is also a good time to use low-interest debt like a home equity line of credit for cash needs if necessary.

**Use retirement savings cautiously.** The CARES Act stimulus package makes it easier to dip into retirement savings to fund short-term living expenses. The 10 percent penalty on early IRA distributions has been suspended for up to \$100,000 of COVID-related withdrawals. The amount that can be borrowed from a 401(k) has been doubled from \$50,000 to \$100,000, and the repayment terms have been relaxed.

You can use these resources to cover essential expenses, but resist the urge to use retirement savings for discretionary spending. Remember, you will either have to pay back what you borrowed or eventually pay tax on the withdrawals. Furthermore, to create cash in a 401(k) to withdraw, you will almost inevitably have to sell stocks when values are depressed, locking in losses.

**Limit media time.** It's important to be informed but easy to become fatigued by watching negative financial news over and over. Even one hour with a financial advisor can help bring you peace of mind and some tangible next steps.



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## ABB DONATES \$5000 TO MUSC FOR COVID-19

Articles Submitted by Susan Grant VP Marketing Director



David Anderson

**MULLINS-** Anderson Brothers Bank donated \$5000 to the Medical University of South Carolina Foundation's emergency response fund to meet the needs caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19). The donation is for immediate needs expenses, including equipment, screening costs, staff support and protection supplies for the Florence Division of MUSC. Monetary assistance will provide immediate funds to assist MUSC facilities in

the Florence and Marion County areas.

"Anderson Brothers Bank is always looking for ways to give back to the communities and citizens we serve," said Susan Grant, marketing director with Anderson Brothers Bank. "The Andersons have always believed in stepping up when a need is presented. This is the foundation of the bank's history and has never been truer today."

For more information about the MUSC emergency response fund, or to donate, visit <https://web.musc.edu/about/giving>.



Anderson Brother Bank Main Corporate Headquarters in Mullins

## ABB CONTINUES TO EXPAND NORTH MYRTLE BEACH

Anderson Brothers Bank continues to expand its North Myrtle Beach team and is pleased to announce the most recent promotions and transitions of Shawnee Harbaugh Thornton, Sarah Jones Myers and Robert Beatty.



Shawnee Thornton

Shawnee Thornton transitioned to loan officer of the North Myrtle Beach office. Thornton joined ABB in July 2016 as teller/CSR in the North Myrtle Beach office. In January 2017, she was promoted to branch operations coordinator of the North Myrtle Beach office. Thornton resides in Horry County with her husband, Kraig, and their son, Zachary.



Sarah Myers

Sarah Myers has been promoted to branch operations coordinator of the North Myrtle Beach office. She joined ABB in August 2017 in the bank's North Myrtle Beach as a teller. Prior to that, she worked for BB&T. Myers resides in Horry County with her husband, Trapper.

### 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



Robert Beatty

Main Street, P.O. Box 310 in Mullins, South Carolina. For additional information about Anderson Brothers Bank, call 843-464-6271, or visit [ABBank.com](http://ABBank.com).



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## LIVING THROUGH A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



*Dedrick LaRon Cameron*

If you are a Florence resident, then you might have recently seen the video of the parade Dedrick LaRon Cameron and his wife, Lumetric, organized for their daughters' birthdays in May. The celebration drew the attention of news outlets as friends and family helped celebrate the couple's beautiful daughters. But what many do not know is the extent of how important the moment was for Dedrick Cameron, a former sports agent and navy retiree, who never would have known that serving his country

for 15 years might forever impact his life, yet it did.

It all began between 1994 and 1996 when Cameron began having breathing issues. Two years later, Cameron had to have an open lung biopsy. He went from being diagnosed with pneumonia and being told to take a Zpack to being told he had sarcoidosis. It was when he finally visited the VA that his life really began to change. Cameron was admitted in the hospital, and wedges were removed from the right lower and middle of his lungs.

However, doctors still could not find out what was wrong. In 1998 Cameron found out he has a rare lung disease called Desquamative interstitial pneumonitis. It comes from smoking, but Cameron has never smoked a day in his life. One doctor attributed the disease to Cameron being exposed to certain particles while aboard the naval ship. That doctor confirmed he was 100 percent disabled, but he only began receiving \$300 per month in benefits, which was not enough to sustain his life in Columbia, so he moved



*Cameron and family*

back to Lake City to an area called Camerontown. There, he started selling mobile homes and began to once again make good money to support his family. Yet, as if Cameron had not gone through enough, his grandfather passed away shortly thereafter.

But that wasn't the only tragedy Cameron would have to deal with. In 2005 he got married, but just three years later, the military federally indicted him, stating that he wasn't supposed to be

receiving a pension. With that, Cameron went from having so much—a new wife, new child, and new house—to being fired from his job as a tax assessor, even when the case had nothing to do with his job, to having to do a quitclaim deed to sell the home they had just bought. Not only that, but the man who'd formerly served our country to ensure its safety and freedom, was forced to wear an ankle bracelet for six months. The judge also wanted him to serve an 18-month sentence, but Cameron's doctor testified on his behalf, letting the judge know he could not do that. Cameron also agreed to pay \$500 a month for the next three months, but because he didn't have a job, he was unable to pay as required.

However, he was proactive and went to real estate school, became licensed and started selling houses. In a series of unexpected, one real estate company he was working for stole his commissions, which led him to begin working at another one. But when a group of investors also stole his commissions, Cameron decided to step away from real estate altogether, knowing that God had other plans for him. One of those plans was to go after his passion for professional sports. Around that time, Cameron had



*Cameron and wife Lumetric*

started an agency called Sinetic Sports with locations in both Philadelphia and Columbia. Through the agency, he represented notable players and teams, including Jamie Watson of the Utah Jazz; Xavier McDaniel, a future NBA Hall of Famer who has played for several teams; the Seattle SuperSonics; the Phoenix Suns; the New Jersey Nets; the New York Knicks; and the Boston Celtics. Today, he remains in contact with many of those athletes.

As you see, for a while, the battle was trending upwards. Cameron even began a job at Carbis. Although he struggled to get military benefits at first, after running into someone who'd recognized him from the past, he found out he was approved on both the medical and administration sides. Soon, he was awarded ten years of back pay, which he used to pay the remainder of what he owed the government. Cameron said that everything the devil stole from him started coming right back to him, even a new home. In 2010, he and his family moved back into same neighborhood they had bought a house in five years earlier.

It still wasn't the end of Cameron's troubles. In 2015, he shoulder pain crept in. He went from doctor to doctor, and after several X-rays, they still couldn't tell him anything. Once he saw a sports doctor, who sent him for an X-ray of left shoulder and arm, Cameron was told that he has a rare type of cancer called multiple myeloma. The American Cancer Society states that multiple myeloma is a cancer that generally occurs when the plasma cells, which are found in bone marrow, "become cancerous and grow out of control." According to Cameron's own research on Google, with that diagnosis, he only had two to three years to live. Apparently, God thought otherwise.

It was a trying time as the family had recently discovered Cameron's mother-in-law also had cancer although they thought she was going to beat it. The next February, Cameron underwent a stem cell transplant at MUSC that he says took away the pain in his body. While life was looking better for Cameron, what he and his wife went home to was, yet, another tragedy. As soon as they returned from Cameron's transplant in March, his mother-in-law passed away.

Cameron's wife has been what he calls a "trooper," remaining by his side through it all, even when his health turned last year as he faced new complications with his lungs. His life went from him being active and even riding his bike again to him almost not being active at all because the cancer came back when he was in remission. Now he is taking radiation again. The chemo and radiation have disintegrated his vertebrae and were causing him to sometimes lose all bodily functions and pass out. While his doctor wanted to put two rods and four screws in his back, Cameron decided not to go through with it because, as of this January, he began walking by himself, once again proving that his work here is definitely not done. Lumetric Cameron said her husband, the man she calls the "rock" of their family, has been on a journey and still is on one, but God is on their side, taking care of him every single day.

Dedrick Cameron is a devout Christian who is dedicated to his faith and family. He and his wife are the proud parents of London (10) and Maddison (15). In addition to that, Cameron takes care of his mother and is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi's Florence Alumnae Chapter.



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## MINUTES MATTER: DON'T PUT HEART HEALTH ON HOLD

*Submitted by Dr. William Cauthen Jr., Emergency Department Medical Director*



*Dr. William Cauthen Jr.*

care in an emergency.

At Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center, we want to stress the importance of recognizing the signs and symptoms of a heart-related emergency and that our hospital is still a safe place to come should you or your loved ones need care. Not only do we have safety measures in place to protect our patients from infection, but we know that quickly taking action in an emergency will also help ensure that the victim gets proper medical treatment before it's too late.

Heart disease refers to problems inhibiting the heart's ability to properly function and circulate blood through the body. Many of these problems are related to atherosclerosis – the process of a substance called “plaque” building up in the walls of the arteries. Plaque buildup narrows the arteries, making it harder for blood to flow through. This increases the risk of a blood clot forming, which can stop blood flow and potentially cause a heart attack, stroke or even cardiac arrest.

Heart attacks, stroke and cardiac arrest are all life-threatening, and every second is critical in regard to response time and treatment.

**HARTSVILLE**-When a heart attack strikes, every minute matters. In fact, the first few minutes are critical in determining the short-term and long-term outcome for the patient. While the world continues to focus on the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, cardiovascular disease, or heart disease, is still the leading cause of death in the United States, and as such, it's important to seek

If you or someone around you is experiencing any of the following symptoms identified by the American Heart Association, call 9-1-1 immediately to receive help and treatment as quickly as possible.

### Symptoms of a heart attack:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

### Symptoms of a stroke:

- **Face drooping.** If you notice one side of your or someone else's face drooping, or if it is numb, this is a telltale sign of a stroke. If you are uncertain, ask the person to smile. If their smile droops on one side, they are likely having a stroke, and it's time to call 9-1-1.
- **Arm weakness.** Many stroke victims experience weakness or numbness in one arm.
- **Speech difficulty.** Speech may be slurred, prohibited or difficult to understand. If someone you are with is experiencing this, ask him or her to repeat a simple sentence, like “the sky is blue.” If he or she cannot, call 9-1-1 immediately.

### Symptoms of cardiac arrest:

- **Sudden loss of responsiveness.** If the person does not respond when tapped on the shoulder, they are likely experiencing cardiac arrest.

## MINUTES MATTER CONT'D

• **No normal breathing.** The victim does not take a normal breath when you tilt the head up and check for at least five seconds.

If you have heart disease or condition or have survived a stroke, you may be considered higher risk for COVID-19 complications, but don't delay routine care. Call your doctor as you may be able to get advice over the phone, or use telehealth for a virtual visit.

Carolina Pines is proud to be an accredited Chest Pain Center and Primary Stroke Center demonstrating our ongoing commitment to our community's heart health.

In the event of a heart-related emergency, know the signs and symptoms, and call 9-1-1. Acting quickly may save a life, including your own. To learn more, visit [heart.org](http://heart.org), or our website [cprmc.com](http://cprmc.com).



## FRIENDS TEACHING WHERE TRUE BEAUTY BEGINS

*Humbly Submitted by Berlinda J. Durant*



*(LtoR) Brenisha Flowers and Chelsea G. Chamberlain*

Every story has a beginning. Every true friendship has love and respect. And every successful business partnership has commonalities: integrity, work ethic, trust and open communication—something Chelsea G. Chamberlain and Brenisha Flowers established many years ago, long before knowing the meaning of it all. This friendship started over 20 years ago in the state of Alabama. Chamberlain's father was stationed at Fort Rucker, Flowers' father worked on the base, and their mothers worked together at a hair salon. They have laughed together and cried together and even realized that they wanted to work together in the field of beauty.

Initially, both ladies wanted to become professional, celebrity makeup artists. Very little was taught about the application of makeup, and that was their only reason for entering the "beauty" school. However, time would alter those desires. But why become an esthetician and not continue to eventually become a makeup artist? The longer they sat in class, the more they understood that proper skincare and not makeup was the premise to a beautiful look.

An esthetician specializes in skincare. The unified objective is to improve one's appearance without using surgical procedures. "Anyone can apply makeup, but very few people are concerned about their clients' skin. I wanted to make every man and woman [of all races/ethnicities] feel great about their natural skin—to have their own personal definition of beauty," says Chamberlain. "The forces of nature can cause our skin to be in a frenzy. That's why it is important for our skin to have a firm foundation—it all starts with clear skin, that is." And

knowing that esthetics is about more than applying makeup became more intriguing for Flowers "as I even learned about waxing with the sugar paste, which I absolutely fell in love with," she says.

Both ladies' passion for skincare nudged them into starting a business together. And, after working independently for over five years, the partnership of More Than Skin Beauty Bar & Spa was birthed here in Florence. Why Florence and not one of the larger cities—Atlanta, Charlotte, Columbia, Greenville or Raleigh? Flowers says, "People are currently traveling to those cities to get the very same services that More Than Skin will be offering. With the revitalization of the various Florence areas, now is the time to prove that Florence can provide upscale services as well as any other city. There are people who travel hours for good skincare, so why not let this area be their destination." (Chamberlain enlightens us that Florence is the central travel spot between New York and Miami on I-95.)

What type of services does More Than Skin Beauty Bar & Spa provide? The services with the use of wax or sugar paste include but are not limited to:

- Waxing - any area of the body can be waxed, but the more common areas are the legs, underarms, genitals, torso and face on both men and women
- Facials – chemical peels, microdermabrasion and dermaplaning
- Lash Extensions, Lash/Brow Tinting and Body Scrubs/Wraps

Future ventures will include The Blow Out Center (blow outs, curling, cutting and coloring of all types of hair) and nail care – manicures and pedicures (without acrylic or chemicals).

These trained and licensed estheticians have one goal: to provide professional, trusted services that will journey their clients to an end goal of intimate beautification and individualized gratification.

For a consultation or to schedule an appointment, feel free to call Chelsea Chamberlain at 843-713-9078 and Brenisha Flowers at 843-472-2878. You will be glad that you did!



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# HOPEHEALTH WELCOMES NEW PROVIDERS

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth



Rebecca Oeffinger, MSW, LISW-CP

HopeHealth has welcomed several new providers this year:

**Rebecca Oeffinger** began with HopeHealth in January as a behavioral health consultant and is located at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. She earned her master of social work from the University of South Carolina.

Oeffinger is passionate about her patients and helping them improve the quality of life. She enjoys working with many different populations, including children and teens.



Laura Lee Samuel, APRN, FNP-C

**Laura Lee Samuel** is a family nurse practitioner who serves patients at HopeHealth in Timmonsville. Samuel earned her Master of Science/nurse practitioner from South University in Savannah, Ga. and her Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

From Marlboro County originally, Samuel is a member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Nurses Association and South Carolina Nurses Association. She is a community basic life support instructor and has received numerous awards, including a SC Palmetto Gold award. She has spent most of her medical career in the Pee Dee area, which includes serving as the clinical manager, director and chief of nursing at HopeHealth from 2009-2017.



Vanessa Sweat-Britt, FNP

**Vanessa Sweat-Britt** is a family nurse practitioner providing care for patients in Access Hope at HopeHealth in Manning. From Manning, Sweat-Britt earned her Master of Science in nursing and Bachelor of Science in nursing from Chamberlain College of Nursing in Downers Grove, Ill., and her associate degree in nursing from Florence-Darlington Technical College.



Taylor Thompson, FNP

Sweat-Britt is a member of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and Sigma Theta Tau International Honors Society of Nursing.

**Taylor Thompson** is a family nurse practitioner who serves patients at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza. From Florence, Thompson earned her Master of Science/family nurse practitioner degree from South University in Atlanta. She

graduated summa cum laude from the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston with a Bachelor of Science in nursing.

Thompson is a member of the American Nurses Association, South Carolina Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society. She has special interest in heart health and served as a cardiovascular nurse for nine years.

**Sharon Black, MSW, LISW-CP/S**, joined HopeHealth as a behavioral health consultant and was recently named the behavioral health consultant manager. From Hartsville, Black graduated from the Coker College with a Bachelor of Social Work degree. She obtained a Master of Social Work degree from the University of South Carolina in Columbia and a Master of Ministry degree from Luther Rice College in Lithonia, Ga.

Black enjoys working with many populations and has special interest in helping children and teens. She is a member of the National Association of Social Work and the Health Minister Association.



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# CSC COMMUNITY PHARMACY SET TO OPEN IN HARTSVILLE Submitted by Andrew Boardwine, Communication Specialist



CSC Community Pharmacy Hartsville

**HARTSVILLE**-CareSouth Carolina announced the opening of its newest CSC Community Pharmacy, a standalone pharmacy next to the Hartsville Medical Center that opened on June 30.

The CSC Community Pharmacy, located at 1280 South Fourth Street, is a full-service

pharmacy that looks to provide excellent care through consultation and affordable prices on prescriptions. The pharmacy was previously located inside the Hartsville Medical Center.

The community pharmacy takes all major insurances and is open to all, even those who are not patients of CareSouth Carolina. The Hartsville pharmacy also has a drive-thru to make things more convenient for patients getting their medications filled.

Ashley Singleton, chief of pharmacy at CareSouth Carolina, said the standalone building will be an added benefit and convenience to the patients. "This will provide another avenue of service for the patients," Singleton said. "Those who have had difficulties coming into the medical center in the past will be able to stay in their car, drop off their medication and pick it up, all with ease. Though many think because we're located on the CareSouth Carolina campus that we're only open to CSC patients, we're open to everyone. There is additional parking that wasn't available before, and we designed this building with avenue of access and convenience in mind for the patient."

The CSC Community Pharmacy and drive-thru is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Patients can also download the

mobile app, Mobile Rx, which will allow them to manage and fill their prescriptions online.

In addition to Hartsville, CareSouth Carolina operates pharmacy locations in Bennettsville, Bishopville, Latta, McColl, 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.

**If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please contact a CareSouth Carolina office before coming in.**

## CURBSIDE PICKUP

Simply Call Your Local CSC Community Pharmacy for Curbside Pickup!

**CSC Community Pharmacy Locations:**  
 1268 South Fourth Street, Hartsville, 843.339.5533  
 899 Cheraw Street, Bennettsville, 843.456.7777  
 122 Latimer Street, Latta, 843.627.6261  
 715 South Doctors Drive, Cheraw, 843-865-4080  
 737 S. Main Street, Society Hill, 843.378.4148

8:30AM - 6:00PM  
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| <p><b>Bennettsville Center</b><br/>999 Cheraw Street<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.479.2341</p> <p><b>Bennettsville Pediatric Center</b><br/>210 W. Main Street<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.479.1200</p> <p><b>Bennettsville Women's Center</b><br/>1076 Marlboro Way, Suite 1<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.454.2294</p> <p><b>Bishopville Center</b><br/>545 Sumter Highway<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>803.484.5317</p> <p><b>Bishopville Pediatric Dental</b><br/>101 Harris Street<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>866.815.9845</p> <p><b>Hunt's Family Practice</b><br/>106 Hospital Square<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>803.484.5943</p> <p><b>Cheraw Center</b><br/>715 S. Doctors Drive Suite E<br/>Cheraw, SC 29520<br/>843.557.0961</p> <p><b>Chesterfield Center</b><br/>500 W. Boulevard<br/>Chesterfield, SC 29709<br/>843.623.5080</p> | <p><b>Dillon Center</b><br/>207 E. Monroe Street<br/>Dillon, SC 29536<br/>843.774.4337</p> <p><b>Hartsville Center</b><br/>1268 S. Fourth Street<br/>Hartsville, SC 29550<br/>843.332.3422<br/>843.339.5520 Chiropractic</p> <p><b>Lake View Center</b><br/>103 N. Kemper Street<br/>Lake View, SC 29563<br/>843.759.2189</p> <p><b>Latta Center</b><br/>122 Latimer Street<br/>Latta, SC 29565<br/>843.627.6252</p> <p><b>McColl Health &amp; Wellness Center</b><br/>3080 Highway 15-401 E<br/>McColl, SC 29570<br/>843.523.5751</p> <p><b>Society Hill Center</b><br/>737 S. Main Street<br/>Society Hill, SC 29593<br/>843.378.4501</p> <p><b>Public Employee Health Services - Marlboro County</b><br/>100 Matheson Street<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.456.7752</p> | <p><b>Bennettsville Pediatric Center</b><br/>210 W. Main Street<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.479.1200</p> <p><b>Bennettsville Women's Center</b><br/>1076 Marlboro Way, Suite 1<br/>Bennettsville, SC 29512<br/>843.454.2294</p> <p><b>Bishopville Center</b><br/>545 Sumter Highway<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>803.484.5317</p> <p><b>Bishopville Pediatric Dental</b><br/>101 Harris Street<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>866.815.9845</p> <p><b>Hunt's Family Practice</b><br/>106 Hospital Square<br/>Bishopville, SC 29010<br/>803.484.5943</p> <p><b>Cheraw Center</b><br/>715 S. Doctors Drive Suite E<br/>Cheraw, SC 29520<br/>843.557.0961</p> <p><b>Chesterfield Center</b><br/>500 W. Boulevard<br/>Chesterfield, SC 29709<br/>843.623.5080</p> |
|--|--|--|

## Pharmacy Locations:

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>HARTSVILLE</b><br/>1280 S. Fourth Street<br/>843.339.5530</p> | <p><b>BISHOPVILLE</b><br/>545 Sumter Hwy<br/>803.588.7960</p>          | <p><b>BENNETTSVILLE</b><br/>999 Cheraw Street<br/>843.456.7777</p> |
| <p><b>SOCIETY HILL</b><br/>737 S. Main Street<br/>843.378.4148</p>  | <p><b>CHERAW</b><br/>715 S. Doctors Drive, Ste. A<br/>843.865.4080</p> | <p><b>MCCOLL</b><br/>3080 Highway 15-401 E<br/>843.523.6212</p>    |

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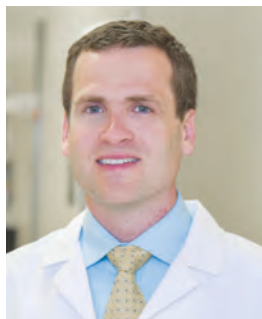
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# ALZHEIMER'S AND YOUR PCP

Submitted by Joseph Hoyle, MD, MPH, HopeHealth



Joseph Hoyle, MD

As a family doctor, I consider early detection of memory problems important to the well-being of my older patients. Joanne Pike, DrPH, of the Alzheimer's Association stated that "early detection of cognitive decline offers numerous medical, social, emotional, financial and planning benefits, but these can only be achieved by having a conversation with doctors about any thinking or memory concerns and through routine cognitive assessments."

As individuals and as a society, these benefits are important to achieve, at least in part because of family caregiving challenges ahead. In 2016, a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine expert committee concluded that "if the needs of caregivers are not addressed, we risk compromising the well-being of our elders and their families." Of note, as "families have fewer children, older adults are more likely to have never married or be divorced, and adult children often live far away from their parents." Already, many family caregivers "are expected to provide complex health care services once, only delivered by licensed health care personnel in a hospital or other setting."

However, a national survey done by the Alzheimer's Association found that, among older patients, 86 percent are not receiving memory assessments during routine health checkups. Of those with memory concerns, 85 percent do not bring this up with their provider, and 40 percent have ever discussed it with their health care provider.

Although most primary care physicians probably do not try to avoid doing a memory assessment, the survey found that those who choose not to assess memory do so for the following reasons:

1. Lack of symptoms or complaints from a patient – 68 percent
2. Lack of time during a patient visit – 58 percent
3. Patient resistance to testing – 57 percent

Let's take these one at a time. If you have a concern, please bring it up because this helps me serve you. Time during an office visit is precious, and I want to serve my patients, give them hope and help them live meaningful lives. If you have a concern about a loved one, go with the person to an office visit. Even if you don't have a concern, consider requesting a routine memory assessment, perhaps by scheduling a free Medicare wellness visit during which assessments are done.

Regarding lack of time: Your interest in memory may help your provider prioritize this as well. There's a lot to discuss as I help my patients balance their most recent concerns with their chronic conditions and well-being issues such as memory. Before I even walk in the room, my patients address most preventive services with their medical assistant or nurse. I am very thankful to have a team-based approach at HopeHealth, as estimates are that a primary care provider with 2,500 patients would need more than seven hours per workday to complete all of the recommended preventive services and nearly 22 hours per work day to provide preventive services and chronic disease management.

Regarding the third issue, patient resistance to testing, the survey found that physicians reported a 57 percent resistance rate to initial assessment, and patient refusal rates for follow-up testing were also significant at 34 percent. I am not sure why this is, but perhaps it highlights doubts about the benefits of early detection.

As a doctor, I encourage you to work with your provider to detect memory problems earlier. Don't miss the opportunity to discuss your memory with your doctor!

Dr. Joseph Hoyle is a board-certified family physician at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. He volunteers with Helping Florence Flourish and is a member of the South Carolina Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians.



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**Hormone Imbalances**

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# SICKLE CELL TREATMENT THEN AND NOW Submitted by Dr. Ziad Skaff



Dr. Ziad Skaff

Five years ago, we only had one treatment for sickle cell disease. Sickle cell disease is a disease that should not be taken lightly. This disease can be a pain generating disease that actually affects all organs of the body. This can start at the heart, blood vessels, brain, joints, bones and also the lungs. Sickle cell is due to a mutation of a tiny gene that leads to an unstable hemoglobin. The sickles in the hemoglobin, when stressed, deprive tissue from oxygen, which can lead to what we call "Crisis." Crisis starts with pain, but

it can also lead to stroke, heart attack and limb loss. Sickle cell crisis is when the abnormal cell gets stuck in the small blood vessels.

Sickle cell disease affects approximately 100,000 people in the United States. For years, the only therapeutic option was **Hydroxyurea**. This drug has been in existence since 1984. We know that this drug works since it has proven to be effective in increasing hemoglobin, reducing pain and acute chest syndrome. This drug has also decreased the number of blood transfusions in patients that suffer from sickle cell disease. Unfortunately, Hydroxyurea is chemotherapy and requires close monitoring. This therapy works over time with each patient. Therefore, all patients will not respond equally. Since Hydroxyurea was first introduced, there has been a need for new treatments. For the last several years, more therapies have started to emerge.

The first notable drug since Hydroxyurea that has been FDA approved in 2017 is **L-glutamine** (Endari). This drug works on the inflammatory part of the disease. It has also proven to decrease the number of pain crisis and lessen acute chest syndrome.

The second drug is **Voxelotor**. This drug is a "once-daily" pill that stabilizes the oxygenated hemoglobin. Trials have proven to make patients less anemic but not necessarily have less painful events. More

long-term studies are looking at this issue. This drug is available and FDA approved through an accelerated program.

The third drug is **Crizanlizumab**. This drug helps with the "stickiness" of the red blood cells against the sticky vessel wall. This is one of the detrimental aspects of this disease. A randomized study called "**SUSTAIN**" proved that this intravenous drug decreases the number of painful crisis. This drug was FDA approved through a breakthrough therapy program.

Lastly, there is gene therapy. This type of treatment consists of an auto stem cell transplant of a viral infected, anti-sticking hemoglobin. This therapy still requires chemotherapy to wipe out the bone marrow so that space can be made for the transplant. The results of this treatment have been very successful.

Many promising therapies are seeing the light and are changing the care of this complex disease so that patients with sickle cell disease can lead a semi-normal lifestyle.

Dr. Ziad Skaff is board certified in Hematology and Oncology. He serves as Chief of Staff of MUSC Health Florence Medical Center and Medical Director of Oncology Services. Dr. Skaff is associated with MUSC Health Hematology & Oncology, located at 805 Pamplico Highway, Medical Pavilion A, Suite 315. To schedule an appointment, call 843-674-6460.

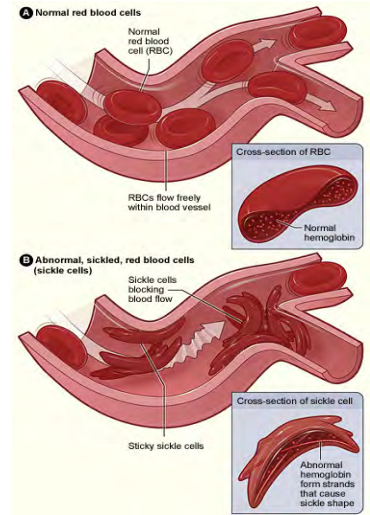


Figure A shows normal red blood cells flowing freely in a blood vessel. The inset image shows a cross-section of. (Photo and cutline from Wikimedia Commons)

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# ARE YOU ONE OF THE MISSING MILLIONS? Submitted by Rishika Motiani, MD HopeHealth



Rishika Motiani, MD

The U.S. Population now exceeds 330 million. Almost as many people worldwide live with a hepatitis infection and don't even know it. Are you one of them?

Worldwide, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports an estimated 257 million people live with chronic hepatitis B and 71 million people live with chronic hepatitis C. World Hepatitis Day is recognized on July 28. This year, the focus is on reaching the estimated 290 million people who don't know they have hepatitis.

## What is Hepatitis?

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis virus. While there are five types of hepatitis, the three most commonly known infections are as follows:

- **Hepatitis A** - Hepatitis A typically improves without treatment. In the United States, it usually spreads through close personal contact with someone infected. Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A.
- **Hepatitis B** - Hepatitis B infections can result in chronic disease and long-term liver problems. It is most commonly spread from an infected mother to her baby at birth and among unvaccinated children. Vaccines are available to prevent hepatitis B infections.
- **Hepatitis C** - Hepatitis C is primarily spread through contact with blood from an infected person. It can also cause chronic disease and long-term liver problems. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. However, treatments for chronic hepatitis C can cure more than 90 percent of infections.

Since many people can live with hepatitis C for decades without feeling

sick or experiencing any symptoms of disease, testing based on risk factors is critical. Many diagnosed with hepatitis C do not know how or when they were infected. If left untreated, chronic hepatitis C can lead to liver damage, cirrhosis and even liver cancer. Therefore, it is important those diagnosed with the disease visit a specialist trained in infectious diseases or gastroenterology for treatment.

While anyone can get hepatitis C, studies have found that three in four people with the infection were born between 1945–1965 (baby boomers). The reason baby boomers have high rates of hepatitis C is not completely understood. Most are believed to have become infected during the 1960s through 1980s when transmission of hepatitis C was highest. Given rising rates of liver cancer and high hepatitis C infection rates in this population, testing is especially important.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone born between 1945-1965 be tested for hepatitis C. Testing is also recommended for people who inject drugs or use intranasal drugs, patients on hemodialysis, children born to mothers infected with hepatitis C, people with sexual partners who are hepatitis C infected, people with HIV infection and people who have had tattoos or piercings.

Despite these recommendations, only one in 10 baby boomers are being tested for the virus, according to a recent study published in American Journal of Preventive Medicine. This is a critically important finding. It shows we have substantial room for improvement and the need for additional efforts to screen and treat this population as a strategy to reduce the rising rates of liver cancer in the U.S. Learn more at [www.worldhepatitisday.org](http://www.worldhepatitisday.org).

Dr. Rishika Motiani specializes in infectious diseases and internal medicine at HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. She speaks four languages: English, Hindi, Gujarati and Sindhi.

## WHAT IS HEPATITIS ?

Hepatitis virus causes infection and inflammation of the liver

**+** Hep B & C can lead to severe disease and possibly death

**⦿** Hep B & C is spread by blood, semen and other body fluids

**400 million**

people live with Hepatitis

**6-10 million**

people are newly infected annually

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# MUSC HEALTH FLORENCE DIVISION NAMES DAISY HONOREES

Submitted by Kim Geiger, Director Marketing & Community Relations MUSC Health Florence



HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY  
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

MUSC Health Florence Division is pleased to announce DAISY Honorees. Harriett Fore, RN, 8th Floor General Surgery at MUSC Health Florence Medical Center and Daniel Lewis, RN, Intensive

Care Unit at MUSC Health Marion Medical Center were named the 2nd DAISY Award Recipients of 2020.

The DAISY award is given to a nurse whose job performance exemplifies the mission, vision and values of MUSC Health. The recipient must also keep a consistent focus on meeting patient-family goals, collaborate with the healthcare team to meet patients' needs, use critical thinking to deliver extraordinary patient care, and demonstrate a caring attitude, as well as professionalism in the workplace during all situations.

Fore was nominated by a patient, who said, "I was just released from MUSC Florence this afternoon. The staff on the 8th floor was so incredible that it brings me to tears. One nurse went above and beyond any expectations I possibly could have had. She was caring, compassionate and went above and beyond anything I could possibly need. I've never had such a tremendous experience with a nurse in my entire life. She deserves to be nominated for the DAISY award because it wasn't only me she treated that way. She treated everybody she came in contact with like they were her own family. She gives a wonderful name to all the nurses out there that do the same, and others should follow her example."

Lewis was nominated by a patient's family member, who stated, "My family member has been in the ICU for over a month, and one of his nurses has really done so much for my family and I. He takes time to explain to my uncle (who is unresponsive) what he will be

doing, whether it's giving his meds or changing his bedding. He is by far the BEST nurse that we have had during this past month. He continues to come check on us. He has such a positive attitude and [is] very respectful to everyone. Daniel is absolutely the BEST nurse that MUSC in Mullins, S.C., has. Thanks, Daniel, for everything that you have done for my family and I. Keep up the great work!"

The DAISY Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, established in memory of J. Patrick Barnes by members of his family. Barnes died in 1999 at the age of 33 from complications of Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), a little known but not uncommon auto-immune disease. (DAISY is an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System.) The care Barnes and his family received from nurses while he was ill inspired this unique means of thanking nurses for making a profound difference in the lives of their patients and patient families. Nurses may be nominated by patients, families and colleagues. Recipients of the DAISY award are chosen quarterly by the DAISY committees at MUSC Health Florence and Marion Medical Centers.



## FACTS ABOUT FOOD ALLERGIES Submitted by Kimberly S. Jackson, M.D.



Kimberly S. Jackson, M.D.

Millions of Americans have food allergies. Studies have shown that approximately 4 percent of the U.S. population identifies some type of food as an allergy trigger. The most common food allergies tend to be related to shellfish, but other common food allergies include cow's milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy and tree nuts, to name a few.

A food allergy is an adverse immune response to a food. Generally, these are divided into what is called IgE Mediated and Non-IgE Mediated reactions. Your immune system makes antibodies to protect you from germs and disease, but sometimes it may also make antibodies (called IgE) to specific food proteins. These IgE antibodies are known to be associated with rapid onset allergic reactions. There are also non-IgE-mediated food allergies which tend to be more chronic in nature.

The IgE antibodies cause mast cells (a type of immune system cell) to release chemicals into the bloodstream. One of those chemicals, known as histamine, causes many of the allergy symptoms which may range from mild to severe. Symptoms can include runny nose, rash or hives, itchy skin, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, tingling of the lips or tongue, tightness in the throat, hoarse voice, wheezing or cough. Most symptoms occur within a few minutes of eating the

food trigger. Rarely, symptoms can appear a few hours after ingestion.

The IgE mediated type of food allergy tends to receive the most publicity. This is the type of reaction that can cause anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is the term to describe a group of symptoms that can occur at the same time and may include decreased blood pressure, narrowed airways in the lungs (bronchospasm) and tongue swelling.

Non-IgE mediated food allergies are typically of a more chronic nature and are usually isolated to the gastrointestinal system and skin. These disorders vary in intensity, depending on whether a person is exposed to the offending food protein on a regular basis or only experiences an intermittent (occasional) exposure. For example, if a person consumes a food frequently, the symptoms might be chronic diarrhea, vomiting, or even gastrointestinal bleeding. Prolonged exposure may lead to chronically low weight and poor health. Some people experience a mixture of the two types of food allergies that leads to chronic patches of dry, itchy skin or dermatitis.

Food allergies are believed to have a genetic component but may develop at any age. Your primary care doctor should take a thorough clinical history and make a referral to an allergist (a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing and treating allergies) if needed. Sometimes the allergist will recommend skin prick tests and blood tests for antibodies to particular foods in order to make a specific diagnosis. If an oral food challenge is needed, this is most often done by an allergist.

## BACK TO SCHOOL: KEEPING CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS UP TO DATE

Submitted by Michael K. Foxworth II, MD, FAAP, HopeHealth Pediatrics



Michael K. Foxworth II, MD, FAAP

The usual school year has been greatly disrupted because of the coronavirus pandemic. But it is just as important as ever to stay up-to-date with your children's immunization records and schedule appointments early with your pediatrician. Vaccines are undoubtedly regarded as one of the greatest success stories of public health. It is estimated that vaccines will prevent 21 million hospitalizations and 732,000 deaths of today's American

children and adolescents.

Unfortunately, vaccines have been so effective that some parents don't recognize their real threat. The dangers of the diseases that they prevent such as measles and whooping cough have been forgotten. Additionally, negative claims about vaccines lead some parents to hesitate or refuse vaccines altogether. The dramatic decline in Well Child Visits in the last few months has increased that threat. However, the abundance of scientific evidence continues to support the facts: Vaccines are safe. Vaccines are effective. Vaccines save lives. While we may not know what the next school year might look like, keeping your child's vaccinations up-to-date is one of the best ways to protect their future.

Dr. Michael K. Foxworth II is a pediatrician and pediatric infectious disease specialist who practices at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence.

## HOPEHEALTH EXPANDS DIABETES

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator



Christy Evans, DNP, right, consults with a patient at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. Evans now also sees patients for diabetes care at HopeHealth in Kingstree.

Diabetes care for HopeHealth patients in Williamsburg County is expanding. Beginning this month, Christy Evans, DNP, will provide diabetes care services at HopeHealth in Kingstree.

These services are in addition to the nutrition services and diabetes education by telehealth already offered. Patients who see Evans for diabetes care will still see their primary care provider for other health-care needs. Evans earned her doctor of nursing practice from the Medical University of South Carolina and is a nurse practitioner at the HopeHealth Diabetes & Nutrition Institute in Florence.

Evans is passionate about her faith, family, friends and empowering her patients to take control of their health. She provides diabetes care for patients struggling with A1c levels over nine percent (a measurement of glucose in the blood), helps manage the chronic disease and ensures diabetes care needs are met, such as:

- eye exams
- foot exams
- A1c monitoring

She has been with HopeHealth since 2013 and earned several awards for her work. These awards include:

- The HopeHealth Yvonne Van Camp Quality Award for her work to increase foot exam rates and reduce the incidents of foot ulcers
- The Diabetes Champion of the Year Award from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control

Learn more about Evans and the Diabetes & Nutrition Institute at [hope-health.org](http://hope-health.org).



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## IN THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19, WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY



You've probably heard the term "essential worker." You might even know a few. Among them are those in the medical profession, education and food production. And they're working hard to keep our nation going during the COVID-19 crisis.

That's why workplaces are putting extra measures in place to keep them protected.

Tyson Foods, for example, is providing facial coverings for all workers, conducting symptom screening (including temperature) daily and facilitating social distancing with physical barriers between workspaces.

But have you ever thought about the role you play in keeping essential workers safe? Tom Brower, senior vice president of health and safety at Tyson Foods, says, "Combining protective measures is the most effective way to keep our team members safe." We all factor into that equation.

Here are a few ways to protect yourself, your loved ones and the essential workers you might encounter.

### Choose actions that protect others.

Keeping a safe distance from others takes many forms. If you do decide to go out in public, keep those trips to a minimum, make sure you stay at least six feet away from others, avoid large gatherings (10 or less is best), follow directional signs in stores and of course, wear a mask the correct way. If you don't know where to find a mask, check for sales through social media classifieds, or watch tutorials to make one yourself.

Let's be clear. Masks don't keep you safe, but they might keep the person next to you safe. In grocery stores and other places where social distancing is a challenge, wearing a mask can help ensure you don't spread infection to others.

Communities that practice good social distancing play a key role in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

### Wash those hands as often as possible.

Did you know--if you're like most people--that you touch your face 23 times...an hour? While COVID-19 is believed to spread through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing or even breathing, it could also be transmitted through shared surfaces. Washing your hands for at least 20 seconds helps ensure you don't transfer the virus from a shopping cart to your face or vice versa.

And don't forget hand sanitizer. If you are unable to wash your hands the traditional way, the "CDC recommends consumers use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol."

### When in doubt, stay home.

If you feel like you may be sick, or getting sick, just stay home. This reduces the potential spread of any illness you may knowingly, or unknowingly, be carrying. Even if you don't feel sick, it's a good general rule to stay home unless you really need to venture out for work or basic items. Imagine cutting out a single errand a week, like making one trip to the grocery store instead of two. It could mean you avoid close contact with dozens of other customers.

Remember, in the fight against COVID-19, we all have a part to play.

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# FIND WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED WHILE SOCIAL DISTANCING

The COVID-19 pandemic presents daunting challenges for many seniors and other vulnerable populations. Social distancing and shelter-in-place requirements are necessary for their continued health and safety. But with it comes the risk of social isolation and the mental and physical tolls this can take.

How can older people balance the requirements for social distancing with the inherent need for social engagement? Here are a few recommendations.

## Explore new technology

Apps like FaceTime, Zoom and Skype offer fun and interesting ways to connect face-to-face with family and friends, even if it's a screen version. And most don't require a terrific amount of tech-savvy: a neighbor, niece or nephew can help with a quick tutorial.

Even popular board games have gone virtual. Classics like Monopoly, Scattergories and Scrabble can be played online together, and there are a host of sites with card games, trivia and other fun activities to do together. A game night is a great way to bring people closer and take your mind off your worries.

If you need help getting started with a smartphone or tablet to use this technology, check the offerings from a carrier like Consumer Cellular. It has been an approved AARP provider for more than 10 years, and in addition to low prices and a wide variety of phones, it offers top-rated customer support, which makes setting up and using your service easy.

## Stay active in the community, from home

It may sound counterintuitive. How can you remain a part of the community if you need to stay separated from it? Many organizations, like political parties, faith-based groups or nonprofits, offer remote

options, relying on volunteers to make phone calls. Explore your options for doing community-based activity right at home.

## Go on a news diet

While it's important to stay informed, don't get locked into endlessly watching "breaking news" on the 24-hour news channels. Typically, not much changes hour to hour, and enduring the repetitious pummeling from TV all day long can bring needless anxiety.

Instead, try watching a news update in the morning. Then check in again at night. And don't stay with it all evening: 30 minutes or an hour is usually plenty to stay well informed.

## Find a buddy system

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending that communities create "buddy systems" to make sure vulnerable and hard-to-reach people stay connected, particularly to news about COVID-19. This can be done through a church group, social group or daily neighborhood email blasts.

Reach out to people in your communities to locate these groups, or start one of your own. Something as simple as a message with a kind word can go a long way during uncertain times.

## Make a phone call

All the digital options available today may make a simple phone call seem old fashioned. But sometimes, the old ways are the best ways. Just hearing someone's voice can be enough to lift both your spirits. Even if you only reach voicemail, you've let someone know you were thinking about them, which is always good medicine.

Social distancing doesn't have to mean social isolation, and even a threat like coronavirus should not force us to be alone. Now, more than ever, people need to find smart ways to stay connected.

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Thanks to a legacy gift from Dr. and Mrs. Percy Bethea, Bethea Retirement Community opened its doors in 1960 and continues its mission to serve senior adults with compassionate care so all they serve may thrive. Bethea is a community of the SC Baptist Ministries of Aging. However, you don't have to be southern or baptist (or southern baptist) to be a part of their community. Residents of all faiths are welcome. On campus, Bethea Retirement Community has its own fully constituted Southern Baptist church that is not only 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.

## What Bethea Residents Are Saying



**"I love nature and the setting I am in. It's quiet; the campus is beautiful. I love walking and taking in the birds and the trees. My main reasons for moving to Bethea were Christ-centered living as number one; safety in a country setting; and continuing care is a gift to my children."**

**- Ms. Rujeanna Storer, retired social/human services professional from New England**



**"...When they find out we are from Oklahoma, everyone wants to know how we found Bethea. Our answer is we Googled it! Looking back, I wonder if we actually hacked in on God's account. We want to say a huge thank you to SC Southern Baptists, past and present, who could look out into the future and have a vision for this many-faceted community. Bethea has become a sweet place of refuge for us!"**

**- Clyde and Sue Shatswell, Oklahoma natives, retired pastor and wife who served churches across the midwest for more than 40 years**

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## MAN 2 MAN ADDRESSES FATHER ABSENTEEISM

by Anna Bowman

It's been said that fatherhood doesn't come with an instruction manual – a true statement, but the difficult question that lies beneath this statement is how can a man become a better father if he's never had a positive role model in his life to emulate?

To solve a problem, it must first be identified and addressed, and in 1999, a group of concerned individuals in Marlboro County organized to address the urgent issue of father absenteeism. Today, over 20 years later, their decision has given way to the success of programs like the impactful Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative Program, one of a

network of six fatherhood programs that extends across the state of South Carolina to reconnect fathers and their children. The SC Center for Fathers and Families helps to coordinate this successful statewide initiative that has a mission to help fathers become a positive and consistent presence in their children's lives.

Derrick Dease, the executive director of the Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative Program, a father himself, explained why he is honored to be a part of this exceptional program. "The Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative Program is unique because we address father absenteeism and provide support from a holistic approach," he said. "We provide the means for men to be better fathers. The impact of father absence is critical. Children raised in father absent homes are four times greater to experience a life of poverty, more likely to have behavioral problems... more likely to go to prison or commit crimes."

One of the most important services the program provides is a 24-week fatherhood program, which is offered free to every participant. All that is required is a commitment. "Our participants range in age from 15-35, but we also work with men over the age of 35, as well," Dease added. The program receives referrals from the Department of Social Services, drug court, family court and walk-ins. "Fathers are also some of our best recruiters," he said.

The core content areas of the 24-week fatherhood program include:

- **Employability Bootcamp**

This is an intensive session that explores skill sets and career paths and helps fathers expand their networks, prepare resumes and build interview skills to land the jobs they want.

- **Economic Stability**

Dads learn about increasing income, managing money, getting credit, navigating child support, and addressing arrears.

- **Healthy Relationships**

Drawing on their personal histories, men build relationship skills that can improve life for their children and themselves.

- **Parenting/Co-Parenting**

Fathers learn how to co-parent and have positive roles in children's lives—from providing structure and stability to establishing paternity and visitation rights.

- **Men's Health**

Fathers learn how to manage their own physical and mental health so they can thrive and model healthy behaviors for their children.

Most participants have never had their biological fathers in their lives. "Oftentimes we must teach them how important they are to their children because they have not been fathered themselves. Many have been socialized to believe that their primary role is to just be a financial contributor, rather than an emotional, social and spiritual supporter to their children. Our core content areas help to eliminate this misconception."

Along with taking core classes, each father in the program works individually with a staff member to create his own One-Man Plan. In this development stage, each father sets his goals and creates a road map for reaching them. Additionally, the program offers Peer Group Sessions for fathers to share their frustrations, learn from other fathers and begin building a positive network of support.

The goal is to bring the mother and father together in the best interest of the child and create a win-win scenario. When things do not work as planned, Man 2 Man provides mediation. Dease said, "We also assist fathers with filing pro se visitation orders, while teaching them how to represent themselves as they go before the judge."

Having to interact with law enforcement and judges can bring about stressful situations for some of our fathers. With the recent untimely death of Rayshard Brooks, a young father, attempting to abscond from police custody in Atlanta, Ga., striking a nerve with young fathers, Man 2 Man has and will continue to engage in conversations with fathers as well as with the community at large. The group encourages the fathers to try to be compliant as possible when being apprehended by a police officer to minimize tension and prevent



the situation from escalating. The staff also speaks about not painting all officers with a broad brush because all police officers are not biased and some work in keeping the community a safe place to live.

Currently, because of COVID-19, challenges have been placed on fathers to connect with their children via social media platforms. "The virus has also forced our staff to adjust due to COVID-19. We send videos of the curriculum content in discussion form in order to continue to conduct sessions for clients that are 'socially distancing' along with our Facebook live sessions held at 12 p.m. every Monday," he said.

As the executive director of the Man 2 Man Fatherhood Initiative Program, which is a 501 (c) (3) organization, Dease is entrusted to manage the grants and ensure compliance and financial flow of the program; ensure the visibility and community outreach; oversee all program operations; spearhead and lead fundraising efforts; oversee and report on organization's effort to the board and funders; ensure quality service delivery; and plan, guide and organize the programs' operations. Additionally, he works closely with the 25 program partners.

Derrick Dease and his wife, Yolanda, reside in Hartsville. The couple has four children and a grandson. He is the pastor of Solid Rock Holiness Church in Bennettsville and is a graduate of Gardner-Webb University with a Bachelor of Science in human services. He received his master's degree in professional counseling from South University.

The initiative serves South Carolina Counties Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence and Marlboro. For additional information, visit our website at: [www.man2manfathers.com](http://www.man2manfathers.com) and social media via Facebook at: @man2manfathers.

Derrick Dease



# Sista Strut

BREAST CANCER WALK  
4TH Annual

# 3k

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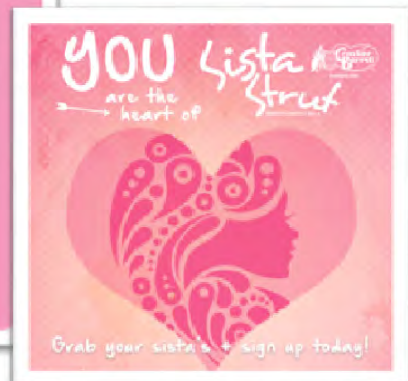
9am/The Florence Center



## What is Sista Strut?

Sista Strut aims to heighten awareness about the issues of breast cancer in women of color, as well as provide information on community resources. Sista Strut recognizes the strength of survivors, their family and friends, heightens awareness, promotes early detection and the search for a cure.

## Where to register:



## BLENDING IN by Dawn “D.A.” Goodwin



*Trè Leonard at Trinity's gym, where he is preparing for the upcoming basketball season.*

Oftentimes, parents make the mistake of assuming a certain type of education is unattainable because no one they know has achieved it or because they didn't go the extra mile to check it out for themselves or their children. Rayde Leonard isn't one of those parents.

The Philadelphia native said, "Growing up for me, in the inner city, private school really wasn't that much of an option, especially with the poverty-stricken areas and financial hardships that some

of us faced. But I always excelled in school, which allowed me to go to a magnet program away from some of the rougher parts of city. That helped me to do well and excel when I went to college. With the opportunity for private education not being there for me, I absolutely knew, I would work hard enough to make it a possibility for my [future] children."

Today, Rayde's son, Trè, is following in his footsteps, but he's not doing so at a school in Philadelphia. Instead, he's right here at Trinity-Byrnes Collegiate School—a private school that serves the entire Pee Dee, values diversity and has a 100 percent four-year college acceptance rate for its students. The highly intelligent 13-year-old is fascinated with more than just his school's delicious lunch options. Trè said he also loves the education Trinity offers, even when he did face a few learning challenges after transitioning from public school, where he had been achieving all A's, to a more rigorous private school curriculum that he sometimes struggled adjusting to and was earning mostly high B's in. Because of Trinity's teachers making themselves so available to their students, it wasn't long before Trè began to, once again, excel academically, ending this last school year with the A/B Honor Roll.

Above all, Trè loves Trinity's culture and size. With an 8:1 student-teacher ratio, he appreciates the one-on-one interaction he is able to have with his teachers. "The school is small enough that everyone seems to know everyone. It's like a family atmosphere," Trè said. That inclusive environment in which he could easily adapt was an important factor when Trè and his dad were seeking a new school for him to attend.

Initially, after visiting several private schools in the area, Rayde was sold on a different school—that was until someone pulled him aside and spoke to him about Trinity. Upon them visiting Trinity for a campus tour, Rayde admits that he went from thinking, "Whatever happens, happens," to immediately being blown away. What did it most for him was when April Munn, the school's director of admissions and promotions and international coordinator, stopped what she was doing and dedicated her attention to the two. "Seeing her take time

out of her day, show us every part of the building, and treat us like my son was already a student there was big for me."

During the tour, Rayde also had the pleasure of meeting the athletic director, Jared Amell, whose very clear words will forever remain with the devoted father: "We don't just want athletes. We want 'student' athletes. And we don't want sports players. We want role models." Knowing that those principles align with the same message Rayde instills in Trè was another indication that they were in the right place.



*Rayde Leonard had the pleasure of coaching his son's football team when he served as a recreational coach for the City of Florence.*

Not only that, but also being able to meet with the school's head master, Ed Hoffman, revealed just how committed Trinity is to the needs of its visitors and students. "Even not knowing who I was, he actually pulled me into his office on a busy school day and shared his vision for the program with me."

"Michael Teasley, the director of diversity and varsity basketball coach made a difference as well," Rayde added. After first speaking with him last year and comparing Teasley's words to where the school is today, Rayde said, "I see how their vision is actually coming to fruition right now." An example of that vision is Trinity's mission and philosophy on diversity. "Diversity is something they've always been big on. They spoke to me about it. They don't hide it, and they want to increase it."



Since officially joining last year, Trè has adapted well at Trinity, even as a minority and middle-schooler under the same roof as high-schoolers. While the basketball and football player inside of him hopes sports start on time, Trè is also excited about making new friends, meeting new staff members

and learning new things.

His father is excited about the new academic year as well, and he offered the following words of advice to other parents: "Regardless of what you may think about private school, the absolute bare minimum I would recommend to any parent is to take their child on a tour. But don't be close-minded. Don't worry about whether or not your child is smart enough. Don't worry about whether or not your child will fit in. All of those things should be the least of your worries. If you, like me, want a better education for your child, then definitely take a look at Trinity," said Rayde.

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# EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS: HOW TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT



 Simma Lieberman  
THE INCLUSIONIST

In response to the many people who've asked me what they can do to support the fight against racism, inequality and injustice, I've put together this starter list. While anyone can take any of these actions, they are focused on White people who may be new to anti-racism and are appalled by the injustice they see against Black people. These are ten of the many suggestions from guests on my podcast, "Everyday Conversations on Race for Everyday People," at [www.raceconvo.com](http://www.raceconvo.com)

**1- Begin with you and where you're at.** Stop and look around your neighborhood and the people around you. Reflect on how you got where you are today, the decisions and choices you've made about where you live, with whom you interact and how you go about your day. If your outrage and awareness about racism is new, consider why that is. What prevented you from seeing the racism, injustice and inequality that exists and has existed for years? What stopped you from being outraged in the past when unarmed Black and Brown people were targeted and killed as they went about their lives, breathing, sleeping, running, driving... This isn't to castigate but to help you understand your process as you move forward. When you can answer those questions, you'll start to change your consciousness, and you can make conscious decisions about actions that stop racism or contribute to racism.

**2- Know your history and your why.** Learn about your own culture and history to understand why you view the world and other people a certain way. Your past experiences and the messages you received about people who don't look like you when you were young impact how you react and respond to people and situations today. Consider specific instances in your life where you heard certain messages about Black and other non-white people.

You'll learn how other people view and experience the world from a different reality than you. Example: Many white people have a hard time understanding and believing that a lot of Black people don't experience the police as guardians of justice. They experience police as an occupying force who stop them for no reason other than being Black. Listen to stories from Black people and other people who don't look like you. As you listen, resist any urge to discount, trivialize or refuse to believe other people's experiences because they make you uncomfortable.

Take a webinar or class on bias, and identify ways in which you are biased. Learn processes you can use to mitigate those biases.

**3- Educate yourself.** Read books about Black history and Black experience. Here are four books:

- "Warmth of Other Suns" by Isabel Wilkerson (one of the best books I've ever read)
- "How to Be an Anti-Racist" by Ibram X Kendi
- "The New Jim Crow" by Michelle Alexander
- "White Fragility" by Robin DeAngelis

There are so many others. Email me for a more comprehensive list of books, documentaries and films.

**4- Check in with Black friends** (if you have any) to let them know you care about them. Ask how they are and what you can do to support

them personally. Don't ask them to tell you what to do to end racism. Right now your Black friends may be traumatized, exhausted and may not want to engage, but most people will be glad you just checked in.

If you only know people like you, check in with yourself to understand why, and plan to interact with people who are different. Get to cultural events or online discussions. I'll be glad to help you open your mind if you contact me.

Listen, listen, listen. Avoid interrupting, interpreting or telling someone traumatized by racism how to feel, what to say or how to say it.

**5-Talk to other people from similar backgrounds as you** who have been involved in anti-racist work. Ask them what you can do, where you can volunteer and actions you can join (For more specific actions or groups working against racism, contact me or use Google).

**6-Research** bills, measures and issues in the coming election. Vote against bills and people that continue racism. Join campaigns, and volunteer to get other people out to vote. There is power at the ballot.

**7- Donate to organizations** that are working to end social justice against racism. Spend your money with companies that have shown real support. Boycott, and divest from organizations that support racist leaders and policies. Know history. Campaigns to withhold money from those kinds of groups helped end apartheid in South Africa. Use the power of the purse.

**8- Think about times in your life when you heard racist comments,** jokes or actions that resulted in discrimination, and you did nothing. Was it because you lacked awareness, didn't want family and friends to be angry or ostracize you or just didn't know what to do? It's time to change that. Learn ways to speak up, intervene or let people know why you're leaving. Rehearse what you'll do or say. Be ready and be clear about your values against racism, and start living those values.

**9- If you see a Black person being attacked,** intervene, whether it's getting people around you to help, jumping in or creating a diversion. Picture scenarios in your mind and possible ways to intervene. Most people remain bystanders because they say they don't know what to do. By visualizing actions you can take, you are more likely to get involved. You could save a life.

**10- Read about privilege** and how it shows up in your life, and find ways to use your privilege to promote change and educate others.

If you would like a more comprehensive list, send me an email with the word "list" in the subject line to [Simma@SimmaLieberman.com](mailto:Simma@SimmaLieberman.com).

**And remember, it's never too late to be part of the solution.**



## SHIFTING GEARS: MORE AMERICANS GET BACK BEHIND THE WHEEL



The COVID-19 pandemic has had an undeniable, unavoidable impact on our world—from the way we conduct business to how we shop for groceries. It has shifted our idea of what is important in life,

and according to Hankook Tire's latest Gauge Index, Americans say spending time with family is a top priority. In light of everything 2020 has brought so far, Americans are shifting gears with a renewed emphasis on things we may have previously taken for granted: from time spent with loved ones, to road trips to our favorite vacation destinations and even surprisingly, our daily commute.

### The rise of the road trip

Summer is normally synonymous with taking a break and making an escape to somewhere fun, and for many, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a wrench in those plans. But Hankook found that nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of Americans are still hopeful and excited about the idea of an upcoming vacation. And more than likely, that vacation will be a road trip.

As consumers remain skeptical of traveling by plane and other forms of public transit, they are finding a safe hygiene haven in their own vehicles. According to the Gauge, 60 percent of Americans expect to take more road trips as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many expect a rise in road trip plans enabling travelers to explore while still safely adhering to social distancing guidelines.

So, whom are they going with? Even as restrictions lift, Americans remain uncertain about traveling with people outside their households. At the same time, they don't necessarily want to travel with everyone in their household.

When Hankook asked whom Americans would most like to travel with after the pandemic restrictions ease, the top choice was their significant other or spouse (40 percent), indicating a desire to spend some quality time together. Traveling with a spouse or significant other was more than twice as popular as the next most popular choice: traveling with your children (18 percent). Good time to check to make sure your babysitters are available!

### Redefining the daily drive

Americans' preference for wheels over wings doesn't just stop when it comes to planning their next vacation. It will also have a significant impact on the daily commute. The Gauge found that Americans widely agree automotive travel will be the top form of transportation after the COVID-19 pandemic eventually subsides (62 percent). Only a small percentage of people expect to regularly use other forms of transportation with the same regularity, including public transit (9 percent), ride sharing (7 percent) and trains (6 percent).

Of course, nobody knows what that regular rush hour might look like as offices across the country look for ways to safely stagger workforces and encourage working from home to allow for proper social distancing. Many will continue to avoid commutes altogether as companies encourage employees to keep working from home. When the time is right to resume your daily commute to work or school, make sure your vehicle is ready for the job as well by checking your tire pressure, any flat spots developed from prolonged parking and that A/C systems are ready to keep things cool this summer.



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