



PG. 33  
JOHN SWEENEY  
FRANCIS MARION  
UNIVERSITY



PG. 65  
SANDRA BARNES  
PEE DEE MENTAL  
HEALTH



PG. 78  
APRIL CAUSEY  
ANDERSON  
BROTHERS BANK



PG. 51  
TERENCE YOUNG  
ARTIST

# DIVERSITY WORKS

JULY 2021 VOLUME 11 ISSUE 3

*"For All of Us"*

**JEBAILY**  
— Law Firm —

697

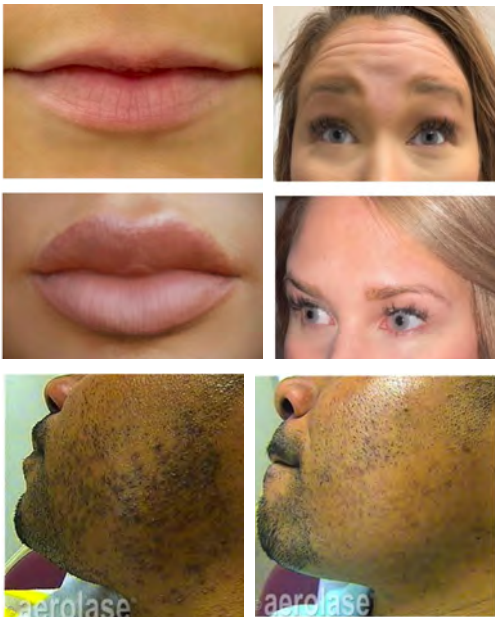


COVER STORY: PG. 38  
JEBAILY LAW FIRM

**INTERNAL MEDICINE | FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE | AESTHETICS | MASSAGE THERAPY**



- Weight Loss
- Botox
- Functional Medicine
- Lip Fillers
- Massage Therapy
- Skin Tightening Laser Treatments (and so much more!)
- Rosacea Laser Treatments
- Acne Laser Treatments
- Dermal Fillers
- Permanent Laser Hair Removal



Our goal at Magnolia Health Care is to bridge the gap between conventional and aesthetic medicine to bring you health and beauty. While we remain well grounded in conventional medicine, we continue to grow in aesthetic services to enhance your beauty with good health, and your good health with matching beauty. Our mission is to provide our valued patients with state-of-the-art total health and wellness solutions, combining traditional medicine, functional medicine, and aesthetics.

Be healthy, be beautiful; the Magnolia Health way.

---

It is our honor to introduce Wilhelmenia Patterson, Magnolia's new Physician Assistant. Mrs. Patterson is now accepting New Patients.



**843.432.2502**

**619 South Dargan Street • Florence SC 29506 • [www.magnolia-health.com](http://www.magnolia-health.com)**



## BUSINESS

4	REFLECTIONS & TENSIONS ON GROWTH AND DEI
5	HOW TO TELL YOUR BOSS NO WITHOUT SAYING "NO"
7	PERFORMANCE FOODSERVICE EXPANDING IN FLORENCE
8	ANSWERING THE CALLS OF THE COMMUNITY FOR 30 YEARS
10	THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
13	UNITED WAY: DEDICATED TO MAKING A LOCAL IMPACT
14	MCCALL FARMS, ARMY PARTNERSHIP
16	HELPFUL CAR INSURANCE TIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS
18	SMART WAYS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE

## DIVERSITY IN SPIRITUALITY

19	4 SPIRITUAL DOORS TO CLOSE ON THE ENEMY
----	---

## EDUCATION

20	DCSD'S HURSEY TO RETIRE AFTER NEARLY FIVE DECADES
20	DARLINGTON BOARD OF ED. APPROVES 20% RAISE
21	TEN DARLINGTON HIGH SENIORS RECEIVE ASSOCIATE DEGREES FROM FDTC
22	HGTC CULINARY STUDENT AWARDED TOURISM SCHOLARSHIP
23	HGTC NAMES CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION LABORATORY
23	HGTC NURSING PROGRAM IS FAMILY TRADITION FOR DONEVANT FAMILY
24	CLAFLIN, AFRICA UNIVERSITY ADD BIOTECHNOLOGY DEGREE
25	ANCHORS AWAY: HARTSVILLE STUDENT APPOINTED TO NAVAL ACADEMY
25	PEER TEACHING AT CLAFLIN
27	THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH BRIGHT BY TEXT
28	FDTC TO OFFER POLICE PRE-ACADEMY TRAINING CERTIFICATE
29	FDTC'S HARTSVILLE SITE OFFERS NEW ELECTRICIAN PROGRAM
29	FLORENCE 1 SEEKING MCCLLENAGHAN HIGH MEMORABILIA
30	RUIZ 4 KIDS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS
31	MOORE, SNEED TO WELCOME NEW GRADES AND PROGRAMS
32	FMU RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING STAFF SERVICE
32	FMU SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION
33	MITCHELL RETIRING FROM FMU, SWEENEY REPLACING
34	NEW ADMINISTRATORS APPROVED FOR FLORENCE 1 SCHOOLS
34	TWO AREA STUDENTS RECEIVE KEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
37	WITH CHALLENGES COME OPPORTUNITIES

## SPECIAL

38	JEBAILY LAW FIRM OPENS NEW OFFICE IN NORTH MYRTLE
40	AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY REUNIONS: ROOTED IN HISTORY
41	THE WAIT IS OVER—DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES RETURN IN 2021
42	FLORENCE COUNTY OFFERS OUTDOOR FUN FOR FAMILIES THIS SUMMER!
44	SUMMERTIME SHINE FOR THE CITY OF FLORENCE
45	OUR PARKS AND RECREATIONS: THE PANDEMIC ERA
46	LAUGHS FOR RECREATION
46	CREATING HIGH-FUNCTIONING TEAMS THROUGH ACTIVITIES
47	SUSTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE
48	WHAT CITY OF FLORENCE REC HAS TO OFFER
50	ART IS AT THE HEART OF AMERICAN CULTURE
50	IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS
51	A SOUND IN THE SOUTH
52	BRINGING NOVEL IDEAS TO THE CLASSROOM
53	AWAKENING CHARACTER IN NARRATIVE PAINTING
53	DARLINGTON HIGH'S LACY WINS MODEL HOME CONTEST
54	FUNDAMENTALLY TOUCHING OTHERS THROUGH ART
54	USING SYMBOLISM TO HONOR THE ANCESTORS
55	SELF-TAUGHT, MULTI-TALENTED AND COMMUNITY-MINDED
56	A MAJOR DEAL IN DANCE
56	IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SENIORS
57	NO RULES. NO BOUNDARIES.
58	ARTS ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
59	MUSC OFFERS ADVANCED TREATMENT FOR PROSTATE CANCER
60	PROSTATE CANCER: THE BLUE RIBBON IS SIGNIFICANT TOO
61	INNOVATIVE PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS BLACK MEN, PROSTATE CANCER
61	WHEN SHOULD MEN BE SCREENED FOR PROSTATE CANCER?
62	WHY HAVE NATURAL PROSTATE REMEDIES FAILED MEN SEEKING RELIEF?
63	THE PAIN OF LOSING A CHILD

64	MAKING CARE SUICIDE SAFE
65	FINDING A PERMANENT SOLUTION WITHOUT A TEMPORARY ACTION
66	TEEN SUICIDE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT
67	THE COST OF ADDICTION
68	COMBATING THE OPIOID CRISIS
69	MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY: POSSIBLE AT ANY AGE
70	FINDING BALANCE AND EASE DURING THE PANDEMIC
70	A CELEBRATION OF RECOVERY MONTH THROUGH A PERSONAL LENS
72	FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION, THE BIBLICAL WAY
73	REVEALING HOW FAILURE IS JUST A LESSON
74	GIVING THE GIFT OF LANGUAGE, WITH LOVE

## FINANCIAL

75	SYNOVUS
76	BUILD YOUR SAVINGS, START WITH SMALL GOALS
77	WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE "THREE-LEGGED STOOL" OF RETIREMENT?
78	CAUSEY PROMOTED TO PROCESSING MANAGER
78	YATES PROMOTED TO BRANCH MANAGER
78	JESSICA SUGGS PROMOTED TO GRAPHIC DESIGN/SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
79	BLESSING OTHERS THROUGH FINANCIAL LITERACY
79	THE RIGHT ADVISOR CAN BOOST YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH
80	3 WAYS TO SAVE ON BACK TO SCHOOL EXPENSES

## HEALTH

81	A TRUE PAIN IN THE PELVIS
85	SENIORS WITH HOPE RETURNS
85	CHEMISTRY FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES
86	CAN WE STOP THE ANTICOAGULANTS (BLOOD THINNERS)?
88	HOPEHEALTH NEW PROVIDERS
89	CARESOUTH CAROLINA NAMES ROBINSON AWARD RECIPIENT
90	HOPEHEALTH RECOGNIZES MEMORIAL DAY
91	HTC EMPLOYEES PARTNER WITH MARCH OF DIMES
93	MUSC NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WITH "A" FOR LEAPFROG SAFETY GRADE

## LIFESTYLES

94	BETHEA RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
95	3 MAJOR BENEFITS OF THE EXTRA HELP PROGRAM
96	HOW DISABILITY INSURANCE CAN PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST
98	2021 SERGEANT TERRENCE CARRAWAY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED
99	2 TIPS TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN YOUR NEXT CAR PURCHASE
100	COLLABORATING TO CREATE GOOD HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

## FEATURED ARTICLES



89

Tammie Robinson  
CareSouth Carolina



14

McCall Farms Signs  
Agreement with Army



67

Bryan Braddock  
House of Hope



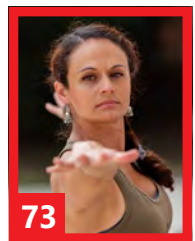
60

Rev. Marvin Hemingway  
MCCC



85

Seniors of Hope  
HopeHealth



73

Veronica Robertson  
Flow Town Yoga

Published By:



# DMM

## ADVERTISING & MARKETING

1951 Pisgah Rd., Suite 111 • Florence, SC 29502

Business: (843) 669-5929 / (843) 413-2743

Mobile: (843) 307-5146

Website: [www.diversityworkssc.com](http://www.diversityworkssc.com)

[www.dmmadvertisingandmarketing.com](http://www.dmmadvertisingandmarketing.com)

Email: [dmmadworks@aol.com](mailto:dmmadworks@aol.com)



### STAFF:

Diana M. Murphy-Eaddy	CEO/Publisher
Gregory Eaddy	Production Coordinator
Dawn "D.A." Goodwin	Editor
Distinctive Design Graphics	Layout & Design
Chinel Boateng	Contributing Writer
Anna Bowman	Contributing Writer
Mallory Brayboy	Contributing Writer
Susan Carter	Contributing Writer
Les Echols	Contributing Writer
Adalia Ellis	Contributing Writer
Ta'Meeka Epps	Contributing Writer
De'Angela Haynes	Contributing Writer
Robin L. Lewis	Contributing Writer
Tonita Perry	Contributing Writer
Jennifer Guiles Robinson	Contributing Writer
Terry James	Photographer
William "Cash" Stukes	Photographer/Film Maker

## 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.

## ADVERTISERS & PARTNERS INDEX

ADP | [www.adp.com/careers](http://www.adp.com/careers)  
ANDERSON BROTHERS BANK | [www.ABBank.com](http://www.ABBank.com)  
BETHEA RETIREMENT COMMUNITY | [www.bethearetirement.com](http://www.bethearetirement.com)  
CARESOUTH CAROLINA | [www.caresouth-carolina.com](http://www.caresouth-carolina.com)  
CAROLINA BANK | [www.carolinabank.net](http://www.carolinabank.net)  
CIRCLE PARK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES | [www.circlepark.com](http://www.circlepark.com)  
CITY OF DARLINGTON | [www.DarlingtonSConline.com](http://www.DarlingtonSConline.com)  
CITY OF FLORENCE | [www.cityofflorence.com](http://www.cityofflorence.com)  
CITY OF FLORENCE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT | [www.florencedowntown.com](http://www.florencedowntown.com)  
CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY | [www.clafalin.edu](http://www.clafalin.edu)  
DARLINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT | [www.darlington.k12.sc.us](http://www.darlington.k12.sc.us)  
DAYS INN BY WYNDHAM | [www.daysinn.com](http://www.daysinn.com)  
DEDICATED COMMUNITY BANK | [www.dcbasc.com](http://www.dcbasc.com)  
EASTERN CAROLINA MEDICINE | [www.icpa4kids.com](http://www.icpa4kids.com)  
EFIRD CHRYSLER JEEP DODGE | [www.efirdautogroup.com](http://www.efirdautogroup.com)  
FINKLEA, HENDRICK & BLAKE, LLC | [www.FinkleaLaw.com](http://www.FinkleaLaw.com)  
FLORENCE COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU  
| [www.visitflo.com/sc-revolutionary-rivers](http://www.visitflo.com/sc-revolutionary-rivers)  
FLORENCE-DARLINGTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE | [www.fdtc.edu](http://www.fdtc.edu)  
FLORENCE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CORP. | [www.florencedowntown.com](http://www.florencedowntown.com)  
FLORENCE 1 SCHOOLS | [www.f1S.org](http://www.f1S.org)  
FOOD LION LLC | [www.foodlion.com](http://www.foodlion.com)  
FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY | [www.fmarion.edu](http://www.fmarion.edu)  
GITTENS CHIROPRACTIC HEALTH CLINIC | [www.GittensHealthClinic.com](http://www.GittensHealthClinic.com)  
HONDA OF SOUTH CAROLINA | [www.hondaofsouthcarolina.com](http://www.hondaofsouthcarolina.com)  
HOPEHEALTH | [www.hope-health.org](http://www.hope-health.org)  
HORRY GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE | [www.HGTC.edu/HR](http://www.HGTC.edu/HR)  
IHEART MEDIA | [www.iheartmedia.com](http://www.iheartmedia.com)  
JEBAILY LAW FIRM P.A. | [www.JebailyLaw.com](http://www.JebailyLaw.com)  
LA QUINTA BY WYNDHAM | [www.lq.com](http://www.lq.com)  
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT | [www.leeschooldistrictsc.org](http://www.leeschooldistrictsc.org)  
MAGNOLIA HEALTH CARE | [www.magnolia-health.com](http://www.magnolia-health.com)  
MARION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT | [www.marion.k12.sc.us](http://www.marion.k12.sc.us)  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOR CAREERS | [www.musc.edu/careers](http://www.musc.edu/careers)  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOR STUDENTS | [www.musc.edu/admissions](http://www.musc.edu/admissions)  
MUSC Health Florence Medical Center | [MUSChealth.org/Florence](http://MUSChealth.org/Florence)  
MCCALL FARMS | [www.mccallfarms.com](http://www.mccallfarms.com)  
MCLEOD HEALTH | [www.mcleodhealth.org](http://www.mcleodhealth.org)  
NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE | [www.newyorklife.com](http://www.newyorklife.com)  
PALMETTO FIRST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION | [www.palmettofirst.com](http://www.palmettofirst.com)  
PATHEON AT THERMO FISHER SCIENTIFIC | [www.thermofisher.com/patheon](http://www.thermofisher.com/patheon)  
PEE DEE DENTAL GROUP | [www.drcharlesconner.com](http://www.drcharlesconner.com)  
PERFORMANCE FOOD SERVICE | [www.performancefoodservice.com](http://www.performancefoodservice.com)  
QUENTIN WILLIAMS INSURANCE & FINANCIAL GROUP  
RALDEX HOSPITALITY GROUP | [www.raldex.com](http://www.raldex.com)  
ROBERT DAVIS ENGINEERING, LLC  
RUBICON FAMILY COUNSELING SERVICE | [www.rubiconsc.org](http://www.rubiconsc.org)  
RUIZ FOODS | [www.elmonterey.com](http://www.elmonterey.com)  
SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC. | [www.santee.org](http://www.santee.org)  
SC EDUCATION LOTTERY | [www.sceducationlottery.com](http://www.sceducationlottery.com)  
SPHERION | [www.spherion.com](http://www.spherion.com)  
STATE FARM INSURANCE | [www.starleealexander.com](http://www.starleealexander.com)  
SYNOVUS | [www.synovus.com](http://www.synovus.com)  
TERRY JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY  
THE LAW OFFICE OF LINWARD EDWARDS II ATTORNEY AT LAW | [www.ledwardsllaw.com](http://www.ledwardsllaw.com)  
THE REHAB CENTER AT MORRELL | [www.rehabcenteratmorrell.com](http://www.rehabcenteratmorrell.com)  
THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION | [www.theschoolfoundation.org](http://www.theschoolfoundation.org)  
TRINITY COLLEGIATE SCHOOL | [www.trinitybyrnes.org](http://www.trinitybyrnes.org)  
VISIT LAKE CITY | [www.visitlakecitysc.com](http://www.visitlakecitysc.com)  
W. LEE FLOWERS- IGA | [www.igaguy.com](http://www.igaguy.com)  
WEGOJA FOUNDATION | [www.wegoja.org](http://www.wegoja.org)  
WILSON SENIOR CARE | [www.wilsonseniorcare.com](http://www.wilsonseniorcare.com)



# FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

## COMMUNITY FORCES THAT BENEFIT ALL



*Dawn "D.A." Goodwin*  
Editor

I am extremely thankful and will be forever grateful to have served as editor of Diversity Works© for almost five years now. However, this will be my last edition as I am retiring from my position. These years have sped by so quickly. I have enjoyed watching the magazine grow and flourish, and I have especially been in amazement at the countless heartwarming stories of diversity and inclusion (D&I) in practice right here in the local community. Now, I look forward to continuing to support the

magazine and this "dream team" I've had the honor of being a part of.

Support seems to be the theme of this edition. In continuing our 10th-anniversary celebration, we hear from organizations that have supported the magazine and continue to uplift D&I. Dr. Nika White reflects on reconciling diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and business growth. United Way discusses its dedication to making a local impact through its partnerships while McCall Farms and the Army have teamed up to help future soldiers and veterans. For our July cover story, Jebaily Law Firm announces the opening of a new office in North Myrtle Beach. The firm is well known in Florence for its community involvement, and it has plans to continue the tradition in its new location.

In this issue, we continue the Diversity Works© tradition of bringing news you can count on. Alisa Nesmith Bellamy of She Rocks Finances is here to stress the importance of financial literacy. We share important information about purchasing your next car, having disability insurance and Medicare's Extra Help program, which can lower your medication costs. Julie A. Cord of New York Life Insurance discusses the "three-legged stool" of retirement. Anderson Bros Bank announces promotions, and Palmetto First Credit Union helps you cut back-to-school expenses. Carolina Trust Credit Union and Horry Telephone Cooperative have joined forces to provide Coastal Carolina University and Francis Marion University students with a huge scholarship opportunity. Other beneficial partnerships for students include the ones between The School Foundation and Bright By Text, Africa University and Claflin University and the SC Technical College System and the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

Even more school news is here. Darlington County schools announce that Dr. B. Jane Hursey will be retiring after 47 years of teaching, and be sure to join us in celebrating the ten Darlington High School seniors who received associate degrees from Florence-Darlington Technical College. Florence 1 seeks memorabilia as it reopens an old high school, and the district now has innovative STEM and STEAM programs at two of its middle schools.

For Hispanic Heritage Month, meet LySandra Mendez, a Spanish teacher who teaches the language with love, and Veronica Robertson, a yoga studio owner and instructor who reveals how failure is just a lesson. She grew up in a place where financial

resources were scarce, but thankfully, she persevered through obstacles and found success right here in Florence.

For American Artist Appreciation Month in August, we recognize several highly talented, creative minds in our community who might even agree that perseverance is key, especially when dealing with the effects of the pandemic on business. They include MeLinda Brown, Colleen Critcher, E.J. Favor, Terence Young, Ashley Davis and more. And read about Major Varsity Dance Team and theatrical activities for, by and about seniors.

Parks and Recreation departments in our area have details about fun-filled activities that are back this summer, and they can benefit the entire family. You can plan a party for children featuring Sanders Cartoon Mascots, and have it at any of our beautiful parks for all to enjoy. Cool off on one of these hot summer days by checking out the Splash Pad at the Environmental Discovery Center in Florence, or visit Neptune Island Waterpark for Family Kickball in Hartsville. As you see, there is so much to do. Even taking advantage of the serene walking trails is a great idea if you desire to work on your health, and don't forget to stop by the City Center Market for fresh, local food.

Maintaining good health is a must in life. CareSouth announces an award winner, McLeod talks stroke care, HopeHealth introduces new providers and MUSC is recognized for earning an "A" Leapfrog Safety Grade. Unfortunately, the number of opioid overdose deaths within Darlington County has doubled since last year. As Rubicon reports, this "threatens the lives of community members and the well-being of families." With enough already going on with the pandemic, we know that this must change. Therefore, you have to read on to find out Rubicon's plan to support substance abuse treatment and recovery-oriented services to help bring forth that change.

Inside, we acknowledge National Recovery Awareness Month, Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and National Suicide Prevention Month, which are all in September. Discover a life-saving intervention for a suicidal patient. We are here to keep you informed of the pandemic's impact on teens and to let you know it's okay to seek help, whether it's from loved ones, professionals or God. Pay close attention to the stories about Reformers Unanimous Addictions Program at Florence Baptist Temple, the brave young girl who lost her life to cancer, the reverend who believes in God for his healing from prostate cancer and four doors to close on the enemy.

Do you know what age men should be screened for prostate cancer? It's imperative that you do, and have you heard about MUSC's Holling's Cancer Center's AMEN Project for Black men to get prostate screenings? It's funded by TD Bank, and the partnership not only helps educate minority men about their health but also supports them in bypassing barriers they often face in obtaining prostate cancer screenings.

As always, we have so much in store for you that I can't name it all. Again, thank you for your continued support of Diversity Works© and for sticking with us over the past decade. Ten years might be down, yet this is just the beginning, so relax, enjoy and be informed! It has truly been a pleasure.



## REFLECTIONS & TENSIONS ON GROWTH AND DEI

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**-As an entrepreneur and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) consultant, I often find myself torn between the two worlds. In one world, capitalism, productivity and constant growth are often at odds with DEI. As I reflect on my journey, I realize there are a few aspects of being an entrepreneur and DEI consultant that conflict. Here's how I reconcile the worlds of business growth and DEI.

### **I remind myself of how valuable DEI is in the business world**

It's no secret, DEI is work. It takes time and energy to look inward, analyze where our businesses have knowledge gaps and pull out actionable steps to create a better company. I find that in the business world, unless something makes money or is considered "productive," it's undervalued. As much as I love DEI and find value in the work, many companies don't. Some executives may ask, "How can DEI make us money or help us innovate a better product?" For some, looking inward to build a better company dynamic and using new DEI frameworks for their employees isn't valuable. I have to constantly remind myself that DEI is the backbone of good business to fuel my mission to get people on board with the work. We as business owners need to see DEI as a tool for growth and productivity in our companies. We should understand that if we want to build a better company and product and grow, we have to work from the inside out. And that means working on how we see and implement DEI in our businesses.

### **I focus on growing my business without compromising my DEI values**

I often feel conflicted between growing my business and seeing it flourish while also staying true to my DEI values, many of which include supporting my staff to avoid burnout, creating a diverse workforce with many lived experiences and keeping clear communication at the

forefront of the business.

I've always believed in my work as a consultant and how Nika White Consulting (NWC) helps others grow, but I'm also conscious of how supporting growth has trade-offs with real impacts on my staff's mental and emotional needs. In a highly productive business world, growing a company often means disregarding the mental, physical and emotional needs of the people who work with you.

That's a mistake. At NWC, I've made it a focus to always keep DEI values at the front of the work I do. I stay focused and mindful about the mental and emotional needs of my staff and myself and grow the business with those values guiding the way.

### **I understand that even my DEI consultancy still has work to do**

I often see businesses that think DEI is a magic pill or something they can do once that can solve their problems overnight. But I've come to learn over the years that DEI is a journey, not a destination. It's important to have realistic expectations about how DEI can influence a company and how much DEI work is needed to make real change.

For example, some companies and individuals may think that my DEI consultancy is perfectly aligned 100 percent of the time with every DEI best practice and has no DEI issues of its own, but that's an unrealistic expectation. No business is perfect, and even a DEI consultancy like mine can have multiple identities that conflict, challenges with communication and social dynamics that privilege some while disadvantaging others. It's humbling to know that even though your business is on a path to improve DEI, so are we at NWC. We're on this journey together, and it's powerful to reflect on how NWC supports

businesses in reaching their DEI goals while also being transparent about our inner work too.

### **I understand DEI work is personal**

As we help companies grow and reach their DEI goals, the staff at NWC often have their own personal feelings and reactions to the work we do. Many of us, including myself, hold complex identities and may feel triggered while supporting another business' initiatives. It can be challenging to work through systemic issues around race, gender, disability or class and not feel some emotional response in the process.

It's no secret that DEI work is personal for your business, employees and all of us here at NWC. Holding space for others can be a challenge when we're working through the same challenges in our personal lives. But we're human, and we do our best to show up fully even when we're feeling complex emotions about the work.

### **Final thoughts**

As a consultancy, we, too, experience growing pains around DEI and productivity. Whether we're experiencing the very thing we're supporting your business in solving, or we're feeling the work is undervalued, we still find the drive to come back and continue on. We know there are tensions in business and DEI, but that's the great benefit of the work. We can sit in the discomfort of the work and still show up every day to help our businesses do better.

It's our purpose and joy to be present for the good and bad and come out resilient. We know DEI isn't easy for anyone, but as long as we continue to sit in the discomfort and find a healthy balance between business growth and DEI, we're confident that our business and yours will thrive.





## HOW TO TELL YOUR BOSS NO WITHOUT SAYING "NO" Submitted by Sara McCord, the Muse

# NO!

Your boss asks you to take on a new project, and your first thought is, "There is just no way." Maybe it's because you're already juggling three projects near deadline, or maybe you fundamentally disagree with his strategy.

Sure, you could try to just power through all of the projects or propose something you think a client wouldn't be interested in, but you probably know that's neither the best nor the most professional option.

Pushing back on a request from your boss can be intimidating (especially if you work for someone who's, let's say, not the most receptive to answers outside the realm of "Of course! When would you like it completed?"), but the truth is, it's significantly better than setting yourself up to fail.

The trick is to push back more diplomatically—getting your point across without actually using the word "no." Read on for how to approach some common situations, as well as one time you should

probably just say "yes."

**Situation: You Truly Don't Have the Time Instead of: "There's No Way I Have Time for That"**  
**Try: "Could You Help Me Prioritize My Project List?"**

While, "No, I don't have time," seems like a perfectly legit response when you're up to your elbows in other work, it can also make your boss question your ability to capably prioritize and execute the tasks that are on your plate.

So, this is the time to remember, "Show, don't tell." Respond to your boss by saying, "Could you help me prioritize my project list?" In that meeting, lay out what you're working on, how long it's taking, and what you would have to delay or stop doing in order to take on the new task.

The best thing about this approach is that, along with demonstrating everything on your plate, you're giving your boss the opportunity to weigh in on what's most important. That way, if the new project can be passed off or held for later, it likely will be, and if it needs your attention now, you have full permission to de-prioritize something else.

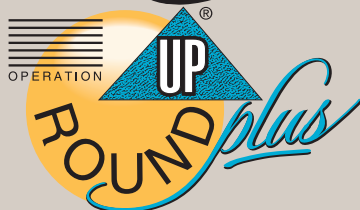
**Situation: You Disagree With the Strategy at Hand Instead of: "I Don't Think That'll Work"**  
**Say: "Can I Throw Out Another Idea?"**

Even if you're thinking, "No, I would never take that approach with this client—how could you even consider that?" remember that the abrasive approach is not terribly conducive to brainstorming new ideas.

Instead, try, "Can I throw out another idea?" One of two things happens when you ask a question like that—clearly, your boss says "yes" or "no." But here's the amazing part: If your boss says "yes" (which happens more often than not) she has welcomed you to contribute a new approach before you even start in, which means she's much more likely to consider it.

# Helping your community is a

# plus



Santee Electric Cooperative's members have helped the community through Operation Round Up®, donating more than \$5.5 million since 1993. Through this program, members' electric bills are rounded up to the next whole dollar. Money raised help in times of need with food, clothing, shelter, health needs and added support for worthy organizations.

We are now offering, Operation Round Up PLUS. Along with Operation Round Up, you can give more to help make a bigger difference in our community. You will be able to choose a one time gift or add a monthly gift in an amount of your choice.

For more information on how you can participate, visit [santee.org](http://santee.org) or call 800-922-1604.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



**ThermoFisher**  
SCIENTIFIC

Chris, Lauryn,  
Carson Rose  
& AJ Tubesing

# MADE FOR

## HOPE & FAMILY

HOW A FAMILY'S PERSEVERANCE HELPED THEM REACH A SEEMINGLY UNATTAINABLE GOAL.

As members of the United States Air Force, Lauryn and Chris were as healthy and fit as a young couple could be. But when two of their three children tested positive for Cystic Fibrosis, everything changed. Along with endless treatments, trips to the doctor, and fear of catching even the slightest cold, was the realization that a typical life expectancy was only about 31. They soon learned of a "wonder drug" that was helping CF patients in trials, and actually treated the disease, not just the symptoms. When they were finally approved, it took only 6 months for their doctor to say something they hadn't heard before: "Your daughter looks healthy." Now, with a life expectancy into the 60s and beyond, these two veterans are free to have all the dreams parents have for their kids.

patheon

 fisher clinical  
services

Find out more at [thermofisher.com/patheon](https://thermofisher.com/patheon)

© 2019 Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. All rights reserved.

● API

● BIOLOGICS

● EARLY & LATE  
PHASE DEVELOPMENT

● CLINICAL  
TRIAL SOLUTIONS

● LOGISTICS  
SERVICES

● COMMERCIAL  
MANUFACTURING



# PERFORMANCE FOODSERVICE EXPANDING IN FLORENCE Submitted by South Carolina Chamber of Commerce



**COLUMBIA**-Performance Foodservice, a division of Performance Food Group and one of the largest foodservice distributors in the nation, announced plans to expand operations in Florence County. The more than \$11 million investment will create 150 new jobs.

With over 60 locations nationwide, Performance Foodservice delivers more than 200,000 food and food related products to 125,000 customer locations.

Located at 2801 Alex Lee Boulevard in Florence, Performance Foodservice's expansion will enhance the company's servicing capacity, include the purchase of new equipment and increase dry good storage.

The building expansion is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2022. Individuals interested in joining the Performance Foodservice team should visit the company's careers webpage.

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development has approved job development credits related to the project. Florence County was also awarded a \$250,000 Set-Aside grant to assist with related project costs.

## QUOTES

"We appreciate the support we've received from Florence County and South Carolina for this expansion and throughout our years as a member of this wonderful community. Having local touch points is an important part of Performance Foodservice's customer-centric approach. We are excited to be growing to better serve our customers and about adding greater, local talent to our workforce." –Performance Foodservice Florence President Rick Wilder

"It's great to see another one of our state's existing businesses build

on its presence in South Carolina. We celebrate Performance Foodservice's decision to invest more than \$11 million and create 150 new jobs in the Florence area and look forward to their continued growth." –Gov. Henry McMaster

"South Carolina is proud to be the home of great companies like Performance Foodservice. This announcement is another indication that the Palmetto State is not only just right for business, but also just right for growth." –Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt

"Foodservice plays a vital role in our communities, and we are proud that the expansion of Performance Foodservice will continue to support local and state restaurants. Not only will this expansion further support our restaurants, it will create 150 new jobs for our state." –S.C. Senator Hugh K. Leatherman

"This expansion is a wonderful example of how companies continue to flourish in Florence County. The county's proximity to two major interstates allows Performance Foodservice to quickly meet the needs of their customers. We are excited for their continued growth and the local jobs that will be created." –Florence County Council Chairman Willard Dorriety Jr.

"Florence County remains a great place to do business, as this announcement attests. We are very pleased that Performance Foodservice continues to be an important part of Florence County's economy." –Florence County Economic Development Partnership Chairman Joe W. "Rocky" Pearce



**DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH.**



EOE/Vets/Disabled  
performancefoodservice.com/florence



ADP, the ADP logo, and Always Designing for People are trademarks of ADP, LLC.

## What are you #WorkingFor?

The things we work for are what define us.

At ADP we're designing a better way to work, so you can achieve what you're working for.

Discover HR, Talent, Time Management, Benefits & Payroll, informed by data and designed for people. Learn more at [design.adp.com](https://design.adp.com)







Madie Robinson

Pee Dee Healthy Start Incorporated (PDHS) is a 501(c)3 community-based, nonprofit organization which has provided an array of services to rural residents in the Pee Dee for 30 years. As a result of the quality of services, PDHS has gained recognition within the Pee Dee community and abroad.

Madie A. Robinson, M.S.W., L.I.S.W., CP/AP and executive director/CEO of Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc., felt compelled to address specific issues affecting the rural communities in the

Pee Dee area. Heavily influenced by her grandmother Bell, who was an education advocate, Robinson combined her Historically Black College/University (HBCU) education, knowledge and skills gained as a former employee of Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) and Florence County Department of Social Services (DSS) prior to joining the Pee Dee Healthy Start Initiative in 1992. A Florence native, Robinson has dedicated her life to “giving back to the community.”

The purpose of Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc. is to address the disparities of adequate health care for rural residents. The lack of adequate health care for these residents has created a crack in the foundation of the family structure. High rates of infant mortality and low birth weight among infants permeates rural communities, jeopardizing the mental and emotional health of the foundational structure of family.

Robinson states, “30 years later, unemployment and poverty, low educational attainment, a disproportionate burden of chronic disease relative to the general public, restricted access to quality health care and insufficient or lack of health insurance coverage” continue to infiltrate communities in the rural Pee Dee area. The challenges that affect the overall health of many residents of rural communities are influenced by the characteristics of the community, individual health behaviors, environmental factors and accessibility to adequate health care.

The mission of PDHS is to connect rural residents to community-based organizations that will afford them appropriate health care, supervised employment and training, housing, education and food resources. Guided by its motto, PDHS “believes that healthy families are the basis of every child’s promise for a bright future. The strength and resilience of these families provide the backbone of vibrant, thriving communities.”

PDHS serves residents in Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg Counties providing in house school-based, prison-based and community-based services.

## Community-Based Partners

Robinson’s exceptional leadership and dedication to serving the community has afforded PDHS a 30-year collaborative relationship with health care providers (DHEC, private agencies and federally-qualified community health centers) and the Pee Dee Community Action Agency (Pee Dee, Darlington County, Chesterfield-Marlboro EOC and Williamsburg County). Collaboration with state agencies, civic and community organizations, school districts, medical providers and coordinating councils ensures residents are afforded services specific to their needs and forestalls the duplication of services.

## Programs and Services

Robinson, a pillar in the Pee Dee community, has spent 30 years promoting the services provided by PDHS locally, regionally and nationally. PDHS offers the following programs:

**Healthy Start Eliminating Disparities in Perinatal Health**-provides services to women 10-44 years of age and fathers that will eradicate circumventable infant deaths, curtail preterm and low weight births, foster preconception health, ensure high-quality healthcare, reinforce the family structure and promote safe and healthy environments. Program participants rate “evidence-based curriculum to educate women on the importance of healthcare services, one-on-one interaction with

staff and health literacy” as the top three services for this program. The Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) provides funding for this program.

**Project Rural, Early, Sexual Prevention, Empowerment and Care for Teens (RESPECT)**-provides sexual risk avoidance services to women 15-19 years of age. High school students can attain employment as communication personnel in this program. The Success Sequence for Poverty Prevention in this program is: poverty prevention, attain a high school diploma, gain full-time employment and abstinence until marriage before starting a family. Program participants rate “food/snacks provided during group workshop sessions, leadership development training and healthy relationship skills” as the top three services for this program. The Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Program, Administrations for Children and Families (ACF) and Family and Youth Service Bureau (FYSB) provide funding for this program.

**Family, Marriage, and Relationship Education Works (FRAMEWorks)**-provides adult services to individuals ages 18 and above. This program encourages the belief, “Promoting and increasing awareness regarding the importance of healthy relationships leads to healthier societies, communities, families, homes and ultimately healthier children.” Program participants rate “healthy relationship skills, program supports and program incentives” as the top three services for this program. Participants receive childcare assistance for job-related activities for up to two children and up to \$210 in Visa Gift Cards for completion of the program. The Administration of Children and Families (ACF) and Office of Family Assistance (OFA) provide funding for this program.

**The Dannon Project at Pee Dee Healthy Start**-provides services for high-risk and at-risk youth 18-24 years of age. Participants in this program are nonviolent offenders with the desire to improve their employability skills through occupational and life skills training. This program offers judicial preventative education while simultaneously identifying an individualized, sustainable career path for participants. Identification restoration, housing, medical coverage and food assistance are offered through this program. Participants can obtain a commercial driver’s license, become a phlebotomist and obtain forklift certification through this program. Program participants rate “links to services, career certifications and incentives” as the top three services offered in this program, and The Dannon Project (Alabama) provides its funding.

## Agency Challenges

Although Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc. has been successfully providing services to residents in the rural Pee Dee area for 30 years, the agency faces many challenges. Federal funding is crucial to the “lifeline” of the agency. The lack of federal funding threatens the sustainability of programs we offer. Securing companies and businesses to employ ex-offenders and pregnant women also poses a challenge. Without the guarantee of employment, program participants may not trust the efficacy of their community. The lack of non-federal funds creates a gap in the infrastructure of our agency. Potential candidates shy away from grant-based employment. Public health and community-based awareness is a necessity for a potential board member to possess as he or she will oversee and govern the programs, policies and procedures of our agency.

## Offering Virtual Services

To maintain the commitment to rural residents of the area, Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc. is providing services virtually. Virtual services will ensure individual and family needs will remain a top priority of the agency, while simultaneously adhering to the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). For future participants, Pee Dee Healthy Start will provide support with technology devices for those who lack access to broadband Internet, a computer, laptop or a smartphone.

Looking ahead to the next 30 years, Robinson envisions PDHS with “multiple sources of funding to strengthen our relationship with families in the Pee Dee region, providing culturally competent services and remaining community based.”

For more information about Pee Dee Healthy Start Inc., please visit: [www.pdhs.org](http://www.pdhs.org).





2671 Hospitality Blvd, Florence  
843-432-3001



3440 W Radio Dr, Florence  
843-432-1500



3000 W Radio Dr, Florence  
843-629-9900



150 Westpark Dr, Florence  
843-519-5200



1735 Stokes Rd, Florence  
843-662-7000



**RALDEX**

HOSPITALITY

[www.raldex.com](http://www.raldex.com)





This year is a major milestone for Diversity Works Magazine®, as we are continuing to celebrate our 10th anniversary. We are certainly grateful for all of those who have supported and continue to support Diversity Works. Serving throughout the Southeast region, we have been able to amplify the voices of those to tell their stories.

We have been networking with some great individuals and organizations who have joined us as we are celebrating this 10th anniversary and providing input about the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and what DEI means to their organizations. Deborah Wimberly has been very intricate in and with the Marion County School District. She serves in public relations & special projects. Wimberly speaks about the importance of DEI saying, “In recent years, there has been much research and discussion around equity, diversity and inclusion in education. As educators, it’s our job to make sure the learning needs for each and every individual student are addressed.”

As each student is unique and different, so are his or her educational needs. Classroom teachers are challenged with determining where students are on the learning continuum, meeting them at that point and then providing them with the resources they need so their educational journey can continue in a positive direction.

The Marion County School District is joining districts across South Carolina and the U.S. that are committed to allocating resources equitably across our schools and programs in a transparent way. But equitable does not mean equal, and the challenge comes when deciding what resources (time and money) are needed by each student.

Here’s how it’s being addressed in Marion County:

They are expanding the types of programs that are offered to students and ensuring all students have access to great educators.

They’ve launched exciting new models of learning, including the Academy of Early Learning for four-year-olds, a growing Montessori program for elementary students, Creek Bridge STEM Academy and an early college program for high school students, to name just a few. Each program offers students a quality education with a different perspective. They are providing a variety of choices for families.

They are committed to providing every child with a technology device capable of getting on the Internet and providing access to the Internet so they can attend virtual classes and complete school-based projects. They are creating learning environments where both students and teachers feel connected and a sense of belonging.

They are providing professional development and support to our educators, including how to be culturally responsive to the unique needs of their students.

One of their priorities is to ensure all our students have access to teachers who provide rigorous instruction based on the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards. This means they provide a rich set of professional growth supports, so that they can best meet the needs of each of the students.

They know that they cannot meet our students’ academic needs until they address their social and emotional well-being.

Equity, diversity and inclusion means supporting the whole child. They believe this work is life-changing. By meeting the students’ social and emotional learning skills, they believe the students will be able to grow and thrive. Creating learning environments with equity and inclusion at the forefront helps to prepare our students to be successful in the path they choose upon graduation.

Doris Lockhart, representing Spherion of Florence and Conway says, “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion matters. It matters in everything that we do here at Spherion. We believe that every person has unique skills, backgrounds, challenges, perspectives, religions and cultures that they bring to the table. Diversity at its core should be a reflection of our community. We are a mixture of cultures, and because of our differences, the workplace can be much better because of diversity.”

Spherion is a national recruiting and staffing enterprise that blends the resources of a global HR company with the local insights of our independent franchise owners. A pioneer in the staffing industry, it has been providing companies with the workforce solutions they need for over 75 years while helping people find jobs and build careers where

they can thrive.

Spherion invests in taking action by fostering a collaborative, supportive and helpful environment that is conducive to building meaningful careers and elevating the workplace. “We celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Plus, we strive to ensure that everyone’s voice is heard. We work with our staff to try to dig into the difficult topics that might be uncomfortable to help our clients and talents. We do this without being intrusive. Our common ground allows us to understand what’s working and what is not working. Our goal is to continue being the premier staffing service.”

“Spherion wants its clients and talents growing, and we understand diversity should be the top priority to make this happen. You have to have a desire to give everyone the opportunity to contribute and make a difference that impacts our clients.”

As it relates to empowering the Florence community, Spherion’s mission and goal is “Driving careers, Growing businesses, and Bettering the Florence community. That’s what we’ve been focused on since we opened our doors. Our job is to match good, hard-working people with successful Florence businesses who are helping our city grow and prosper. When you work with us, you’ll feel the Spherion difference--we take the time to build relationships with everyone who works with us, so we can really understand what you’re looking for” ([https://www.spherion.com/our-offices/florence-sc\\_1163/](https://www.spherion.com/our-offices/florence-sc_1163/)).

There is always more work to do when it comes to equality, diversity and inclusion. “Without inclusion, diversity really can’t bloom within the culture of an organization,” says Rebecca Rogers-Tijerino, president of Spherion Staffing, LLC. “Congratulations on your 10 year anniversary!”

In this day and time, still in the United States, our nation is struggling with celebrating diversity, equality and inclusion, so to have a platform and network of people and organizations that are willing to appreciate and celebrate the great qualities of diversity, is a great benefit in life. Being different, distinctive and gifted doesn’t mean that one is not valuable. We are better together.







# 2021 DIVERSITY FOCUS TRAINING

*Our Community! Our Future!*



**CEOs, HR Professionals, Managers, Diversity/Leadership Teams,  
Business Owners, Young Professionals & Non-Profit Organizations**

*Increase Production & Profitability Through Diversity Focused Training...*

**Save the Date for the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Diversity Focus Training & Luncheon**

**THEME:** EDI 3.0 (Issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

**WHEN:** THURSDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2021

**TIME:** 9 am – 4 pm

**WHERE:** Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing & Technology  
1951 Pisgah Road, Florence SC 29501

Hosted at:



Sponsors:



This is a training and networking opportunity to learn more about fostering diversity and inclusion in our communities, schools, and workplaces in order to increase productivity and profitability.

Knowledge is Power; we can never get enough of it.



More information to come. If any questions call (843) 413-2743 / (843) 669-5929 or email: [dmmadworks@aol.com](mailto:dmmadworks@aol.com)

*Increase Production & Profitability Through Diversity Focused Training*





Honda Leadership Advancement Mentoring Program

No one knows where the next big idea will come from.

At Honda, we believe innovation is born of inclusive workplaces where everyone is granted the freedom to explore the power of dreams.

**Honda is a proud supporter of Diversity Works.**

**HONDA**  
The Power of Dreams

[hondaofsouthcarolina.com](http://hondaofsouthcarolina.com)

**INCLUSION.** It's in all of us.

**THE LAW OFFICES OF  
LINWARD C.  
EDWARDS II  
LLC**

821 W. Evans Street  
Florence, SC 29501  
Fax: (843) 536-0715  
[Linward@LEdwardslaw.com](mailto:Linward@LEdwardslaw.com)  
[www.LEdwardsLaw.com](http://www.LEdwardsLaw.com)

*SERIOUS PROBLEMS REQUIRE A SERIOUS ATTORNEY*

**Criminal Defense • Auto Accidents • Family Law • DUI / Traffic**

**CALL NOW (843) 410-9605**



# UNITED WAY: DEDICATED TO MAKING A LOCAL IMPACT Submitted by staff



When many people think of the United Way of Florence County, they think of a big, corporate organization. Although part of a larger, overhead organization, United Way of Florence County

is independently governed by a local volunteer board and operates on a community level to best meet the needs of those in Florence County. Through partnerships with local agencies, companies and volunteers, United Way of Florence County continues to focus on touching the lives of those in our community. Each one of our partners plays a unique and crucial role in serving six different social sectors: education, youth, health, special needs, financial stability and emergency service.

So far this year, agencies and programs funded through United Way of Florence County have served over 20,000 people. United Way provides resources and funds necessary to our 22 partner agencies that provide services that improve the quality of life for all individuals in our community.

In the education sector, United Way of Florence County funds six different agencies to ensure people in our community have the resources and opportunities to succeed. "The funding we receive through the United Way helps us purchase literature, keep our doors open to students and maintain subscriptions to online resources. Without the United Way's funding, these things could be in jeopardy," stated Christina Lawson, executive director of the Florence Area Literacy Council.

In the emergency and financial stability sector, Lighthouse Ministries, The Salvation Army and The American Red Cross all work to provide stability in times of distress. "United Way of Florence County has financially supported our Ministry Aid Program (providing basic needs) and our Ramp Program. Our partnership with United Way is vital in our being able to continue to serve Florence County families. Through this partnership, we can make a larger impact in the lives of families we serve. Partnering with United Way also makes the services we offer more accessible for those seeking assistance," stated Cecilia Meggs, executive director of Lighthouse Ministries.

The Chrysalis Center, one of our five partners in the special services sector, is an extended-term residential treatment facility for women battling drug and substance abuse issues and their children.

"As a partnering agency with the United Way of Florence County, we receive financial assistance to ensure the needs of the women are met, regardless of their financial status. Two of our greatest challenges are dealing with rising food cost and providing adequate exercise for the women. Through United Way funding, we can purchase much healthier food options for the women and their children as well as providing on-site educational courses weekly by a certified nutritionist on menu planning and nutritional care. These skills are then incorporated into the women's overall treatment plans and become an integral part

of their recovery," stated Robin Murphy, executive director of the Chrysalis Center.

She went on to say, "These resources are vital in helping the women to focus on developing healthier lifestyles for themselves as well as during their pregnancy. In fact, our United Way partnership, and those that support the local campaign were a key element in 14 healthy and drug-free babies being born to mothers residing at the Chrysalis Center this past year."

By working together, we can accomplish far more than any of us could on our own. As United Way of Florence County continues to carry out its mission, it encourages everyone to LIVE, GIVE, and HELP LOCAL. If you or anyone you know is interested in learning more, giving a donation or getting involved, please contact the United Way office at 843-662-2407 or email at [uwfloinfo@uwflorenc.org](mailto:uwfloinfo@uwflorenc.org).



RDE provides broad-based engineering design services. The firm provides complete structural engineering services including structural design, structural evaluations, seismic risk assessments and construction administration.

The firm has experience in a wide range of facilities including:

- Office Buildings
- Shopping Centers
- Commercial Buildings
- Churches
- Medical Buildings
- Public Schools
- Private Residences
- Seismic Retrofits
- Public & Institutional Buildings
- Apartments
- Retirement Centers
- Public infrastructure

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

181 E Evans Street,  
Florence, SC 29506 843 536 0896

**Robert Davis**  
**ENGINEERING, LLC**

## United Way of Florence County

### Partner Agencies





# MCCALL FARMS, ARMY PARTNERSHIP

Submitted by McCall Farms



Photo'd to the right, on behalf of McCall Farms, is Thomas Hunter, co-president. To the left, on behalf of the Army, is Florence Army Recruiting Commander Captain Patrick Gregg.

**EFFINGHAM** – McCall Farms in Effingham entered an agreement with the United States Army as the first business in the Pee Dee to participate in the U.S. Army Partnership for Youth Success (PaYS Program). A signing ceremony was held, and an oath of enlistment ceremony was held for four new PaYS future soldiers.

Signing the agreement on behalf of McCall Farms was Thomas Hunter, co-president, and signing for the Army was Florence Army recruiting commander Captain Patrick Gregg. Gregg also administered the oath for the four PaYS future soldiers.

According to its website, the U.S. Army PaYS Program is an enlistment option available to regular Army and Army Reserve soldiers. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets enroll and select their PaYS partners prior to graduation and commissioning.

The PaYS Program guarantees soldiers and ROTC cadets enrolled in the program a job interview with at least two potential employers after leaving the Army. They must match the job skills associated with the military occupational specialty (MOS) selected.

The Army partners with employers like McCall Farms as an incentive to attract men and women to serve in the Army by helping them have access in finding potential jobs when they get out of service. The business partners have potential employees who are trained in many areas and skills.

As part of the program, the PaYS partners agree to interview the soldier for a selected position, providing that the soldier receives an honorable discharge after one enlistment, is otherwise qualified and a job vacancy exists.

Darryl Davids, vice president of human resources at McCall Farms, said soldiers will be granted interviews if their MOS match their openings. He said McCall Farms is excited to enter this partnership and that there is currently a shortage of workers in most areas of their operation. Davids added that the Army provides veterans with many of the skill sets required to do the jobs available at McCall Farms, from forklift operators to maintenance specialists. He said they want these veterans to become a part of the McCall family.

“We are very excited about this partnership,” Davids said. “We support our troops.”

He said veterans make fantastic employees for their safety training, work ethics, their ability to be promoted and their company loyalty, and veterans are some of the first employees to work and the last to leave.

At the presentation, Hunter said the company is looking forward to deepening its relationship with veterans in the community. He also said they already employ more than 200 veterans, and this will be a mutually beneficial partnership for McCall Farms and the Army.



# TOGETHER



# WE CAN!

FAMILY OWNED  USA GROWN

McCall Farms, is a family-owned company in Effingham, SC. We have been harvesting a wide range of fresh vegetables for over 180 years. Most of our produce is locally grown by generations of proud South Carolina farmers. But the flavor of our Real Southern Style cooking is savored beyond the south, to every region of the country. And our offerings continue to grow. Our brands include Margaret Holmes, Glory, Peanut Patch, Allens, Veg-All, Popeye Spinach and Bruce's.

Come Grow With Us! **Now Hiring for All Shifts** – Laborers – Machine Operators – Forklift Drivers – Clerks - Mechanics & more. For employment opportunities visit [McCallFarms.com](http://McCallFarms.com), or call us at 843.662.2223. We offer benefits including: paid time off, medical insurance, healthcare savings or reimbursement accounts, 401-K, education assistance and flexible schedules in some areas.





CALIFORNIA • TEXAS • SOUTH CAROLINA

Ruiz Foods has a variety of positions available at our Florence, South Carolina facility including:

PACKAGING  
PRODUCTION  
PROCESSING  
PRE-BATCH  
BAKERY  
SANITATION  
MAINTENANCE

— *All Shifts Available* —

Offering excellent medical benefits, life insurance, dental and vision coverage, paid holidays, 401k ... and more.

Send resumes to: [florencejobs@ruizfoods.com](mailto:florencejobs@ruizfoods.com)

Here to help  
life go right.™



State Farm

## HELPFUL CAR INSURANCE TIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Submitted by State Farm Insurance, Starlee Alexander Agency



When your child goes away to a college and leaves his or her car behind, there are options to lower your insurance premiums while he or she is away.

You have plenty of big things to worry about with

your child heading off to college—room and board, textbook purchases and the frequency of late-night pizza orders—so you probably haven't done much thinking about the effect on your auto insurance. But learning how your auto insurance works when your child attends a university or college away from home is an important item to consider.

### How does car insurance work when your child goes away to school?

In most cases, you need to notify your auto insurance company about your child leaving for school, even if you are leaving your car at home. Why?

College, university and trade school students are typically covered under their parents' car insurance, as long as they live at the same address as their parents when not at school. Review your specific policy to see if your child is covered. You might qualify for lower auto insurance rates and discounts.

Rates may change if your child is driving the car at school rather than leaving it back at home. If your child is in college, or heading off to school soon, get in touch with Starlee Alexander, State Farm insurance agent, @starlee@starleealexander.com today.

There when things go wrong.  
Here to help life go right.™



Starlee B. Alexander  
Owner/Agent

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR  
STATE FARM IS THERE.®

2027 S. Irby Street  
Florence, South Carolina 29505  
(843) 662-4164 • Fax (843) 665-7373  
[www.starleealexander.com](http://www.starleealexander.com)



KEEP  
CALM  
IT'S JAKE  
FROM  
STATE FARM

DIVERSITY

Makes Us

STRONGER



RESPECT WORKS HERE





# **JOBS IN THE PEE DEE!!!**

**SPHERION IS CURRENTLY HIRING FOR:**

- Hospitality
- Admin
- Warehouse
- Quality inspecting
- Assembly
- Housekeeping attendants
- Machine operating
- Forklift
- Customer service
- Wire techs

**SCAN WITH YOUR  
PHONE CAMERA  
TO GET STARTED**



**Spherion Florence**

843-664-0050

[spherion.com/florence](https://spherion.com/florence)

**Spherion Conway**

843-438-3887

[spherion.com/conway](https://spherion.com/conway)





# FINKLEA, HENDRICK & BLAKE, LLC

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS AT LAW

2254 E. HWY 76 - MARION, SC 29571

814 W. EVANS STREET - FLORENCE, SC 29501

PHONE 317-4900 • FAX 317-4910

101 S. MAIN STREET - HEMINGWAY, SC 29554

### REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

- Purchase/Refinance
- Equity Line/2nd Mortgage
- Investment/Commercial
- Reverse Mortgage
- 1031 Exchange
- Mobile Homes
- Wills/Probate

### FAMILY LAW

- Divorce
- Custody Disputes
- Child Support

### CRIMINAL LAW

### SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY



CHARLIE J. BLAKE, JR. ATTORNEY    WILLIAM J. EDWARDS ATTORNEY    J. GREG HENDRICK ATTORNEY    GARY I. FINKLEA ATTORNEY    SUSAN C. MCGILL ATTORNEY    PATRICK B. FORD ATTORNEY

### CIVIL LITIGATION

- Contract Disputes - Fraud
- Insurance Claims
- Boundary Lines/Land Disputes
- Quiet Title Actions
- Construction Defects
- Mechanic's Lien
- Foreclosure/Collection
- Consumer Law

### PERSONAL INJURY

- Automobile Accidents
- Wrongful Death
- Workers' Compensation
- Dog Bites
- Slip and Fall
- Malpractice
- Insurance Claims

*Handling a full range of legal services in a timely manner with proficiency and professionalism.*

Finklealaw.com

Hablamos Español



## SMART WAYS TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE

*Submitted by Abby Wolfe, the Muse*



Personal websites are a great place to showcase who you are and what you do, whether you're simply sharing your resume or uploading an entire portfolio. They can also be incredibly helpful in landing new opportunities and growing your career.

### Optimize Your Site for Search

You may have heard the phrase "search engine optimization," or SEO. Broadly speaking, this refers to fine-tuning your website so that search engines (mainly Google) can crawl all the pages and understand what they're about. The goal is to get your site popping up on page one when someone inputs a relevant search term—which drives more traffic.

This may sound a bit intimidating. But thankfully, there are plenty of places to learn about SEO. For example, Squarespace provides a guide to improving your SEO to help you understand some of the ways you can make your site more visible to search engines plus an SEO checklist you can reference when building your site.

A few simple ways you can boost your site's visibility:

• **Structure your content with headings.** Split up blocks of texts with relevant headings. This makes it easier for both readers and

search engines to understand the most important points on every page.

• **Add tags and categories.** Categories are a great way to organize content by topic or type, and tags operate like hashtags—they help people find specific things you mentioned more easily and help search engines understand the topics on your site.

• **Include a site description.** This is a small block of text that usually appears below your site title in search results. It tells readers—and yep, search engines—what your site is all about.

• **List your geographical location.** This is especially helpful if you only provide services in a specific area.

• **Promote it as much as you can.** You've got to promote your site to real live people too. Try doing the following to help drive your traffic to the next level.

• **Put the URL on all of your profiles.** Any social media profiles you have, your LinkedIn, you name it...it's all about exposure, even if a lot of that exposure is passive.

• **Include it in your personal email signature.** Think about it—how many emails do you send in a week? (That said, I hope it goes without saying that you should probably leave the URL for your side hustle out of your official work email signature.)

• **Announce it.** Share your site with your Instagram followers, tweet it to the world and send an email to your personal and professional connections. And while you may not want to email people about it more than once, you can plug your site on social media far more frequently—say once a week or a few times a month.

• **Leverage social sharing.** Many website builders offer something called social sharing. With this tool, you can link your site to your social media accounts. Every time you publish new content, it's pushed to your feeds for your friends and followers to see. All you do is set it up once and voilà.



# 4 SPIRITUAL DOORS TO CLOSE ON THE ENEMY by Robin Lewis



## HEMINGWAY - Is It Spiritual Warfare?

In my late thirties, I experienced something that I hoped would never happen again. I heard a deep, wicked voice come out of the mouth of a person I knew well. It was not their voice! I went to my pastor the next day to ask how to pray. He said, "Robin, you can plead the blood of Jesus, but I don't know anything else to tell you. I've not had any experience with something like this."

Well, that just didn't set right with me. I was determined to learn about spiritual warfare and how to fight to win! I found a mentor, bought books and took courses. The Lord began showing me where I was open to attack. I followed advice and scripture and began to experience a sense of increasing freedom in my life!

Galatians 5:1 says, "At last we have freedom, for Christ has set us free! We must always cherish this truth and firmly refuse to go back into the bondage of our past."

You have an enemy. He became your adversary the moment you chose to believe in Jesus Christ as your savior. Satan hates all the children of God and seeks to bring disaster into all Christian lives.

Most believers would like to pretend Satan doesn't exist. He's fine with that because then he can plot to ravage our lives, and we remain unaware of the real reason things aren't going well.

Pretending and ignoring him doesn't stop him from trying to "steal, kill, and destroy" in your life (John 10:10). 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."

The good news is that Jesus' triumph over him at the cross gives us authority. We just have to learn how to use it. Ephesians 6:11 says we are "not to be ignorant of the schemes of the evil one." Jesus said, "I have given you all authority to trample over serpents, scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:19).

## 4 Spiritual Doors You Need To Close On The Enemy

Our negative thoughts, attitudes, words and actions can open spiritual doors that give the enemy access to our life. Here's a brief look at four common doors that we need to keep closed... and locked!

### DOOR #1 – Fear, Unbelief & Doubt



These three weapons, some of the enemy's favorites, can be emotions or actual spirits that assail believers with negativity to tempt us to not trust in what God has said.

My favorite verse about fear is 2 Timothy 1:7 that reads, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of

power, love, and a sound mind." Fear is not from God nor is it of God. His word says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Unbelief is another weapon of the enemy. Unbelief means we're having a hard time believing what God has said. The enemy wants to get you focused on doubting God, but God is

always faithful. Always.

### DOOR #2 – Unforgiveness



Have you found it difficult to forgive others for things done to you? How about forgiving yourself? Unforgiveness opens a door to the enemy to keep you hooked into what happened and bound with pain that will grow

into bitterness if it's not quickly uprooted.

Ephesians 4: 31-32 says, "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Jesus stressed in his teaching the important of walking in forgiveness. It truly is the key to the healing we all need.

### DOOR #3 – Complaining, Negativity & Discontent



When we slip into complaining about our problems and speaking negative words over our lives, we are actually disagreeing with what God says about us. James 5:9 teaches, "Do not complain against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged," and Philippians

2:14 says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing."

When we allow our thoughts and words to shift into the negative, we are throwing open a door to the enemy to bring even more of what we're complaining about! 1 Timothy 6:6 says, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." This is a door to close and keep closed!

### DOOR #4 – Idolatry

I'm not talking about actual physical idols here, although those are quite dangerous spiritually. I'm talking about making other things more important than God is to you. What are you focused on most often? Is it your finances or job or someone you're in a relationship with?

Idolatry can be a subtle, creeping influence that leads us away from our primary relationship with God. Paul warns believers in Colossians 3:5, to... "kill off everything connected with doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God."

### Closing The Doors

There's an amazingly simple way to close these doors.



Since God is always for you and always loves you unconditionally, you can simply go to him and ask for his help. He is always ready to forgive and strengthen you.

Father God, thank you for always loving me, even when I make a mistake. Please forgive me for allowing (fear,

unforgiveness, complaining, negativity, idolatry, etc.) to have a place in my life. I ask for your help in being strengthened against these harmful mindsets. I now close the doors on the enemy and command every spirit of darkness to be gone in the name of Jesus. Fill me with your spirit, renew my mind and help me grow more deeply in you. In Jesus' name, amen.

Robin Lewis is a certified spiritual strategist coach. To learn more about how to discover and defeat the enemy in your own life, book a free consultation call with Robin at [www.RobinLewisLife.com](http://www.RobinLewisLife.com).

# DCSD'S HURSEY TO RETIRE AFTER NEARLY FIVE DECADES

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Dr. B. Jane Hursey

**DARLINGTON**— Sixty-four years after she entered the Darlington County School District (DCSD) as a student and 47 years since she began teaching there, Dr. B. Jane Hursey will retire.

She has spent a lifetime guiding and growing students and adults across a career that spanned from South Carolina to Tennessee, Virginia to Texas, and back again. Hursey has touched countless lives

with her kind heart, fierce faith and grand intellect.

Oscillating between tears and joy, she sat in her office, searching for the words to describe her lifelong pursuit of promoting education. “God surrounded me with so many wonderful people--committed teachers, custodians and secretaries—that often made me look good and taught me so much,” she said. “It was more than just a job. It was always a family. My career feels like a long string of callings and preparations from God. It is a very privileged platform to work in education.”

Hursey spent the past 14 years as the director and assistant superintendent of Human Resources for DCSD. Her office, tucked away in the corner of her department, feels less like an office and entirely like an old, cozy den. Photos of students, parents, colleagues and friends from far and wide, young and old, stamp nearly every inch of the walls (and windows). There are handwritten letters and typed responses alongside comical figurines and inspirational quotes dangling from every corner and desk. Of course, there’s a mountain of paperwork one would expect in the workspace of a human resources executive, but that’s an afterthought to a visitor.

She tried to describe some of the lessons her career impressed upon her. “Treat people the way you would want to be treated. That is the best philosophy when you hold a position in a school district,” Hursey said. “If you lose sight of the relationship and the heart of a child, then you’ve missed the essence of effective education. We cannot raise a generation without heart because then it wouldn’t really matter what you put in their heads.”

In the fall of 1974, Spring Elementary School in Darlington hired Hursey as a fourth grade teacher. Spring Elementary no longer exists, but a few years later Hursey returned from Vanderbilt University, where she worked as a graduate assistant in the Department of Elementary Education, as a sixth grade teacher. In rapid succession, Hursey moved to St. John’s Elementary as the youngest assistant principal in the district and then back to Spring Elementary as acting principal. She eventually became principal at Spring Elementary and remained there until 1985.

From 1986 to 1988, she served as a graduate instructor in the University of Virginia’s Department of Curriculum and Instruction. She returned to Darlington for a year as a director of Elementary Education before trekking halfway across the country to Houston. She spent 14 years as the superintendent of Second Baptist School, a three-school system that serves pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.

In the fall of 2005, Hursey returned once again to DCSD as a grant administrator, albeit briefly. She quickly became the district’s interim personnel director and, eventually, the director of human resources before a title change to assistant superintendent

thereafter.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from Furman University and a Master of Science in school administration from the George Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University. Hursey earned her Doctor of Philosophy in education from the University of Virginia in 1989.

Her professional accomplishments are varied and extensive, such as the 2012 Darlington County Educator of the Year and the 2003 Texas Educator of the Year as selected by the Texas Association of Baptist Schools. She has been a member of Coker University’s Teacher Education Advisory Committee, the Pee Dee Education Center’s Regional Board of Directors and the Greater Darlington Chamber of Commerce’s Board of Directors.

Of course, no portrait of Barbara Jane Hursey would be complete without sketching in the immutable love and respect she holds for her parents, the late Edward and Christine Hursey, and her brother, Steven.

The granddaughter of a man who rode his horse to St. John’s as a student, Hursey will retire from DCSD at June’s conclusion. She began her career at Spring Elementary, and her replacement, Chuck Miller, traces his roots back to Spring too. He was a first grade student there when Hursey was principal.

“I have a deep and abiding affection for Darlington, this community and the people and children here,” she explained. “We are very fortunate to have such committed people here, and we are fortunate to have wonderfully gifted children here. There is nothing more wonderful than the journey to discover that gift in each and every child. My children will stay with me as long as I have breath, and even then, I believe love is eternal. So, I will look for them in heaven.”

## DARLINGTON BOARD OF ED. APPROVES 20% RAISE

**DARLINGTON**— The Darlington County Board of Education reinforced its goal to keep pay rates highly competitive across the board for employees. At the recommendation of Darlington County School District (DCSD) Superintendent Dr. Tim Newman, at its June meeting the Board approved a 20 percent pay hike for all bus drivers, custodians and food service workers in the district.

Newman said it is vital to show our current employees and potential future employees that the district is committed to taking care of its staff. “These classified staff are some of the hardest working employees we have,” he said. “They interact directly with our students and staff every single day. Many of them are the first and last faces our children interact with on a school day. I applaud the Board for approving this pay increase, and DCSD appreciates all of our employees.”

The raise came included in the proposed 2021-22 operating budget that district administration presented to the Board for second reading. With the 20 percent increase, the starting hourly rates in DCSD for those positions are as follows:

- Bus Drivers - \$14.38
- Custodians - \$12.85
- Food Service - \$12.60





# TEN DARLINGTON HIGH SENIORS RECEIVE ASSOCIATE DEGREES FROM FDTC

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



This group of Early College Honor Program graduates marks the sixth such class from DHS.

**DARLINGTON** – After navigating years of college courses alongside their high school courses, as well as an international pandemic that brought their daily lives to a halt, 10 Darlington High School (DHS) seniors recently received two-year college degrees from Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC).

These students had their college degrees a month before DHS Principal Cortney Gehrke conferred their high school diplomas. “Not only did these 10 graduates overcome the pandemic interrupting their normal high school classes, but they persevered through their college courses as well,” Gehrke said. “These students are a shining example of perseverance, and we are so proud of their success.”

The students each received either an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Science from FDTC during a commencement ceremony held at the Florence Center. The graduates were:

- Jayla Eden Back, Associate of Arts
- Tanner Grace Berry, Associate of Arts
- Kimberlee Madisyn Britt, Associate of Arts
- Areyana Nicole Henry, Associate of Arts
- Dana Makayla Joe, Associate of Arts

- Jaimesha Alise McKenzie, Associate of Arts
- Jalyse Mo’Nae Harrell, Associate of Science
- Tanner Brooks King, Associate of Science
- Mckayla Leigh Miller, Associate of Science
- Darian Braxton Smith, Associate of Science

Most of these students began taking their college courses during the spring semester of the freshman year, according to Debra Wallace, an English teacher and the Early College Honors Program coordinator at DHS. “They have quite literally been in college for four years,” Wallace said. “Some of these students even chose to take two classes this past summer in order to get ahead and not have such an arduous senior year.”

Making the journey towards an early college degree even tougher, the students took nearly half of their college courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. They took courses both through FDTC and Francis Marion University.

Additionally, the students have continued participating on a variety of athletic teams and school clubs while also completing numerous community service hours and holding part-time jobs.

Two of the degree earners, Jaimesha McKenzie and Darian Smith, also became completers at the Darlington County Institute of Technology. McKenzie passed her certified nursing aide exam and became a Health Science completer. Smith became an Automotive Technology completer and earned his S/P2 Auto Technology Certification and his ASE Maintenance and Light Repair certification.

All 10 of the students have chosen to continue their academic careers at colleges and universities following high school graduation.

This group of Early College Honor Program graduates marks the sixth such class from DHS.

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

- Highest paying school district in the Pee Dee.
- 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 academics and real-world opportunities.
- We are conveniently located between the beach and the mountains, a small town community with easy access to Columbia and Charlotte.



Lee County School District  
***Congratulations Class of 2021***  
**Lee Central High School**



**Valedictorian - L'Shaun Woods GPA: 4.77**

Scholarship Total Amount Earned: \$59,480

Central Carolina Associates of Arts Degree Awarded / LCHS Student Government Secretary / Top 5/ Beta Club / Academic Challenge Team / Marching Stallions/ Teacher Cadet/ Early Childhood CATE Completer/ Palmetto Girls State Participant/ Plans to attend Francis Marion University majoring in Early Childhood Education

**Salutatorian - Semaj Woods GPA: 4.61**

Scholarship Total Amount Earned: \$431,404

Central Carolina Early College Program Participant/ Student Body President/ Top 5/ Beta Club/ Emerging Leaders Board Member/ JROTC Superior Cadet/ First Aid/ OSHA General Industry Certification/ Health Science CATE Completer/ Palmetto Boys State Participant/ Plans to attend Clemson University majoring in Biochemistry



**Lee Central High School Top Five Honor Graduates**

Semaj Woods plans to attend Clemson University  
 L'Shaun Woods plans to attend Francis Marion University  
 Ce'onna Davis plans to attend Wingate University  
 Emmanuelle Cain plans to attend Methodist University  
 Tauzhane Spann plans to attend Francis Marion University



**Lee Central High School Early College Graduates  
Associate's Degree Recipients**

Tauzhane Spann plans to attend Francis Marion University  
 Ce'onna Davis plans to attend Wingate University  
 Ta'Kiyah Adams plans to attend Georgia State University  
 L'Shaun Woods plans to attend Francis Marion University  
 Omani Stadar plans to attend the University of SC (Columbia)

**115 Graduates   33 Life Scholarship Recipients   56 Honor Graduates**

**Total Earned in Scholarships: 3,673,968**

**5 Early College Graduates   71 CATE completers   12 Dual CATE Completers   34 CATE certifications**

Mr. Baron Turner, Principal  
 Lee Central High School

Mr. Bernard McDaniel, Interim Superintendent  
 Lee Central High School

**Lee County School District Board of Trustees**

Sylvia Scott, Chair • Queenie Boyd, Vice-Chair • Nathaniel Brunson, Secretary  
 Johnny McDuffie, Reggitt James, Lucretia Mack and Echo Belvin

**Lee County School District Superintendent**

Bernard McDaniel, Sr.



Lee County School District • 310 Roland Street, Bishopville, SC 29010 • (803) 484-532

**A learning community where students come first!**



# HGTC CULINARY STUDENT AWARDED TOURISM SCHOLARSHIP

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist



Left to right: Chef Geoff Blount, HGTC professor at the International Culinary Institute; Abigail “Abbey” Carter, 2020 Tourism Scholarship winner; and Jimmy Gray, Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, director of Government Affairs

**CONWAY** – Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is proud to announce that Abigail “Abbey” Carter, Baking and Pastry Arts student at the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach, is one of nine seniors from South Carolina colleges and universities selected for the 2020 Tourism Student Awards for outstanding academic achievement in

their culinary, hospitality and tourism studies.

“I feel so honored to be chosen as one of the recipients of the South Carolina Tourism Student Award. I want to thank the Travel and Tourism Coalition as well as my chef instructors at the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach. I am grateful to represent the College with this award,” said Carter, Baking and Pastry Arts student and scholarship recipient.

Sponsored by the South Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition, the Tourism Student Award recognizes the state’s outstanding, full-time students from college and university tourism programs across South Carolina. Every year, faculty at each college or university selects one student from their hospitality program for the award. Carter will receive a \$1,000 scholarship through the Fred Brinkman Memorial Fund.

“All of us at the International Culinary Institute take pride in our

program and celebrate students like Abbey Carter for their exemplary scholastic achievements and culinary studies,” said Joe Bonaparte, HGTC executive director of the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach. “We greatly appreciate the recognition the South Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition provides for our students who are motivated to exceed in their studies.”

“Abigail has always brought an enthusiasm for learning the art of pastry,” Chef Geoff Blount, HGTC chef professor. “What really makes a difference is that she shares her passion and enthusiasm with those around her daily to Bake the World a Better Place.”

To learn more about the program, visit [www.hgtc.edu/culinary](http://www.hgtc.edu/culinary), or contact Blount at 843-839-7002 or [Geoffrey.Blount@hgtc.edu](mailto:Geoffrey.Blount@hgtc.edu).

The International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach at Horry-Georgetown Technical College boasts a state-of-the-art facility at the heart of the Grand Strand. Located at 920 Crabtree Lane in Myrtle Beach, it offers associate degree and certificate programs, including the infamous associate degree in Baking and Pastry Arts. Internships and scholarships are available to qualifying students. Horry-Georgetown Technical College’s Culinary Arts programs are accredited by the American Culinary Federation Educational Institute, and graduates are eligible for ACF certification.

## About HGTC

HGTC offers college transfer and skilled associate degree programs in 70 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.



## JOIN OUR TEAM.

As Gators, we believe we’re at our strongest when we support and celebrate our similarities as well as our differences. That’s why diversity and inclusion are more than buzzwords at HGTC. It’s about communities and individuals—students, staff, and professors who combine their own unique identities and views by working together.

- Over 600 employees
- Employer of choice in Horry and Georgetown Counties
- Helping our community grow
- Competitive benefits package
- Three campus locations:

Conway Campus  
2050 Hwy. 501 East,  
Conway, SC

Grand Strand Campus  
743 Hemlock Avenue  
Myrtle Beach, SC

Georgetown Campus  
4003 South Fraser Street  
Georgetown, SC



[hgtc.edu](http://hgtc.edu) | 843.347.3186

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. Public Institution of Higher Education.





*Left to right: Tom Fox, chief deputy, Sheriff's Office, Sheriff's Foundation-Horry County president; Dr. Dan Wysong, HGTC assistant vice president for Academic Affairs and dean; Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore, HGTC president; Phillip Thompson, sheriff of Horry County; and Neyle Wilson, president & CEO of HGTC Foundation*

**CONWAY**— Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) hosted a press conference on June 22 at 10 a.m. to officially name the Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Laboratory in honor of the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County. In 2015, the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County partnered with Horry-Georgetown Technical College by establishing a \$30,000 endowed scholarship for the criminal justice program. Since that time, the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County has donated \$85,000 with a commitment of \$100,000 for the endowed scholarship by the end of this year.

"The formal naming of the criminal justice laboratory as the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County Crime Scene Investigation Laboratory pays homage to our many supporters and will serve as a reminder of our commitment to developing highly trained and educated law enforcement officers serving our citizens and community. We would like to thank our many generous donors over the last nine years who have partnered with the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County to support our efforts," said Phillip Thompson, Horry County sheriff.

The Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County is committed to a vision of the future that ensures quality, integrity, accountability and increased public awareness for the criminal justice field and the support of public safety officers. To achieve this mission, the Foundation provides annual scholarships to highly qualified applicants seeking a career in law enforcement or a criminal justice related field.

"We are fortunate that the Sheriff's Foundation of Horry County has been a supporter of HGTC and the Criminal Justice program for many years. We are immensely grateful for their continued commitment to the College and the Criminal Justice students in our community. Scholarships are an important financial resource to many HGTC students. A scholarship award is critical to a student who is struggling to pay for tuition or books and supplies. The donations made by the Sheriff's Foundation have helped and 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," said Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore, HGTC president.

HGTC recently announced an exciting new partnership with the SC Criminal Justice Academy that provides an alternate career pathway for entering the field of law enforcement. The program is designed to address



*Left to right: Robert Hucks, HGTC area commissioner; Tommy Branyon, HGTC Area Commission chairman; Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore, HGTC president; and Dr. Robert Farrar, HGTC area commissioner*

the state's workforce shortage and enhance the policing profession overall. With the aid of the Lottery Tuition Assistance program, Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERS) and the SC WINS Scholarship,

tuition for the new pathway will be mostly covered for participating students.

HGTC began offering the new Pre-Police Academy Training Certificate to the first class on June 21. This certificate is a four-course program and a great, new pathway to the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. The Police Pre-Academy Certificate degree will educate and train the next generation of law enforcement officers locally. This is the first step in providing stronger academic candidates, expediting the time for academy completion and reducing the bottleneck for entering the workforce.

"The original Pre-Academy training that started in 2019 was a coordinated effort with the Horry County Police Department and was highly successful. The training is the foundation of the new certificate program," said Dr. Dan Wysong, HGTC assistant vice president for Academic Affairs and dean for Public Service, Education, Business and Computer Technology.

For more information about the HGTC Criminal Justice Program, please contact Jeff Scott at 843-349-7140, Larry Muncey at 843-349-3648 or Dr. Dan Wysong at 843-349-5326.

## HGTC NURSING PROGRAM IS FAMILY TRADITION FOR DONEVANT FAMILY



*From left to right: Michael Donevant, father; Jennifer Michelle Pisaniello, HGTC graduate and daughter; and Sara Donevant, mother. Not pictured: son, Jonathan Michael Donevant*

**CONWAY**— Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) acknowledged the success of over 70 practical nursing (PN) and Associate in Applied Science in nursing (ADN) graduates during the spring pinning ceremony this year. Graduating from the HGTC ADN program was Jennifer Michelle Pisaniello. She is the third person in her

family to graduate with a nursing degree from HGTC. Her mother, Sara Donevant, PhD, RN, CCRN, is now employed at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing. Jennifer's brother, Jonathan Donevant, is now pursuing his Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) at Yale University.

"HGTC is preparing nursing graduates to enter the healthcare workforce to meet the growing needs of our community. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 'The U.S. is projected to experience a shortage of Registered Nurses (RNs) that is expected to intensify as Baby Boomers age and the need for health care grows.' This is especially true for South Carolina where seniors retire to enjoy the mild climate, low cost of living and beautiful coastal waterways," said Ann Daniels, HGTC dean of Health Sciences.

A well-qualified nursing staff is essential for high-quality healthcare. This ongoing need presents graduates of HGTC's nursing program with a wealth of employment opportunities and excellent earning potential.

Jennifer Pisaniello has accepted a position in the McLeod Health ICU department.

The Associate in Applied Science in nursing (ADN) degree prepares students for the challenges of modern healthcare. The classroom instruction that is provided in nursing concepts, coupled with laboratory practice and clinical experience at area healthcare providers, ensures that students are well-qualified to enter the field. Graduates of the program are prepared to take the National Council Licensure Examination-RN (NCLEX-RN). Upon satisfactory completion of the examination and licensure by a State Board of Nursing, graduates are titled registered nurse (RN) and ready to respond to the changing healthcare demands in a variety of settings.

The HGTC Associate in Nursing program located on the Grand Strand and Georgetown Campuses is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.





# ACCELERATED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS

ONLINE • ORANGEBURG • FORT JACKSON (COLUMBIA, SC)



**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**ON-CAMPUS AND ONLINE**

(803) 535-5896/5573

civey@claflin.edu

conedu@claflin.edu

**RN TO BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING**

**100% ONLINE**

(803) 535-5843

nursing@claflin.edu

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

**ON-CAMPUS AND ONLINE**

(803) 535-5573

conedu@claflin.edu

**BACHELOR OF ARTS IN PSYCHOLOGY**

**100% ONLINE**

(803) 535-5573

conedu@claflin.edu

**MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)**

**ON-CAMPUS AND ONLINE**

(803) 535-5200

mba@claflin.edu

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**100% ONLINE**

(803) 535-5896/5573

civey@claflin.edu

conedu@claflin.edu

**MASTER OF EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION (M.ED.)**

**100% ONLINE**

(803) 535-5436

rspeight@claflin.edu

mastersed@claflin.edu

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOTECHNOLOGY**

**ON-CAMPUS, 2-YEAR PROGRAM**

(803) 535-5459/5405

gmccutcheon@claflin.edu

ncherry@claflin.edu

**THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING STUDIES**

(803) 535-5573 conedu@claflin.edu

**CLAFLIN ONLINE**

(803) 535-5695 anparker@claflin.edu

conedu@claflin.edu

**Earn Your Bachelor's or Master's Degree in as little as 12-18 Months!**

**Apply Now!**

[www.claflin.edu/continuing-education](http://www.claflin.edu/continuing-education) | [www.claflin.edu/academics/graduate-programs](http://www.claflin.edu/academics/graduate-programs) | [www.claflin.edu/cuonline](http://www.claflin.edu/cuonline)

## CLAFLIN, AFRICA UNIVERSITY ADD BIOTECHNOLOGY DEGREE



*Pictured from left to right: Rev. James Salley, vice chancellor for institutional advancement, Africa University; Dr. Verlie Tisdale, interim vice provost, Claflin University; Professor Peter Mageto, acting vice chancellor, Africa University; President Dwaun J. Warmack, Claflin University; and Dr. Karl Wright, provost, Claflin University.*

**ORANGEBURG**—When Claflin University announced its partnership with Africa University in March 2017, the agreement reaffirmed the University's commitment to global engagement through its transformative academic programs and world-class faculty. The partnership is largely based on a faculty/student exchange program, which is consistent with Claflin's vision to "develop a diverse and inclusive community of globally engaged visionary leaders."

Claflin administrators and Professor Peter Mageto, acting vice chancellor at Africa University, recently met in Orangeburg to review the status of an exciting new component of their historic collaboration—Claflin's plan to offer classes online to Africa University students who want to earn a Master of Science degree in biotechnology. The program is expected to begin in 2022.

"The master's in biotechnology program will significantly enhance our historic partnership with Africa University," said Claflin President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack. "A master's degree in biotechnology will increase employment opportunities considerably for their students in the global workforce. The program also expands Claflin's brand throughout the continent. This will help us recruit talented diverse scholars, faculty and

researchers from Africa and other countries."

"We see biotechnology as a program that will strengthen our relationship with Claflin," said Mageto. "We also see this as an opportunity to develop an international program that will attract students from beyond our borders and impact how governments will begin to think about biotechnology and climate change."

Africa University, located in Zimbabwe, is the first and only fully accredited institution of higher learning established on the African continent by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church. The General Conference unanimously approved the founding of Africa University in 1988.

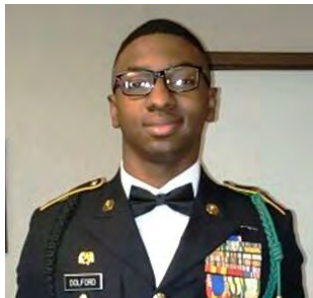
The official groundbreaking ceremony was held in April 1991. In January 1992, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, issued the University Charter by official proclamation, making the institution the first recognized private university in Zimbabwe. Both Claflin and Africa University are affiliated with The United Methodist Church.

Although COVID-19 has interrupted the partnership's faculty/student exchange initiative, Africa University and Claflin administrators continued their strategic planning through virtual communications platforms. Much like colleges and universities throughout the U.S., Africa University's academic programs transitioned to 100 percent online during the pandemic. The school's proficiency in virtual instruction and its outstanding academic programs contributed to a dramatic increase in online enrollment. According to Mageto, enrollment grew from 2,400 to 3,000 students.

"We see ourselves as a learning, teaching and research center that benefits tremendously from this partnership," said Mageto. "Everyone is very excited about the M.S. in biotechnology program. The enrollment numbers will be shocking because the program is both historic and unique."

# ANCHORS AWAY: HARTSVILLE STUDENT APPOINTED TO NAVAL ACADEMY

Story Credit Matthew Christian, Morning News



Keyshawn Dolford, a senior at Hartsville High School, has been appointed to the Naval Academy. Contributed Photo

**HARTSVILLE**— A senior set to graduate from Hartsville High School will be trading in the red and white of his high school for the blue and gold of the United States Naval Academy. Keyshawn Dolford was appointed to the academy by U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham.

“I made the decision to join the military roughly around eight years old,” Dolford said. “How I was going to approach that was always up in the air.”

He said he was inspired to attend the academy by a visit during his sophomore year from a former Hartsville student who attended the Naval Academy. “Roughly two years ago, we had a Midshipman [students are known as Midshipmen at the academy] and a former student from Hartsville High School come to talk to us about the Naval Academy and the admissions process,” Dolford said. “He gave us his personal training and his insight, and it pretty much sold me on the Naval Academy.”

Dolford said he was sold because he could get a “top of the line” engineering education at a school with NCAA Division I athletics while still being able to get to his end goal of serving his country in the military.

In 2021, U.S. News and World Report ranked the Naval Academy as No. 6 in National Liberal Arts Colleges, No. 43 in Best Undergraduate

Teaching, No. 1 in Top Public Schools, No. 5 in Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs, No. 5 in Aerospace /Aeronautical/Astronautical, No. 10 in Electrical/Electronic/Communications and No. 9 in Mechanical Engineering.

Dolford said that in Junior Reserve Officers Training Class [JROTC], he had learned that he could attend college for free, serve his country and be set up for civilian jobs when he retired by attending a service academy.

Dolford called the application process strenuous and stressful. In addition to a recommendation from a member of Congress, an applicant needs recommendations from math and English teachers, needs to write a few essays and needs to participate in interviews.

“It was a long process, but it was pretty rewarding once you get to the end goal, which is earning an appointment to the Naval Academy,” he said.

Dolford played football [he said he played defensive end, linebacker and tight end], ran in the 4x100 relay and threw the shotput, javelin and discus and was a member of the Chinese Club, the National Honor Society, the Beta Club and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He also participated in community service.

He said he also served as delegate to Palmetto Boys State and was set to attend a summer program at the Naval Academy last year, but the program was canceled due to COVID-19.

Dolford said he is looking at participating in football, track and field in the academy. He is the proud son of Regina and Kenny Dolford.

## PEER TEACHING AT CLAFLIN Submitted by Claflin University



**ORANGEBURG**-Dr. Nick Panasik, associate professor in the biology and chemistry departments at Claflin University, was among the presenters at “Academic Integrity in the Online Space,” a virtual conference on April 16, sponsored by CourseHero. Panasik’s presentation focused on peer teaching and how it is used at Claflin to improve teaching, learning and assessment. CourseHero is an online

learning platform that offers over 40 million course-specific study resources created by and for students and educators, as well as 24/7 tutor help.

“Peer teaching at Claflin has become an effective way to increase student engagement while improving learning,” said Panasik, who in 2012 won the prestigious Early CAREER Award presented by the National Science Foundation. The program funded early attempts at changing pedagogy using peer teaching.

“Over the course of the week, a professor will teach a topic, and at the end of the week, students will record themselves teaching that topic in their own words,” Panasik said. “The professor then records himself watching the video and responds in real time to the points the student makes, pausing to compliment them on what they did right and providing advice on points they didn’t understand. If the student did a great job, the video is posted to the rest of the class. The results have been amazing.”

Panasik said the technique has resulted in his students improving their exam scores by 12 percent. He also said that 90 percent of his students believe peer teaching makes them feel they have as much or more one-on-one time with the professor, compared to the normal on-ground class.

“Every student gets face time with the teacher and a weekly one-on-one explanation of their understanding of their assignments,” Panasik said. “The technique was enhanced by utilizing the Flipgrid online platform that was developed as faculty at universities transitioned to online teaching during COVID-19.” Flipgrid is a free video discussion platform from

Microsoft that helps educators see and hear from every student in class.

“Students now feel more comfortable explaining scientific concepts,” he said. “Teaching their peers appears to be a great motivation for students with many saying their understanding of the material really increases when they hear their peers explain it in addition to the teacher. Moreover, the connection with the teacher increases as well.”

**Pee Dee  
Medical  
Professionals  
Association, Inc.**

**2021 HEALTH  
SCHOLAR  
RECIPIENTS**

**Valerian Bruce** | West Florence High School | **Junior**  
**Na’Kia Hannah** | Marion High School | **Junior**  
**Tracy Jackson** | Trinity Collegiate School | **Senior**  
**Jaya Peterkin** | South Florence High School | **Senior**

**Thank you to our 2021 Community Judges:**

Dr. Annie Ruth Grant, Dean of Nursing, Florence Darlington Tech  
Shaneka Johnson, Educator, West Florence High School  
Marcus McGirt, Director, Save Our Youth Movement Program



# INTRODUCING... Bright by Text

to sign up, TEXT

SCKIDS

to 274448

Bright by Text is a FREE program for parents and caregivers that sends tips and resources promoting child development, targeted to a child's age from prenatal to 8 years old, right to their cell phone.

Messages Include	Content Sources	Links To More Resources
<p>Research based messages help parents and caregivers feel prepared, and local messages keep them informed.</p>		<p>Each text message has a link to a landing page with more information, including short modeling videos, related books, games and other resources.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="858 646 1024 1012"> <p>text message</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1082 646 1248 1012"> <p>landing page</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1311 646 1477 1012"> <p>linked content</p> </div> </div>

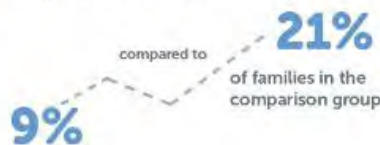
## Does it have an impact?

A third party evaluation conducted using surveys and focus groups from parents and caregivers has determined that Bright by Three's curriculum has positive effects on parent and caregiver attitudes and behaviors, as well as children's academic performance.

92% of parents are more confident as a result of receiving Bright by Text messages.

### INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Percent of families overwhelmed with parental responsibility



### HIGH RETENTION RATE

Bright by Text has a **95%** retention rate after 30 days.



Parents and caregivers love the age-appropriate, actionable content Bright by Text provides.

### INCREASED DEVELOPMENT

Bright by Text families have **children** who are on average



**ahead** of a comparison group in language development.

95% of children whose caregiver subscribes to Bright by Text are developmentally on track or above average in their language development.

[brightbytext.org](http://brightbytext.org)

completed by Marzano Research Laboratory in Sept, 2018.

# THE SCHOOL FOUNDATION PARTNERS WITH BRIGHT BY TEXT

## TO DELIVER DEVELOPMENTAL TIPS DIRECTLY TO PARENTS FOR FREE

Submitted by Debbie Hyler, Executive Director

The School Foundation has teamed up with Bright by Text to bring the program to the Florence community. The program, already offered in Colorado, New York, California and other communities around the nation, offers parents and caregivers expert tips and resources for children prenatal to age eight right at their fingertips.

Did you know that in the early years a child's brain is developing at a faster rate than it will at any other point in his or her life? The interactions that a child has with adult caregivers at this stage of life set the foundation on which all later learning, behavior and health depends.

"A child's brain doubles in size the first year and is nearly full grown by age five," stated Catherine Sanderson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, NBPT-Literacy, with Florence 1 Schools. "During this early brain development period, important connections are made that will impact children for the remainder of their lives. With this knowledge, it makes sense for parents of young children to have expert information on brain development at their fingertips. Bright by Text brings information to parents in a manner that is easy for them to manage in their busy lives—quick and effective text messages. I am overjoyed that The School Foundation is providing Bright by Text for parents with children 0-8 years of age in the Florence 1 Schools attendance zone."

Brittany Smith, MAT, F1S REACH program stated, "As a teacher and first time mom, I have really appreciated Bright by Text. I love how the texts are personalized for the age of my child, and they are sent right to my phone regularly. Bright by Text has sent so many tips for reaching developmental milestones and updates on how my child is growing and changing."

Bright by Text helps parents and caregivers make the most out of these interactions by illustrating fun and easy activities, providing positive parenting tips and resources, tips for aiding a child's physical development and much more. The program is proven to build nurturing caregiver-child relationships and positively impact a child's healthy development and school readiness.

In addition to expert content, Bright by Text includes messages about events and resources specific to the Florence community, like free museum days, health clinics and preschool open enrollment periods.

To sign up, parents and caregivers with children under eight can text the word **SCKIDS** to **274448**. They will receive two to five text messages per week, and each message includes a link to a landing page with more detail, short modeling videos and links to related resources. **For additional information, visit [www.theschoolfoundation.org](http://www.theschoolfoundation.org).**



[theschoolfoundation.org](http://theschoolfoundation.org)

(843) 662-9996



# FDTC TO OFFER POLICE PRE-ACADEMY TRAINING CERTIFICATE Submitted by FDTC



A law enforcement officer poses beside his vehicle in this photo illustration.

Florence-Darlington Technical College (FDTC) will offer a Police Pre-Academy Training (PPAT) Certificate to local law enforcement thanks to a newly formed partnership between the SC Technical College System and the SC Criminal Justice

Academy (SCCJA). The 14-week certificate program will consist of four classes that are a total of 12 credit hours. Candidates will be individuals who aspire to be employed as law enforcement officers in the state of South Carolina.

To be accepted into the program, candidates must be a U.S. citizen, have a high school diploma or equivalency, successfully pass a criminal background check and be at least 20 years old. The PPAT does not qualify for federal financial aid, but it does qualify for Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA) and the South Carolina Workforce Industry Needs (SCWINS) scholarship.

“This is an excellent opportunity for the Criminal Justice Department of Florence Darlington Technical College,” said FDTC director of Criminal Justice Technology, Sharon Sheehy. “This certificate will not only be an asset to our local departments but also provide potential candidates with quality training as they pursue a career in law enforcement.”

The PPAT Certificate classes will be held on FDTC’s main campus and will be taught by FDTC Criminal Justice Technology instructors.

The credit hours can be applied to a 66-credit hour associate degree. Candidates will learn basic and introductory law enforcement training as well as tactics and procedures. The classes include CRJ Police Science 281, CRJ Police Science II, CRJ 283 Police Science III and CRJ 284 Police Science IV.

## **CRJ 281: Police Science I**

Course topics include but are not limited to: Intro to Criminal Law, Courts, Crimes, and Procedures, First Amend., Basic Patrol Operations & Traffic Law.

## **CRJ 282: Police Science II**

Course topics include but are not limited to: Domestic Violence, Juv. Procedures & Victimology.

## **CRJ 283: Police Science III**

Course topics include but are not limited to: Report Writing, Interviewing, Officer Survival, Drug Enforcement and Crime Scene & Physical Evidence.

## **CRJ 284: Police Science IV**

Course topics include but are not limited to: Basic Collision Investigation, Uniform Traffic Ticket, Vehicle Tactics and Mind Armor.

After successfully completing the program, candidates will have a year to be hired by a law enforcement agency and attend the academy. Once candidates are hired, they will then pass a cumulative exam and a physical assessment test through the SCCJA, and then they will spend eight weeks at the SCCJA in Columbia before becoming a certified law enforcement officer. The PPAT Certificate features an array of benefits, but most notably, it increases pre-academy structure from four weeks to 14 weeks, and it also increases SC Basic Law Enforcement (BLE) training from 12 weeks to 22 weeks, which is aligned with national training standards. The PPAT Certificate relieves financial, personnel and resource strains on local agencies and provides an increased pre-certified pool of candidates.



**843-661-8324 | WWW.FDTC.EDU**



## FDTC'S HARTSVILLE SITE OFFERS NEW ELECTRICIAN PROGRAM

*Submitted by FDTC*



Florence-Darlington Technical College's (FDTC) Hartsville site will offer an electrician program beginning with the Fall 2021 Semester. Students in the certificate program will learn skills leading to jobs as technicians in the growing electrician field.

Official job prospects show the electrician career growing by eight percent in the next decade with a median income of \$56,000 a year according to the U.S. Department of Labor. Alternative power supplies like solar and wind are also driving increases in the field.

During their two semesters at FDTC's Hartsville site, students will study the basics of electricity, learn how to read blue prints and diagrams and apply national codes to their work. Successful students will be able to take certification tests that will qualify them as entry level electricians.

For more information about the Hartsville Site Electrician Certificate Program and to register, contact Casey Copeland, site director, at casey.copeland@fdtc.edu, or call him at 843-383-4500. To learn more about Florence-Darlington Technical College and its associate degree, certificate and diploma programs, email Shawn Reed, department chair of Engineering and Industrial Technology at shawn.reed@fdtc.edu, or call him at 843-413-2746.

## FLORENCE 1 SEEKING MCCLENAGHAN HIGH MEMORABILIA

*Submitted by Melissa Rollins, Communications Specialist, Florence 1 Schools*



*The old McClenaghan High School*

The old McClenaghan High School will soon be open again, this time serving as an annex for the Florence 1 Schools (FIS) district office. A grand re-opening for the facility, originally completed in September 1921, is being planned for Sep. 16 at 6 p.m. All alumni and the general public are invited to attend.

Once home to secondary students, this beautifully renovated piece of district history will now be home to Florence County Adult Education and district office personnel moving from the current annex on South Dargan Street.

Florence 1 is seeking memorabilia for a permanent public history display in the building. Trisha Caulder, FIS board member and chair of the Reopening Planning Committee, said that plaques, trophies, awards, pictures, sports items, letter sweaters and any other items related to McClenaghan are welcome. "I taught at McClenaghan, so this really means something to me," Caulder said. "We also think it would be a good idea to get an alumni group started. All of the other schools have one, and McClenaghan has groups for this year or that year but not one big group."

Caulder has found a few items in district records, including copies of the McClenaghan newspaper and information about the cost of the original building. She said that she is excited to have these items and any others that are donated on display for the public to see. Hopefully, Caulder said, the display will be set up in a third-floor room that will be available to rent for future McClenaghan class reunions.

Anyone interested in donating McClenaghan-related items can call the district at 843-669-4141 or bring the items to the Florence 1 Schools District Office at 319 South Irby St. Caulder can also be reached at Trisha.Caulder@fsd1.org. Several McClenaghan alumni have already volunteered to serve on the Reopening Planning Committee. Any and all alumni interested in serving on the committee are welcome and encouraged to contact Caulder.



**Trinity Collegiate School** *Preparing students for success with loyalty, honor, and perseverance*

Grades 6-12 • College Preparatory • Extensive Advanced Placement Selections • Performing & Visual Arts • Athletics • Robotics  
5001 Hoffmeyer Road Darlington, SC 843.395.9124 www.trinitycollegiate.org  
To schedule a tour, contact April Munn at (843) 395-9124 or email amunn@trinitycollegiate.org

*Congratulations*  
CLASS OF 2021



**TOTAL SCHOLARSHIP - \$6,724,764**

Valedictorian: **Marian Winters**  
Salutatorian: **Gene Ziegler**  
Honor Graduate: **Bryce Christian**

### COLLEGES ATTENDING

Auburn University, Florida State University, Baylor University  
North Carolina State University, Pennsylvania State University  
Appalachian State University, Arizona State University, Ave Maria University  
Benedict College, Clemson University, Keio University (Japan)  
Northeastern University, Sewanee: The University of the South, Berea College  
Butler University, Campbell University, Coastal Carolina University  
Coker University, College of Charleston, College of Charleston Honors  
Columbia International University, Furman University, Florida Southern College  
Francis Marion University, Elizabeth City State University, Elmhurst University  
Gardner-Webb University, The Citadel Honors, Lagrange College  
Louisiana State University, Mercer University, Methodist University  
Mississippi State University, Newberry College, Presbyterian College  
Providence College, Norfolk State University, North Carolina A&T University  
North Central College, Shenandoah University, Shorter University  
UNC-Asheville, UNC-Pembroke, University of Alabama, University of Dallas  
University of Arizona, University of Virginia, University of Kentucky  
Texas A&M University, University of Oregon, University of Hong Kong  
University of Maine, Waseda University (Japan), West Virginia University  
University of Connecticut, University of Maryland,  
University of Massachusetts-Amherst, University of Miami, University of Mississippi  
University of Rhode Island, University of Rochester  
University of South Carolina Honors, University of South Carolina  
University of South Florida, University of Tampa, University of Toronto  
Western New England University, Wingate University, Winston-Salem State University  
Wofford College, Wake Forest, Virginia Tech



# RUIZ 4 KIDS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

Submitted by Ruiz Foods



“It all began 30 years ago,” said Tyler Beck, president Ruiz 4 Kids. “I can remember my grandfather, Fred Ruiz, chairman emeritus and co-founder of Ruiz Foods, sharing the story of how Ruiz 4 Kids began.”

A Team Member in California had a very sick child. Local doctors could not determine the cause, and the child’s parents were very concerned. They took their child to the area children’s hospital nearly an hour away.

With a focus on children’s conditions and disease, the area children’s hospital--Valley Children’s Hospital--determined the cause of the young child’s illness and began treatment. But the child would need to stay in the hospital to receive treatment, and it would be for several weeks. The parents worked during the day, but they were determined to see their ill child, so they drove two hours to the hospital



Royall Elementary Engaging in “Math Minds”

and back each day after work.

Fellow Team Members, most with children of their own, understood the concern of the family and their need to see their child on a daily basis as he received treatment toward recovery. So, they began to talk among each other asking themselves “how can we help?” and “how can we make a difference?”

Fred Ruiz learned of the situation and the Team Members’ desire to do something for the family. He asked how he could help. The Team Members has the idea to donate money to help pay for the gas the family needed to travel two hours daily to see their son. They asked Fred to find out how they could set up a non-profit organization for situations like this so they could help a fellow Team Member in need.

And so, Ruiz 4 Kids was born by Team Members concerned and caring for other Team Members; Team Members who wanted to do what they could to make a difference; and

Team Members who believe in helping others. And it has grown tremendously.

At first, Ruiz 4 Kids gave to help the special needs of fellow Team Members’ families and their children. But soon, the desire to help others outside of fellow Team Members--to help members of the community--became an important goal. And so the question was asked, “What fundraisers can we organize to raise even more money and help more children?”

Over the years, the organization grew in size and giving. They formalized a Board of Team Members, asked Fred to be an advisor and encouraged interested Team Members to join and help. What was key, and always a source of pride, is that Team Members donated their own time to participate and be a part of Ruiz 4 Kids. “And that’s how we view it still today,” adds Beck. “It’s our opportunity to help...to give back...to make a difference.”

Since that first ill child, who fully recovered because of the efforts of the local children’s hospital, Ruiz 4 Kids keeps its focus on children and their education. And the two programs that work hard to make many dreams come true are (1) the annual Ruiz 4 Kids Scholarship Program supported by the Annual Louis F. Ruiz Golf Tournament and (2) the Mini-Grants for Teachers Program supported by Team Member donations.

As Ruiz Foods grew, first adding a manufacturing facility and distribution warehouse in Denison, Texas and then a manufacturing facility and distribution warehouse in Florence, so have both programs. “The Ruiz family is so proud of how our Team Members in both Texas and South Carolina quickly embraced both programs,” adds Beck. “It’s great to see how our Team Members enjoy working together to help children further their education. We are blessed to have Team Members who not only care about each other but their communities as well.”

The very first scholarship presented by Ruiz 4 Kids was in 1987. One scholarship for one high school senior in California.

Fast forward to 2015, the first year



Lester Elementary Hand on STEM 2020

Florence area high school seniors were asked to apply for a Ruiz 4 Kids scholarship. One application and the very first scholarship presentation was made to a Florence high school senior. That’s right...one scholarship. But Ruiz 4 Kids was on its way.

Fast forward again to 2021, and Ruiz 4 Kids awards \$64,000 in scholarships to South Carolina high school seniors. That’s a \$1000 scholarship for each recipient. And the reach is far and wide. South Carolina school districts/schools include: West Florence High School (15), Wilson High School (10), South Florence High School (8), Darlington High School (4), Hannah Pamplico High School (4), Lake City High School (4), The King’s Academy (4), Hartsville High School (3), Dillon High School (2), Mayo High School for Math Science and Technology (2), Carolina Academy (2), Crestwood High School (1), Florence Christian School (1), Lamar High School (1), Lee Central High School (1), and Marlboro County High School (1).

The Ruiz family, Ruiz 4 Kids and Ruiz Foods Florence Team Members couldn’t be prouder. “We’re making a difference,” adds Beck, “and it’s great to have this opportunity to give back to the community and have a positive impact on so many young students.”

The second Ruiz 4 Kids program, Mini-Grants for Teachers (MG4T), has also grown



Ruiz 4 Kids scholarships were presented to the recipients from West Florence at a ceremony held May 24, 2016. The students are Tyler Barbarino, Riley Dunnam, Katherine Florio, Andersen Johnston, Sonu Khatri, Camryn Maybank, Deannah Neupert, Wyatt Rivers, Mary Stalvey, Leana Steels, Jaylin Taylor and Jasmine Watson.



## RUIZ 4 KIDS CONT'D



North Vista Elementary School Robotics Integration 2018

tremendously since the first teacher's grant was awarded in Florence in 2015.

"Our MG4T Program was designed with the understanding that limited school budgets restrict teachers from purchasing materials for projects, activities and even basic classroom needs," adds Beck. "This program is designed to

help teachers purchase the materials they need to help make their job possible and ease the financial burden many teachers carry."

With grant awards ranging up to \$1,000, Ruiz 4 Kids awarded \$4,500 to teachers in the Florence area. Remembering that the monies raised for this community giving program comes directly from Team Members, it's exciting to note that last year, Ruiz 4 Kids Florence awarded nearly \$25,000 to teachers in Florence area schools.

"We are fortunate to have some very amazing Team Members throughout our organization," said Matt Ruiz, director of Corporate and Community Relations, Ruiz Food Products, Inc. "My dad, our co-founder, taught us to care about the communities where we live and work. It's about giving back. And it's heartwarming to see how our Team Members have embraced that thinking and how it continues to grow each year."

## MOORE, SNEED TO WELCOME NEW GRADES AND PROGRAMS

Submitted by Melissa Rollins, Communication Specialist



In the first phase of Florence 1 Schools' transition to a middle school model, Moore Middle School and Sneed Middle School will welcome 6th through 8th-

grade students when school starts on Aug. 2. The new grade configuration won't be the only change: Moore will be launching an innovative Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) curriculum school-wide while Sneed will be implementing a new Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program.

Moore students will explore the many STEAM pathways, not only in their electives but also throughout their core curriculum with updated learning spaces and new equipment to support the Project Based Learning approach. New electives like Design and Modeling, World Music and Flight and Space will offer students a glimpse of the wide-ranging careers based in STEAM.

Classrooms will incorporate drones, 3D clay printers and robotics. The district is also adding iMac computers for students to explore photography with digital cameras and photo editing software, as well as coding and app creation. Students interested in ceramics will be able to channel their creative interests into Sculpting and Pottery electives, firing their creations on-site with the school's kiln.

The World Music elective will introduce students to different cultures, rhythms and instruments. Agricultural classes in the John W. Moore Environmental Center will delve into the planting, caretaking and harvesting of fruits and vegetables and other plants.

Community partnerships will also allow for a variety of STEAM learning opportunities for Moore students. Partners include MUSC, STEMU, the USDA, Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Clemson

Extension and the Greenwood Genetic Center mobile genetic lab.

"I am excited for the upcoming changes for the 2021-2022 school year," said Principal April Leroy. "Our STEAM focus will utilize Project Based Learning as a primary learning experience each day. John W. Moore Middle School's updated and enhanced STEAM pathways will give students Exposure, Exploration, and Experience in all classes. Teachers, administrators and community members have worked with a purpose to create a positive learning environment for each student."

Sneed's STEM program will prepare students for 21st-century career opportunities by developing creativity and problem-solving skills, encouraging students to engage in teamwork and innovation. To allow ample time for collaboration in the classroom, class periods will be lengthened to 75 minutes.

Anticipating the new grade configuration at Sneed, the STEM program was designed to take students through a three-year learning pathway, each grade building on the previous year's STEM experiences. Students will complete comprehensive STEM projects each year that connect STEM principles with all of their grade-level content. A new state-of-the-art STEM lab will give students space to work with 3D printers, robots and drones.

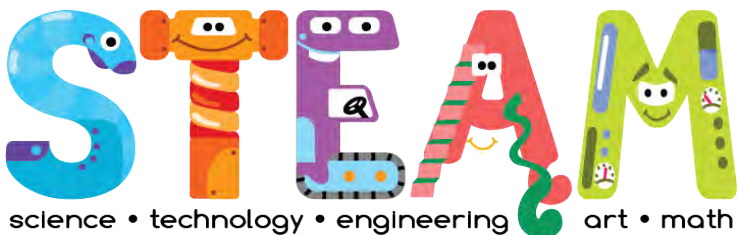
The number of Project Lead the Way electives has increased to give students a greater introduction to STEM-related careers. New course offerings will include Green Architecture, which focuses on eco-friendly construction and sustainable materials, Energy and the Environment and STEM piloting, where students will learn the basics of aviation.

In Medical Detectives, students will solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs. In Design and Modeling, they will use what they learn about the design and development process to create a therapeutic toy for a student with a disability.

"I am excited and looking forward to the addition of 6th graders to our middle school," said Principal Bentley Oates. "Sneed Middle School promotes active learning and engages students in numerous elective and extra curriculum choices. Becoming a STEM school allows us to expose our students to different career paths before entering high school. Students attending our STEM school will improve their creativity, empower their critical thinking and be introduced to team collaboration. The STEM program at Sneed Middle School is designed to prepare students for high school, college and the 21st century workforce."

Greg Hall, assistant superintendent for Secondary Education, said that the 2021-2022 school year will be a fantastic one for students with the convergence of the newly reconfigured Moore and Sneed and the launch of their innovative STEAM and STEM programs. "I am extremely excited about the first two schools to transition to the middle school configuration, Moore Middle and Sneed Middle," Hall said. "The STEAM and STEM programs in these two middle schools will have state-of-the-art equipment and learning spaces along with expanded options for students to explore STEAM and STEM electives. Most importantly, the STEAM and STEM content will be interwoven throughout the entire learning experience to really synthesize the curricular focus for these two schools."

Florence 1 Schools is pleased to be able to launch our first two traditional middle schools with innovative STEAM and STEAM programs that will deliver premier learning experiences with cutting edge technology and classroom resources never before offered in the Pee Dee region.





## FMU RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING STAFF SERVICE

Articles submitted by FMU



Jared Jeffries, Bonnie Barr, Danagene Razick and Alicia Campbell pose for a photo with their respective FMU staff awards.

Francis Marion University (FMU) recently recognized outstanding service by four of its employees at its annual Staff Service Awards Dinner on campus.

Jared Jeffries received the Marvin Lynch Humanitarian Award, and Alicia Campbell received the John J. Kispert Leadership Award. Danagene Razick and Bonnie Barr were named winners of the University's two Outstanding Staff Service Awards.

The award recipients were nominated by their colleagues. The winners were determined by a special committee consisting of past award winners and representatives of FMU's academic departments and schools.

Campbell, the recipient of the Kispert Leadership Award, is FMU's assistant director of campus applications and data services and has worked at FMU for 15 years. Campbell's coworkers described her as professional, calm, intelligent and as having a knack for solving complex problems.

Jeffries, the recipient of the Lynch Humanitarian Award, serves as FMU's senior desktop support technician and has worked at FMU for four years. Jeffries' coworkers remarked that he is a quick study of new tasks, approaches his numerous roles with enthusiasm and makes his coworkers feel at ease.

Danagene Razick is the University's associate director of human resources and has been with FMU for five years. Bonnie Barr is one of the University's lead custodians and has worked at FMU for 31 years. Both Razick and Barr were lauded for their cheerful dispositions, their cooperative spirit and their commitment to their jobs.



Dr. Callum Johnston

Education has been preparing superb educators for our region and our state for 50 years," says Carter. "It is one of FMU's trademark programs. Accreditation by CAEP is a distinctive honor, but it's no real surprise. Educators across South Carolina are familiar with the quality of our program and the educators it produces. My compliments to Dean Cal Johnston and our fine education for their hard work during the accreditation process, but more importantly, for the work they do every day in the classroom preparing

the next generation of teachers."

Dr. Callum Johnston, interim dean of the FMU School of Education during the past year, says the rigorous CAEP accreditation process gives students—and school districts across the state and the nation—confidence and assurance. "We go through a lot of scrutiny, both during this accreditation process and others at the individual program level," says Johnston. "Completing and receiving accreditation means we have met standards that are recognized not just in South Carolina, but across the nation. This assures schools and school districts that our graduates are well prepared. And, it gives our students confidence that they can teach effectively anywhere they choose to work."

Teacher preparation has been an important part of FMU since its founding. Thousands of teachers have earned undergraduate or graduate education degrees, or both, over the years.

FMU's School of Education offers an array of programs. Undergraduate programs include early childhood education, elementary education, middle school education, secondary education in four different academic disciplines and art education. Graduate programs include Master of Education (M.Ed.), M.Ed. learning disabilities, Master of Arts in teaching learning disabilities and specialist degree in school psychologist (in conjunction with FMU's Department of Psychology). All of these programs are also accredited individually by special area accrediting agencies outside of CAEP.

FMU is also home to two Centers of Excellence in Education, as part of Centers of Excellence Program established by the South Carolina Legislature in 1984. The Center of Excellence for Teaching Children of Poverty was formed in 2004, and the Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness was formed in 2014. Both are led by FMU education faculty and are closely affiliated with FMU's School of Education.

FMU houses a South Carolina Teaching Fellows program and is also home to the largest Teacher Cadet program in the state. FMU sponsors Teacher Cadet programs in high schools across the region, allowing hundreds of high school students to explore the teaching profession before attending college. Many of those students matriculate at the FMU School of Education because of that experience.

FMU's School of Education is expecting to continue its legacy of excellence with new leadership this fall. Dr. Courtney Clayton will assume duties as the new dean of the School of Education at FMU in July. Dr. Clayton comes to FMU from University of Mary Washington's College of Education where she was an associate professor and associate dean for Academic Progress, Assessment, and Accreditation.

## FMU SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RECEIVES NATIONAL ACCREDITATION



Dr. Fred Carter

The Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP), the nation's premier accrediting agency for college and university education programs, has extended accreditation for the Francis Marion University (FMU) School of Education through 2027.

FMU's re-accreditation by CAEP is for the seven-year cycle running through 2027. The accreditation is for both the initial (baccalaureate) and advanced (master's) level of instruction.

CAEP's mission is to "advance equity and excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning."

FMU's School of Education has been successively accredited by CAEP and its predecessors throughout its history. Dr. Fred Carter, president of FMU, says the CAEP accreditation is evidence of the ongoing excellence of the School of Education. "FMU's School of





## MITCHELL RETIRING FROM FMU, SWEENEY REPLACING Submitted by FMU



Tucker Mitchell

Francis Marion University (FMU) is saying farewell to a long-time vice president and is welcoming his replacement to the campus community. Tucker Mitchell, FMU's vice president for University Communications, is retiring in July and will move to his native North Carolina. He's been at FMU since 2013.

Mitchell began discussing his plans with FMU President Dr. Fred Carter in January. Carter began developing a succession plan soon after. Vice presidents at FMU serve at

the president's discretion.

Mitchell's replacement in the post will be John Sweeney, a 2009 graduate of the University who worked with Mitchell at the Florence Morning News during Mitchell's tenure as editor there. Mitchell supervised editorial operations for the Morning News and four other weekly newspapers operated by the same company in the Pee Dee.

Sweeney is currently the director of Business Development at the Northeastern Strategic Economic Alliance, which coordinates economic development in a nine-county area in and around the Pee Dee. Prior to that, Sweeney was a member of Congressman Tom Rice's staff in Florence.



John Sweeney

Sweeney will join FMU's communications team in mid-May and will work alongside Mitchell for six weeks as part of the transition.

Carter praised Mitchell's work at FMU and said he was glad to find someone as able and competent as Sweeney to fill his shoes.

"Tucker's been an indispensable part of the university's leadership for the past eight years," said Carter. "He has thoughtfully and carefully crafted our public branding and message as we've continued to grow and expand with new degrees and programs. I'm deeply appreciative of his hard work, creativity, and, most especially, his friendship."

"John is one of our own, and it'll be great to have him back home, picking up where Tucker leaves off."

Mitchell, a Wake Forest University graduate, spent more than 30 years in journalism before moving into his role at FMU. He won numerous awards as a newspaper reporter, columnist, editor and publisher. He and his wife Cindy started the Mecklenburg Newspaper Group, which owned and operated several weekly newspapers in the Charlotte suburbs. Mitchell sold MNG shortly before coming to Florence.

At FMU Mitchell directed a team that helped further embed FMU's brand in the Pee Dee and beyond. During Mitchell's tenure, FMU's website was redesigned and moved to a new modern platform, the University's social media presence was enhanced and its viewership increased five-fold and several new publications were created. As part of FMU's 50th Anniversary celebration, Mitchell played a large role in editing and writing Francis Marion University, 1970-2020, a special edition book which captured the spirit of the University's first 50 years through photos and essays.

That publication was Mitchell's "third" book. He previously authored two books on sports history, "Hornets Never Lie," and "Peahead!"



# HAPPINESS IS BEING FIRST.

*Support the First Generation Fund at Francis Marion University — scholarships for those who need it most.*

MAKE A GIFT TODAY | [WWW.FMARION.EDU/FIRSTGEN](http://WWW.FMARION.EDU/FIRSTGEN) | 843-661-1225





# NEW ADMINISTRATORS APPROVED FOR FLORENCE 1 SCHOOLS

Submitted by Melissa Rollins, Communication Specialist, Florence 1 Schools



Beverly Greene

During its June 17 meeting, the Florence 1 Schools Board of Trustees approved several school and district-level hires for the 2021-2022 school year, based on administrative recommendations. These employees will officially start in their new positions in July.

Beverly Greene and Brandon Carter will join the staff at South Florence High School as assistant principals.

Greene has a master's degree in educational leadership and a master's degree in learning and teaching-instructional technology from Coastal Carolina University. She was most recently an interventionist at Dewey L. Carter Elementary School.

Carter has his master's degree in educational leadership from Arkansas State University. He also has elementary and secondary principal Tier 1 certifications. He was most recently a physical education teacher at Olanta Creative Arts &

Science Magnet School.

Lauren Hasty will serve as an assistant principal at West Florence High School. Hasty has a master's of education in curriculum and instruction with a focus in secondary literacy and a master's of education in educational leadership from the American College of



Chris Coleman

Education. She most recently worked as the lead teacher, curriculum coordinator/instructional coach, at Mullins High School.

Alfred Rush Academy will have new leadership as Chris Coleman assumes the director position. Coleman has served as an assistant principal at West Florence High School since July 2019. He holds a master's of education from Union University and is currently working toward a Certificate of School Management and Leadership from Harvard University.

Calandra Brisbane-Davis will be in charge of the district's induction teachers, professional development and evaluations as the director of Professional Development. Brisbane-Davis holds a master's degree in instructional technology from Lesley University. She was most recently working as an assistant principal at West Florence High School.



Calandra Brisbane-Davis

"We are happy to have all of these administrators coming on board," said Florence 1 Schools Superintendent Richard O'Malley. "Administrators play a vital role in our school community, and we look forward to the fresh ideas they will bring to their schools and the district."

# TWO AREA STUDENTS RECEIVE KEY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Submitted by Leslie Causey, Marketing Coordinator/Public Relations



CONWAY-For the 15th year, Carolina Trust Federal Credit Union and Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (HTC) chose two graduating high school seniors to win \$1,000 each in

scholarship awards. High school seniors from Horry, Georgetown, Marion, Williamsburg, and the southern part of Florence County planning to attend either Coastal Carolina University (CCU) or Francis Marion University (FMU) were encouraged to apply.

The 2021 Key Scholarship award winners are: Aynor High School graduate, Ariana Teel, and North Myrtle Beach High School graduate, Devin Montgomery. This fall, Teel plans to attend Coastal Carolina University and major in business. Montgomery also plans to attend CCU to major in business and prelaw.

"This scholarship demonstrates our support of local students and higher education," said Carlton Lewis, HTC chief financial officer and Carolina Trust Board of Directors member. "Both HTC and Carolina Trust are dedicated to investing in the communities we serve, and the Key Scholarship provides an excellent opportunity to continue the support of our youth."



(Left to Right) Beth Brown, head counselor at North Myrtle Beach High School; Leslie Causey, public relations coordinator with HTC; Devin Montgomery, Key Scholarship recipient; Teresa Todd, principal at North Myrtle Beach High School; and August Mize, brand ambassador for Carolina Trust

The scholarship will continue to support the chosen applicants throughout their college career. The initial \$1,000 is applied to their first-year tuition cost, but the scholarships may be renewed for an additional three years in the amount of \$500 per year should the recipients continue to meet qualifying criteria. Recipients must maintain a 3.0 GPA and full-time enrollment at either CCU or FMU.

"We are honored to recognize these talented students. Their academic achievements in the classroom, extra curricular activities, and dedication to community service are truly impressive. We are proud of all the applicants who are planning to continue their education in an effort to achieve personal and professional goals," said Tim Carlisle, Carolina Trust president and CEO.

Application packets were distributed to high school guidance counselors, and the scholarship opportunities were advertised on the Carolina Trust and HTC websites. The 2021 award recipients were scored as most qualified for the Key Scholarship based on completed application, academics, school and/or community involvement and school choice.

For more information, please contact Leslie Causey at 843-369-8564 or Amanda Marker at 843-443-8533.



(Left to Right) Leslie Causey, public relations coordinator with HTC; Michael McCracken, Aynor High School principal; Ariana Teel, Key Scholarship recipient; and August Mize, brand ambassador for Carolina Trust



# MORE THAN \$6.5 BILLION

has been appropriated to **Support Education in S.C.** since 2002.

More than **2.2 MILLION**  
**Scholarships and Grants**  
have been awarded to S.C.'s Students.

- **Palmetto Fellows** Scholarship • **LIFE** Scholarship
- **S.C. HOPE** Scholarship • **Lottery** Tuition Assistance
- **S.C. National Guard College** Assistance Program
- **S.C. Need-based** Grants • **S.C. Tuition** Grants



**K-12** programs  
have received more than  
**\$1 BILLION**

**\$52 MILLION**

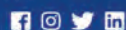
has supported Community Education  
programs in the Palmetto State.



Each year the General Assembly appropriates lottery  
net proceeds for educational purposes.



[sceducationlottery.com](http://sceducationlottery.com)





# Florence 1 Schools Salute Academic Excellence: Congratulations to The Class of 2021



SOUTH FLORENCE HIGH SCHOOL



WEST FLORENCE HIGH SCHOOL



WILSON HIGH SCHOOL

**956** Graduates • **3** National Merit Finalists

**219** Board of Trustees Scholars

**48** Palmetto Fellows

**251** Life Scholarship Winners

**144** Double Cord Graduates

**295** Single Cord Graduates

**TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED IN SCHOLARSHIPS**

**\$19,783,083**



319 South Irby Street

Florence, SC 29501

[www.f1s.org](http://www.f1s.org)



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

S. Porter Stewart, Chairman

Trisha C. Caulder, Vice-Chairman

Kimrey-Ann Haughn, Secretary

Bryan Chapman • John Galloway

Davy Gregg • EJ McIver

Alexis D. Pipkins, Sr. • Barry Townsend

# WITH CHALLENGES COME OPPORTUNITIES Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea



Dr. Kandace Bethea

**MARION**-The pandemic has certainly presented us with many nearly insurmountable challenges, but challenges also bring change and opportunities for improvement.

One of the earliest opportunities we took advantage of was funding from the CARES Act. With this money, we were able to get an Internet accessible device into every student's hands. Devices and Internet connectivity have become not just a high priority, but a necessity in this new remote learning

landscape. That ubiquitous access to the Internet has shaped our thinking over the last year and will no doubt continue to shape it after the pandemic is over.

Our teachers have really gone the extra mile throughout this crisis. Teachers across our district became very creative in creating resources students could use at home. Early learners have a very hands-on approach to learning. Our teachers created baggies with all the materials students needed for upcoming lessons. They used disposable items as much as possible, like beans for math manipulatives, so that parents wouldn't have to worry about bringing them back.

At the time, our teachers were just trying to fill a need the best they could, but the pandemic's disruption actually became an opportunity to better engage families in their students' education. Many parents had never had manipulatives in their home before, and they were learning how to use them, and other educational techniques, by watching how teachers interacted with students during remote classes.

Right now, we're focusing on learning recovery, and the key to

that is knowing exactly where students are. So many of our students have not had consistent, sound instruction since last spring (2019). We're interested in achievement, but the main thing we're looking at is growth. You can't have achievement if students aren't growing toward it, after all. We know that students all over the country aren't where they need to be, so we're focused more on ensuring that they're moving in the right direction than on whether they're already there or not.

With round two of CARES Act funding, we're looking to combat pervasive skills gaps with more personnel. We are looking to bring in full and part time interventionists to begin working with students in and out of the classroom, in one-on-one or small group instruction.

Another part of our funds will go to digital curriculum. We're looking for new resources that are proving effective at helping students grow, and we'll be expanding existing programs that are working as well.

COVID-19 has certainly presented challenges, but by investing in our students' future, leaning on the strength of our community within and around the district and refocusing on nurturing student growth, we're confident we can become a stronger district.



## Hiring Great Teachers

Join us on an exciting journey as we transform the lives of Marion County students together

Teachers have the biggest in-school impact on student achievement. Our top priority is to ensure our teachers and leaders have what they need to provide our students with a world-class education, including:



Personalized professional development






Career ladder opportunities



Opportunity to continue your education from a choice of local universities



 MarionCountySchools  
 @MarionCountyScho  
 @marioncounty10

Explore more at [www.marion.k12.sc.us/jobs](http://www.marion.k12.sc.us/jobs)

#GrowingBetterTogether



# JEBAILY LAW FIRM OPENS NEW OFFICE IN NORTH MYRTLE Submitted by Jebaily Law Firm



*The Jebaily Law Firm Family*

**NORTH MYRTLE BEACH**—The attorneys of Jebaily Law Firm, an established and respected South Carolina legal practice, has announced the opening of a new office situated in North Myrtle Beach.

Jebaily Law Firm was founded in 1969 in Florence. The firm's lawyers have over 100 years of combined experience helping people with cases involving personal injury, Social Security disability, workers' compensation and more.

The new office is located at 697 Main St., North Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29582. The phone number for the North Myrtle Beach office is 843-272-0020.

The office is in the heart of North Myrtle Beach, just blocks from Highway 17. It is easily accessible from anywhere on the Grand Strand, including Little River, Cherry Grove, Briarcliffe Acres, Myrtle Beach, Surfside Beach and Garden City. The office also serves Conway, the rest of Horry County and surrounding communities.

The North Myrtle Beach attorneys at Jebaily Law Firm stand ready to assist local residents and visitors alike, including out-of-state travelers who get hurt while on vacation.

The office's five attorneys and support staff handle cases including car accidents, truck accidents, motorcycle accidents, premises liability claims (dog bites, slip-and-falls, swimming pool injuries, for example), Social Security disability claims, workers' compensation claims, wrongful death cases and more.

## **Jebaily Law Firm in the North Myrtle Beach Community**



*New North Myrtle Beach Office*

The attorneys and staff at Jebaily Law Firm have a history of dedication to the communities the firm serves. Over the decades, the firm has become an integral part of the community in Florence, where the law firm's first office is located.

Firm leaders plan to continue that tradition of community involvement in North Myrtle Beach. For example, the firm is looking into sponsorships of events in North Myrtle Beach. One of the potential sponsorship opportunities is the



*L-R: Le, Skylar, and Jocelyn enjoying the beautiful weather outside of our new N. Myrtle Beach location.*

Society of Stranders, a local organization for enthusiasts of shag dancing, one of the area's most significant cultural contributions. Each year the Society of Stranders uses the power of its membership to make a difference in the lives of people in need.

Jebaily Law Firm is also looking into sponsorship of the Myrtle Beach Car Club, an organization of auto enthusiasts that hosts car shows and cruise-ins in the Grand Strand area. In the past, they have also been and participated in the American Heart Association's Heart Walk.

The firm's current community involvement includes work with organizations such as:

- Heart Association
- Pecan Festival
- Humane Society
- Habitat for Humanity
- End Distracted Driving
- South Carolina Association for Justice
- McLeod Health Foundation
- Kid's Chance
- Downtown Florence Redevelopment

## **Details About Jebaily Law Firm**

The attorneys and staff at Jebaily Law

Firm are guided by the firm's mission statement: "We are experienced lawyers fighting with determination and passion for injured people; committed to serving our clients with dignity and respect."

The firm's attorneys and legal staff are dedicated to seeking justice and accountability on behalf of people in the community who need legal help. As trial lawyers who care about right and wrong, the Jebaily Law Firm's attorneys listen to their clients' needs and fight for their rights. They have dedicated their careers to making a difference in clients' lives and in the life of the communities the firm serves.

Members of Jebaily Law Firm's staff are dedicated to client care. They were selected for their abilities and their commitment to client service.

Throughout 50 years of service, the firm has been just like family for many citizens of South Carolina. We treat our clients like we treat our family—with compassion, respect and dignity. We understand how stressful any severe injury can be and the impact it can have on both the victim and their loved ones. We approach each client with empathy, letting them know we are here for their every legal need, and we will look after them and see that they are taken care of. We treat them just like family.

## **CONTACT US TODAY!**

We know the struggles that injury victims face. We also know what it takes to help them get back on their feet. If you were injured in South Carolina, contact Jebaily Law Firm for a free consultation. We have over 50 years of experience pursuing the benefits that our clients need.





**JEBAILY**  
Law Firm, P.A.  
1969 CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 2019



*Lawyers Helping  
Injured People.<sup>SM</sup>*



George Jebaily • Rangeley Bailey • Ron Jebaily (Retired) • Suzanne Jebaily • Brian Yost

### PERSONAL INJURY

- Auto Accidents
- Truck Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Accidental Death
- Defective Products
- Slip and Fall & More
- Wrongful Death

### SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY

- Disability Benefits
- Social Security Benefits

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

- On the Job Injuries
- Exposure to Harmful Substances
- Occupational Diseases
- Repetitive Trauma Injuries & More

*Hospital visits and weekend appointments available upon request.*

**843-667-0400 • [www.JebailyLaw.com](http://www.JebailyLaw.com)**  
291 W. Evans Street • Florence, SC • 29501



# AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY REUNIONS: ROOTED IN HISTORY

Submitted by Flock and Rally Media



**COLUMBIA**-One of the most distinctive aspects of African American culture is the family reunion, the weekend gathering of extended family members who reconnect, share, update and rediscover.

It has its roots in Emancipation of the mid 19th century. Formerly enslaved people placed “Information Wanted” advertisements in search of family who were separated from them under the cruel practice of slavery.

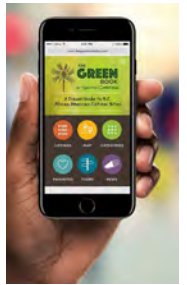
Reunions grew and became more joyful gatherings during the Great Migration. However, between 1915-1940, nearly four million African Americans fled the South to the North and West. As they found education and professional opportunities that were denied to them in the Jim Crow South, they developed the country’s first African American middle class. With their discretionary income, they traveled back to the family and the communities they’d left behind. Many of them used the “Negro Motorist Green Book” to help them find welcoming establishments on their journey.

Today, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission and the WeGOJA Foundation proudly offer the “**Green Book of South Carolina**” as a reference for travel around the state. At [www.GreenBookofSC.com](http://www.GreenBookofSC.com), the online guide can be used to enrich a reunion’s weekend schedule with trips to intriguing historic sites, like

- [The Cigar Factory in Charleston](#), where a group of striking workers first sang the Civil Rights freedom song “We Shall Overcome”
- [The African American Monument on the Statehouse](#) grounds in Columbia, which chronicles the experiences and contributions of African Americans in South Carolina since the Middle Passage
- [Penn Center on St. Helena Island](#) near Beaufort, a historic campus for the preservation and interpretation of sea island culture in South Carolina and part of the newly designated Reconstruction Era National Monument
- [Springfield Baptist Church in Greenville](#), home to non-violent protests in Greenville during the Civil Rights Movement, including a march from the church to the downtown airport after Jackie Robinson, the first Black Major League Baseball player and visiting keynote speaker for a state NAACP convention, was denied use of the airport’s waiting room
- [Friendship Junior College and McCrory’s Five and Dime](#) in Rock Hill, where college students staged a sit-in in 1961. When they were arrested, they declined bail, choosing instead to remain in jail until their cases were argued in court. This “jail-no-bail” effort became a strategy used by other college students throughout the country.

“The Green Book of South Carolina” features additional tips and ideas for reunions at the **Family Reunion Toolkit** ([www.FamilyReunionSC.com](http://www.FamilyReunionSC.com).) The micro-site offers links to some of South Carolina’s best destinations for reunions, offers suggestions on best places for that big family picnic and provides sample day-trip itineraries to historic sites.

Both online resources can be used to enhance reunions and help family members rediscover the roots of this unique culture.



**RECONNECT & REDISCOVER**

Plan your next  
**family reunion**  
with the Green Book of SC

THE  
**GREEN**  
BOOK  
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Pre-planned day-trips provide exceptional experiences for your family reunion.

PLAN YOUR FAMILY REUNION HERE  
[FamilyReunionSC.com](http://FamilyReunionSC.com)



# THE WAIT IS OVER—DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES RETURN IN 2021

Submitted by Florence Downtown Development Staff



Florence After Five (photo credit True Light Photography)

The long wait is over, and signs of normalcy are returning to Downtown Florence, marked by the much-anticipated return of award-winning street festivals and the Andrew H. Griffin Plaza splash pad. After a year marked by uncertainty, struggle and unprecedented obstacles, Downtown Florence is doing what it has done for the past decade—revive.

Downtown Florence's award-winning street festival and summer concert

series, Florence After Five, returned to the 100 block of S. Dargan Street in late June to much fanfare, celebration and plenty of dancing in the streets to the music of Hip Pocket. The event will continue the last Friday of each month through October and will continue to adhere to recommended CDC guidelines and offer free vaccine clinics from MUSC Health Florence Medical Center. Bands for the remainder of the season include Carolina Breakers in July, Cat 5 Band in August, The Embers in September and Chocolate Chip and Co. Band in October. Attendees can join in on the fun with free admission courtesy of Carolina Bank, Victors, Southern Crown Distributors and MUSC Health Florence Medical Center.

Also set to return is Downtown Florence's annual Oktoberfest, which features live entertainment, the annual

Running of the Weenies dog races benefiting the Florence Area Humane Society, stein and barrel roll races, authentic German foods and cold drinks. This event will take place on Oct. 9.

Perhaps one of the most anticipated returns is the SC Pecan Music & Food Festival, formerly the SC Pecan Festival, which takes over nine blocks in historic Downtown Florence on Nov. 6 for a full day of live entertainment across eight stages, a free kids fun zone and STEM activity zone, arts and culinary contests, amusement rides, over 250 vendors, classic car show, Run Like a Nut and so much more. The 2021 event is headlined by American Band, Grand Funk Railroad, who is sure to put on a show worthy of this event's exciting rebound after a year off due to COVID-19.

Other highlights of the Downtown Florence event season in 2021 include the City Center Farmers' Market Jam Fest on Oct. 16, Greater Florence Chamber's Kickin' Chicken and Wings Festival on Oct. 22, Small Business Saturday on Nov. 27, family favorite Downtown Christmas Magic to kick off the holiday festivities on Dec. 3 and the Downtown Holiday Music and Lights Show, which runs the full month of December.

Another popular downtown feature to make its comeback is the free children's splash pad located in the Andrew H. Griffin Plaza next to Wholly Smokin' in the 100 block of S. Dargan Street. The splash pad re-opened at the end of June and is the perfect place to bring the kids to cool off during summer break. Families should also make time to check out the gelato at ChocoBella while downtown—the perfect cool treat for a hot day. The splash pad is open daily from 9-11 a.m. and again from 2-6 p.m.

For more information on Downtown Florence events, visit [www.florencedowntown.com](http://www.florencedowntown.com).

## Welcome back!

2021 Events in  
**DOWNTOWN FLORENCE**

- JUL 30** - Florence After 5
- AUG 6** - Jr. League End of Summer-Fest
- AUG 27** - Florence After 5
- SEP 24** - Florence After 5
- OCT 9** - Downtown Oktoberfest
- OCT 16** - City Center Market Jam Fest
- OCT 22** - Chamber Kickin' Chicken
- OCT 28** - Florence After 5
- NOV 6** - SC Pecan Music & Food Festival
- NOV 27** - Small Business Saturday
- DEC 3** - Downtown Christmas Magic

[www.florencedowntown.com](http://www.florencedowntown.com)



# South Carolina's REVOLUTIONARY RIVERS



Don't just read history, paddle history.

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

## FLORENCE COUNTY OFFERS OUTDOOR FUN FOR FAMILIES THIS SUMMER!

Submitted by FCVB



Splash Pad

If you are looking for some cool opportunities for fun and exploration this summer, look no further than Florence County.

Hot weather equals summer water fun, so let's start with the **Splash Pad** at the Environmental Discovery Center at Lynch River County Park. The Splash Pad is filled with all kinds of whimsical, colorful and fun water sprinklers, including a dumping bucket, multiple water loops and water cannons. It's currently open Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday from 1-6 p.m. Cost is \$3/child (one-17 years of age), and one adult gets in free with a paid child admission.

In addition to the Splash Pad, the 676-acre **Lynch River County Park** features a swinging treetop Canopy Walk that offers visitors a panoramic view of the park. Other popular activities include canoeing, nature trails and picnicking. The park is open daily from 9 a.m. to sunset.

Speaking of rivers, the **Friends of Revolutionary Rivers** (FOREVR) offers the natural, historic and recreational resources of the SC Revolutionary Rivers National Recreation Trail



Friends of Revolutionary River (Photo by Christopher Neal Photography)

located within the Pee Dee region of South Carolina, which of course includes Florence County. You can also book a platform campsite accessible only by water—talk about seclusion. If you need help with paddling or rentals, give **RiverRats** a call.

Back in the city, the **Florence Family YMCA** offers both indoor and outdoor pools for plenty of summer fun—slides are included, but you'll need to bring your own towels. They are also offering swimming lessons and summer camps and many additional programs for children and adults. Visit their website for membership information.

Looking to stay dry but stay outside? Check out the **golf** offerings in town. Or how about disc golf? Florence County Parks & Recreation has a nine-hole course at Mars Bluff Community Park. And for more recreation opportunities such as tennis and baseball, check out both the **City** and **County** recreation programs.

If you're looking to couple recreation and arts, check out the newly developed **Alex Palkovich Sculpture Trail**. His public



## FLORENCE COUNTY CONT'D

works of art can be found across South Carolina with the greatest concentration at Florence Veterans Park. In total, you will find 20 of Palkovich's sculptures and busts in Florence County.

Three of Palkovich's sculptures can be found in Lake City. While there, check out the **Lake City Community Park** featuring an eight-acre lake with a boardwalk, five fishing piers, a canoe/kayak launch, a shaded gazebo, a picnic shelter with a wood-burning fireplace and restrooms. Grills and picnic tables as well as magnificent views of trees, flowers and wildlife can be found throughout the park.

Root for the home team at a RedWolves baseball game. Established in 1998, the **Florence RedWolves** baseball team participates in the Coastal Plain League, which is comprised of 15 teams in a summer collegiate wooden bat league. Games feature lots of team interaction, field games with audience participants, delicious hot boiled peanuts and ice-cold beer and



Florence Trail System

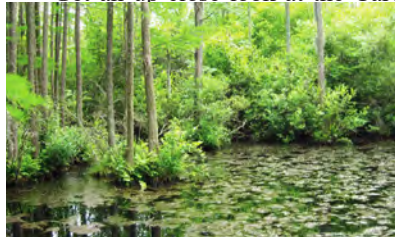
souvenirs.

Looking to stretch your legs? The **Florence Trail System** is made up of a series of connections that link more than 40 miles of trails together throughout the city. The Trail System connects to parks, cultural features

and historical sites. You can start your hike at the Freedom Florence Recreational Complex and connect to the Florence Stockade and National Cemetery Trails.

Don't kick off your bike or running shoes just yet. Instead, explore the **High Hill Creek Bike & Run Park**, a four-mile trail that runs along I-95. The newly developed High Hill Creek Bike & Run Park is intended for beginner to intermediate mountain bike riders but provides a good riding experience regardless of skill level.

Get an up-close look at the Carolina Bays of the Atlantic



Woods Bay State Park

Coastal Plain region at Woods Bay State Park in Olanta. The Mill Pond Nature Trail is an easy ¾-mile loop, giving visitors the opportunity to experience flora and fauna in a Carolina Bay

along the 1,150-foot boardwalk. Visitors have reported seeing alligators in the cypress tupelo swamp as well as 114 different bird species within the boundaries of the park.

And lastly, after you've hit the pavement and worked up an appetite, checkout the **South Carolina Pecan Trail**. Dine at stops along the culinary trail (many stops feature outdoor dining options), and get your passport stamped to earn some ultra-cool pecan swag. Pecan pie martinis, touch-of-honey pecan chicken salad, warm goat cheese pecan salad, dark chocolate pecan bonbons and white Russian pecan pie—yum!

For even more summer fun, check out [visitflo.com/events](http://visitflo.com/events) for upcoming events in and around Florence.

Courtesy of the Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau  
[www.visitflo.com](http://www.visitflo.com) • 843-616-3600

# Special Places

### Alex Palkovich Sculpture Trail

[www.visitflo.com/alex-palkovich-sculpture-trail](http://www.visitflo.com/alex-palkovich-sculpture-trail)

### City of Florence Parks & Recreation

[www.cityofflorence.com/parks-recreation](http://www.cityofflorence.com/parks-recreation)  
843-665-3253

### Florence Co. Parks & Recreation

[www.florenceco.org/offices/parks-recreation](http://www.florenceco.org/offices/parks-recreation)  
843-667-0920

### Florence Family YMCA

1700 S Rutherford Dr, Florence  
[www.florenceymca.org](http://www.florenceymca.org)  
843-665-1234

### Florence RedWolves

520 Francis Marion Rd, Florence  
[www.florencewolves.com](http://www.florencewolves.com)  
843-629-0700

### Florence Trail System

[www.cityofflorence.com/city-florence-trail-system](http://www.cityofflorence.com/city-florence-trail-system)

### Golfing in Florence

[www.visitflo.com/golf](http://www.visitflo.com/golf)

### High Hill Creek Bike & Run Park

[www.facebook.com/AtomicMTB](https://www.facebook.com/AtomicMTB)

### Lake City Community Park

273 N Church St, Lake City  
[www.florenceco.org/offices/parks-recreation](http://www.florenceco.org/offices/parks-recreation)  
843-667-0920

### Lynches River County Park

5094 County Park Rd, Coward  
[www.lynchesriverpark.com](http://www.lynchesriverpark.com)  
843-389-0550

### RiverRat's Canoe Rentals

2740 Indigo Landing Rd, Scranton  
[www.facebook.com/riverrats.rentals](https://www.facebook.com/riverrats.rentals)  
843-389-4656

### South Carolina Pecan Trail

[www.visitflo.com/sc-pecan-trail](http://www.visitflo.com/sc-pecan-trail)

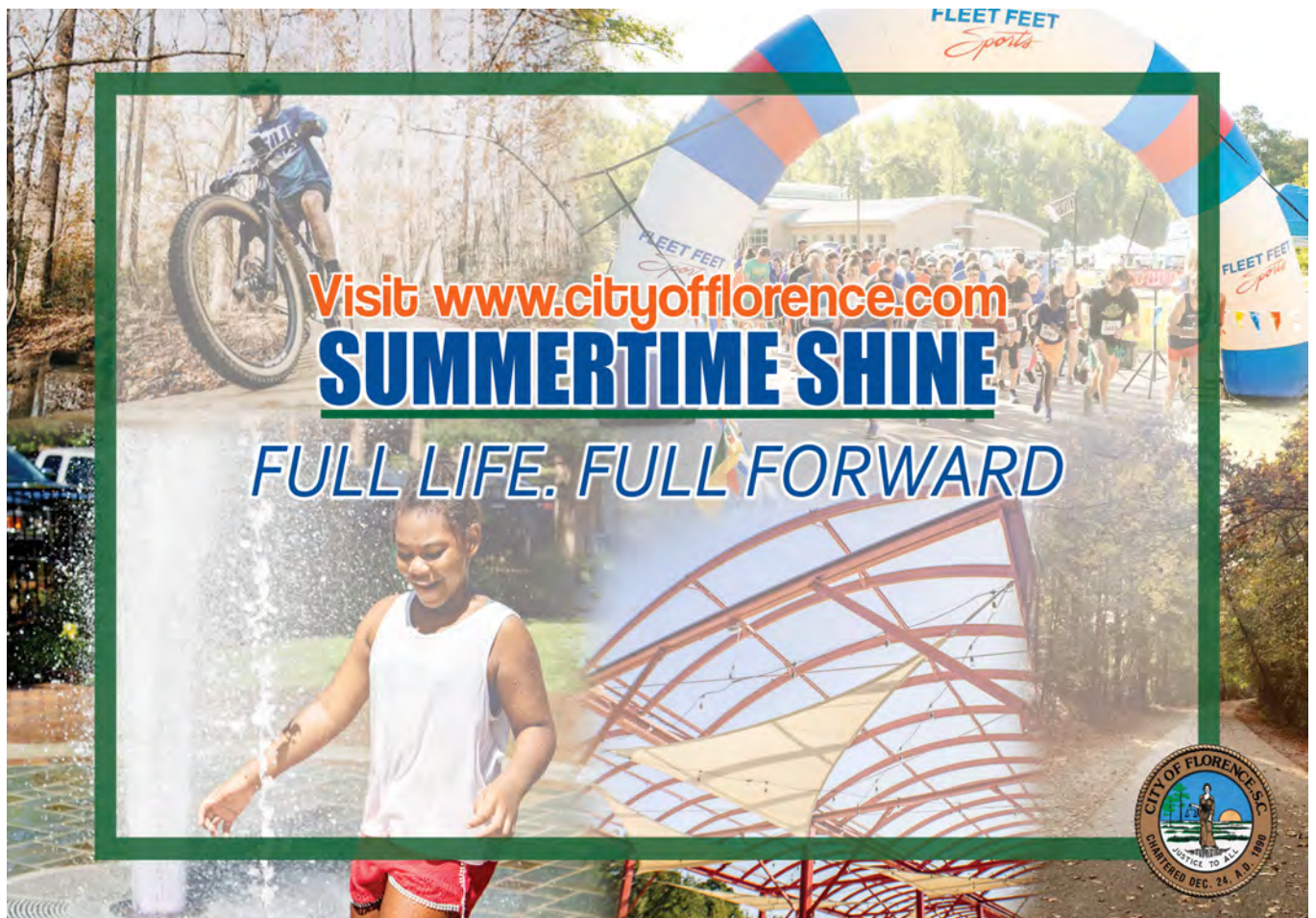
### SC Revolutionary Rivers National Recreation Trail

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

### Woods Bay State Park

11020 Woods Bay Rd, Olanta  
[www.southcarolinaparks.com/woods-bay](http://www.southcarolinaparks.com/woods-bay)  
843-659-4445





**SUMMERTIME SHINE FOR THE CITY OF FLORENCE** *Submitted by the City of Florence*



Things are heating up in Florence, and the summer season has officially begun. As life returns to what was once familiar, excitement is buzzing in the community. With children out of school and parents seeking to enjoy summer nights, there are plenty of events to look forward to that will kick off the summer. Florence is a great place to live, work and play, and we encourage residents to engage in the full Florence experience.

Staying hydrated and cool this summer will be essential on hot days. The interactive water feature in the Andrew H. Griffin Plaza located at 146 S. Dargan St. has officially re-opened. This feature is designed for children ages 12 and under and includes eight spray jets that blend into one column of water with alternating spray heights and LED lights. Fountain hours of operation are Monday – Saturday from 9–11 a.m. and 2–6 p.m. and Sunday from 2–6 p.m. The inviting space adds to the downtown experience, offering a playful vibe for community youth and a gathering spot that’s appealing to all.

Beating the heat is not the only activity to look forward to when it comes to the summertime. Promoting quality of life amenities for residents is essential for a healthy and thriving community. For the City of Florence, this is a motivation to connect people and resources so that residents have access to healthy foods and affordable recreational activities. The City

Center Farmers Market has announced a new initiative from the Eat Smart Move More Florence Coalition (ESMM Florence) that will be joining the market on the first Tuesday of each month. There will be fun activities such as a three-mile downtown loop bike ride with Phil’s Bicycle World, Aroha Afro Latin Dance afro line dance, fitness classes and a Blood Connection donation section. The City Center Market is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Tuesday nights from 4-7 p.m.

The fun does not stop there. Downtown’s favorite award-winning block party is now back. Florence After 5 kicked off in June and is held the last Friday of each month from April to October. The Florence Downtown Development Corp. hosts a free concert in the 100 block of S. Dargan Street between Evans and Cheves Streets in Historic Downtown Florence. Florence After Five has received awards for Best Community Festival, Best Place to Dance, Best Outdoor Event, Best Local Concert and Best Place for Live Music. The events run from 5:30-8:30 p.m., and the band takes the stage at 6 p.m. Food and beverages are available at the event.

Moving closer towards the fall season, in its sixth year, the Flo-Town 5K will take place this Oct. 30. The idea for a race developed from an interest by the City’s Employee Wellness Program to end a “Couch to 5K” training program with its own 5K event showcasing the beauty of the City of Florence Trail System. All proceeds benefit the Florence Track Club. The Flo-Town 5K organizers invite everyone to participate and join us to “Walk or Run, Just Get it Done!” The City encourages residents to experience the Trail System, which includes more

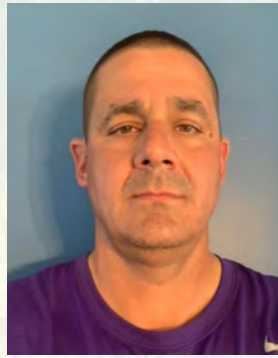


## SUMMERTIME SHINE CONT'D



than 22 miles of trail, including the new High Hill Creek Mountain Bike & Run Park located at 2502 Prosperity Way, Florence, S.C. 29501. This park has over four miles to bike and run and runs along Interstate 95.

The City encourages the Florence community to have a safe and enjoyable summer. Whether you soak in the sun while the kids splash around, enjoy local fresh foods at the City Center Market or enjoy a good walk on the trails, engage in the summertime shine experience, and live Full Life. Full Forward.



Timothy Wilson

players, coaches and other participants.

The City is starting to awaken, and people are beginning to return to pre-pandemic activities. Reopening and restarting recreation is important to promoting the benefits of healthy communities. Children should remain active, especially following quarantine, to remain healthy. Because they were sedentary, some children were not able to use the mental and physical abilities they would use if they would if they were in school. The city offers alternatives and additions to what children may or may not have available at home. Children (and adults) can participate in baseball, soccer, softball, football, track and cross country, volleyball, gymnastics and cheerleading.

There are several programs the City offers for all ages: Adult Sports Programs, Athletic Camps, Athletic Policies and Procedures, City of Florence Scholarship Program, Tennis And Youth Sports Program. The summer program schedule includes:

- Fall Adult Softball registration- July 1
- Ralph Lundy Soccer Academy- The City of Florence will host the Ralph Lundy Soccer Academy July 19-22 at the Florence Soccer Complex. This will be for boys and girls and for ages 8-17. They will offer a half-day camp for \$250 and a full-day camp for \$350. Every camper will receive instruction, games, Nike backpack and Nike/RLSA t-shirt. All campers should bring a soccer ball. Full day campers are responsible for their own lunch. They will offer a team discount of \$25/camper for groups of 10 or more, and they will also offer a multi-child family discount of \$25/child. For more information visit: [www.ralphlundysoccer.com](http://www.ralphlundysoccer.com).

- Girls High School Tournament- Aug. 13-15

Parks and recreations work to improve the quality of life in cities by appealing to families. Satisfied families bring companies and companies support recreation. Sports tourism is boosts economics when tournaments bring in big groups of participants and fans. Florence hosts soccer, lacrosse and tennis tournaments. What the City offers is more than just swings sets and opportunities to cheer for games, but a way of life. Children and families benefit from what parks and recreation offers. Please support it.

## OUR PARKS AND RECREATIONS: THE PANDEMIC ERA by Jennifer Robinson



The power of sports

Pre 2020, children were arriving to the parks with their families, carrying baskets filled with food for a day of fun, fellowship and togetherness. Men in huddles with their teammates were reviewing plays during a tied softball game. Recreation league football players in nice uniforms were getting off buses as they prepared to play against their cross-town rivals. Cheerleaders were offering cheers they have practiced for weeks to support their teams.

Within a matter of months, there was a deafening silence. No more kids were competing to see who could swing the highest. Dogs could no longer be walked in the park. There were no more couples walking and holding hands. The sound of runners' shoes pounding the pavement could no longer be heard. The sound of cheering for your favorite volleyball team to win was not there.

This is a snippet of a narrative of the effects of COVID-19 on City of Florence Parks and Recreation for the first few months of 2020. But the pandemic only stalled recreation for a short period of time, according to Tim Wilson, athletic director for the City of Parks and Recreation. At the beginning of the pandemic, he stated, they started the baseball season in March 2020 with only one game, and then everything shut down. They restarted the fall 2020 season with volleyball, soccer and other fall sports. The winter season's sport, basketball, was also able to resume. "The resumption followed safety protocols," Wilson stated. "Therefore, they were able to do it safely." Parks and Recreation created a COVID policy as well as a waiver to protect





## LAUGHS FOR RECREATION by Jennifer Robinson



*Robin Sanders*

**MARION**-If someone approaches you in a cartoon character costume dancing funny, offering balloon animals, what is the first thing you do? If it's in a safe environment, you may laugh or garner a big smile. Mascots have been a staple at children's parties for decades and have created many smiles and laughs. Those laughs are the goal of recreation creators like Robin Sanders, owner of Sanders Cartoon Mascots.

Mascots are people dressed in costumes who are hired to provide entertainment for events, mostly children's events, such as birthday parties. Sanders created this business because of her love for the characters Mickey and Minnie Mouse, a small financial need and her love of people. She also said she knows this is a calling from God. Sanders sat down at her computer one day and saw the Mickey and Minnie character costumes online. She ordered them, and when they arrived, she had her teen children try them on. From that day in 2018, Sanders Cartoon Mascots was born. Sanders and her seven children bring the characters to life. She said the business would not be what it is without them.

Mascot entertainment is not recognized as a form of recreation every day in our society. When many people think of recreation, they think of parks, tennis courts, soccer fields and, possibly, swimming. Those recreations all have to do with physical activity. But when one thinks of cartoon characters, some of us can instantly think of our favorite one, from Mickey and Minnie to Marvels



*Top Row, left to right, Robin Sanders, Ericka Sanders, Jakira Sanders, Davon Fryson, Kabresha Sanders and Jamaal Sanders. Bottom row, left to right: Jeremiah Sanders and Leslie Sanders.*

Incredible Hulk and Iron Man. From Finding Nemo to Baby Shark, we all have those thoughts and memories that make us laugh.

Sanders stated her starting her company is more than just about her love for characters. She



*LtoR: Paw Patrol Jakira Sanders, Minnie Mouse Ericka Sanders, Robin Sanders, Mickey Mouse Davon Fryson and Cookie Monster Jakira Sanders*

wants to create a legacy for her family. She was blessed with the idea for Sanders Cartoon Mascots with no job, seven children and three grandchildren. Though money was a motivator, she said legacy was and is

more important. She said that when she is gone, she wants her children and grandchildren to continue the business. Her prayer is that the business will be global. In addition, Sanders wants her children to use their talents to expand their business to continue to make people happy. When people call for their services, she says she makes sure her staff is available. She wants her business to always maintain the same integrity, and she also wants to use Sanders Cartoon Mascots to build communities and create jobs.



*LtoR Pink Panther Kabresha Sanders, Spiderman Jamaal Sanders and Mickey Mouse Davon Fryson*

Her character suit inventory has grown from two to 10 in the past two years with a year hiatus because of the pandemic. Sanders said her goal is to have 20 characters by the end of the year. She also declared with excitement that their event schedule is full. There are future events that will allow Sanders Cartoon Mascots to travel throughout the Southeast.



*Minnie Mouse is played by Ericka Sanders & Mickey Mouse is played by Davon Fryson*

As with other recreational businesses, the pandemic had some effect on Sanders Cartoon Mascots. Sanders said they were not able to attend events for most of 2020, but they did do some shows virtually. However, the schedule has rebounded, and she continues to pray for more events.

## CREATING HIGH-FUNCTIONING TEAMS THROUGH ACTIVITIES Submitted by Cypress Adventures Inc.

**HARTSVILLE**-At Cypress Adventures, we believe there's nothing a cohesive team, workgroup, organization or community can't accomplish. At the same time, we know that building cohesion doesn't happen overnight. It requires dedicated focus and a commitment to continually developing a culture of trust, support and respect.

**With practice, cohesion can turn an ordinary team into a high-functioning one.**

Our Teambuilding and Professional Services are community-focused, stimulating and customized to meet the unique needs of companies, organizations and private groups seeking better outcomes. Depending on your needs and goals, we concentrate on improving communication, negotiation, creative thinking and idea-sharing.

We utilize a combination of structured indoor and outdoor activities, including a low ropes course, to facilitate teambuilding that enhances individual effectiveness, illuminates shared visions, improves morale and reinforces practical leadership skills.

**At Cypress Adventures, we believe strong teams build healthy communities.**

Our Teambuilding and Professional Development Services are available for businesses, organizations and private groups in half-, full- and multi-day options.

**Contact Information:** Cypress Adventures, Inc., 881 Loblolly Lane, Hartsville, S.C., 29550

Telephone Number: 843-610-0866

Website: <http://www.cypressadventures.org>



**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**



**SUSTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE** *by De'Angela Haynes*



*Byerly Park*

**HARTSVILLE-** What is recreation, and why is it important? Recreation comes from the Latin word “recreate,” which means to create again and renew. It also means an activity done for enjoyment when one is not working. This is certainly the case for the

City of Hartsville, under the leadership of Adam Bedard, who is the director of Parks and Recreation. Sustaining and recreating quality of life is definitely important during this time when the pandemic caused shutdowns and closures around the world. Like any other business or organization, this was unprecedented, yet adjustments were made with the City of Hartsville in mind.

Bedard said it was so important to the City of Hartsville throughout COVID closures and modifications to keep recreation and quality of life at the forefront of our conversations and thought processes. In the beginning, when people were encouraged to stay home, we realized that they still need recreational outlets. While we were not able to welcome them to our indoor facilities for quite some time, we were able to encourage and highlight the outdoor opportunities that we have.

The City’s Tourism and Recreation Departments partnered to feature a Pandemic BINGO game that encouraged people to do things like take a long walk, visit a park, have a picnic, watch the sunrise and so much more. Once they received BINGO, they were entered to win a gift certificate to a Downtown business. The priority here was to give people options to maintain healthy lifestyles during the pandemic.

Neptune Island Waterpark also went to great strides during the pandemic to ensure it was able to open safely to provide an outdoor recreational opportunity. It opened at a 50 percent capacity during the summer of 2020 and implemented procedures such as a virtual entry line, extra sanitizing stations, floor markers throughout the park to encourage social distancing and additional sanitizing park-wide.

In 2021, Neptune Island reopened to a greater capacity but still uses many of the protocols that were introduced during the pandemic to continue making safety a priority. The virtual entry line was one of the great new additions that is still in place as it allows for guests to enter the admissions line from their cars rather than at a gate. Sanitizing stations as well as the markers for social distancing are still in place throughout the park.

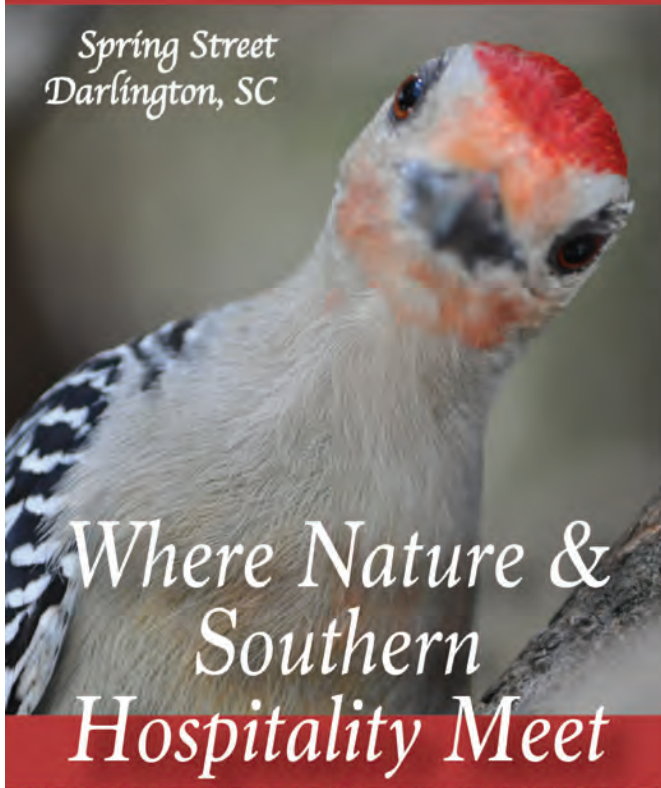
The City of Hartsville will continue to prioritize the safety of anyone using our parks and facilities to ensure that they are able to use these recreational opportunities comfortably. The public is encouraged and welcomed to any of our city parks, facilities and especially Neptune Island Waterpark. Registration is available online for Parks and Kickball <https://www.hartsvillesc.gov/government/forms/parks-rec-kickball-registration/>. It is the priority of Bedard to ensure that the City of Hartsville and beyond knows that they can

still experience quality of life, even if it had to be phased in and adjusted. This speaks highly of his leadership role and commitment to the City of Hartsville’s Parks and Recreation.



*Neptune Island*

*Spring Street  
Darlington, SC*



*Where Nature &  
Southern  
Hospitality Meet*



*Find more than 300 plant and animal  
species that flourish along Swift Creek  
and 70 acres of cypress forest  
on 1.1 miles of trails and boardwalks*



**Williamson Park**  
A Woodland Preserve



**South Carolina**  
Just right.



DiscoverSouthCarolina.com

**www.WilliamsonPark.org**  
**www.CityofDarlington.com**



## WHAT CITY OF FLORENCE REC HAS TO OFFER by Les Echols



Victoria Nash

We spoke with City of Florence employee, Victoria Nash. Nash started her journey with the City of Florence in 2017 as an activity instructor. Because of her hard work and passion for recreation, she has moved up and is now Recreation Division manager.

Nash grew up in the small town of Summerton and graduated from Sumter High School. “When I was younger growing up in a small town, I started being active with riding my bicycle and was fortunate enough to be encouraged to remain active in outdoor activities throughout the years,” she said. “My experience helped to instill in me how vital recreation is to the health of our youth as well as families. Children now have access to many more video games and mobile devices, so keeping them moving and active in recreational activities is critical. Throughout the years, we have realized that some children did not have access to the opportunities for several reasons from prohibitive cost, to lack of transportation. So, we have taken steps to be more

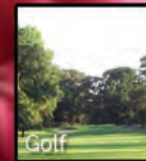
inclusive and give back to families by ensuring affordable and centrally located options so that more children will be able to enjoy the programs we offer,” Nash continued.

She stressed that creating awareness of programs helps to create more involvement. “Lack of knowledge is key, and one of the ways we are expanding is by helping to get the word out about local programs. When I first started with the City of Florence, I did not know all the things Florence had to offer. We offer several programs beyond what is seen as standard recreation, such as basketball, football and soccer. We have started several non-traditional programs like golf and boxing, and we focus on a bigger picture of recreation, academics and leisure. We also try to help promote everything from festivals to educational programs that are offered throughout the area. This encourages entire families to be involved in the community by taking advantage of more programs and events throughout the city,” concluded Nash.

The City of Florence Recreation Department remains busy throughout the summer with camps and has already started registering for its fall afterschool program. According to Nash, “The cost is inexpensive, but spots are limited. It has academic, homework help, arts and crafts, so we do not just keep children occupied with activities but also help them focus on their schoolwork. The afterschool program starts Aug. 2, and we want to encourage people to get children signed up as soon as possible.”

Victoria Nash graduated from the University of South Carolina (USC) in Sumter with an associate degree and USC-Aiken with a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise and sports science.

## Let Us Get your play on in the Pee Dee ...a world of adventure!



NORTHEAST SOUTH CAROLINA ~ HOME OF THE PEE DEE RIVERS

843-669-0950 [www.peedeetourism.com](http://www.peedeetourism.com)

2513 West Lucas Street • Florence, South Carolina 29501

DARLINGTON • DILLON • FLORENCE • LEE • MARION • MARLBORO • WILLIAMSBURG COUNTIES

Now located at the Pee Dee Farmer's Market in the log cabin



# SOUTHBOUND

Photographs of and about the New South



**Over 200 pieces now on display in Lake City! Visit each week Tuesday-Saturday from 11AM-5PM.**

**TRAX Visual Art Center  
122 Sauls Street  
Lake City, SC**

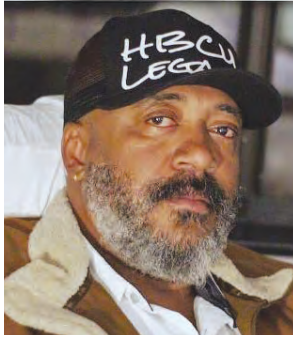
**Jones-Carter Gallery  
105 Henry Street  
Lake City, SC**

**Crossroads Gallery  
124 West Main Street  
Lake City, SC**

*Photos shown are by Susana Raab.*



## ART IS AT THE HEART OF AMERICAN CULTURE by Jennifer Robinson



*Herman Keith Jr.*

are sculptures or are music, they tell the story of the artist's interpretation.

In what ways do people show appreciation for the various art forms? Art is purchased, but does the purchaser look beyond the monetary value and celebrate the story behind the creation? Artists share so much when they create their pieces. They have mental, emotional and physical connections with their creations of which most people do not take the time to learn about or understand.

With the saturated and controlled media of today, it can be difficult for artists to achieve recognition not only for their work, but also for the advocacy behind their art. Therefore, let us take some time this month to explore and appreciate art that doesn't necessarily stand out on a magazine cover or in a documentary. Rather, dig deep for your local American artists whom you may uncover as making a difference in your world, and share them with us (consciousmagazine.co). American Art Appreciation Month is a time to not only share art but to also share historical context about art in America. American artists are highlighted for the entire month. In the Pee Dee, local artists are highlighted for their talents and artistic community contributions.

Herman Keith Jr. is an artist who does not mind making those artistic contributions to communities. Keith is an Anderson native and is now sharing his talents with the lower part of the state in places



*Mural downtown Lake City -From This Movement Forward*

like Orangeburg and Lake City. His work was commissioned to Lake City, and he also participated in ArtFields, a nine-day art competition. As a public artist, he paints murals in mostly rural towns that represent the culture of their areas. He stated the work he creates is to be shared with others. Keith acknowledged that the being that created us all as one, created us to impact others in a positive way. The positive way is to share their talents with others.

He said, "Art is not truly appreciated, at least not consciously. Art is seen every day and is not sometimes viewed in the ways it should. It's like when we lose things or people in our lives. We don't appreciate them until they are gone. And it's the same way with art. Because we see things every day, we don't really notice the beauty in them until we don't see them anymore."

As the art hub in South Carolina, Keith says he remains in Lake City for now because of the developing art industry. Lake City has become a draw because it has embraced the visual arts. Having an

**ANDERSON-**Herman Keith defined art as many different things. He gave a description, "When you wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and see a form, that's art." When you look around in nature and view the colors of flowers and trees, that's art. Art is not monolithic. In the eye of the beholder, there are multiple views that lead to the creation of many artistic works. Whether those works are in print,



*Tiger*

entire city become a beacon based off its appreciation of art impacts the industry. Keith states, "Lake City is a model for small towns that have lost other industries and shows that art can be an economic base."

Keith says that families and schools should motivate youth to appreciate art. Often, children are taught that there is money in athletics, but it is never shared that art is lucrative as a career. Parents, teachers and other youth supporters can help develop the talents of those who show signs of interest. Art is in young people's everyday lives from the clothes they wear, to the shoes they show excitement about, to the foods they eat. Keith says that young people may not be aware they are taught to create when they work in fast food restaurants how to build a burger that it is considered art. This could lead to a culinary career, which is art. When searching for scholarships for colleges, there are art awards that are often not applied for because young people are not aware of the opportunities.

Art will never be lost because if society visits local museums and galleries and even views small town murals. The artists will appreciate you.

## IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS by Anna Bowman



*Adrian Rhodes*

**HARTSVILLE-** Visual artist Adrian Rhodes is the 2020 recipient of the coveted 701 CCA Prize. The art project, created in 2012 by the Center for Contemporary Art, is a biennial competition and exhibition for South Carolina artists 40 years and younger. Rhodes will have a six-week, paid residency at the 701 Center for Contemporary Art, in Columbia, along with a solo exhibition and an ad in an art publication.

Rhodes--a printmaker, installation artist, painter, drawer and collagist--was extremely overjoyed being announced the winner of the prestige honor. "I submitted a portfolio of ten images for the prize application, which included both individual works and installations from prior exhibitions. The jury chose the winner based on those submissions, and I along with the other two finalists presented an exhibition of work related to the application portfolio," she explained. "My exhibition installation was titled 'Go Tell the Bees' and presented several of the works from the application portfolio, along with some site-specific work in the gallery and new drawings. I have not yet done the residency; I am very much looking forward to it. It will be a chance to make a great deal of work for my solo exhibition."

After winning the prestigious 701 CCA Prize, Rhodes sees an amazing opportunity for her career to continue to evolve as an artist. "Each installation and exhibition are a chance to do something new in the work and reach a new audience," said Rhodes. "I'll keep pushing to see what other venues and opportunities I can discover. The 701 prize includes a solo exhibition at 701CCA, and I am excited



## IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS CONT'D



*"Go Tell the Bees," 2020. Site-specific installation at the 701 Center for Contemporary Art in Columbia*

for the chance to use the entire space; it's a fantastic gallery."

A Hartsville native and graduate of Winthrop University with a BFA concentrated in drawing and painting and a MFA in painting and printmaking, Rhodes says that printmaking is the basis of everything that she does. In a recent interview with "Artist Minute," she described her artwork as "coming from a very personal place, a reflection of [her] own experiences, [her] own anxieties, and deals with the balance between grief and joy, and how you balance and hold both of those things simultaneously."

The past year was truly a banner year for the artist. In addition to her 701 prize, Rhodes was also the recipient of the SC Arts Commission's 2020 Individual Artist's Fellowship and the 2019 SECAC Artist's Fellowship, but winning awards, fellowships and honors for her artwork has been a staple throughout her career for over a decade. Her installation artwork entitled "Blood & Honey" is prominently featured on the January 2021 issue of "Carolina Arts" Magazine, a publication covering the visual arts in the Carolinas.

Rhodes said what she's proudest about her work is her sustained attention to detail in her artwork. As an art instructor at the University of South Carolina, in recent years, she has been enjoying sharing her love of arts with a future generation of artists. She is constantly learning and growing in her art field, and she has successfully sold numerous pieces from her art collection on her online shop via her website <https://www.adrianrhodes.com>.

## A SOUND IN THE SOUTH by De'Angela Haynes



*Terence Young*

**COLUMBIA**-August is American Artist Appreciation Month. While the life of artists is mostly one of solitude, their work is for others, and this is an important month to appreciate those American artists who are creating or have created works of art intended to inspire humanity and who are able to create and inspire change through their work. In much of the world today, an artist is

considered to be a person with the talent and the skills to conceptualize and make creative works. Such persons are singled out and prized for their artistic and original ideas. Their art works can take many forms and fit into numerous categories, such as architecture, ceramics, digital art, drawings, mixed media, paintings, photographs, prints, sculpture and textiles. For this edition, we feature Terence Young.

According to his website, "Terence Young has earned the



reputation of one of the most talented and electrifying Lead Guitarists in the world. He has released 10 CDs to date, ranging from Smooth Jazz and R&B, to gospel, Christmas, instrumental rock and his original guitar compositions. Young has shared the stage with countless renowned recording artists, including The Temptations,

Frankie Beverly and Maze, Patti Labelle, Gladys Knight, BabyFace, Charlie Wilson, En Vogue, Morris Day and the Time, Al Jarreau, Roberta Flack, George Duke, Rachele Ferrell, Gerald Albright, Clarence Carter and Joe Sample. In addition to performing with these top talents, Young has also performed with and was music director for the legendary Ashford and Simpson, Lenny Williams, Aaron Hall and Angie Stone, to name a few. Young's talent can also be heard on the Earth, Wind & Fire Tribute CD with R&B queen, Angie Stone."

Young "has been called on to perform the National Anthem at the NBA and various college games, and he was the featured artist at the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants). He has received several prestigious awards, including a Humanitarian Award."

"A native of Elko, Young now resides in Columbia where he manages The Finesse Band ([TheFinesseBand.com](http://TheFinesseBand.com)), one of the top party bands in the Southeast, while still producing and performing his jazz concerts nationwide. These shows are known as The Terence Young Experience. Entertaining and electrifying are just two words Young's fans use to describe his shows. Be sure to catch The Terence Young Experience the next time he is in your area. You don't want to miss it!" (<https://www.terenceyoungmusic.com/>)

Young is an awesome musician. Here are the titles of his CDs: "The Guitar Diary," "Healing For the Soul," "Love Stories," "Forever Young," "The Experience," "Christmas Time," "Christmas With You" and "Genesis."

Information about Young can be found on the Internet and through social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), and his music can be found on YouTube, Spotify and YouTube Music as well. Here are his upcoming shows:

- Aug. 20, The Main Course in Columbia <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/153028944693>
- Aug. 21 Sumter Opera House in Sumter <https://www.sumteroperahouse.com/terenceyoungexperience>
- Aug. 28 Charleston Music Hall in Charleston <https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/2D005AB9EB7F4046>

Great music doesn't just come from the New York, Hollywood or other great areas, but with great musicians like Terence Young, there is also a great sound that can be found in the South.





## BRINGING NOVEL IDEAS TO THE CLASSROOM



E.J. Favor

**MARION** – E.J. Favor originally planned to major in music education with a minor in theater when he began college with the ultimate dream of one day performing on Broadway. But faith intervened, and he discovered his true life’s calling, which led him to become a teacher. “I discovered my love for teaching while in college, when I had the opportunity to teach at various schools in Orangeburg, S.C., as well as

teaching abroad,” he said. “The experiences awakened my passion to pursue teaching as a career.”

Favor, a sixth-grade social studies teacher at Johnakin Middle School in Marion, just completed his second-year term. Each year has been an exceptional experience for the novice teacher. However, school year 2020-2021 will surely be the most memorable to date because of the way in which the COVID-19 virus impacted the lives of all Americans, especially students. Suddenly, the world was inundated with new jargon: “social distance”; “stand six feet apart”; “wash your hands”; and the all too famous, “wear your mask.” The latter, being the one thing that threw everyone’s life for a loop, seemingly stripping everyone’s identity overnight.

Suddenly, schools became virtual, then hybrid, and both teachers and students had to adapt to their new normal. As schools began to allow in-person classes, a new problem arose: how to ensure the safety of the students by encouraging them to wear a mask. Favor, who describes himself as an unconventional teacher, got a phenomenal idea to address the dilemma. “During one of our faculty’s core development meetings for staff who were tasked with preparing for in-person classes. The staff also discussed ways to express the importance of wearing masks,” he said. “The melody of a popular song titled ‘Mask Off’ became stuck in my head.” Favor began to write lyrics to a song that he would title “Mask On” that would talk about the importance of wearing their masks while at school. He started the process single-handedly but quickly enlisted the assistance of his students. “As my students returned to the classroom, I invited them to participate in writing some of the lyrics, as well. We brainstormed to complete the lyrics for the song as a team. The process helped to give the children ownership of the process to make their school safe.”

Once the song was completed, Favor shared the idea of making the video to Principal Mark Fraiser. “I was amazed at his enthusiasm about the project, as well as the other teachers.” Favor noted that not all his out-the-box ideas were received as well as this one. “I can’t say enough about the principal and staff that embraced the idea, and not only welcomed the idea of the video, but were happy to take part in the video to showcase a unified goal of keeping everyone safe. It also showed a softer, fun side of the principal, teachers and staff members.” The video, “Mask On,” has been viewed on YouTube nearly a thousand times and was an overwhelming success in achieving its goal of keeping everyone safe.

This isn’t the first video that Favor and his students have produced. After watching the movie “Selma,” he had students recreate the scene where Civil Rights marchers crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. He was pleasantly surprised about how much his 11- to 12-year-old students understood about that period in American history and how knowledgeable they are about social injustice, as it stands today. He said that his teaching style allowed students to be “present” in that era. He even compares his teaching style to that of the Magic’s School Bus’s character, Miss Frizzle, who embarks on adventures with her class on the eponymous school bus as they journey on their exciting field trips. “Presently, all field trips are not allowed, but that does not stop me from bringing that experience into my classroom.”

Favor wants to help his students understand how they can become agents of change for the world. In fact, his mantra for his classroom is, “You Can Change the World.” He cannot share his personal viewpoints, but he encourages students to share their views with the class.

As a Black male teacher, Favor is a part of a small minority of Black male teachers who are often referred to as “Unicorns” because they are so rarely seen in classes. He understands the positive impact he has on young Black boys, but he understands that his presence is also special for young boys of all races, who might not have a father or strong male figure in the home to help guide and shape their future. He wants his students to know that he isn’t just there for them academically, but he wants to assist them in the development of their day-to-day life.

Favor’s beloved grandfather, the late Dr. Walter I. James, Sr. Ed.D, who was also a social studies teacher, would always share this quote with his grandson: “Everybody knows some things about something, but nobody knows everything about nothing.” These are words that Favor has embraced throughout this young life.

A Marion native, Favor is a 2019 graduate of Claflin University with a BA in psychology, and a minor in middle level education. He will return to Claflin University in the fall to obtain his M.ed, in curriculum and instructions. During his undergraduate matriculation at Claflin, he was elected Mr. Claflin 2018-2019, and as a part of his platform, he created a non-profit mentoring organization for young boys in grades third through eighth called “Cultivating Kings Mentoring, Inc.” that is still active today on the campus. Favor has a chapter of the organization established at Johnakin Middle School as well, and he attends The Door of Hope Christian Church in Marion.





# AWAKENING CHARACTER IN NARRATIVE PAINTING by Anna Bowman



Colleen Critcher

Colleen Critcher knew as early as the age of five that she wanted to be a painter. “When I was five years old,” she recalled, “I remember taking a tour of my elementary school and peering into the art room to observe

rows of easels and shelves full of art supplies. I had never seen a dedicated studio space until that day, and I remember thinking that I wanted to be an artist and work in a studio when I grew up.” Critcher’s extraordinary career has come full circle from a little girl peering into an art studio, to an award-winning painter who became a gallery coordinator.

Critcher, who received her degree in visual art from Francis Marion University (FMU) and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Savannah College of Art & Design, describes herself primarily as a painter but subsequently finds herself creating drawings as well. “I prefer oil paintings, but I also make a lot of gouache (opaque watercolor),” she said, adding that she occasionally makes sculptural and video works, and lately, she’s working on printmaking processes. For the past several years, she has engaged in working on a body of work that addresses consumer culture. “I have made a large series of portraits, as well as a large number of repetitive images of Tyrannosaurus Rex.”

Her artwork is inspired by things she has experienced in her life. “I started making artwork about consumerism because at the time I was living in Savannah, Ga., where my studio overlooked the cargo ships heading to port on the Savannah River,” she said. “It was hard for me to avoid thinking about how each ship was full of things headed to stores and showrooms, and how the whole process dominated our lives and culture.”

Fans of Critcher’s artwork are also aware of her love of including garden gnomes and T. Rex because she said that the two images are constantly reappearing to her in various forms via popular culture. She also finds inspiration in her friends and family. “In the past couple of years, I’ve been adding a lot more characters into my narrative paintings. Having small children has definitely influenced how I think about art and imagery, as well,” she stated. She has also started to include herself in her paintings, adding that she is using herself in narrative paintings because the ideas in the paintings began to feel self-reflective. “Making self-portraits is also convenient because you always have an enthusiastic model,” she acknowledged.

Critcher, an award-winning artist, has taught at FMU, Coker University and Coastal Carolina University. “Teaching is the most rewarding job I’ve ever had,” she said. “It’s a great feeling to help students overcome their fears and empower them with a good understanding of process and techniques.” She occasionally offers private lessons, mentorships and workshops.

In her current position as gallery coordinator for The University Place Gallery, located in the heart of downtown Florence, Critcher is truly in her natural environment. Critcher said that working at the Gallery, located at 142 North Dargan Street Florence, S.C., is a wonderful experience. The Gallery, which offers free admission and features rotating exhibitions designed to inspire and engage the residents of the Pee Dee region, is a wonderful opportunity for residents of the Pee Dee to become introduced to various artists and



Colleen Critcher Studio Image

their artwork.

“I have the privilege of bringing great artists into downtown Florence and sharing their visions with the community. There is never a dull moment because things are

constantly changing,” she said. “We have some excellent shows coming up soon, including a partnership with Terry James of the Jamestown Foundation titled: ‘No Place Like Home.’ All the artists in the show are the descendants of slaves and are making work in response to that concept in some way. Many of the artists are working in traditional craft processes such as basket weaving, furniture making, and carving. There will be an amazing variety of media from a large group of artists from the southeast, including Freeman Vines and Carren Clarke, as well as local artists like Harry McFadden.”

Critcher is currently prepping for an exhibition to be held at Julia Deckman Studio in Charleston this September. “This show is going to include a lot of really colorful pop art paintings of T.Rex,” she said. Art lovers can find her small works and commissions for sale on her website [www.colleencritcher.com/new-products](http://www.colleencritcher.com/new-products). They can also find her work at Shop SCAD in Savannah, Ga.: <https://shopsacad.com> and through SCAD Art Sales: [www.scadartsales.com/](http://www.scadartsales.com/).

Colleen and Brad Critcher are the proud parents of two children, and the family resides in Florence.

## DARLINGTON HIGH’S LACY WINS MODEL HOME CONTEST

*Submitted by Christopher McKagen, Communications Specialist*



*Shaleigh Lacy, a sophomore at Darlington High School who attends the Darlington County Institute of Technology, won DCIT’s annual model home building contest with this model home.*

**DARLINGTON-**Shaleigh Lacy, a sophomore at Darlington High School who attends the Darlington County Institute of Technology (DCIT), won DCIT’s 2021 Model Home Building Competition.

The contest takes place annually in Jack Parker’s Carpentry I class at DCIT as a project-based learning experience. All of the students must first build an identical model from scratch, and later in the process they add their own touches.

Lacy’s winning model features an elegant design with dormer gables, a structurally sound frame, a front porch with overhead trellis and a front yard enclosed by a picket fence.

Darlington County School District administrators carried out the judging. Parker rewarded the Carpentry students’ efforts with a lunch through the support of North Industrial Machine in Hartsville.

DCIT’s Carpentry class is one of many hands-on opportunities at the school that gives students practical work experience. The career and technology school works to prepare students to enter the workforce following graduation.



## FUNDAMENTALLY TOUCHING OTHERS THROUGH ART by Adalia Ellis



Rachel Jones

“Imagination is a wonderful thing, and words have such power,” says local visual artist Rachel Jones. Art has been essential to her since childhood. For Jones, art plays a significant role in fulfilling the need to create and to express her individuality.

When she creates a painting, it forces her to stop and think about how she wants to create herself through paint. “It allows me to make sense of my little universe and bigger things I have no control over.

Jones is attracted to the universality of visual art. While memes, social media and shifts in culture rely on a constantly changing language to keep up with minutiae of thought, “the language of visual art is universal. There are definite differences in how it will be perceived by the viewers, depending on culture, the times, upbringing, personal ideology, but there is a unifying element where we relate to it on some personal level, or it challenges us to think about something in a new way or explore the context.”

She feels this is the power of visual art...that it can transcend time, culture and experience to touch the heart and minds of people at a fundamental level. In a small way, Jones’ art allows her to have conversations and connect with people that she may have never had the chance to meet. “In a divided world, I feel this is truly unifying. Also, I like to play with paint and try to make pretty things.”

When considering what media to use, such as charcoal, pastels, oils, watercolors, collage, layers of paper or embroidery, Jones considers not just her mood but also the subject matter. She began creating visual pieces by using charcoal and pastels

because she appreciated the directness of these artistic mediums. She then moved to oils and watercolors. “Oil has a certain weight to it that suits my painting a darker or heavier theme. However, if I want to create something ethereal, it has to be watercolor,” explains Jones. In her more recent artwork, she is addressing memory and time, “Since there is not one event on a timeline, I try to reflect that overflow with a mixture. There are words, collage, layers of paper, and even embroidery in some of the pieces. We are complex, and sometimes so is the work.”

As with any vocation, there can be challenges and also joy. For Jones, her challenge is that there is not enough time. She is not currently a full-time artist, but art exists in her mind full time. “I’m constantly thinking about projects and how I’d bring them to life if time and money were not limited.” She does not let this hinder her though and believes that where there is a will there is a way. “I cannot make. It puts me in a mood when I’m away from my little studio space for too long.”

In addition to painting, her other joy is teaching. She would love to do it more because she enjoys teaching those who think they can never paint. “The excitement when they realize after a lesson that everyone can make art and that it is just a matter

of a little direction is priceless. Then they have something that is truly their own.”

For those who are hesitant to explore the various types of art, Jones says, “Do it. Everyone has something to say and your point of view is valid. It isn’t all about the end result, but the process. It takes time. Find that art form that brings joy, and start. We were made to create. There isn’t a finish line, so just start running at your own pace.”



The Watcher

## USING SYMBOLISM TO HONOR THE ANCESTORS by Ta’Meeka Epps



Abra Regina features a scarf worn as a headwrap called “Bright Love.” It features the symbol called “Odo Nnye Fie Kwan,” which translates to “love always finds its way home,” which symbolizes the power of love.

**LAKE CITY**—The next artist spotlight illuminates the works of an alumnus of Lake City High School, North Carolina A&T and Maryland Institute College of Art, Abra Regina. Abra was born and raised in Northeast Baltimore and at the age of 16 relocated to live with her mother in Lake City, where she still resides.

Abra uses cultural influences and the marriage of digital and textile art to bring her current creations to life. “I currently design fabric using digital software. Then, it is printed by a third-party manufacturer. My fabrics are used to make scarves and headwraps. Within these digital illustrations, I use Adinkra symbols from West Africa. Each symbol has a meaning. The Adinkra symbols, along with flowers I have photographed,

mainly from my mother’s garden, are used to create my current artwork. I like to play with different arrangements of the symbols and essentially write with them in order to relay a message. I treat the messages in my artwork as affirmations. I personally use the symbols as a reminder to walk and live in purpose, power and beauty.”

Abra grew up sewing as a small child, and she remembers watching her great-great aunt sew and make clothes for dolls. Her mother then taught her how to hand stitch dolls. Her love for art, especially visual art, was nurtured from a young age. As she continued to grow in her art form, her repertoire expanded, and in 2019 she introduced the Adinkra symbols into her creations. “I originally discovered Adinkra symbols at an art gallery where I was employed. They had a huge tapestry hung in the lobby where we would hang out, and I found myself staring in awe at the creation,” Abra explained of her love for the African symbol.

A coworker of Abra’s was able to identify and name one of the symbols, which led her on a mission to research and find out as much as she could about the Adinkra symbols and their history. The symbols became the muse for Abra. “This language



## USING SYMBOLISM CONT'D



*Abra Regina features a poncho (NFS), untitled. It features three Adinkra symbols, meaning determination, wisdom and nurturing.*

was a window to an unexplored history of people of African descent. In school we aren't taught much of the history of Black/African people prior to slavery. The Adinkra symbols solidify the fact that there were complex written languages in Africa well before slavery, that there was wealth and beauty in the Africa. It is confirmation that this perspective was stolen from us and that we have always held value as a people. These symbols give me a space to honor my ancestors, no matter how indirect. I get into a space

to create freely constantly."

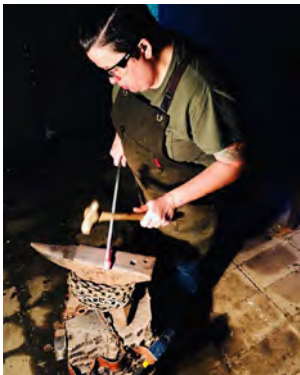
Abra wants to expand her scarves and headwraps to a full fashion line as well as continue to create fine art. She would like to be innovative in her efforts and set up a manufacturing arm for her products employing those in the community giving them resources to provide for their family and learn valuable skills. She increased her social media presence during the pandemic and will pursue retail opportunities throughout South Carolina before looking to expand to other states.

She is inspired by the people around her, the colors they are wearing, even the way they carry themselves. She finds inspiration in phrases, friendships and anything or anyone inspires her to create. She believes people in general are beautiful. Therefore, she creates beautiful things for beautiful people.

To learn more about Abra Regina and her artwork, visit her at [instagram.com/createdbyabra](https://www.instagram.com/createdbyabra) [facebook.com/createdbyabra](https://www.facebook.com/createdbyabra) and [www.createdbyabra.com](http://www.createdbyabra.com).

## SELF-TAUGHT, MULTI-TALENTED AND COMMUNITY-MINDED

by Ta'Meeka Epps



*MeLinda Brown*

**LAKE CITY**-The month of August is not only the midpoint of the third quarter of the year, but it is also Artist Appreciation Month. During the month of August, we spotlight those who give their gifts as inspiration to life--to humanity. Art is a diverse expression involving creative imagination and skill which invokes beauty, debate, ideas and power.

The Pee Dee region has an eclectic mix of artists who have made the area their home. MeLinda Brown of Lake City uses every aspect of her life as an opportunity to create art.

Brown is a metalsmith who works in theater, including entertainment production. A metalsmith is a craftsman who creates tools or works of art out of various metals. Brown is also a member of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Union (IATSE).



*MeLinda at work*

The start of the COVID-19 pandemic saw the shutdown of the IATSE in March of 2020, rendering Brown unemployed. "Since the start of the pandemic, I haven't been able to work. The wood shortage has stalled me building my blacksmith shop. So, I've been using my artistry in other ways, such as cooking, making hot sauce, writing a graphic novel with a friend, as well as building a forge in the back yard where I will teach

classes and start making knives again."

Brown makes knives and woodwork, sews, preserves foods through fermentation, paints and draws and does leather work. She is a bartender and stagehand. She gardens, plays the guitar, sings, writes music and creates delicious works of arts in the kitchen. Her skillsets are mostly self-taught with the exception of sewing and cooking, which were passed down through the generations of her family.

When asked why she creates, Brown's response shined a light on a disorder many artists fight through: post-traumatic stress disorder. Brown doesn't have a muse she creates as a way to deal with trauma. She suffers from CPTSD, so making things keeps her occupied and balanced. CPTSD stands for complex post-traumatic stress disorder. It is a mental health condition in which a person might experience intense PTSD symptoms.

Brown uses her art as a way to combat the disorder while creating beautiful and tasty things and spaces to display those things. In fact, she and her wife, artist Ashley Hamilton, are in the process of opening a gallery/cocktail bar on Main Street in Lake City. They have been together for eight years, married for six this year. Hamilton's gallery will be called Liminal Space, and Brown's bar will be called Lush and Feral.

Brown believes diversity is key to growth. "We have to figure out how to be the best allies we can for one another. As a lesbian who grew up in the South, I know the value of allies, of having a meaningful connection through a common interest. I know how important it is to have a group of people supporting you even before you ask," she explained.

MeLinda Brown knows how important community is and looks forward to building with the community of Lake City. She also wants to start a community garden to teach kids gardening, and she envisions teaching blacksmithing classes and food preservation techniques as well. For more information on Brown and her artistic creations, follow her on Instagram @ [melindabrownmade](https://www.instagram.com/melindabrownmade).





## A MAJOR DEAL IN DANCE Articles by Adalia Ellis



*Renetha Stagers*

Dance is an art form that encourages engagement and group participation. Although dance can be a solo endeavor, true growth and experience as a dancer happens when individuals get to express themselves through movement with others. The Major Varsity Dance Team is one such organization. In 2014, Renetha Stagers and Terica Austin established the dance team under the name Glamour

Girl as a way to promote unity, create friendships, serve the community and offer a safe haven for the youth. The first program was offered through the city's recreation department. A year later, the group decided to become independent, and the name was changed to its current title.

The inspiration behind the dance team was the young daughter of Stagers. "When she was a little girl, I always kept her in activities such as gymnastics, cheer, Double Dutch, softball and dance, just to name a few. I always wanted to be that parent that was involved, so luck has it I ended up coaching a few." It was through coaching her daughter's various activities that Stagers became the director of The Major Varsity Dance Team.

But she doesn't do it alone. She is assisted by Tarsha Smoot, Kamika Park and dance coaches, Javion James and ZaLayia Robinson. Participants range in age from 6-18, are male and female and are from all over the Pee Dee. They are a competitive dance team that travels throughout the Middle East and eastern states. The team has won countless trophies, including the title of Grand Champion. Some of the dance styles they specialize in are jazz, hip-hop, ballet and majorette.

For young people, dance is a powerful way to create bonds of friendship and skills for interpersonal engagement that will stay with them for life. "Being involved in dance helps the youth create new friendships, stay fit and understand the meaning of commitment, dedication, leadership skills, team work, accountability, loyalty and so much more," says Stagers.

In addition to learning choreography, practicing and competing, participants also do service so that they can stay engaged in and give back to their community.

One of the biggest challenges for Stagers, as a director, is funding. "Our monthly fees are one the lowest fees for a youth activity in Florence. I really work hard to keep it this way so it can be affordable."

She also juggles work, school, being a mother and a soon to be wife. For her, the joys outweigh the challenges. "Just to see them grow into productive young adults right in front of my eyes is enough. The smiles, the cries, the hard work shows me every day why I do what I do. If I can keep them off the street and out of trouble three days a week, I'm doing my job."

The program is always looking for sponsors, and they accept donations. Registration for their 7th season began in June. The



*The Major Varsity Dance Team*

season will begin in July. Find and follow the team on FaceBook under Major Varsity and on Instagram under Major\_varsiytdanceteam.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SENIORS



*"Who Murdered Grandma Poo Poo" performance at the Sunrise Outdoor Theatre in Southern Pines, N.C. on April, 2021. Left to right: Josephine Jupiter and Daisy Crawford*

In 2017, the Leatherman Seasoned Players drama group began under the leadership of Brenda Brown. After discovering a lack of theatrical activities for, by and about seniors in Florence County, Brown set out to establish a senior theatre company. In 2020, the drama group was renamed, and The Flo-Town Wisdom Players Senior Theatre Company became a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

In a society that emphasizes youth, is obsessed with looking young as one ages and relegates elders to inactivity, The Flo-Town Wisdom Players Senior Theatre Company challenges these notions

with energy and creativity. The members agree that the company fosters a supportive environment that allows them to work with and learn from one another. The theatre experience creates an inner excitement and drive, which enables members to tap into their creative talents and develop new skills.

The company also promotes social, cognitive, physical and emotional well-being. Though the group is made of like-minded people, they are different due to their life experiences. This creates an opportunity for conversations. These conversations can generate laughter, growth and support. The members are encouraged to learn as much as possible about all aspects of putting on a production. They are involved in writing, casting, organizing and producing shows, which require utilization of cognitive skills. In addition to preparing for a production creatively, members physically participate within the limits of their ability. "Simply getting out of the house, socializing and learning from others promotes a healthy sense of self," says Brown, company founder and president.

For the larger community, performances by The Flo-Town Wisdom Players Senior Theatre Company have been inspiring, dormant performing arts companies are now becoming active, and younger members of the community are also being impacted. The younger generation is motivated to change their perception of aging by observing older adults being active in the community. This dispels the stereotype that older adults "can't do anything."

Some of the challenges of running a community-based theater company are limited funding, lack of a permanent space and limited equipment. Despite these challenges, Brown says, "One of the



*Black History Month Skit, "From the Outhouse to the White House," February 2020. Left to right: Sutton Bacote, Ethelean Frison and Janice Bogun*



## IT'S ALL ABOUT CONT'D

joys of producing senior theatre is having selective audience members who are eager and happy to participate in the performances. We are delighted when we see the smiles on the faces of our audiences and to hear how much they enjoy our productions. That is how we measure success!”

**OUR MISSION:** To enhance and enrich the quality of life for all, with emphasis on senior citizens. The group endeavors to expose the audience to a variety of lively performances and to tap into the hidden talents of the participants.

**OUR PURPOSE:** To motivate, encourage, uplift and educate people of all ages.

**OUR MOTTO:** “We are not finished yet and neither are you” Ps. 92:14.

## NO RULES. NO BOUNDARIES.

by Adalia Ellis



Ashley O. Davis

Visual art has the power to communicate depth of feeling, thought and lived experience without uttering a word. Ashley O. Davis, a local visual artist, is harnessing this power to address the needs of our time. She is currently using visual art to emphasize the need for unity in urban neighborhoods through the Canvas the Courts Project.

“With all the racism that we have experienced and are experiencing in our nation and all the crimes that we see occurring down the street from our homes, we, Canvas the Courts Project, wanted to do something positive in our communities that the people would be proud of.” She painted the first-ever basketball court mural in the city at Northwest Community Park in May of 2021. For three days she and other local artists and volunteers were on their hands and knees taping off court basketball lines, chalking out drawings and painting the design she created. The purpose? “To give the people in that neighborhood something positive to talk about.” They are only getting started with what she refers to as “our act of love.” There are two more parks that they plan to transform, Dr. Iola Jones Park in North Florence in September 2021 and Levy Park in East Florence in November 2021.

Davis’ love for art began at a young age. Around the age of eight or nine, while she was attending North Vista Elementary School, she was fascinated with sneakers. She tried to imagine what it would be like to create them. She began drawing designs on sneakers, which is her earliest memory of drawing on something. “I don’t exactly know when I developed this passion for art, but



1st Court Design Your Life Matter

it was almost innate. It came as a shock, I think, to my parents that I had this great talent for not only drawing but other art forms. But, for me, it was no surprise. It was

natural.”

One of the joys that art creates for her is that it has no rules and allows Davis to express herself without boundaries. “Art is like stepping into a high definition open field of an array of flowers with a welcoming warm sun as the gentle smell of fresh linen graces your nose.”

Creating art becomes challenging sometimes, such as when Davis experiences brain freeze, so she prays and asks the Creator to help her to create something that is fresh, exciting and new, and it always works.

Davis loves all art forms. She dabbles in photography, videography, painting, drawing, theater, writing, music (playing instruments), public speaking and graphic design. Although she finds it hard to choose a favorite, the one that she connects with most is painting. For her it is relaxing and can also be intimidating. She explains, “Having a blank canvas in front of your face is not an easy task. It’s actually scary because you have to turn nothing into something with no rules or directions in hand. So every single time before I paint, I stare at my canvas for minutes envisioning what my end result will look like. Before even dipping the paint brush into my beautifully arranged palette, I practice stroking my brush on the canvas. Getting started is the hardest part, but after that passes, I just flow and freely create something that’s never been created before.”

A proud moment for Davis was working the Black Lives Matter Mural. She was shocked that a small city like Florence was involved in something so grand. The entire world got to see the mural. Davis was responsible for the “B” in the word Black. She describes her contribution to this initiative by local artist Jamel, “I painted that “B” with so much pride because it represented me. Inside the ‘B’ was a silhouette of a black woman with this crown of natural hair. I saw that woman as myself...young, black and proud.”



2nd Court Design Your Life Matter

At the basketball court at Northwest, you will see a game controller. “With this particular design I am literally announcing very loudly (due to the scale of the design) to the community that you are in control of your life. Whether you win or lose, it is up to you. You hold the controller in your hand, and just like you can win at basketball or video games, you can win every day when you step outside of your home. The choice is simply yours.”

The court at the Northwest Community Center features black hands, lifelines and the colors red, green, yellow and black. “This court is definitely an announcement to the Northwest Community that their life matters, and it is meant to encourage them to remain proud of who they are.”

Davis encourages everyone to visit the locations of these murals. “I want our mission and our love for the community to be seen worldwide via these basketball court murals.” They are still in need of support from the community in order to carry out the project. If you would like to donate or sign up to volunteer, please email them at [canvasthecourts@gmail.com](mailto:canvasthecourts@gmail.com).



## ARTS ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS Submitted by FRAA



Since 1997, the Florence Regional Arts Alliance with generous support from Honda of South Carolina has awarded 64 Florence County students with the prestigious Betty Ann Darby Scholarship. This



*Mary Leslie Bessenger*

year three more students have been added to the list of deserving recipients. This year's recipients are Mary Leslie Bessenger, Dylan Cowdright and Jackson Matthews.

Mary Leslie Bessenger, a recent graduate of West Florence High School, will be attending Coastal Carolina University. She has an extensive list of school activities as well as community activities. She performed as featured soloist with the West Florence Knight Edition Show Choir at Walt Disney World Florida, performed supporting roles in Florence Little Theater production of "Matilda" and performed in several popular productions with Impact Children's Theater where she played her favorite role as Genie in "Aladdin." Her involvement in the community includes serving with Junebugs Care and volunteering in Kid's Ministries at Church at Sandhurst and with Power Up Club as leader and team captain. Her immediate goal is to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts in musical theater and to participate in the Disney College Program. Her ultimate career goal is to perform on stage and on screen. In regards to her talent and future goals, Bessenger states, "My heart and love for musical theater will help me to persevere during classes that might be a struggle. And to someday transport audiences to another world



*Dylan Cowdright*

for a few hours and share with them the joy that theater can bring. A degree in musical theater will be the first stepping stone to achieving this dream."

Dylan Cowdright is a graduate of South Florence High School who plans to attend Francis Marion University in the fall. Cowdright has participated in South Florence High School Student Art Shows as member of the National Honors Society and as member of the Beta Club. Cowdright completed South Florence Advance Placement (AP) Studio Art class with a 100 percent average and went on to pass the AP Studio Art exam with a four out of five. His immediate goal is to complete Francis Marion University with bachelor's degree in graphic design, and his ultimate career goal is to become a concept artist for popular entertainment companies like Marvel, Disney or DC. "This degree will increase my chance of working within this career greatly. I've worked for so long with art, and going into an art field feels very natural for me. I hope to be successful with my college study and my career



*Jackson Matthews*

goals," he shares.

Jackson Matthews plans to attend Clemson University and major in design and packaging science. Matthews recently graduated from The Carolina Academy. His experience includes graphic design for the school's website, intern with Lake City Creative Alliance and volunteer with HomeWorks group rebuilding homes for those in need.

"I've always loved art and anything requiring a creative vision," he shares.

Interning with the Lake City ArtFields Collective solidified that design was his future. He credits, "After working with the Lake City ArtFields Collective for the summer, they offered me a part-time job during the school year. I've been working with them ever since and have loved every second of it. I get to see all sorts of art and meet many artists, which continues my drive and passion towards the arts. I like to view things from many perspectives and with different views. Art allows me to see, feel and understand what someone is trying to convey." This experience decided his career choice.

Commenting on this study choice, Jackson says, "Ultimately, I would like to start a business of my own and bring creative people together to work collectively towards a common goal. I have many interests and would love to bring people together in a common space."

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.

The Betty Ann Darby Scholarship Program each year awards 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. Students complete an application that includes an essay and a portfolio of support material.

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 at [director@florenceartsalliance.org](mailto:director@florenceartsalliance.org).





# MUSC OFFERS ADVANCED TREATMENT FOR PROSTATE CANCER

Submitted by C. Eric Wooten, M.D., MUSC Health Florence Radiation Oncology



C. Eric Wooten, M.D.

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer diagnosed in men. The American Cancer Society predicts about 248,530 new prostate cancer cases will be diagnosed this year. This means about one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

For patients diagnosed with early-stage prostate cancer, selecting the best treatment option can be a challenge. This is due primarily to the many different treatment options available. Also, not every cancer treatment center can provide the same treatments.

Although surgery and radiation therapy are the two most common treatment options for prostate cancer, many different types of treatment are available for both. Knowing the benefits and risks of each treatment makes it easier for someone to decide which option will work best. Men commonly choose external beam radiation therapy (EBRT) due to the low risk of urinary and sexual side effects combined with the ease of quick, daily outpatient treatments. However, a drawback of traditional EBRT for prostate cancer is that it typically takes nine weeks or 39-45 daily treatments.

Recently, a more advanced type of EBRT called stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT), or stereotactic ablative radiation therapy (SABR), has been developed. SBRT is a high-precision type of EBRT with the advantage of fewer total outpatient treatments needed. SBRT requires only five daily outpatient treatments for prostate cancer compared to 39-45 visits required of traditional EBRT. In addition, SBRT requires only about one-third of the total radiation dose than with traditional EBRT. In other words, it's a bit like comparing a 30-year to a 15-year fixed-rate mortgage. A higher monthly payment is needed for a 15-year mortgage, but your house is paid off in half the time with less total money given to the bank as interest.

I am fortunate to have trained with one of the founders of SBRT and to have extensive experience. We have provided SBRT at MUSC Health Florence Medical Center as an alternative in treating prostate cancer for more than a year now with excellent outcomes. In addition to convenience, SBRT has increased patient safety during the pandemic by reducing the number of treatments by nine to one, thereby reducing exposure. We also use SBRT to treat a variety of other cancers due to its superior outcomes and reduced side effects, compared to more traditional

treatments.

Not every cancer center provides SBRT due to the necessary training, experience and its highly precise nature. MUSC Health Florence offers the most advanced form of SBRT planned and delivered with VMAT technology, which is a form of IMRT. VMAT is similar to the technology jump from X-Rays to CT scans. It improves treatment by delivering radiation from a continuous arc versus fixed angles, allowing more precise targeting. My staff and I offer only the highest quality and most advanced technology in our clinic. Every SBRT patient is treated according to the most recent clinical trial standards, which is the highest standard available. Our goal is to exceed those high standards with every treatment.

SBRT can be used with other prostate treatment techniques, including placement of hydrogel spacers. Hydrogel spacers help increase the dose of radiation to the tumor while at the same time lowering side effect risk from treatment. We also use MRI imaging for prostate cancer treatment to provide a much better image than CT images alone. SBRT is now recommended by national guidelines and should be offered to all suitable patients with early-stage prostate cancer.

MUSC is South Carolina's only NCI-designated cancer center. MUSC Health Florence Medical Center is proud to be the first in the region to offer SBRT as a treatment option for early-stage prostate cancer.

SBRT is a real win for our patients and our hospital. We have had excellent feedback from our patients. I remember our first patient was reluctant to have invasive procedures done because of possible side effects. He wanted to move forward with EBRT, but his occupation made it difficult to come in every day for nine weeks. He was thrilled to find out we could complete the same treatment in only five quick outpatient visits.

Dr. C. Eric Wooten is a board-certified radiation oncologist and a member of the MUSC Health Florence Medical Center medical staff. For more information, please call 843-674-2470.

A graphic for Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. At the top, a blue banner with white text reads "September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month". Below the banner is a blue silhouette map of the United States. Overlaid on the map is the text "Prostate cancer kills ~30,000 Men in the U.S. each year". The text "Prostate cancer kills" is in white, "~30,000" is in large white font, and "Men in the U.S. each year" is in white. The background of the graphic is a blurred image of blue surgical instruments.



**PROSTATE CANCER: THE BLUE RIBBON IS SIGNIFICANT TOO** *by Jennifer Robinson*



Reverend Marvin Hemingway

There is information that is shared about prostate cancer but may not be as prevalent as what is shared about other forms of cancer.

In the United States, over 160,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, and about 30,000 die from it. Early detection is the key to successful treatment. This awareness period and the organizations and associations that support it, are responsible for saving an untold number of men’s lives by encouraging them to have a discussion with their healthcare provider about prostate cancer and early detection ([www.prostatehealthguide.com](http://www.prostatehealthguide.com)). A local survivor shares his compelling story of overcoming this disease.

Reverend Marvin Hemingway was diagnosed with prostate cancer in the 5th stage on April 21, 2021. He says he is not exactly sure how he feels about the sickness at this time, but he is not afraid, and he is neither worried nor is he accepting defeat. He says he will proceed with the medical treatment from MUSC of Florence, which includes making frequent doctor visits, tests and lab work. His medication has made his treatment manageable for the past five years.

Hemingway declared, “It is especially important for men to make frequent doctor visits and have their prostate checked on a regular basis. At this time, I have just received my second opinion from MUSC of Florence, my first diagnosed came from the VA, and now I will be making my decision as to what

**MARION-**Our nation has recognized pink ribbons as the symbols for breast cancer for decades. There are pink ribbons used for branding and fundraising to raise awareness for breast cancer everywhere during the month of October. The color blue is used to raise awareness for prostate cancer in September, but unfortunately, support and awareness are not as great for this disease for

treatment to receive.”

Two months prior to receiving his diagnose, Marvin Hemingway’s baby brother, Barry Hemingway, who is a veteran, was diagnosed with stage 2 prostate cancer. He began his treatment at McLeod of Florence. Their other brother was tested for prostate cancer, but it returned with a negative result. The reverend has a son and even though his son is only in his thirties, he has encouraged him to start getting regular checkups.

Marvin Hemingway is a proud Army veteran and is grateful that his benefits have afforded him the opportunity to receive treatments. He has learned from this experience to exercise daily, eat right and prepare for treatments. He is also grateful for the staff and physicians at MUSC, especially Christina Omalley, who has been a help and support to him. He says that his friends have been supportive as well by being willing to drive him to appointments.

In addition, Hemingway is a man of faith and believes in Christ and his healing power. His faith has grown in Jesus because of this sickness. He watched his PSA level, which was initially 38.7 when the VA Hospital did his blood work, but a month later, his PSA had lowered to 14.2. He said it was truly a blessing.

Hemingway stated, “I have heard of several others with prostate cancer. I would like to say to them and to all men, please get checkup regularly, exercise, eat healthy, take all prescribe medications. Live a life without all the stress. Relax in what you do in life. I believe in the Lord that helps me to know that he will carry me through this prostate cancer, but there must be work from myself as well.”

“I encourage all men to encourage other men, and let us be strong supporting on another. Attending a support group with prostate cancer survivors is a great way to show love as well as to educate and promote awareness of this sickness.”

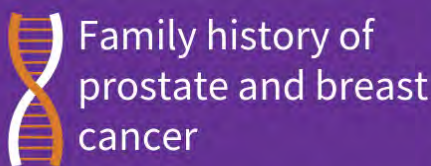
“I say to all the men with prostate cancer, pray, do better with our bodies, strive for better health, live, laugh and enjoy life. Family members, love on your family member, call, visit and encourage them, and allow them to know that you are there for them through this ordeal.”

**What is your risk of prostate cancer?**

**Risk Factors**



Aged 50 and above



Family history of prostate and breast cancer



Overweight



Affecting 1 in 8 men

**See your GP if you have**

- ➔ Difficulty passing urine
- ➔ The sudden urge to pee
- ➔ An inability to empty your bladder
- ➔ A need to pee more frequently
- ➔ Blood in pee or semen

These symptoms can also be caused by other things that aren’t prostate cancer, but it is a good idea to get it checked out so you can get the right treatment if you need it.



# INNOVATIVE PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS BLACK MEN, PROSTATE CANCER

Submitted by MUSC Charleston



Photo of Lee Moultrie

He's often met with silence. Moultrie, a prostate cancer survivor, laughs and admits it can be a conversation stopper, but then he's quick to educate men that they should start testicular cancer screening when they are young and then add prostate screenings to the list in their forties.

It's why he's excited that MUSC Hollings Cancer Center is starting the AMEN Program. The 15-month project, led by cancer researcher Marvella Ford, Ph.D., will focus on Black men ages 40 to 65, the recommended age group for prostate cancer screening.

"We know that in South Carolina, Black men die of prostate cancer at a rate that's nearly three times higher than for white men with prostate cancer, and so that's a real problem. And we absolutely know that if we can screen more men and educate people about prostate cancer and then help to deliver screening, then we will be able to reduce the mortality rates," Ford explains.

## Here's how the program works:

- Deliver monthly prostate cancer education sessions to Black men, focusing on ways to increase prostate cancer screening in their

**CHARLESTON**-Lee Moultrie likes to talk straight. When men gather to talk about their favorite Super Bowl play or basketball team, he'll bring up the other issue they should be discussing—like do they know when they should get screened for prostate cancer.

"It's important because most men don't discuss their health. It has to be a normal everyday discussion," he said.

communities.

- Provide navigation services for those who attend the prostate cancer educational sessions to resolve any barriers they may face in getting prostate cancer screening.

- Administer a follow-up survey to each program participant to assess prostate cancer screening rates following the education session.

Ford said she's grateful for community involvement such as that of TD Bank, which has partnered with Hollings to fund the project. TD Bank's support enables her team to reach out to minority men in their communities and give them the support and education they need to bypass barriers.

There are a lot of social determinants of health and contextual factors that contribute to the disparities that are being seen. "With health care matters," Ford said, "sometimes men are ignored, and sometimes they ignore their own symptoms. I think we just need to have a combination of giving people the educational tools that they need and also providing institutionalized support in terms of linking them with health care facilities where they can receive screening and other treatments that they need."

Ford said that everyone who participates will receive a \$50 gift card at the start of the program and then another \$50 when they complete a three-month follow-up survey. At each session, there will be giveaways, so there are incentives to participate. The men who go through the program will become ambassadors in their own neighborhoods, spreading the word. And, most importantly, they'll be getting the care they need.

"We want to make sure that we are helping them get to the screening sites and helping them navigate the distance both geographically, culturally, emotionally and socially," she said.

For more information, visit the AMEN Program website, or email Melanie Slan at [slan@muscc.edu](mailto:slan@muscc.edu).

## WHEN SHOULD MEN BE SCREENED FOR PROSTATE CANCER? Contributed Article MSN



Prostate cancer is treatable when caught early, leading to an emphasis on screening. Yet, different organizations recommend being screened at different ages, which can lead to some confusion. About one in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his

lifetime, so understanding one's level of risk is crucial.

### What age should men be screened for prostate cancer?

The Prostate Cancer Foundation recommends that Black men or men with a family history of cancer be screened at the age of 40. Otherwise, the organization advises getting screened at 45. The American Cancer Society recommends that men at "average risk" be screened at the age of 50, while "men at high risk of developing prostate cancer," like Black men and men who have a first-degree relative, like a father or brother, who were diagnosed with prostate cancer before the age of 65, be screened at 45. Men at "even higher risk" should be screened at 40.



In 2018, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force issued a recommendation advising men to start talking about screenings with their doctors at the age of 55.

Dr. Behfar Ehdai, a urologic surgeon specializing in prostate cancer at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, said that these varying guidelines are due to the different risk factors that each person faces. Things like family history, environmental factors, race and more can all come into play when it comes to assessing prostate cancer risk.

"There are specific patient level factors that have to go into that decision, including family history, comorbidities and life expectancy," said Ehdai, who said that people who are not expected to live more than another decade may not be advised to get screened. "And of course, the patient's own preferences are taken into account, their goals, what they want to achieve."

Dr. Matthew Rettig, the medical director of the Prostate Cancer Program at the Institute of Urologic Oncology at UCLA in California, said that even if screenings aren't performed right away, men should at least start talking about them with their doctors early in life. "I think I would have that conversation fairly early on in life, maybe even in (your) 30s or 40s, about when to initiate screening," said Rettig. "I think that would be most important for patients who are at high risk for prostate cancer and high risk for early onset of prostate cancer. Those are the types of patients that probably ought to have the discussion and make a decision about when to start screening at a relatively young age."

Rettig said that someone who has a "strong family history" of early onset prostate cancer might want to talk to his primary care provider or other health care practitioner earlier in life, while someone



## WHEN SHOULD MEN CONT'D

with less risk might prefer to wait.

The guidelines for how often men should be screened again also vary. If you have a high prostate-specific antigen (PSA), a protein made by cells in the prostate gland, you may be recommended to come back for more frequent screenings, but those with lower PSA levels might only be advised to come back every four years or so.

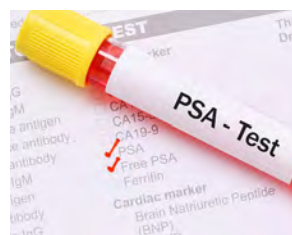
“If you’re 55 and you have a PSA of less than one, you can wait four years to get screened again,” Rettig explained. “Alternatively, if you’re 45 and have a PSA of two and a half, that might be someone who might get a biopsy or be re-screened within the year...How frequently one would be prescreened is really contingent upon the specifics of the patient.”

### What is a prostate cancer screening like?

A prostate cancer screening can be conducted in one of two ways. The first, a PSA test, is a simple blood draw. The second is a brief rectal exam that takes less than 30 seconds to perform.

“For a screening, if a patient comes and asks for a prostate cancer screening, it begins with a blood test,” said Ehdaie. “It’s a

small vial of blood, and then a medical history and physical examination. In the physical examination there will be a digital rectal examination in which the physician’s finger is inserted into the rectum to feel the prostate.”



This examination lasts “15 to 20 seconds,” according to Ehdaie, and is “uncomfortable” but “not painful.” Rettig noted that on its own, the digital exam is “not going

to add very much,” but can be paired with the blood test to give a full picture of the patient’s health situation.

After that exam is completed, and the blood work is done, the results are “evaluated together.”

“A decision would be made to either pursue further tests because the screenings suggest there may be something that would be of concern, or they would return at the next scheduled (screening),” Ehdaie said.

## WHY HAVE NATURAL PROSTATE REMEDIES FAILED MEN SEEKING RELIEF?



Over half of all men over the age of 50 will experience frequent urination<sup>[1]</sup>. While this condition may be an entirely normal part of aging, it can leave many feeling frustrated.

Many men talk about the “prostate curse”: having to wake up multiple times per night to use the bathroom, leading to sleepless nights. Urologist Dr. Daniel Brison explains, “Common concerns include having less control over when you can go, constant or sudden urges to urinate and a weak, lagging urinary stream.”

For support, many men turn to naturally derived supplements that include big promises of improving prostate health. But do they work?

The answer turns out to be more complicated than a simple “yes” or “no.” That’s because the most popular ingredient used to back up these claims is a relatively unknown cousin of the palm tree named saw palmetto.

A berry plant native to Florida, saw palmetto has been used for generations by local Native American peoples to aid in urinary health. But it wasn’t until 40 years ago that Western scientists began conducting clinical studies on this mysterious plant.

The saw palmetto berry is unique in that it contains specific nutrients—a “lipid profile”—that can provide the body with effective urinary support. In recent years, this research has gone global. Currently, the largest market for saw palmetto is in Europe<sup>[2]</sup>, where the Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products recognized it for effectiveness in treating the most common form of enlarged prostates, Benign Prostate Hyperplasia (BPH).

In the United States, saw palmetto is not held to the same standard as prescription medications, so consumers are often left with no way of knowing whether a prostate supplement actually contains this ingredient. In fact, the New York Attorney General’s Office found that up to 79 percent of all supplements (including saw palmetto) could be adulterated—or completely fake<sup>[3]</sup>.

Margaret H. Dohnalek, PhD and chief scientific officer at Valensa International, has seen the problem firsthand: “The dangers of using a generic saw palmetto is you have no idea what you’re getting. Products are labeled as saw palmetto that are really nothing but fillers, maybe largely only vegetable oils.”

Also, it turns out saw palmetto is a delicate berry. If it’s not harvested at its peak ripeness, it won’t contain the right nutrients needed to see real results. Because of its short growing season, much saw palmetto is harvested before it ripens.

In response, the United States Pharmacopeia (USP), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that consumers receive the supplement ingredients they purchase, began looking for a solution.

The USP developed a new method to analyze the purity of saw palmetto. It is now able to identify pure, ripe saw palmetto by testing the exact lipid profile in each supplement. There’s only one type of USP-verified saw palmetto extract in the entire United States called USPlus, and it’s used by only a handful of supplement brands.

Dr. Daniel Brison, board-certified urologist and former head of surgery at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Los Angeles, designed IMD’s men’s health supplement, ProstateMD, with USPlus saw palmetto in mind: “With USPlus, we’ve been able to help thousands of men support their prostate health with the same amount of effective care that’s provided in Europe. With the addition of USPlus to our ProstateMD formula, men are experiencing for themselves just how effective a pure, naturally derived supplement can be.”

Though the market continues to be filled with adulterated saw palmetto products, American consumers can look for the USPlus label to ensure quality prostate support.

[1] [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/H-Arrighi-2/publication/21440440\\_Natural\\_history\\_of\\_benign\\_prostatic\\_hyperplasia\\_and\\_risk\\_of\\_prostatectomy\\_The\\_Baltimore\\_Longitudinal\\_Study\\_of\\_Aging/links/598b77dbaca272e57acaf4cb/Natural-history-of-benign-prostatic-hyperplasia-and-risk-of-prostatectomy-The-Baltimore-Longitudinal-Study-of-Aging.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/H-Arrighi-2/publication/21440440_Natural_history_of_benign_prostatic_hyperplasia_and_risk_of_prostatectomy_The_Baltimore_Longitudinal_Study_of_Aging/links/598b77dbaca272e57acaf4cb/Natural-history-of-benign-prostatic-hyperplasia-and-risk-of-prostatectomy-The-Baltimore-Longitudinal-Study-of-Aging.pdf)

[2] <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/saw-palmetto-extracts-sales-market-report-by-business-analysis-size-share-growth-rate-forecast-by-global-technology-latest-development-2021-to-2027-covid-19-impact-on-industry-share-and-growth-rate-2021-06-08?tesla%3Dy&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1623887118889000&usq=AOvVaw0CY63IBP0yUuIm5eF0j9nh>

[3] <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2015/ag-schneiderman-asks-major-retailers-halt-sales-certain-herbal-supplements-dna>



# THE PAIN OF LOSING A CHILD by Anna Bowman

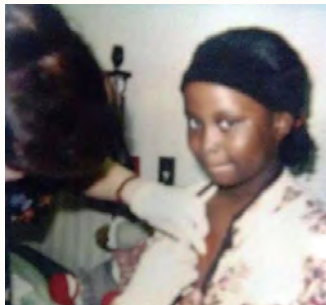


*Ranika's first year spending Christmas at MUSC after surgery*

**MULLINS** – There is no stronger bond than a mother and child. Long before the world gets the opportunity to be introduced to the new little bundle of joy, a mother has already experienced the joy of motherhood as her little one begins to wiggle, stretch and grow as the world awaits his or her arrival.

On Friday, Sep. 16, 1988, Mr. and Mrs. Randy L. Crawford's little bundle of joy, Ranika LaQuinna Crawford, was welcomed into the world. Their little angel was truly filled with sugar and spice and everything nice! Ranika was a typical little girl, and just like so many other little girls, her favorite color was pink, and she enjoyed playing Monopoly. To satisfy her sweet tooth, Mommy and Daddy always ensured that her favorites, 3 Musketeers candy bars and orange flavored Trident gum, were somewhere stashed around the house for their little princess. She enjoyed singing, going to the movies and dining out with her family. And her favorite song was none other than the beautiful ballad "I'll Always Love You" by songstress Whitney Houston.

Ranika's mother described her daughter as "a typical fourth grader at Mullins Elementary School, and she was certainly vibrant and playful." And when the family welcomed their second daughter, Alexis Symone Crawford, "She savored her role as 'big sister.'" The Crawford's home was filled with exuberance and love.



*Ranika was learning how to flush her Porticath as she was preparing to go home after treatment.*

One day, Ranika began to show signs of what her parents felt was a normal cold. "She was experiencing what most people would consider symptoms of a cold. A routine visit to Dr. John Odom, MD, a family practice specialist, revealed tenderness in her chest, which alerted Dr. Odom to request X-rays to be completed," recalled Crawford. "The X-rays confirmed the doctor's fears that her condition was more serious than a cold. In December 1997, a tumor was discovered in her chest cavity, and at the innocent age of nine years old, Ranika was diagnosed with a childhood cancer called Neuroblastoma. Our lives would be changed forever!"

"My daughter dealt with more than what most adults could imagine. She went from being a little girl to a little princess warrior when we arrived at the Children's Hospital (MUSC) in Charleston, S.C., Ranika had to endure an extensive needle biopsy, followed by her doctors deciding to perform immediate surgery. It was extremely hard, as parents, seeing our daughter in so



*The Crawford's first family photo after Ranika being in remission.*



*Ranika was a very intelligent young lady who was crowned Miss Palmetto at her school Mullins Palmetto Jr. High.*

much pain and wanting to just take the pain away from her."

Suddenly, the family was faced with two daughters in pain: one physical and one emotional. "Alexis was only five years old when Ranika was diagnosed, and she was affected by the recent change of events and didn't quite understand what was going on," said Crawford. Alexis didn't understand why her sister was so sick and why her parents and sister were constantly away from home, having to stay with family members while Ranika went through chemotherapy treatment and radiation.

"The journey was difficult for the entire family, but we did receive tremendous help and support from various family members; friends; the Marion County Sheriff Department where her father was employed at the time; my pastor and church family, along with the counselors from MUSC in Charleston, S.C."

Ranika LaQuinna Crawford fought a brave battle for a little girl with a big disease, and on Sunday, Aug. 14, 2005, she succumbed to cancer.

"It has been said that time heals all wounds, but that's not true, especially when you lose a child at such a young age. As the years come and go, there is always that parental urge to wonder what she would have become: a teacher, doctor and maybe even a mother herself. Since losing Ranika, her father has also transitioned as well. We always celebrate the lives of Ranika and her father Randy L. Crawford by releasing balloons and placing fresh flowers, on their final resting place. But with every breath I take, I'm always reminded of the pain of losing a child is embedded in my soul forever."

## "The Pain Never Goes Away"

By Sylvia W. Crawford

I lost a friend.  
I lost a friend who had a great mind.  
I lost a friend who was very kind.  
I lost a friend who told the truth.  
I lost a friend in her youth.  
I lost a friend who was very smart.  
I lost a friend who had a big heart.  
I lost a friend whose smile was bright.  
And now she is in Heaven's light.  
Ranika, I miss your smile, your classy style.  
I Will Always Love You!

Sylvia W. Crawford, your mom,  
Alexis S. Crawford, your sister.

SEPTEMBER IS  
CHILDHOOD CANCER  
AWARENESS MONTH

ADVOCATE • SUPPORT • CURE



# MAKING CARE SUICIDE SAFE Submitted by Lynn Bulloch with The Jonathan Foundation

**CENTRAL-2020** was a challenging year for everyone, requiring immediate navigation of an unknown and burgeoning worldwide pandemic and changing the constellation of our work force, family life and social interaction. Healthcare providers and the public were consistently recognizing secondary hazards of this crisis, an epidemic of worsening mental health and subsequent increase of prevalence and incidence of suicide. The catalyst of this health crisis changed all statistical trajectories as we knew them as families lost loved ones and jobs, children became isolated without access to peers and educational buffers and healthcare givers faced an ever growing rise of secondary trauma secondary to exposure to so much disease and death.

Prior to this pandemic, suicide was the second leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24 years old, increasing since 2007. A few sobering statistics sharpen the understanding of the divide between hurting people and practical immediate care. These include: Eighty-three percent deaths by suicide were seen by healthcare professionals in the last year. Most of those who died by suicide did not have an identified mental health diagnosis. Fifty percent of people who successfully completed suicide had visited their primary care provider in the month preceding their death. Forty percent of these people had an emergency department visit without a mental health diagnosis.

The harsh reality is that our healthcare community urgently needs further education and equipping for effective suicide prevention, intervention and post-vention best practices. Another emerging concern brought into focus is that current mental health providers have no mandatory minimum requirement of education or CE education to help them be professionally literate about suicide prevention. This lack of understanding of specific risk assessment beyond screening could be the most dangerous liability we as a community may face. The gold standard of healthcare and mental health services is to use evidence-based interventions that are standardized and replicable in our community.

Three mothers, united by the loss of their sons and their determination to make a difference are stepping out to bring Project 2025 suicide awareness and prevention campaign to the region. The mothers--Lynn Bulloch, who lost her son Jonathan Smith in 2011; Helen George, who lost her son Will George in 2017; and Gracelyn Elemendorf, who lost her son Robert Duffee in 2003--are working through The Jonathan Foundation to align with the work of the National Action Alliance, the Zero Suicide Initiative and the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention in this call to action to our health and community care systems in South Carolina to step up and make care "Suicide Safe."

The National Strategy (2012) added a new goal: to promote suicide prevention as a core component of healthcare services. In response, the accrediting bodies have issued standards. As a result, many healthcare organizations have begun to prioritize suicide prevention. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Project 2025 seeks to reduce the national suicide rate by 20 percent by 2025 by targeting key opportunity areas that have been identified in the national research. The COVID pandemic has brought heightened awareness to this need and can be the catalyst for facilitating the widespread adoption of evidenced-based suicide risk reduction in our counseling community, primary care centers, emergency departments, schools and colleges, churches and first responder services.

To that end, The Jonathan Foundation is launching three new strategic community awareness campaigns over this next year:

- The Will George Project, which will advocate for the adoption of risk assessment screening in counseling, primary care centers and emergency departments.
- The Robert Duffee Project will advocate for the adoption of screening in educational settings, primarily middle school, high school and colleges.
- The Jonathan Smith Project will advocate for proper mental health crisis intervention training for all first responders--EMS and Police.

The national workgroup applied lean methodology in determining a "standard of work" and informing this standard with low-cost, high value, evidenced-based practices for implementation in health care organizations: primary care offices and clinics, emergency departments and inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance abuse settings.

The Standard of Work involves three key elements that fit within existing care management frameworks:

- Risk Assessment and screening with risk formulation.
- Safety Planning with a care pathway that includes a safety plan and means reduction.
- Transitional Care through referral and caring contacts (24/7).

Just as CPR is life-saving intervention for the cardiac patient, QPR (question, persuade, refer) is life-saving intervention for the suicidal patient. These three key elements align very closely to QPR and represent the national standard for effective suicide prevention.

Ask a Question, Save a Life, Every Life Matters  
 Step up, Let's Get Better so They Can too.  
 Join us in this Community Call to Action and follow us! <http://thejonathanfoundation4teens.org>



# FINDING A PERMANENT SOLUTION WITHOUT A TEMPORARY ACTION

by Jennifer Robinson



Sandra Barnes

It has been said that suicide is a permanent solution for temporary problems. Though that statement may be true for some, there are many who cannot control the urge to end the anxiety they feel, and it is due to mental illness. There are many pressures in the world that people face: societal pressures where people feel they must fit in to be accepted; financial pressures that people feel if they don't have a certain amount of money, they will not reach a

certain status; and then there are the mental pressures in people who suffer with mental and emotional issues that sometimes cannot be identified, and they are searching for relief. So, what is this act that seems to have increased over the years? Suicide.

Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die (cdc.gov). There is an average of 123 suicides each day in this country. It's the tenth leading cause of death in America—second leading for ages 25-34 and third leading for ages 15-24. To create awareness and strengthen the fight against suicide, the entire month of September is Suicide Prevention Month (nationaltoday.com).

Raising awareness about suicide is pivotal for those who are coping with issues that seem to be burdensome or endless. Those who contemplate the act of suicide are often faced with problems where ending their lives seem to be the only solution. People should be made aware that suicide contemplation is a health issue. Suicide is an act that should not be judged or ridiculed. Many who contemplate suicide often have struggles with depression, schizophrenia or acts of mania. Those disorders also are stigmatized, and people who suffer with them feel shame and do not seek assistance. A part of raising awareness is illuminating the strength and courage possessed to seek assistance.

Sandra Barnes, program coordinator II with Pee Dee Mental Health in Florence, along with the program manager, the Intake Mobile Crisis supervisor and staff work together closely to ensure that individuals seeking mental health services have access to same day/next day services. Barnes talked about challenges in sharing information about suicide prevention because of the stigma that surrounds it. She said potential patients are often non-compliant because of embarrassment they may feel about depression and how people view depression. Some may self-medicate instead of seeking professional treatment.



Threats of suicide are to be taken very seriously. Pee Dee Mental Health offers various services that assist people with mental health issues. People who suffer from mental illness may have crises that occur outside of center hours.

South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH) has a Mobile Crisis Program that sends a team of clinicians to community health centers or other locations to de-escalate crises. They then assist adults and children with ongoing medical treatment. The Mobile Crisis clinicians are available 24/7/365 and will respond anywhere in South Carolina. This program diverts individuals from unnecessary incarcerations and hospitalizations.

Other services include:

- Community Integration Services- Recovery support services
- Child, Adolescent and Family Services- Counseling and psychiatric services to families and to those children and adults who are experiencing emotional, relational and/or behavioral problems.
- Adult Outpatient Services- Counseling and psychiatric services for serious mental illnesses and significant emotional disorders. Treatments are evidence-based to support patient's recovery in the community. Mental Health is also involved in the Zero Suicide System, which is a system-wide approach to transforming suicide prevention.

The charge to prevent suicide is led by those who provide education about mental health. Education includes knowing the warning signs, knowing the symptoms and sharing resources. Family members or people close to those suffering with mental illness may not be aware of the different types of mental disorders. They range from depression to psychosis. SC Department of Mental Health partners with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to provide information about mental illnesses and suicide prevention. There is also a Suicide Hotline. We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones and best practices for professionals. Call 1-800-273-8255 (<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>).





# TEEN SUICIDE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT

Submitted by Triza Cox, Coordinator, Community Services Circle Park BHS



Pam Williams

The second half of 2021 marks the beginning of the nation recovering after nearly 15 months of one of the most stressful events in modern history. Pam Williams, director of Outpatient Treatment Services at Circle Park Behavioral Health Services, informs us of the necessity to be aware of the pandemic's impact. She states, "As we find our new normal, we understand the toll the pandemic took on the mental health of our most vulnerable community

members." Children and adolescents experienced an onslaught of stresses from the disruption of their social and educational norms. At all times attention should be paid to the factors that make youth susceptible to mental health issues and suicidal ideation. Additionally, this current era mandates a proactive approach to prevention and support to young people.

The data of youth suicide rates during the pandemic is still being accumulated and analyzed, but information has been released that points to an increase in risk factors associated with teen suicide. Many adolescents report experiencing stress from the fallout of remote learning, social isolation, racial strife and economic insecurities. In October of 2020 researchers at the Making Caring Common Project conducted a national survey of 950 Americans. Their data showed that 36 percent of respondents reported feeling lonely "frequently" or "almost all the time" within the last 30 days of the survey. That percentage is up from 25 percent during pre-pandemic times. Moreover, 61 percent of those reporting high levels of loneliness were between the ages of 18 and 25. Public health professionals are noting that COVID-19 compromised adolescents' feelings of wellbeing as well as increased severe anxiety, depression and suicide ideation.

In the recent years before the pandemic researchers were noting risk factors that made children and early adolescents prone to suicide. A 2016 peer reviewed study published in "Pediatrics" discussed how interpersonal problems were often "a precipitating factor" in both children and early adolescent suicide. The same article recommended a prevention approach, which includes targeting interpersonal problem solving skill development and building positive emotional and interpersonal

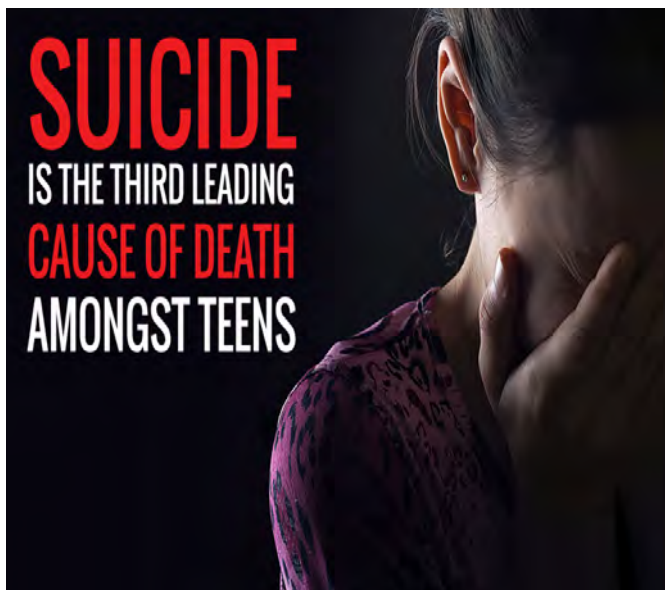
skills in early childhood.

Certain demographics within youth are shown to be particularly at risk. When researchers examined data from the National Violent Death Reporting System, Black males were shown to be the most at risk for suicide for children. As young people move more in the adolescent years, LGBTQIA youth were shown to be four times as likely to attempt suicide compared to straight and cis-gendered youth. This information appears to be in accordance with the consideration of the minority stress model. Groups subject to experiences of discrimination, rejection, stigma and violence often have compounded adversities and can present with more negative mental health issues.

Williams reminds us, "Circle Park Behavioral Health Services is a local resource and is available for treatment and prevention for adolescent health issues. We are located at 238 South Coit Street in Florence." She also adds, "Our number is 843-665-9349, and we accept walk-ins Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in order to allow patients to enter services as quickly as possible." In addition to the resources available at Circle Park there are national services dedicated to suicide prevention. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline offers strategies to help someone who may be at risk for suicide or mental health problems. The social media #BeThe1To recommends the following six strategies for people concerned about preventing suicide:

- 1) Ask
- 2) Be There
- 3) Keep Them Safe
- 4) Help Them Stay Connected
- 5) Follow Up
- 6) Learn More

More information about these strategies and about suicide prevention and resources are available at [www.suicidepreventionlife.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlife.org). For people in crisis the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That number is 1-800-273-8255. Together we can bring wellness to the youth around us and reduce teen suicides.





## THE COST OF ADDICTION by Anna Bowman



Bryan Braddock

In a heart wrenching testimony, Bryan Braddock, husband, father, businessman, and council member-peels back the many layers of fear, hurt, guilt and shame he once hid under during his darkest days as he dealt with substance abuse. Braddock paints a riveting picture of his ordeal by sharing an honest account of his often horrific journey, from start to recovery.

DW: What was that moment like, when you accepted the fact that you were addicted to drugs and needed help?

Bryan Braddock: One night I had spent all my money doing drugs and was on my hands and knees looking for crack cocaine on the floorboard of my car. It was at that time that I prayed and asked God for help.

DW: Were you married at this time, and did you have any children at this point in your life?

Bryan Braddock: I had been married for about nine years when I hit rock bottom and my wife Tracey and I had three young daughters. We now have five daughters: Hannah, Haley, Hayden, Holly and Hope.

DW: How long were you addicted from start to recovery?

Bryan Braddock: I had been addicted to drugs for five to six years.

DW: How did you hide your drug use from your family and friends? What was an average day like for you when you were going through your addiction? Do you remember those dark days vividly at all?

Bryan Braddock: To maintain a drug addiction and hide it from your family, you must live one huge lie supported by 100 white lies. Actually, I don't know if I ever told the truth. I had to lie about where I was going, how much money I had, why I was working late, why I could not sleep, who I was talking to on the phone...the lies went on and on. Physically, it was when I ran out of drugs and began to go through withdrawals that my wife thought that I was using. When I was on drugs, I seemed normal, but when I tried to quit was when I would be in bed for days. It was such a vicious cycle. Eventually, every waking moment of every day was consumed with getting money to get pills to get high so that I was able to function so I could make money to get pills. I was a slave to drugs!

DW: How did your drug use affect your marriage, your family, your friends, your work?

Bryan Braddock: I lost everything except my wife. She made a vow to God and never left me, but my friends and family didn't want me around. I was always asking for money and lying to them. My young girls didn't know what was wrong with their dad. I was always ignoring them and ashamed to be around them.

DW: Was there ever a time when you thought you would die from your addict?

Bryan Braddock: I hoped that I would die, but I didn't want to overdose! I ran a scenario of driving my truck off the road over and over in my head. I just didn't want there to be drugs in my system when I died. I didn't want my children to remember me that way, but I could not get sober long enough to do it.

DW: What did your addiction cost you personally,

financially, mentally (pride, shame, humiliation)?

Bryan Braddock: My addiction cost me my business, friends, embarrassment, my house, my cars, my career, everything except my wife and my life, but I knew those would be next if I didn't get help.

DW: You've been extremely transparent about your past with addictions. Why?

Bryan Braddock: I don't want that part of my life to not mean something. I don't want it to be wasted. I want moms, wives, fathers, daughters, friends, and family members of someone struggling with addiction to not give up hope on their loved one. I want the person struggling with addiction to keep praying, keep believing, keep loving, keep fighting and know that they can gain victory over their addiction.

DW: Most people take drugs just for fun (recreational use) and become addicted, but you took drugs to alleviate your pain and became addicted. Did you ever feel that life had dealt you a bad hand?

Bryan Braddock: I wasn't dealt a bad hand. I just never knew how much I was gambling with...I think if I fully understood what was at stake, I would have dealt with the pain more and looked for other options to deal with the pain. Addiction is cunning and deceptive. You never realize you are hooked until it is too late.

DW: Have your trials and tribulations made you the great family man, community leader, and director of the House of Hope that you are now? Do you believe that your past has been a part of God's plan for your current life?

Bryan Braddock: I believe that "All things work for the good of those who love the Lord and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28) and that "our current sufferings are not to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us," Bible verse Romans 8:18. I think God planned for me to be a loving father, to serve my community and to help those in need, but He didn't need me using drugs to fulfill His plan, but He didn't let that stop me from fulfilling His plan either. I just gave the mess I created with my decisions to Him, and He put the pieces together.

Bryan and Tracey Braddock have been married for 25 years, and they are the parents of five daughters: Hannah, 21; Haley, 17; Hayden, 16; Holly, 8; and their baby girl Hope is in heaven. Braddock is the executive director of House of Hope of the Pee Dee, and he was recently elected councilman for Florence City District 3. The Braddock family attends the Florence Baptist Temple.

Braddock wants anyone who is struggling with addiction to call Corbett Stone with Reformers Unanimous at the Florence Baptist Temple or Jackie Dubose with Celebrate Recovery at the Palmetto Street Church of God. He truly hopes that his story will encourage people within the community.





## COMBATING THE OPIOID CRISIS Submitted by Brandi Shepherd, ADSAP Coordinator



**HARTSVILLE**—Claiming more lives than the novel coronavirus, the opioid crisis has been one of the deadliest epidemics in the United States. In 2019, nearly 500,000 people lost their lives to an opioid-involved overdose. The overdose mortality rate continues to rise as we are still experiencing the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Darlington County is no exception to this as the number of overdose deaths within the county has doubled since last year. The overwhelming number of overdoses has cost local hospitals and clinics more than \$17.9 million—almost double the number of other counties similar to Darlington.

With one out of every 10 Americans claiming that he or she started using alcohol or other drugs to help cope with the stress of the pandemic, Darlington County has seen a spike in the number of drug-related consequences. This includes a 20 percent increase in the number of narcotic violations. With the average cost of incarceration being \$22,650 per individual, this increase in arrests cost the county approximately \$271,800 last year. Darlington County also experienced a staggering 62.5 percent increase in the number of newborns diagnosed with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome. This resulted in the highest rate Darlington County has ever experienced.

The rise in opioid and stimulant abuse within Darlington County threatens the lives of community members and the well-being of families. Therefore, Rubicon feels driven to reduce not only the number of residents abusing these substances but also the consequences substance abuse creates. Rubicon applied to and was awarded a \$65,000 grant from the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) to help support substance abuse treatment and recovery-oriented services throughout Darlington County. With this funding, Rubicon aims to:

- Implement an evidence-based supported employment program
- Develop a targeted referral and resource guide
- Implement evidence-based, recovery-oriented services
- Implement community outreach initiatives that address alternatives to opioids, stimulants and behaviors that may lead to prescription drug abuse

**Employment Programs:** During the height of the pandemic, the unemployment rate in Darlington County rose from 3.8 to 5.1 percent resulting in nearly 3,400 residents without a job. Based on the vast research supporting unemployment as a risk factor for substance abuse, the majority of these individuals were now at a higher risk for abusing alcohol and other drugs. Furthermore, 88.9 percent of Rubicon’s clients enrolled in Pre-Trial Intervention services expressed concern in maintaining their sobriety given their unemployment standing. The consensus among these individuals was that their struggle in finding employment led to an increase in their cravings for opioids, stimulants, alcohol and other substances. These findings demonstrate a need for a Supported Employment Program that will target individuals currently in treatment or recovery for a substance use disorder.

To best meet this need, Rubicon has acquired the “Ten Soft Skills You Need” curriculum from Global Courseware. This evidence-based curriculum is designed to help improve participants’ soft skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, time management and problem-solving skills. These soft skills can be contributed to the success of most employees. After all, nearly every job requires an employee to work with others in some way. In addition to making a candidate stand out in a competitive job market,

these soft skills help to make an applicant a highly adaptable employee. This is due to the transferable nature of these skills, meaning that a person can use them regardless of their job. Rubicon is offering these classes free of charge to anyone interested. Please contact Theresa Curtis, director of Prevention Services at 843-332-4156 for more information.

**Referral and Resource Guide:** Despite the rise in substance abuse cases, Darlington County experienced a 10.4 percent reduction in the number of residents seeking treatment for an opioid use disorder. The County also experienced an average 5.8 percent reduction in the number of stimulant use disorder diagnoses. In addition, Rubicon also experienced an 82.1 percent decrease in the number of pregnant women seeking treatment for a substance use disorder—even though the number of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome cases rose by 62.1 percent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to the rise in overdoses, these findings suggest that Darlington County residents are not being screened for or diagnosed with a substance use disorder and are subsequently not being referred to treatment. Therefore, Darlington County needs an updated referral system as well as training on identifying signs of substance abuse.

As the county’s sole provider for substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment, Rubicon takes responsibility for addressing these needs. We have launched our new “Signs of Substance Abuse” training that will assist local health care facilities and agencies in addressing the more subtle symptoms and signs a person with a substance use disorder may present with. This training will also review the referral process to Rubicon’s Treatment Department. If you or your agency are interested in participating in this free training, then please contact us at 843-332-4156 or [info@rubiconsc.org](mailto:info@rubiconsc.org).

**Recovery-Oriented Services:** We at Rubicon understand the specific and unique challenges people in recovery may go through in maintaining their sobriety. With limited recovery-oriented services being present within the county, it is often difficult for our community members to feel supported in their decisions to refrain from alcohol and drug use. To address this concern, Rubicon’s peer support specialist Chris Bullard has founded a local ANA group. ANA, short for National Association of Recovered Addicts/Alcoholics (ANARAA), goes beyond the regular 12-step program in search for a personal relationship with God. Every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Bullard welcomes anyone from the community to Rubicon Family Counseling Services for a safe space to “be yourself; be human.” For more information about Rubicon’s ANA group, please contact Chris Bullard at 843-332-4156.

**Community Outreach:** Rubicon is committed to ending the opioid crisis in Darlington County by offering a variety of prevention services that focus on reducing risk and promoting factors that increase resiliency against substance use. Rubicon staff will conduct monthly outreach initiatives, such as community events, presentations and workshops, to raise the county’s awareness of opioid alternatives, Medicated Assisted Treatment (MAT), substance use treatment services and referral information. Rubicon will also continue to provide free Narcan and medication disposal packets to anyone in Darlington County. For more information on events happening near you, please visit our Facebook page at Rubicon Family Counseling Services of Hartsville, S.C.

The staff at Rubicon Family Counseling Services are here for you if you need us. To schedule an appointment with us please call 843-332-4156, or visit us in person at 510 E. Carolina Ave. in Hartsville, S.C. Our crisis line is open 24/7 at 843-861-2740 for emergencies.





## 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*

### MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY: POSSIBLE AT ANY AGE by Susan Carter



*Neveah Robinson*

Common triggers for mental health problems in young people include chronic physical health conditions, family conflicts and bullying by peers. Neveah began struggling with depression in 7th grade after peer conflicts and bullying lowered her self-esteem. She also experienced physical health challenges that included persistent symptoms of dizziness and fatigue. She began to have disturbing thoughts of wanting to hurt herself, and

she cried a lot. Neveah saw a school guidance counselor for her depression and thoughts of hurting herself in the spring of 2019. That counselor quickly connected her to the school-based mental health clinician who provided a clinical assessment and determined that Neveah would benefit from mental health services.

For the next six months, Neveah received close monitoring by a Pee Dee Mental Health psychiatrist and frequent counseling and check-ins with her school-based counselor. The doctor prescribed medication that helped Neveah sleep better and reduced her other depression symptoms. Her counselor, Brenda Lawson, provided cognitive-behavioral therapy to help Neveah



*Neveah & her mom Latonya Robinson*

view herself more positively.

As a result, after a year of tele-mental health counseling (due to the pandemic), Neveah's outlook on her future is bright. She enjoys reading and listening to music and is looking forward to in-person classes for her sophomore year. She reports that she no longer cries daily or thinks of harming herself and has improved her relationships with her mother and 10-year-old brother. She is excited about going to the beach this summer. After college, Neveah intends to go to law school and achieve her dream of "fighting for justice" for those who need an advocate. Neveah and her mother want others to know that reaching out for help was the best decision they could have made to improve their lives.



*Patricia Greenan*

Mental health concerns often surface by young adulthood although the diagnosis of depression or anxiety may not occur until much later after symptoms intensify or keep recurring and worsening. Patricia Greenan began experiencing depression symptoms at age 20 after her first marriage ended. However, following short-term treatment with an anti-depressant, she went on to a successful career and a second marriage. Years later, when that relationship ended suddenly, Greenan once again began experiencing feelings of overwhelming loss and depression. However, after a short break, she was able to return to work and resumed a productive and satisfying life. Unfortunately, she suddenly lost this job a few years later, leaving her anxious and angry. This third loss took a major toll on Patricia's self-esteem and functioning. For years she struggled with her emotional and financial health, and she was unable to maintain stable housing or work, adding to her depression and anxiety.

Greenan credits several Pee Dee Mental Health programs with helping her get back on her feet. In addition to providing housing, she attended group therapy and worked with a job coach to prepare to return to the work world after being away for several years. In 2004, she became employed through the program as a temporary worker and received several promotions. Today she is a volunteer coordinator and administrative assistant for Pee Dee Mental Health. Staff speak highly of her work ethic and reliability. As Greenan acknowledges, working plays a significant role in mental health: "I'm a better person when I have a job to go to."

Greenan enjoys a full life outside of work. She is a member of First Baptist Church where she participates in the choir and attends weekly Bible Study and choir practice in addition to services. She is proud of her recovery and enjoys the independence it brings her. She has worked steadily for the past 16 years and has many friends with whom she socializes. She is close to her siblings and helps them when needed while always remembering the importance of self-care to maintain her own health.

When asked what she would tell others experiencing a mental health challenge, Greenan responds quickly and with certainty: "When you need help, reach out. You can get sick mentally as well as physically. There is nothing wrong with getting help."

If you or someone you know needs help, please reach out to Pee Dee Mental Health for assistance. We have offices in Florence, Marion and Darlington Counties as well as outreach and school-based programs. Out-patient, school-based, community-based and tele-mental health services are available. Pee Dee Mental Health has specialized programs for children, teens, and young, middle-aged and older adults. See our website for more information: <https://www.peedeementalhealth.com> and contact us at 843-317-4073.



## FINDING BALANCE AND EASE DURING THE PANDEMIC Submitted by SOS Care



**MYRTLE BEACH-**The Coronavirus pandemic has changed our world, our country and our communities in ways we never thought

possible. According to the CDC, many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, were necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. For individuals with autism or intellectual disabilities this isolation can be even more pronounced.

We chatted with some of the residents at Oak Tree Farm, an affordable housing community for adults with autism or intellectual disabilities developed by SOS Care. We wanted to see how they have been fairing throughout this process, considering they were able to move into this new life-changing chapter just this past February. Oak Tree Farm's transitional home houses five residents (25 to 48 years old) who will eventually move into apartment living as that next phase of the development is completed.

Cody Lewis is 34 years old and moved to Myrtle Beach with his parents in 2007 from Maryland. His parents were relieved to realize there were several more programs available to families of individuals with disabilities here than in Maryland. He started with SOUL, a club for young people who need a place to connect while working on improving conversation skills, dealing with emotions and discussing topics that interfere with daily living. He loved it so much, he began volunteering with the staff and worked Friday Nights, a respite program for families that gives everyone social and recreational time together. After almost a decade of loving and learning through SOS programs, Lewis moved into Oak Tree Farm on Feb. 13, 2021 (his birthday) and celebrated his independence and next trip around the sun in a special way.



*Cody Lewis*

When the pandemic hit and raged for more than a year, SOS Care had to figure out how to work through it all and still serve its vulnerable population. Adults were the first to stay home, and many of the programs Lewis and the guys were involved with had to go virtual. Although Lewis still enjoys certain therapy sessions virtually, what came from this shift to online was really quite amazing. SOS Care had to Zoom

Independent Living, Customized and Supportive Employment Services, Life Skills training and more.

But they also came up with "Yappy Hour," a way of connecting virtually that brings peers together after work to share their week and support each other. As this new peer meetup became more routine, participants could look forward to hanging out with familiar faces to joke and play in a more relaxed environment that could have them at ease within the broader context of the pandemic.

Along with being a peer support group comes the inherent social opportunities to play games together and for some to share their hobbies, from creating computer animated stories to

household crafts such as making mandalas from paper towel rolls.

What began as a way for peers to join together after work to share and connect with each other throughout the pandemic's social distancing requirements, this group hangout has continued to see familiar faces as well as new participants hopping on when they can each week to catch up, hang out, play games, share some stories and have fun.

The pandemic taught us many lessons, and we are grateful that this virtual shift helped our folks learn to overcome anxiety and even gain confidence in certain situations and now leaves us open to balance both virtual and in-person events moving forward.

## A CELEBRATION OF RECOVERY MONTH THROUGH A PERSONAL LENS

*Submitted by Triza Cox, Coordinator, Community Services Circle Park BHS*



*Maxine Quillen*

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." 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. SAMSHA uses this month to remind Americans that recovery is possible and that treatment is available, effective and can be lifesaving.

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. This disease has extraordinary reach and affects the rich and poor; males and females; the educated and the uneducated; and all races. Additionally, real time data is showing that overdose rates during the COVID-19 pandemic doubled compared to non-pandemic times.

Circle Park Behavioral Health Services is currently implementing proactive strategies to ameliorate this increase in issues around substance use disorder. These strategies include reducing access and availability of drugs through supporting Drug Take Back Days and drug deactivation bag distribution. Medication Assisted Treatment has become an important service offered to patients struggling with substance use disorder. Moreover, Circle Park now accepts walk-ins 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at its 238 South Coit Street location in Florence. People in need of treatment or prevention services can also call 843-665-9349. 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 over 30 years



## A CELEBRATION CONT'D

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 how her substance use went from a social habit to a full blown addiction. The wakeup call came when she started spending money that was designated for other responsibilities on her drug use. Her substance use disorder led to a downhill spiral, which 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 aroused bitterness and anger in Quillen, but upon further reflection she realized that the time spent there was preparing her for her career at the Chrysalis Center. The hard work and organizational 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.

Quillen’s 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.



RECOVERY AWARENESS



## Medication Assisted Treatment

*For more information*  
**843-665-9349**  
*www.circlepark.com*





## FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION, THE BIBLICAL WAY by Les Echols



Corbett Stone

July is Recovery Month, when we work to promote and support new evidence-based treatment and recovery practices, the emergence of a strong and proud recovery community and the dedication of service providers and community members across the nation who make recovery in all its forms possible. This year's theme is "Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger."

Diversity Works© caught up with Corbett Stone of Florence Baptist Temple. Stone is well known and respected in Florence and surrounding communities. He gave insight on Florence Baptist's well-renowned recovery program, Reformers Unanimous, and his role there.

DW: Tell us about the recovery program at First Baptist Temple.

CS: Reformers Unanimous is a Christ-centered addictions program that teaches the way to overcome stubborn habits or addictions is through developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Any strong relationship is built on two-way communication, so we teach people how to "talk with God and allow Him to talk to them" through a curriculum and daily meditation. As an individual develops a daily relationship with God, He has a way of changing the way that individual thinks, and that is critical in changing unwanted behavior. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he," Proverbs 23:7.

DW: In your words, what is the importance of having a robust recovery program?

CS: To have a strong recovery program it is important to have the right philosophy for overcoming addiction, to have the necessary resources and to have the right people to assist

those that are battling with addiction. No one wants to be an addict, partly because there is personal disappointment and shame that goes with addictive behavior. It is so easy to fall into the trap and so very difficult to get out. Some people have an accident or medical problem that leads to opiate addiction. Some are just trying to fit in socially and get addicted to alcohol and drugs. I have heard thousands of testimonies of people becoming hopelessly addicted, and none of them ever said, "Well, I just wanted to become an addict." But once a person becomes addicted, they have practiced and ingrained a coping mechanism for dealing with the struggles of life that is very difficult to stop. And to that individual the idea of changing the way they cope with life (i.e. stop the addiction) represents pain. So many people who know someone who struggles with addiction often ask the questions, "Why won't my husband stop drinking? Why won't my daughter stop using drugs?" It is because to stop means that person is going to feel major pain in his/her life. My experience tells me that for any individual to begin the process of recovery they must get to the place where the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of change. Then and only then will the person choose to change over staying addicted.

For anyone interested in a Biblical approach to freedom from addiction, Reformers Unanimous can offer two classes each week on Friday at 7 p.m. and Sunday morning at 9 a.m. free of charge. Stone can also be reached at [cstone@fbt.org](mailto:cstone@fbt.org) or 843-661-4342.

Corbett Stone holds a bachelor's in political science from Francis Marion University and a master's in management from Troy University. He has been the program director of the Reformers Unanimous Addictions Program at Florence Baptist Temple for the last 15 years. Stone is married to Amy, and they have four children and two grandchildren.

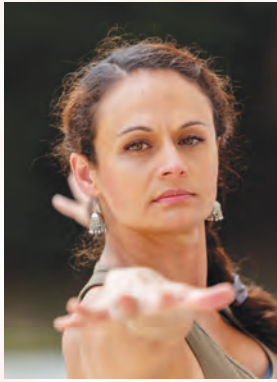
## JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY STRENGTHEN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES





# REVEALING HOW FAILURE IS JUST A LESSON

Submitted by Veronica Robertson



Veronica Robertson

I grew up in Colombia. In the 80s, I spent my early years between a big city, Medellin, and a small rural town where my dad lived. When I was under three years old, my mother fell ill, and through a series of several unfortunate events, she ended up paralyzed from the waist down and unable to care for me as she needed plenty of care herself while learning to navigate her own physical challenges. There was no government help for the

disabled...no health insurance to help with her needs. And financial resources were scarce.

I went back and forth between my parents and between states through my whole childhood. Sometimes, I lived at my grandparents' house or was cared for by neighbors and friends while my father worked. I couldn't see my mother for months at a time. I have vivid memories of myself napping over a blanket on the floor of my dad's job. As of then, there was no other choice, and I was deeply missing my mother. I was just a little child.

The late 80s and while I was a pre-teen, were some of the darkest years in my country and especially of my city of Medellin. I was living with my mother at this time, and bombs were exploding often; some of them as close as four blocks away from our small apartment. It was the drug cartels' war, and I was exposed to violence and blood. There was constant fear as I had to witness death myself. And it was just the two of us--a wheel chair bound young woman and a kid, trying to survive in the midst of the horror of the war and poverty.

My mom was resilient. She never stopped to complain or feel sorry for herself. She simply survived. She came up with all kinds of ideas of crafts to make and sell to make money.

All through those years and the challenges, I witnessed her lending a helping hand to others, feeding people who had less than we did. She pushed her wheelchair through the busy traffic, through terrible roads, uphill because she had no other options. Because of her, I'm who I am today. She is my number one inspiration. And I often go back to her and the example of resilience and perseverance she set for me when I feel down and weak and like giving up.

With the help of my dad and my aunt, I went to college and graduated with a communications and journalism degree and had a moderate command of the English language. I had a successful start of my career before immigrating to the U.S. in

2002 when I was 24 years old. I was able to find a job easily, but it took four years to really feel comfortable working in any setting due to the language challenge.

After living in North Carolina for seven years, I moved to Florence because of my husband's job. We chose Florence as we felt very comfortable with the people and their warmth. We felt welcomed, and McLeod was and is a great



organization for my husband's career.

Through the years, I have changed careers several times, being a medical office assistant, an interpreter and translator and a fitness instructor at a gym. Eventually, I fell in love with yoga, thanks to the teachings of a friend. With her encouragement and support, I enrolled in a yoga teacher-training program in Charleston, and I have added advanced yoga education all around the country.

Back in 2016 Florence didn't have but one yoga studio option, where yoga could be learned in a quiet environment and in a space conducive to breathing awareness and full relaxation. I ended up working for that studio, and after that yoga studio permanently closed, it was my turn to take the risk, and so I did.

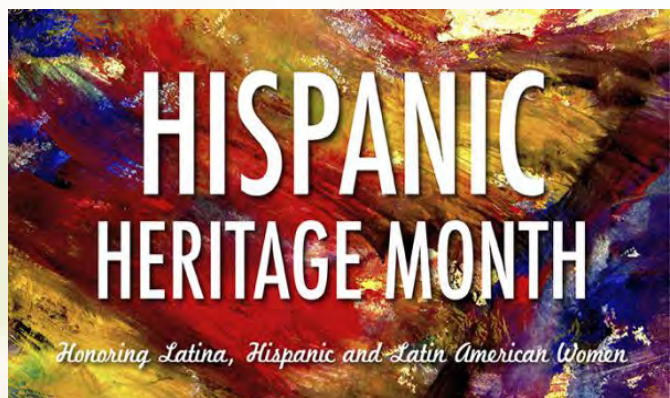
Starting a small business was a very challenging task. I did it all on my own and with a bank loan. It was scary and uncertain.

Today, the reward comes in the small and big differences that you make in people's lives while sharing your skills and doing what you love.

As a Latin American immigrant and mother of two little girls, my mission is to be an example to my daughters about contribution to the wellbeing of all and about compassionate leadership. I want to inspire other females, especially from a minority background, to follow their passion and dreams. Start now and do not wait to be ready because being ready may never arrive.

And the greatest lesson I have learned in my over four years of entrepreneurship is that perseverance is everything and that every "failure" is just a lesson for growth and personal development.

I'm Veronica Robertson and the owner at Flow Town Yoga. I emigrated from Colombia 19 years ago. I'm now a naturalized American citizen, and I call Florence my home since 2009. I am here raising my two 1/2 Hispanic, 1/2 American daughters, Julianna and Lucia.





## GIVING THE GIFT OF LANGUAGE, WITH LOVE by Ta'Meeka Epps



LySandra Mendez

**GEORGETOWN**-Hispanic Heritage Month is observed annually from Sep. 15 to Oct. 15. It is a time to appreciate and celebrate the colorful cultures, rich histories and diversity of the American Latino community. The 2021 theme is “Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future.”

LySandra Mendez is Latin American, and she was born in Puerto Rico. Her father served in the military, and at the age of 10 their family relocated to South Carolina. Mendez currently resides in Georgetown and commutes to Lake City to teach Spanish at J Paul Truluck Creative Arts and Science Magnet School in Florence County School District 3.

Mendez has been employed there for the past four years and has been an educator for the last five years. “Teaching is my passion, and I live life expecting every experience and every encounter to leave me with something new, which helps me continue growing while I leave something along the way that helps others grow.”

As a Spanish educator, Mendez uses culture as part of her Spanish curriculum and as a component of her daily lessons. “I share what I have with others every chance I’m given. I also live it daily so others can get a glimpse of what is definitely a part of me, my culture, my heritage, my pride.”

Hispanic Heritage Month spotlights a culture rich and full of beautiful people, great food and beautiful rhythms that make you move. Mendez explains, “Our traditions are what makes us who we are, and at the center of it all, like my mother would say, love is what makes it special. We do everything with love, and that is the secret to anything that we make or do, even when I teach. I teach with love.”

When asked why she chooses to serve and educate future



generations, she shared the following, “To be honest, it chose me. To make a long story short, when I became an educator I was grieving the loss of my mother. I stepped in front of a classroom full of high school students, and when I began to teach, I began to heal. Serving others through education gives me a reason to continue living because I see life through the eyes of my students, and I am able to give them an experience they may never get anywhere else.”

Through her service, Mendez is giving the gift of language to her students. She is equipping them with tools necessary to become bilingual, an invaluable and highly sought-after hard skill in the workplace. Spanish is a global language with over 500 million native speakers and 33 million speakers in America. It is the second largest language in the United States.

The growth of the Spanish language globally speaks directly to the theme for Hispanic Heritage Month. Mendez knows it’s because of the foundation laid by her ancestors, the past shaped by their dedication and commitment to the culture, that has molded and prepared her for her future, and she plans to do the same for others.

During Hispanic Heritage Month we encourage the Hispanic community to raise their voices to educate others about their cultures and all the contributions Hispanics have made in the past and will continue to make in the future.





# From here. For here.

Here is where we're from. Here made us who we are. We believe relationships are worth more than dollars can measure. It's a value that grows over time, strengthens under pressure, and thrives when serving others. And, we're glad to be here.

1-888-SYNOVUS  
synovus.com

**SYNOVUS**<sup>®</sup>  
the bank of here



Synovus Bank, Member FDIC.

# SYNOVUS<sup>®</sup>

## the bank of here

*Submitted by Synovus*

For 130 years, at Synovus we've stayed true to the concept that banking is a service to our communities in the Southeast and to the people who live here.

Our humble beginnings date back to a Georgia textile mill in 1888 and a simple act of kindness. At the Eagle & Phenix Mill in Columbus, Ga., a mill worker's dress became entangled in the factory machinery. To the surprise of her co-workers, her hard-earned savings—that she had sewn into her dress hem for safe-keeping—spilled across the floor. G. Gunby Jordan, the mill's secretary and treasurer, witnessed the incident and offered to keep her money in the mill safe and pay her monthly interest on the deposits. He soon offered the same service to all the mill workers. Their deposits marked the beginning of the company that would become Synovus.

Our company is founded on the principles Jordan modeled the day that mill worker's dress was torn—integrity, character and the principle of treating people right and doing the right thing. This foundation has endured over the years, and while we've grown from helping customers and small businesses across three

different centuries to financing modern corporate expansions, we're still proud to be part of our local communities and to do the right thing.

We hope you'll stop by your local branch and tell us what we can do for you. At Synovus you'll find that we have:

**Personal banking solutions** to help whether you're just starting out, supporting a young family or getting ready to retire. We offer everything you need to help you reach your financial goals, find stability and enjoy the future you envision for yourself and your loved ones.

**A passion for business**—our business and corporate banking solutions are based on our knowledge of the local community and our financial strength that allows us to deliver sophisticated, customized solutions for businesses large and small.

A financial services company based in Columbus, Ga., Synovus has approximately \$55 billion in assets. We provide commercial and retail banking, and a full suite of specialized products and services, including private banking, treasury management, wealth management, mortgage services, premium finance, asset-based lending, structured lending and international banking through 285 branches in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Florida and Tennessee. With more than 5,000 team members, Synovus is a Great Place to Work-Certified Company and is on the web at [synovus.com](http://synovus.com) and on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

Synovus Bank, Member FDIC.



# BUILD YOUR SAVINGS, START WITH SMALL GOALS



Building a savings account can seem daunting. Many people believe they should have a high amount of savings tucked away but then often become overwhelmed thinking about that goal. By shifting your mindset and taking small, achievable steps, you can reach your savings

goals and more.

Keep in mind, if your savings is low or nonexistent, you're not alone. Fewer than 40 percent of Americans could pay an unexpected \$1,000 bill with their savings, according to a recent survey. The pandemic has presented countless challenges for many people, and even if you tapped your savings to make ends meet, you can always restart and refocus.

The good news is there are simple steps you can take to establish a savings account and help you reach other goals, like a down payment on a new home or extra payments on the principal balance of an existing mortgage loan.

Here are three simple steps to start a successful savings plan:

## Set a realistic goal

It may not be realistic for you to start saving \$500 a month, but that doesn't mean you can't save an amount that makes you comfortable. Consider \$50, \$25 or even \$5 if that sounds reasonable. Starting with a small, realistic goal can help you stick to a savings plan. Tracking your goals builds excitement, whether that's for an emergency fund or to buy a new home. Visibly seeing progress reinforces your goals, and you can be proud of building momentum.

## Create and stick to a budget

There is power in knowing the exact amount of money coming in and going out each month, so budgeting is an essential step in understanding your finances and guiding your saving efforts. If you budget and find a surplus, consider using that extra money to bolster your savings. If there is a deficit, reevaluate and decide what adjustments can be made. Understand necessities versus nice-to-have expenses, and find ways to make your money work for your situation.

## Know your "why"

Building a savings takes time, but having a motivation for your commitment can support your success. Whether it's to have a safety net, or you're saving for a down payment on a home, a goal can help keep you focused, which means you are more likely to follow through.

These three initial steps can give anyone a guiding start to building a savings account to help them reach their goals. Remember, just like a runner needs to train from completing a mile to completing a marathon, the best way to build a savings account is with consistent, achievable steps.



CAROLINABANK  
*Building on tradition since 1936*

Member  
FDIC

CAROLINABANK  
**FIELD**

We can't wait to bring families together and generate revenue for local businesses with this remarkable facility.

**Bank Local,  
Invest Local!**

**CarolinaBank.Net**





# WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE “THREE-LEGGED STOOL” OF RETIREMENT?



Have you ever heard of the “three-legged stool” of retirement? If you have, it probably was a while ago. Once considered the ideal retirement model, the three-legged stool has fallen out of favor because one of the legs—defined benefit pensions—is not as stable as it once was, and the future of Social Security is often wound up in political maneuvering in Washington. Consider the following:

—According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, just 51 percent of private sector employers offer defined contribution or defined benefit pension plans, and only 8 percent offer traditional defined benefit plans, thereby eliminating a guaranteed source of lifetime income.

—Social Security benefits replace about 40 percent of the average worker’s salary. What’s more, the Social Security trust fund

is expected to deplete its reserves by 2034 and will be able to fund approximately 77 percent of benefits after that.

Fortunately, there are ways to reinforce the third leg of the stool—retirement savings and other personal assets—so that you can still enjoy a long and fulfilling retirement. While each person’s financial circumstances are different, here are two proven funding sources you may want to consider if you need to compensate for any shortcomings:

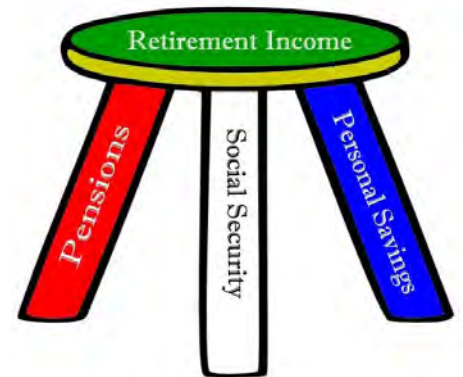
—With people living longer than ever, it’s important to make sure the money you have set aside will last the rest of your life. While Social Security provides a lifetime supply of income, it may not be enough to support your desired lifestyle. If you think you’ll need additional income and do not have a pension, a lifetime income annuity can be an excellent way to make up the difference.

—Although the primary purpose of life insurance is to deliver death benefit protection, many permanent life policies accumulate cash value. If your need for protection decreases over time, you can borrow against this cash value—tax-free in most cases—and use the money to supplement your retirement lifestyle. (Loans against your policy accrue interest and

decrease the death benefit and cash value by the amount of the outstanding loan and interest.)

While the three-legged stool of retirement may be a bit wobbly, the good news is that a secure future is still within reach. The main difference these days is that you will most likely have to build it yourself.

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).



For over 175 years The New York Life Insurance Company has served the insurance and financial needs of individuals, families, and businesses.



## PERSONAL STRATEGIES

Life Insurance | Legacy Strategies  
Long Term Care Insurance

## BUSINESS STRATEGIES

Key Person Protection | Business Continuation  
Individual And Group Strategies

Financial security isn’t just about money. It’s a safety net for the ones you love.



Be good at life.

Together let’s prepare for the future so you can continue all the good you do in your life.



**Julie A Cord, MBA, MIM, CLU®**  
Agent  
New York Life Insurance Company  
P.O. Box 13809  
Florence, SC 29504  
200 Meeting St., Ste 401  
Charleston, SC 29401  
317.289.3010  
[jacord@ft.newyorklife.com](mailto:jacord@ft.newyorklife.com)  
[www.julieacord.com](http://www.julieacord.com)



Registered Representation offering investments through NYLIFE Securities LLC (Member FINRA/SPICA), A Licensed Insurance Agency. NYLIFE Securities LLC is a New York Life Company.

New York Life Insurance Company, 51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010



## CAUSEY PROMOTED TO PROCESSING MANAGER



April Causey

**CONWAY**– Anderson Brothers Bank (ABB) is pleased to announce the recent promotion of April Causey to processing manager.

In her role, Causey will work and support Mortgage Lending VP, Tim McCoy, loan officers and mortgage loan processors on a daily basis to ensure mortgage loan applications are originated, processed and closed according to established policies and procedures. Causey is a graduate of Horry Georgetown Technical College and has 27 years of experience in the mortgage field. She has been employed with Anderson Brothers Bank for the past eight years with her most recent position being mortgage loan processor. She resides in Aynor with her husband, Tracy, where she is an active member of Langston Baptist Church.

“April has done an outstanding job fulfilling her role as mortgage loan processor. Due to her dedication and the value she has brought to our Mortgage Lending Team, we are pleased to announce her new role as processing manager,” said Tim McCoy, VP Mortgage Lending.

## YATES PROMOTED TO BRANCH MANAGER



Creighton Yates

Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Creighton Yates as branch manager in the bank’s downtown Conway office located at 500 Main St. in Conway.

In his role, Creighton will continue to assist customers with a full array of consumer lending products. In addition, he will now provide supervisory support within the branch to ensure effective and efficient customer service. He joined ABB in September 2015 in the bank’s downtown Conway office as loan officer.

“Creighton has been a crucial part of the success for the Conway/ Myrtle Beach area. His passion to serve customers and his team reflects daily. This is well deserved!” said Jeff Williamson, vice president/consumer finance director.



ANDERSON  
BROTHERS BANK

## JESSICA SUGGS PROMOTED TO GRAPHIC DESIGN/SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

Articles submitted by Susan Grant, VE Marketing Director



Jessica Suggs

**MULLINS**- Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Jessica Suggs as graphic design/social media manager in the bank’s marketing department.

In her role, Suggs will head up all creative development of print, digital and online content used to promote loans, services and the brand of Anderson Brothers Bank. In addition, she will develop, monitor, respond and report all social media responses to various principals throughout the bank as it relates to various areas. She joined ABB in June of 2015 in the bank’s

Marion Main Street office as teller/CSR and transferred to the marketing department in May of 2018 as marketing coordinator.

“Jessica joined the marketing team in 2018 to manage promotional and supply requests from all branches in addition to communications with all employees in branches and departments throughout,” said Susan Grant, vice president/marketing director. “Her enjoyable character, alert ability and willingness to absorb new concepts have expanded her knowledge while enriching our whole department. I have no doubt she will excel in this new role, and we are privileged to have her on our team. This is well deserved!”

*Your* LIFE.  
*Your* CHOICE.  
*Your* LOAN.

- Loans for Credit Scores as Low as 550
- Local Decision-Making
- Quick Processing

Apply Online  
@ABBank.com

Member FDIC

ANDERSON  
BROTHERS BANK



# BLESSING OTHERS THROUGH FINANCIAL LITERACY by Les Echols



Alisa Nesmith Bellamy

Financial literacy has been recognized by many educators as a key component to personal and professional financial longevity. Florence native Alisa Nesmith Bellamy uses She Rocks Finances to stress the importance of financial literacy and to help educate people on becoming financially literate.

She Rocks Finances is a personal finance blog where Bellamy shares tips and advice based on her personal financial journey. “Growing up, working and not having much in terms of savings or investments inspired me to create She Rocks,” she explained. “I was confused by my own story—looking as if everything was great but financially not having much to show for it. She Rocks is about my journey of doing something different to get better results. My blog posts mainly target women, and in the Black community, females lead many households. This means we as women oversee many financial decisions in the home. My blog seeks to simplify money and stick to the basics, which are to spend less than you make, get out of debt, save and invest. While we cannot tackle them all at once, we can set goals and create plans to help our journey,” Bellamy continued.

She also elaborated on the day-to-day importance of financial wellness. “Financial wellness is just as important as food, rest and spiritual health. If you consider that stress contributes to many illnesses, think about what stresses us. Many times, it is not having enough money or not being responsible with what we have because we haven’t been given the right tools. As a person of faith, I feel that God’s word also teaches us to be good stewards and not to be anxious about

anything. I believe financial health is possible for everyone regardless of income or background. It’s like everything in life when we take time to find truth and wisdom—we find peace and security and a more solid base to live from. Soon it grows, reaches and then blesses others,” she concluded.

Bellamy is from Florence but now resides in Charlotte with her husband and daughter. She graduated from West Florence High School and completed her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of South Carolina with a major in business administration and a concentration in finance. Bellamy stresses that because her parents and many relatives still are in the Florence area, she enjoys visiting her hometown for family gatherings.



## THE RIGHT ADVISOR CAN BOOST YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

Many people have reexamined their finances since the pandemic. While some are itching to dine out and travel again, others are looking to invest in their future. According to a recent survey, Americans’ top financial goals include boosting their savings, planning for retirement and paying off debt.

To reach these and other goals, people often look for an advisor to help manage their money. However, there are many different types of financial professionals to choose from, so it’s important to know what makes the right financial professional stand out.

“Americans often share more with their financial advisors than they do their doctors,” says Geoffrey Brown, CEO of the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA). “So, it’s important they have someone they can trust and who will always put their best interests first.”

### Qualities to look for in a financial advisor

Selecting an advisor is one of the most important life decisions you’ll make. When looking for the right qualities, you want your advisor to be:

- A Fee-Only financial advisor
- A fiduciary
- Confident and proactive
- Holistic in their approach

### Finding the right financial advisor for you

Choosing to work with a financial advisor can be one of the best life decisions you make. Knowing what qualities make a transparent, reliable and objective advisor will allow you to find a professional who can help you achieve your financial goals.

For more information on selecting the right advisor for you, visit [www.napfa.org/financial-planning/consumer-resources](http://www.napfa.org/financial-planning/consumer-resources).

*Community.  
That's what we do here.*



*Our employees know you by name and greet you with a smile as you walk in the door. If you've ever been to Dedicated Community Bank, you know what we're talking about. We're interested in you, and we will do our best to make sure you are 100 percent satisfied with your banking experience.*



2016 Hoffmeyer Road  
Florence, SC 29501  
843.292.0016

202 Cashua Street  
Darlington, SC 29532  
843.395.1956

[www.dcbcs.com](http://www.dcbcs.com)





### 3 WAYS TO SAVE ON BACK-TO-SCHOOL EXPENSES



Back-to-school shopping is going to hit record high this year as “the second busiest retail season of the year, next to holiday shopping.” That’s what one national retail federation report had to say, noting that back-to-school expenses would hit a record high for the 2021-2022 school year, averaging \$789.49 per child. That’s up from the average of \$696.70 last year.

If that number gives you heartburn, here are a few tips to help get what your kids need without the financial stress.

1. Take inventory at home first: More often than not, you have many of the school supplies your kids need at home already. See if you have highlighters, pens, pencils, notebooks and other school supplies saved up from prior years before buying more of the same. The savings may seem small, but they will add up, and every little bit helps.

2. Take advantage of the “loss leaders”: Wait, what? “Loss leaders” are items that stores advertise at low prices (or even at a loss) to lure you into their stores, hoping you’ll buy more. Big box stores like Walmart and Target usually offer deep discounts on school supplies starting after July 4, and these discounts last through September. Be on the lookout for weekly deals



at stores like Staples, Office Depot and even Walgreens or CVS where they will highlight a small handful of products each week, sometimes as low as 25 cents.

3. Don’t use those store credit cards: If you are offered one while checking out, politely decline. Sure, those sign-up bonuses can be great, but if you carry a balance on one of these cards, the interest you pay with those high APRs (averaging 24.24 percent APR) will easily exceed what you saved with that initial discount the store offered you.

If you do find yourself needing a little extra to cover the costs of back-to-school shopping, Palmetto First can help. We offer personal loans with competitive rates and flexible payment options for just this reason.

APPLY NOW or CONTACT US and allow us to review your specific situation and make a personal recommendation that will fit your budget.



**OPEN YOUR EYES  
TO A  
CREDIT UNION®**

[WWW.PALMETTOFIRST.COM](http://WWW.PALMETTOFIRST.COM)





## A TRUE PAIN IN THE PELVIS *Submitted by John Russell, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center*



*Erin Pigge and Sherry Heiden*

Sherry Heiden didn't know what exactly was wrong with her. All she knew is that she was in pain—and it was getting worse, even life-changing. Heiden is overall the picture of health in her mid-40s: staying active, going to the gym regularly and busy being a mother. However, the “pain” started in 2018.

“I was having a lot of pain in my pelvic area,” Heiden described. “It was hard because I've always been active and not been one to sit around and be idle.”

She said at first, her doctor thought it was kidney stones, which she has had before. Talk to anyone who has ever had a kidney stone, and they'll tell you it's very painful. A month went by as she and her urologist monitored her symptoms, eventually sending her to get a scan for kidney stones. The test result came back negative—no stones present. Heiden and her doctors were baffled.

“It [the pain] got to be so bad I could hardly get out of bed in the morning, or any other time of day. I can only describe it as excruciating. It's nearly impossible to describe the pain I was in,” she said. “It was so bad my husband called my gynecologist for me. Before I knew it, I was scheduled for laparoscopic exploratory surgery. I was also informed both my gynecologist and urologist would be doing the surgery.”

Surgery can be scary, but she said surgery with two doctors didn't exactly put her at ease. Heiden's mother died at an early age of cancer in the pelvic area. Women over the age of 50 can be at higher risk for pelvic cancer, but Heiden was in her mid-40s. On the day of her surgery, in mid-2018, she said her urologist didn't find anything to be worried about. Her gynecologist, however, found endometriosis and treated it with endometrial ablation. Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the womb grows outside of the uterus and possibly other areas of the body. It can also show up in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, bladder

and with tissues holding the uterus in place. Endometrial ablation is a procedure to destroy the endometrial tissue.

“After the surgery, I was very hopeful my problem was solved. I thought, ‘Yay, I'm going home and will feel better.’ Unfortunately, I didn't feel better. I actually felt worse. I went back for another surgery, and they took out an ovary, both fallopian tubes, cervix and my uterus. Once more I thought I'd get better, but it didn't happen,” she said.

In the last surgery, she had her other ovary removed and removed more endometriosis. This time she said she felt better, but it was the third surgery she'd had in nine months. Fast forward to 2019, and the pain was coming back.

“It got to be so bad I couldn't sit down, and I was having a lot of bladder issues. I felt like I had a kidney stone. I constantly had the urge to go to the bathroom,” she said, reflecting back on the experience. “I couldn't ride in the car. It got so bad I had to hire someone (for a whole year) to pick my child up at school because I couldn't sit in car line, go on a vacation, drive to Columbia. At night trying to sleep was horrible.”

In the middle of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Heiden went for a follow-up appointment with her gynecologist, who told her she had a lot of scar tissue in her pelvic area. The doctor told her the pain was caused by endometriosis, scar tissue and a tightening of her pelvic muscles.

“Oddly enough, I was good with the pandemic because I could stay home, and no one would wonder why I couldn't go out to do things. But, it was getting to the point where I wasn't sure if I could live,” she said tearfully. “I was told I needed a pelvic floor therapist. Both my doctor and I looked everywhere but couldn't find one nearby. The closest one was at least an hour away, and there's no way I could ride in the car that long; it would be too painful.”

Through social media, someone in Florence let Heiden know about Erin Pigge, a pelvic health physical therapist at MUSC Health Outpatient Rehabilitation Center in Florence. Pigge is trained to help women and men with pelvic health and specialized therapeutic treatment for women of all ages.

“I was so relieved to have found someone that could help me finally—and they were local,” Heiden said with

excitement. “I immediately called my gynecologist, who set me up with an appointment the next week with Erin.”

“I help people with bowel and bladder dysfunction, urinary or stool leakage and pain in the pelvic region. Depending on what the issue is, rehabilitation requires different approaches to therapy,” Pigge said. “When someone is in pain for years, like in Sherry's case, the muscles can stay in a tightened position. I describe it as carrying several bags of groceries at a time. Once you set them down, your muscles are still tense. The goal is to get muscles to relax back into a lengthened state.”

Pigge said education is the first part of therapy. Going over anatomy, why things happen in the pelvic area, how it works and talking through everything is essential. “I really believe if you understand your body and understand what we're doing, then you are a better consumer of what I'm doing. We do breathing techniques, exercises, stretching, muscle retraining and use manual muscle relaxation techniques. For many women, this therapy doesn't feel good at first. I'd compare it to tense shoulders or knots you might have in your shoulders. Sometimes it hurts even to touch.”

As Pigge pointed out, the pelvis is the muscular base of your body. Sitting, posture, legs, back and hips all involve the pelvis. “It's more than just focusing on one specific muscle. It's more about addressing the entire system. That's why this therapy is different,” she said. “I have to applaud Sherry because many of my patients and those with pelvic issues are very quiet about it. It's a sensitive topic you don't want to talk to other people about.”

Heiden's therapy is ongoing, and she feels optimistic about her path to a pain-free life. “I am a new person, and it's only been two months. I still have a way to go. I'm back to working out again, going on trips and just doing everyday things. I've taught my daughter some of these breathing and relaxation techniques. I feel all women can benefit from these techniques. My life is 95 percent better because of this. I can live now!”

For more information about pelvic health and women's therapy services, or to speak with Erin Pigge, please call the MUSC Health Outpatient Rehabilitation Center at 843-661-4360, or go to [MUSChealth.org](http://MUSChealth.org).



# PDMPA GOLF TOURNAMENT



The Pee Dee Medical Professionals Association, Inc. Inaugural Golf Tournament provides scholarships to deserving high school Juniors & Seniors residing in the Pee Dee region and pursuing a career in the healthcare field.

**SATURDAY ■ AUG. 28th ■ 8:30AM**

**TRACES GOLF COURSE**

4322 Southborough Road ■ Florence, SC 29501 ■ 843.662.7775

Captain's Choice Foursome, 18 Holes

Entry Fee -- \$85 per player | Door Prizes & Contests

Check, cash or Paypal: [Paypal.me/PDMPA](https://www.paypal.com/merchot/?url=https://www.paypal.me/PDMPA)

8:30AM - 9:15AM  
9:30AM - 1:00PM  
1:00PM – 3:00PM

Registration  
Shotgun start & Tournament  
Luncheon & Awards

**EARLY BIRD TEAMS**  
prior to July 17<sup>th</sup> receive a free raffle  
ticket for each team member

**PLAYER REGISTRATION INCLUDES:**

Green fees, golf cart, clubhouse use, beverage cart, snacks, luncheon, 1 mulligan, 1 green tea buster

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/pdmpa-inaugural-golf-tournament-tickets-156966548171>

PDMPA | 1937 W. Palmetto Street, #342 | Florence, SC 29501 | [pdmpa.org](http://pdmpa.org)



To become a sponsor or to participate contact:  
Patricia E. Lewis, MBA | Projects & Plans, LLC

☎ 843.472.1614

✉ [pdmpagolf@gmail.com](mailto:pdmpagolf@gmail.com)





# At MUSC we are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion.

In the spirit of our new enterprise strategy, OneMUSC, we are reimagining with renewed energy and clarity of purpose, our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We are committed to leveraging differences and building inclusion to create an academic health care community, which allows people to understand and be understood. As we look toward the future, we must not tire from this hard work, and we must lead the way as a model for inclusion and engagement.

## We must be our best selves.

MUSC is implementing a series of strategic initiatives to eliminate health care disparities, build MUSC leadership, students, and workforce to reflect our communities, and elevate a culture of “OneMUSC”.



[www.musc.edu/dei](http://www.musc.edu/dei)





*In today's economic climate we all have to look for value when we are feeding our family. Your hometown IGA food store should be your first stop when looking to stretch your food budget.*



*IGA's exclusive TableRite beef is hand selected for quality, value and flavor. We only buy USDA inspected meat and our trained meat cutters can cut and wrap your purchases just the way you want it, in most cases at no extra cost.*

*Don't forget, at IGA, all our customers are special. We offer everyday guaranteed low prices with no games, gimmicks or frequent shopper cards all so we can save you time and money. Since 1956 IGA has brought quality and value to South Carolina shoppers and during these trying times, it's nice to know you can count on IGA.*

*Visit us online at [www.igaguy.com](http://www.igaguy.com) to learn more.*



## SENIORS WITH HOPE RETURNS

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator



Seniors with Hope!

Before COVID-19, HopeHealth held monthly Seniors with Hope programs and provided an opportunity for seniors to get together, listen to excellent speakers, make new friends, play games and enjoy time together.

Designed to help seniors learn about lifestyle and medical topics at the Medical Plaza, the program ended in-person meetings due to COVID-19 and established a monthly newsletter. In May, with many seniors fully vaccinated, HopeHealth resumed Seniors with Hope at the Medical Plaza in Florence with masks and social distancing.

Each month, seniors hear from a health care expert on a topic related to seniors and participate in an activity.

- In May, Dr. Heather Leisy, HopeHealth director of prevention, provided the latest updates on COVID-19 and answered participant questions, and Merrette Dowdell of Florence City Center Farmers Market and Soulift Yoga, Pilates, Barre taught a seated workout using drumsticks, an exercise ball and clothes basket.

- In June, Seniors with Hope took a field trip to The DIY Place in Florence for a hands-on craft activity.

Check out the program on our Facebook/hopehealthinc page. To learn more about Seniors with Hope, visit hopehealth.org. To sign up for the monthly newsletter, scan the QR code with your smart phone or visit <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/5iwLWvq>.



SCAN ME

## CHEMISTRY FOR STRONG COMMUNITIES



More than 30 million patients count on community health centers for their health care needs, and every August we celebrate the work and services these centers provide during National Health Center Week. This year is no different.

The annual celebration aims to raise awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's health centers over the past five decades, and during the week, HopeHealth hosts various events and initiatives to showcase the importance of community health care centers for more than 50,000 patients in five counties. This year, HopeHealth also celebrates its 30th anniversary of helping people meet their health care needs.

Community health centers are essential for accessible, affordable quality care. Centers help people establish long-term relationships with health care providers, address the health needs of the entire person and provide individualized pathways to achieving health goals.

Throughout the year, HopeHealth takes a proactive approach to improving the health of our communities. By providing essential access to care in rural communities of Aiken, Clarendon, Florence, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties and hosting community events and public health-focused classes, HopeHealth contributes to the equation for building a strong, healthy community.

Be a part of that equation and become a community health center advocate, speak up on behalf of centers and commit to advocating for policy issues impacting health centers and their patients. About 2,200 HopeHealth advocates are already a part of the equation. Join us today at [theadvocacy.org](http://theadvocacy.org). Sign up as a CHC advocate, and list HopeHealth as your community health center.



#WORKATHH



Work at HopeHealth!  
[careers.hope-health.org](http://careers.hope-health.org)



# McLeod Health



## What is Atrial Fibrillation?

Atrial fibrillation is a heart condition where the upper chamber of the heart beats irregularly. This can cause blood to pool and form clots in an area of the heart called the left atrial appendage. If a blood clot does form, it can travel through an artery to the brain and cause a stroke.

People with untreated atrial fibrillation may be at greater risk for stroke than people with normal heart rhythms. In atrial fibrillation, the left atrial appendage, a small pouch located on the top of the heart, is believed to be the source of most stroke-causing blood clots.

Anyone can have a stroke no matter what age, race or gender. The chances of stroke increase with the following risk factors:

- Atrial Fibrillation
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol

## How can you reduce your risk of stroke?

Medications like anticoagulants, also known as blood thinners, can reduce the risk of blood clots that could lead to stroke. Warfarin is an example of a blood thinning medication that keeps the blood from sticking together and forming clots. There are several newer drugs like Dabigatran, Apixiban and Rivaroxaban, which help to reduce the risk of stroke in some groups of patients with atrial fibrillation.

Anticoagulants work well for many patients; however, there are reasons why some patients do not take blood thinners. While they prevent blood clots, anticoagulants can also increase the risk of bleeding problems. When a bleeding event occurs, like a cut taking longer than normal to stop bleeding, it is usually easily treated. But, in some cases, bleeding can be quite serious and require hospitalization.

## WATCHMAN

Patients who have atrial fibrillation without significant heart valve disease, and who are on anticoagulant medications, may be a candidate for a device available at the McLeod Heart and Vascular Institute called the WATCHMAN Left Atrial Appendage Closure Device. The WATCHMAN, about the size of a quarter, is implanted at the opening of the left atrial appendage to prevent blood clots from entering the blood stream and potentially causing a stroke. The device is a one-time implant that does not need to be replaced.

By closing off the left atrial appendage, the source of more than

90 percent of stroke-causing blood clots, the risk of stroke may be reduced and over time patients may be weaned off their blood thinning medications.

To perform the WATCHMAN procedure, the implant is guided via a catheter inserted through a vein in the upper leg. Once the implant is in position in the left atrial appendage it is opened - similar to the opening up of an umbrella. The implant remains permanently in the heart.

## WATCHMAN FLX

McLeod began offering the WATCHMAN device more than five years ago. Now the creators of WATCHMAN have developed the next generation, the WATCHMAN FLX.

The new device is available in more sizes, which enables the treatment of a wider variety of patients. To determine the correct size needed, a transesophageal echocardiography test (TEE) is performed. This is a test that uses ultrasound technology to create highly detailed pictures of the heart and its internal structures.

The WATCHMAN FLX features a new, fully-rounded design that allows the ability to maneuver within the left atrial appendage for correct positioning. Once in place, if necessary, it can be repositioned during the procedure making it more customizable to the individual patient's anatomy.



## Are you a candidate?

The WATCHMAN is for patients with atrial fibrillation who need or take anticoagulant or blood thinning medications to reduce their risk of stroke, but their physician is recommending this device as an alternative to long-term use of these drugs because of bleeding risks or other concerns.

The WATCHMAN does not cure atrial fibrillation and after receiving the implant it is important that patients continue to see their cardiologist.



*Dr. Prabal Guha  
McLeod Electrophysiologist*

To find out if you are a candidate for the WATCHMAN device, please call McLeod Cardiology Associates at 843-667-1891.

Electrophysiologist Dr. Prabal Guha of McLeod Cardiology Associates can help you manage your atrial fibrillation. Dr. Guha cares for patients at their offices located in Florence and Sumter. Appointments can be made by calling 843-667-1891.



# MCLEOD STROKE CARE.

Close To Home. Far From Ordinary.



★★★★★  
**in Treatment  
of Stroke**  
by Healthgrades  
(2021)

★★★★★  
**in Cranial  
Neurosurgery**  
by Healthgrades  
(2021)

## Dr. Basil Shah, Interventional Neuroradiologist

In today's world, it is more important than ever to have extraordinary medical care close to home. The region's leader in advanced stroke care, the McLeod Stroke and Neurosciences team performs the latest life-saving procedures in emergent stroke care. In our dedicated Neurointerventional Bi-Plane X-ray Suite, Interventional Neuroradiologist Dr. Basil Shah performs the minimally invasive Thrombectomy procedure to treat Ischemic Strokes, the most common type of stroke.



McLeod Health has the advanced stroke care you need, when you need it.

Close to home, far from ordinary.

## McLeod Health

[McLeodHealth.org](http://McLeodHealth.org)





# Care for Yours



Now Accepting New Patients!  
[hope-health.org](http://hope-health.org)

1920 2nd Loop Rd., Florence  
11 W. Hospital St., Manning



## HOPEHEALTH NEW PROVIDERS

Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communications Coordinator, HopeHealth

New HopeHealth providers this quarter, include:



David Garrell, MD, FACP

HopeHealth welcomes **Dr. David Garrell** to HopeHealth in Orangeburg. Garrell is a member of the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians and a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American Society of Addiction Medicine. He is certified in addiction medicine through the American Board of Addiction Medicine and in addiction management through the American Society of Addiction Medicine.



Maci Johnson, LMSW

Behavioral health consultant **Maci Johnson** has joined the pain management program team at HopeHealth on Palmetto Street in Florence.

From, Dillon, Johnson volunteers with Save The Youth Expo, hosted in Latta, and She Is Me Mentoring. She completed international school-based social work in Trinidad and Tobago and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.



Kira O'Neal, LPC

**Kira O'Neal** is a behavioral health consultant at HopeHealth in Lake City. O'Neal graduated from Francis Marion University in Florence with a Bachelor of Science in psychology and minor in biology. She received a Master of Arts in counseling from Webster University in Myrtle Beach.

**Dorothy Selmon** serves patients at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence as a behavioral health consultant. She is fluent in both English and Spanish and has experience counseling patients in addictions, family and individual therapy.



Dorothy Selmon, LPC

**Cheryl Watson** is a behavioral health consultant with the HopeHealth behavioral health team at HopeHealth in Timmonsville. She graduated from Rutgers University–Livingston College in New Brunswick, N.J., with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and from Adelphi University of Garden City, N.Y., with a Master of Social Work. She also received a Master of Divinity from Campbell University in Buies Creek, N.C.



Cheryl Watson, MSW, M.Div., LMSW

HopeHealth is a nonprofit leader in providing affordable, expert health care and infectious diseases services for all ages in Aiken, Florence, Clarendon, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties. Our federally qualified health centers are the primary care providers of choice for more than 50,000 patients. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414, or visit [hope-health.org](http://hope-health.org).



# CARESOUTH CAROLINA NAMES ROBINSON AWARD RECIPIENT



Tammie Robinson

**HARTSVILLE-** CareSouth Carolina's Tammie Robinson was named the Medication Therapy Management of the Year Award recipient at the 19th Annual SC Chronic Disease Prevention Symposium.

Serving as the clinical pharmacist in CareSouth Carolina's CSC Community Pharmacy in Hartsville, Robinson works with a diverse group of patients ranging in age, ethnicity and economic class.

Robinson, who has worked at CareSouth Carolina for more than eight years, was named the award recipient for her effort to go above and beyond to come away with innovative solutions to improve the management of medications and chronic diseases. Robinson works collaboratively with providers and health care workers to ensure the best possible care is provided.

Through the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program, she is able to take an in-depth look at patients' prescriptions and help educate them on the importance of their medication. "The program helps fill in the education gap," Robinson said. "A lot of the patients have chronic conditions, like hypertension, high cholesterol, asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure. They are on what we call 'maintenance medications.' I am able to go in, look at their prescriptions and help them understand the importance of taking that prescription to help treat that condition."

Robinson said she was honored and humbled to be named the award recipient. "This validates the role of the pharmacist as more than just a prescription provider, but also as an educator," Robinson said. "It's important to help customers remain compliant and adhere to their prescriptions. I'm able to discuss with them and address barriers as to what

is standing in their way."

The purpose of the Annual Chronic Disease Prevention Symposium is to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and partnership in efforts to reduce the burden of chronic disease in South Carolina. This annual event brings together health professionals and community stakeholders not only to educate and inspire each other, but to also embrace unique and innovative approaches to chronic disease prevention and health disparity reduction.

The theme for the 2021 Symposium is "The Color of Health." As a result of the Annual Chronic Disease Prevention Symposium, participants had the opportunity to:

- Explore the intersection of race and health
- Interpret the root causes of health disparities as they relate to chronic illness
- Identify barriers and facilitators related to chronic disease management and prevention within the clinical and community setting
- Recognize evidence-based and innovative strategies designed to improve patient care and outcomes
- Identify tools and resources that support chronic disease prevention and management
- Summarize innovative strategies that support improved patient outcomes
- Assess the clinical implications of integrating technology into healthcare practice

CareSouth Carolina is a private, non-profit community health center delivering patient-centered health and life services in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina. CareSouth Carolina operates centers in Bennettsville, Bishopville, Cheraw, Chesterfield, Dillon, Hartsville, Lake View, Latta, McColl and Society Hill.

Services provided by CareSouth Carolina include family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, women services, OB/GYN, HIV/AIDS primary care, dental, chiropractic services, pharmacy, geriatrics, social services, clinical counseling, laboratory, 4D ultrasound, X-Ray, migrant services and veterans choice provider.

## Convenient Locations:

Bennettsville Center 999 Cheraw Street Bennettsville, SC 29512 843.479.2341	Hartsville Center 1268 S. Fourth Street Hartsville, SC 29550 843.332.3422 843.339.5520 Chiropractic
Bennettsville Pediatric Center 210 W. Main Street Bennettsville, SC 29512 843.479.1200	Lake View Center 103 N. Kemper Street Lake View, SC 29563 843.759.2189
Bennettsville Women's Center 1076 Marlboro Way, Suite 1 Bennettsville, SC 29512 843.454.2294	Latta Center 122 Latimer Street Latta, SC 29565 843.627.6252
Bishopville Center 545 Sumter Highway Bishopville, SC 29010 803.484.5317	McColl Health & Wellness Center 3080 Highway 15-401 E McColl, SC 29570 843.523.5751
Bishopville Pediatric Dental 101 Harris Street Bishopville, SC 29010 866.815.9845	Society Hill Center 737 S. Main Street Society Hill, SC 29593 843.378.4501
Cheraw Center 715 S. Doctors Drive Suite E Cheraw, SC 29520 843.537.0961	Public Employee Health Services - Marlboro County 100 Matheson Street Bennettsville, SC 29512 843.456.7752
Chesterfield Center 204 Perry Wiloy Way Chesterfield, SC 29709 843.623.5080	
Dillon Center 207 E. Monroe Street Dillon, SC 29536 843.774.4337	

## Pharmacy Locations:

HARTSVILLE 1280 S. Fourth Street 843.339.5530	BISHOPVILLE 545 Sumter Hwy 803.588.7960	BENNETTSVILLE 999 Cheraw Street 843.456.7777
SOCIETY HILL 737 S. Main Street 843.378.4148	CHERAW 715 S. Doctors Drive, Ste. A 843.865.4080	MCCOLL 3080 Highway 15-401 E 843.523.6212
LATTA 122 Latimer Street 843.627.6261		

### We Accept:

Medicaid • Medicare • Private Insurance • Sliding Fee  
[www.caresouth-carolina.com](http://www.caresouth-carolina.com)

*Health Care For The  
Entire Family!*

Family Practice  
Pediatrics  
Women's Care  
Behavioral Health Counseling  
Chiropractic Care  
Substance Abuse Prevention  
Lab  
Radiology/Ultrasound  
Dental Care  
Family Support Services  
Infectious Diseases Primary Care  
Senior Support Services  
Community Pharmacy

Welcome  
**HOME**  
TO BETTER  
HEALTH



Contact us today to  
schedule an appointment  
for you and your family!

follow us!



# HOPEHEALTH RECOGNIZES MEMORIAL DAY Submitted by Donna Tracy, Communication Coordinator



Junior ROTC cadets from Wilson and West Florence High Schools presented the U.S. and POW/MIA flags at the HopeHealth Memorial Day event.

HopeHealth honored service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice on May 28, with a Memorial Day program on the front lawn of the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence.

With U.S. and Prisoners of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) flag presentations by Jr. ROTC cadets from West Florence and Wilson High Schools; a brief history of Memorial Day by Conner Smith, veteran care navigator; and comments from Henry

Humphries, veteran liaison, the program served as a reminder of the true meaning of Memorial Day.

The flags were flown at half-mast through Memorial Day on the recently installed pole and will continue to be flown daily and illuminated at night per the flag code.

The flag pole is just one of the ways in which the organization recognizes and focuses on helping veterans. HopeHealth honors veterans year-round with programs, including:

- Veteran liaisons and care coordinators - Veteran liaisons and care coordinators at HopeHealth are themselves veterans who understand the unique needs of service members and their families. They help navigate health care services and specialize in helping veterans get connected to their local Veterans Affairs offices, understand benefit eligibility, submit claims or file for an appeal, along with many other services both inside and outside of



Henry Humphries, the guest speaker, salutes the U.S. flag.



Guests visit the Veterans with Hope information table.

HopeHealth.

• Veterans with Hope - Held on the third Thursday of every month, veterans and their families are welcome to gather to hear about local resources and upcoming opportunities. Each month the event includes two speakers—one affiliated with HopeHealth, the other representing a community resource from

which our veterans could benefit.

• Cup of Joe with a Joe – A morning gathering of veterans on the first Friday of the month.

• “Thank A Veteran” Art Contest – Each fall, local students are invited to show their appreciation for veterans in an art contest. Several submissions are selected to be displayed in the Medical Plaza on a wall dedicated to our Veterans with Hope program.

Most recently, HopeHealth established a permanent Missing Man table honoring POW/MIA in the Coast Line Café at the Medical Plaza in Florence. The table dates back to the Vietnam War and is used to honor service members who were taken prisoner by the enemy or were never found. Two additional tables will rotate through our other sites to honor these service members and spread the word about Veteran programs at HopeHealth.

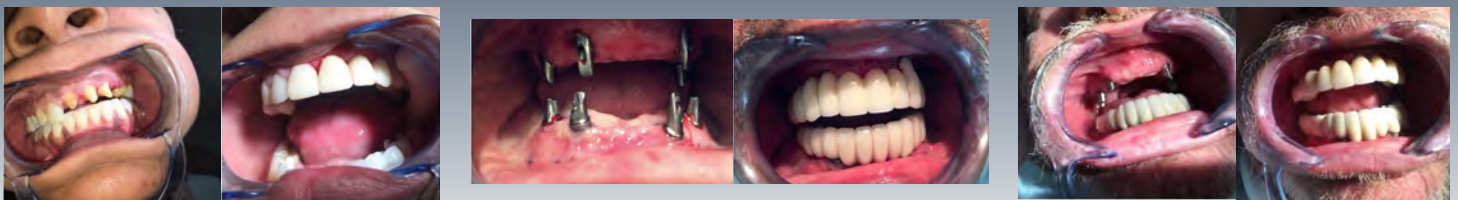
Visit [hope-health.org/veterans](http://hope-health.org/veterans) to learn more about HopeHealth veterans programs. HopeHealth is a nonprofit leader in providing affordable, expert health care and infectious diseases services for all ages in Aiken, Florence, Clarendon, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties. Our federally qualified health centers are the primary care providers of choice for more than 50,000 patients. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414, or visit [hope-health.org](http://hope-health.org).



**Pee Dee Dental Group**  
DR. CHARLES R. CONNER JR., DDS



**FIRST IN THE AREA TO OFFER IMPLANTOLOGY!**



The Pee Dee Dental Group is not your ordinary dentist's office. Toothless patients come from all over the country to see Dr. Charles Conner. When they walk out of his office, they have teeth. Dr. Conner's practice attracts a nationwide clientele with patients from as far away as Florida, New Jersey, and California because of his groundbreaking work in implantology, in addition to a wide range of other dental services. After 40 years in business and more than 14,000 implants, Dr. Conner has proven them wrong.

His practice attracts patients from all over the country to the Florence area.

461 W. Cheves Street • Florence SC 29501 • [www.drcharlesconner.com](http://www.drcharlesconner.com)

**CALL US TODAY AT (843) 669-2456**





# HTC EMPLOYEES PARTNER WITH MARCH OF DIMES

Submitted by Leslie Causey, Public Relations Coordinator



Conway Medical Center

**CONWAY-** Representatives from HTC and the March of Dimes recently delivered 10 iPads to local hospitals to support new parent training, remote meet and greets for newborns and pediatric development.

This donation, which was made possible by HTC employee contributions and the March of Dimes March for Babies Campaign, will support McLeod Hospital, Conway Medical Center, Tideland Health and Grand Strand Medical Center.

“March of Dimes is proud to partner with a company like HTC who is committed to



McLeod Hospital

uniting and connecting us all to fight for families who need us most. We are thankful to HTC for joining this movement and providing support and education to these families at our local delivering hospitals.”

“As a local cooperative, the mission of HTC is to give back to the community it serves,” said Leslie Causey, HTC public relations coordinator. “Our employees are committed to supporting organizations that ensure the well-being of our community.”

In the spirit of the Cooperative, HTC is proud to support and partner with local



Tideland

helping families in their community,” said Ashely Edmunds, March of Dimes director of Donor Development. “March for Babies: A Mother of a Movement™ is about

organizations that share the vision of investing in our communities. To learn more about how HTC is connecting with its community, contact Leslie Causey at 843-369-8564 or email [leslie.causey@htcinc.net](mailto:leslie.causey@htcinc.net).

## About HTC

HTC, Inc. is the nation’s largest telecommunications cooperative. Founded in 1952, HTC celebrates over 65 years of service to Horry and Georgetown counties as a local communications leader. HTC offers High Speed Internet, Digital Cable, Digital Wireless, Home Security, local telephone and long distance service and advanced business services such as Local and Wide Area Networks (LAN/WAN), Managed Networks, VOIP Solutions, WiFi Solutions, Firewall and Security services. HTC provides these services utilizing the area’s most extensive fiber optic network.

For additional information about HTC or becoming a member, call 843-365-2154, or visit [www.htcinc.net](http://www.htcinc.net).

## About March of Dimes

March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies. We support research, lead programs and provide education and advocacy so that every baby can have the best possible start. Building on a successful 80-year legacy of impact and innovation, we empower every mom and every family.

To find out more about March for Babies: A Mother of a Movement visit [marchforbabies.org](http://marchforbabies.org). For the latest resources and information, visit [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org).

# EASTERN CAROLINA MEDICINE

“Thank You” for Voting Me Best Chiropractor & Acupuncturist in the Pee Dee Region!

CONDITIONS COMMONLY TREATED AND EXTENSIVELY TRAINED IN:

- PREGNANCY CARE
- PEDIATRIC CARE  
(Webster’s Technique Certified)
- INFERTILITY
- MENOPAUSE
- MENSTRUAL IMBALANCES
- HEACHACHES/MIGRAINES
- NECK/BACK PAIN
- EXTREMITY PAIN
- FIBROMYALGIA
- AUTO & SPORTS INJURIES
- NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

**Dr. Jennifer M. Evans**  
**CHIROPRACTIC AND ACUPUNCTURE MEDICINE**

Find Dr. Jennifer Evans on [www.icpa4kids.com](http://www.icpa4kids.com)  
(ICPA-International Chiropractic Pediatric Association)



**MAKE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY! CALL 843.665.7500**



**SAVE THE DATE**



MAGNOLIA'S  
BREAST  
CANCER

AWARENESS SEMINAR

"A Natural Approach to Breast Health"

**28 OCTOBER 2021**

FMU PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

201 South Dargan Street  
Florence, SC 29506



**REGISTRATION**  
**843.432.2502**  
[www.magnolia-health.com](http://www.magnolia-health.com)





# MUSC NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WITH “A” FOR LEAPFROG SAFETY GRADE

Submitted by John Russell, Marketing Manager/Media Relations



## Florence Medical Center

MUSC Health Florence Medical Center received an “A” grade in the spring 2021 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, a national distinction recognizing achievements protecting

patients from errors, injuries, accidents and infections. The Leapfrog Group is an independent national watchdog organization committed to health care quality and safety. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade assigns an “A,” “B,” “C,” “D” or “F” grade to all general hospitals across the country and is updated every six months. It is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospitals’ prevention of medical errors and other harms to patients in their care.

“This safety rating shows MUSC Health Florence Medical Center is succeeding in providing the safest care possible to the Pee Dee region,” Dr. Rami Zebian, MUSC Health Florence Division chief medical officer, said. “Despite the pandemic, we have always been dedicated to this effort in preventing patient care errors.”

“One of our top priorities is patient safety, and this Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade further validates our efforts to eliminate patient care errors,” said Donna Sullivan, MUSC Health Florence Medical Center chief quality officer. This ‘A’ would not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of our care team members. We are fortunate to have such a caring and engaged team who are laser-focused on delivering safe and compassionate care.”

“An ‘A’ safety grade is an elite designation that your community should be proud of,” said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. “The past year has been extraordinarily difficult for hospitals, but MUSC Health Florence Medical Center shows us it is possible to keep a laser focus on patients and their safety, no matter what it takes.”

Developed under the guidance of a national Expert Panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses up to 27 measures of publicly available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,700 U.S. acute-care hospitals twice per year. The Hospital Safety Grade’s methodology is peer-reviewed and fully transparent, and the results are free to the public.

MUSC Health Florence Medical Center was awarded an “A” grade when Leapfrog updated grades for spring 2021. To see MUSC Health Florence Medical Center’s full grade details and access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit [hospitalsafetygrade.org](http://hospitalsafetygrade.org), and follow The Leapfrog Group on Twitter and Facebook.

### About The Leapfrog Group

Founded in 2000 by large employers and other purchasers, The Leapfrog Group is a national nonprofit organization driving a movement for giant leaps forward in the quality and safety of American health care. The flagship Leapfrog Hospital Survey and new Leapfrog Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) Survey collect and transparently report hospital and ASC performance, empowering purchasers to find the highest-value care and giving consumers the lifesaving information they need to make informed decisions. The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade, Leapfrog’s other main initiative, assigns letter grades to hospitals based on their record of patient safety, helping consumers protect themselves and their families from errors, injuries, accidents and infections.

### About MUSC Health

As the clinical health system of the Medical University of South

Carolina, MUSC Health is dedicated to delivering the highest quality patient care available, while training generations of competent, compassionate health care providers to serve the people of South Carolina and beyond. Comprising some 1,600 beds, more than 100 outreach sites, the MUSC College of Medicine, the physicians’ practice plan and nearly 275 telehealth locations, MUSC Health owns and operates eight hospitals situated in Charleston, Chester, Florence, Lancaster and Marion counties. In 2019, for the fifth consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named MUSC Health the No. 1 hospital in South Carolina. To learn more about clinical patient services, visit [muschealth.org](http://muschealth.org).

MUSC and its affiliates have collective annual budgets of \$3.2 billion. The more than 17,000 MUSC team members include world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers and scientists who deliver groundbreaking education, research, technology and patient care.



## Stop Chasing Symptoms and Get to the Root of the problem

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

**Stress**      **Poor Digestion**  
**Poor Diet**      **Genetics**  
**Toxins**      **Infections**  
**Lack of Sleep**      **Lack of Exercise**  
**Deficiencies**      **Trauma**

**GITTENS HEALTH AND WELLNESS**      333 W. Palmetto Street Florence, South Carolina 29501  
843-678-9394



## Safety, Security, & Fixed Costs

### It's All Yours at Bethea Retirement Community

The benefits of being part of Bethea's retirement community are endless, even in our current world's state of recovery from a global pandemic. In light of the uncertainty coronavirus has brought to all of our lives, many seniors may question the wisdom in entertaining yet another life change created by moving to a retirement community.

Bethea Retirement Community is a vibrant residential community that embraces senior adults from all walks of life. A community of SCBMA (SC Baptist Ministries of Aging), Bethea opened its doors in 1960 with a mission to help seniors thrive. As a continuing care retirement community (CCRC), Bethea offers a full continuum of living options for residents so their changing health needs can



be met without requiring them to relocate. Bethea has living arrangements compatible for senior adults at every level of care. Their cottage community consists of singles and couples who are totally independent but want to be a part of the safety and security that living within a community offers. Neighboring residents look out for one another, share in activities and common interests, and don't have to worry with the maintenance issues of being a homeowner. Bethea Retirement Community structures its pricing with planned increases so their residents know exactly how much their living expenses will be in the future without the unpleasant surprises a recovering economy can bring. Residents live securely knowing that any maintenance required in or around their homes will be handled promptly by Bethea's competent team who are ready to respond to any resident's request.

Bethea's new state-of-the-art healthcare center opened in 2021. Within the new center is an on-site primary care clinic where residents can be seen by a nurse practitioner through HopeHealth. The new healthcare center also contains a new state-of-the-art rehabilitation gym

**Bethea**  
RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
DARLINGTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

A COMMUNITY OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTIST  
**SCBMA**  
MINISTRIES OF AGING



where seniors both within the retirement community and senior adults outside of the community but referred by physician for rehabilitation can receive physical and occupational therapy. As residents' health needs change, Bethea Retirement Community has suitable living options with services ranging from simple medication reminders to assistance with activities of daily living and memory care.

Bethea Retirement Community remains committed to getting better every day through expanding and renovating its physical structures to better suit the needs of its residents and by developing more innovative ways to provide care.



Visit [BetheaRetirement.com](http://BetheaRetirement.com) or contact Jenny Doll,  
Director of Marketing, 843-395-4402 for more  
information or to schedule a tour.

157 Home Avenue Darlington, SC 29532



# Taking Senior Care to the Next Level!



Skilled Nursing Centers

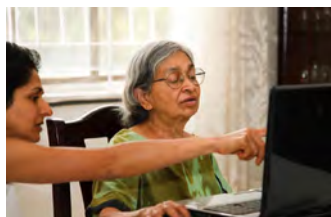
Loris | Medford | Morrell | Oakhaven  
The Rehab Center at Morrell

Admissions Inquiries:  
(843) 395-8970



[www.wilsonseniorcare.com](http://www.wilsonseniorcare.com)

## 3 MAJOR BENEFITS OF THE EXTRA HELP PROGRAM



Maintaining your quality of life can become more challenging as you age. In addition to routine living expenses, your medical bills may begin to pile up, consuming more and more of your limited income.

This can be worrisome for Medicare beneficiaries, who remain the only insured population without a cap on out-of-pocket spending. Older adults are more likely to require medications for multiple conditions, which means multiple co-pays. And these extra bills can create a significant burden. The good news is that you may qualify for Medicare's Extra Help program, which could help lower your medication costs by 85 percent or more.

### What is the Extra Help program?

Run by the Social Security Administration, the Extra Help program—also known as the Low-Income Subsidy program—helps qualified Medicare beneficiaries afford the costs related to their prescription drugs, including premiums, deductibles and co-pays.

There is a full and a partial coverage version of the plan available, depending on your income level and assets, but both versions have huge potential for savings. For example, if a medication would normally cost \$12,000 a year out of pocket, through the Extra Help partial program, your payment could be reduced to about \$1,900. With full Extra Help, you would pay \$0.

Most people who qualify for the full program are automatically enrolled because they are already enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare or another support program. But many people are eligible for the partial program and don't realize it, thus, missing out on big savings. An individual might be eligible for the program if he or she has an annual income under

\$20,000 and less than \$15,000 in assets, but there are some exceptions, and the limits are higher for couples.

### How does this program cover the costs?

The Extra Help program can help save money, but there is a lot more to it than that. Here are a few other benefits it can provide:

It pays for Part-D premiums: Most Medicare recipients have to pay a monthly fee as part of their premium. These premiums can be expensive depending on the prescription. Fortunately, the Extra Help program pays a portion of this premium. However, how much the program pays for can vary, as different states have different amounts they're willing to set aside.

It gives qualified patients a special enrollment period: Most Medicare recipients can only enroll in prescription drug coverage during open enrollment between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7. But with the Extra Help program, participants have a Special Open Enrollment period that runs through the first nine months of the year.

It eliminates late enrollment penalties: If you've enrolled late for Part-D Medicare benefits before, you've probably paid a penalty fee. The fee is one percent of the national base beneficiary premium, which was \$32.74 in 2020. But for those who are part of the Extra Help program, these fees usually get eliminated.

### There is a path to affordable treatment.

With all the valuable benefits the Extra Help program can provide, qualifying requires getting your financial documents in order and filling out an application. This can seem overwhelming at first, but the PAN Foundation's education hub can help. It includes videos that explain the process, an eligibility checker and an interactive check list to get you ready to apply. And if you get approved, the benefits can help you save a lot of money over the years.



# HOW DISABILITY INSURANCE CAN PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

As we begin to transition out of the pandemic, it's important to consider steps that can help provide you and your loved ones a more stable financial future. Just consider that 41 percent of U.S. employees are living paycheck to paycheck right now, and the same number of employees doesn't feel in control of their finances, according to the 2021 U.S. Employee Benefit Trends Study.

To change course, employees should consider reviewing the benefits their employers offer, including disability insurance, which offers a vital source of income protection that may help cover essential living costs such as food, clothing and mortgage payments in the event you are unable to work due to a qualifying physical or mental health condition. In fact, the study shows that employees with disability insurance feel more confident in protecting what matters most to them in the event of unexpected

expenses than those without disability (66 percent with versus 59 percent without disability insurance).

## Financial protection for those caring for loved ones

While almost everyone has been impacted by the financial stressors of the pandemic, caregivers may feel an increased burden. Caring for family members can be overwhelming, leaving many unsure about their short-term and long-term financial goals. In fact, the study finds that four in 10 caregivers don't have a savings cushion of at least three months.

These financial concerns are also just as real for pet parents. Expenses related to pets can become a burden should a pet parent suddenly become unable to work. To avoid having to dip into long-term savings to pay for short-term expenses, pet parents should consider having disability insurance to ensure their pets' needs can be met in the event of something unforeseen.

What's more, disability insurance may also help provide security for those struggling with serious medical conditions like cancer, stroke or heart attack, especially when paired with supplemental benefits like critical illness insurance. Critical illness insurance may help cover expenses not covered by health insurance like plan deductibles, copays and costs for out-

of-network care.

## Support extends beyond financial health

After a year of lockdowns and uncertainty, you may, like many others, feel more stressed and anxious about your financial future than ever before. This stress and anxiety can often build, reducing mental wellness and even hindering your ability to care for yourself and your loved ones.

However, taking hold of your financial health may help alleviate some of these anxieties—ensuring that you and your family are able to focus on healing, not your finances. Caregivers, for example, who have a savings cushion of at least three months are 47 percent more likely to say they feel mentally healthy than those who do not.

By having disability insurance and other supportive benefits as part of your financial wellness arsenal, you can feel some additional security in the event you are unexpectedly unable to work. Taking action to improve financial security can have a positive impact on reducing stress and anxiety, allowing you to provide you and your loved ones more secure care now and in the future.

To learn more about disability insurance and how it can support your financial and mental health, talk to your HR department.



## “Helping People Make Better Financial Decisions”



**Quentin Williams, Agent**  
 Quentin Williams Insurance  
 & Financial Group  
 Telephone: (843) 694-9252  
 que.williams03@gmail.com  
 SC Lic#536835

## LET US HELP YOU...

### Life Insurance

- Whole Life
- Universal Life
- Variable Universal Life
- Senior Market

### Term Insurance

- “Basic” Level Term Policies
- “Plus” Level Term Policies

### Disability Income Insurance

- Coverage for Individuals
- Coverage for Small Business Owners

### Retirement Plans

Offers Debt / Credit Consultations



### Mission

To make a difference in your life by helping you achieve financial security and independence today – and for generations to come.

### Vision

To be your company of choice – through integrity, trusted relationships and financial strength.

### Values

We hold ourselves, the relationships we build, and the products we deliver, to the highest standards of quality. These values represent the core of who we are and what we do, every day

Stay Connected:





4th Annual

# Sista Strut

BREAST CANCER WALK

MAKE PLANS NOW TO JOIN US SATURDAY OCTOBER 16<sup>TH</sup>  
DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

REGISTRATION LINK WILL BE ACTIVE SOON

STAY TUNED TO YOUR FAVORITE iHeartMEDIA STATIONS

*Sista Strut was created and dedicated to heighten the 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.*





# 2021 SERGEANT TERRENCE CARRAWAY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Submitted by the City of Florence Police Department



Karson Byerly of Hartsville High School was awarded a \$1,000 Sgt. Terrence Carraway Memorial Scholarship from Chief Allen Heidler (left) of the Florence Police Department and Allison Carraway (right) of the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation.



Megan Atkinson of Lake City High School was awarded a \$1,000 Sgt. Terrence Carraway Memorial Scholarship from Chief Allen Heidler (left) of the Florence Police Department and Allison Carraway (right) of the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation.



Kristian Mack of Darlington High School was awarded a \$1,000 Sgt. Terrence Carraway Memorial Scholarship from Chief Allen Heidler (left) of the Florence Police Department and Allison Carraway (right) of the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation.



Grace Myers of West Florence High School was awarded a \$1,000 Sgt. Terrence Carraway Memorial Scholarship from Allison Carraway (left) Daniel Blathers (right) of the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation and Chief Allen Heidler of the Florence Police Department.

Chief Allen Heidler of the Florence Police Department, along with Daniel Blathers and Allison Carraway of the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation, awarded four area high school graduates with the Sergeant Terrence Carraway Memorial scholarship, during a small ceremony in the City Council Chambers. The 2021 recipients of the scholarship are Karson Byerly of Hartsville High School, Kristian Mack of Darlington High School, Grace Myers of West Florence High School and Megan Atkinson of Lake City High School. Each graduate received \$1,000 to go toward higher education expenses.

Established in January of 2019, this need-based scholarship honors the life and work of Sergeant Terrence Carraway, whose watch ended Oct. 3, 2018. The joint effort by the Terrence F. Carraway Foundation and Florence Police Department is a commitment to the continuation

of Terrence's passion to assist the youth in the Florence and Darlington areas to have a brighter future.

Karson Byerly plans to attend Liberty University and major in film. Kristian Mack intends to major in sports management at Coastal Carolina University. Grace Myers plans to attend Western Carolina University and major in forensic science. Megan Atkinson intends to major in criminal justice at Clemson University.

The recipients of the scholarship were selected from applicants from school districts in Florence and Darlington Counties or a comprehensive review of their application high school transcripts SAT/ACT scores and their 500-word essay.

Information regarding this scholarship is provided each year to all of the Florence and Darlington school district guidance counselors.



- Free American Continental Breakfast
- In-room Microwave & Refrigerator
- High Speed Internet Access
- Outdoor Pool
- Pet Friendly



2111 West Lucas Street, Florence  
843.665.4444 - [www.daysinn.com](http://www.daysinn.com)

**LA QUINTA**  
BY WYNDHAM

Come enjoy the newly renovated La Quinta Inn & Suites of Florence, featuring 84 spacious & modern pet friendly rooms and a deluxe continental breakfast.

2123 West Lucas Street, Florence  
843.629.1111 - [www.lq.com](http://www.lq.com)



## 2 TIPS TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN YOUR NEXT CAR PURCHASE

After a house, a car is likely the second largest purchase most Americans will ever make. While it's often easy to feel confident in smaller, everyday buys--like a new pair of shoes or takeout from your favorite restaurant--bigger purchases, like a car, can leave you second-guessing. Did you make the right choice? Was there something better out there? Here are the top tips to help you feel fully confident when buying your next ride.



### Tip 1: Do your homework

It's important to find a vehicle that complements your lifestyle--and fits your budget. Whether you're looking for a compact car to navigate narrow city streets, a convertible

for open-air road trips or an SUV big enough to fit the whole family (and car seats too), think about what you want in your next ride. Make a list of must-haves, and don't forget to note the ways your old car came up short. This will help you feel prepared as you start the search process.

### Tip 2: Visit a store or shop around online



Once you've conducted your initial research and set a budget, it's time to find your dream car. Whether you prefer to visit a physical store or shop online, take time to browse your options.

You may filter by price, vehicle type, make/model, color and features (this is where your list of must-haves will come in handy). Narrow down your top choices--decisions, decisions.

Car shopping should be stress-free--and exciting. Whether you choose to buy online or in-store, these tips can help you feel fully confident in your next purchase.



Ask about our services:

- Advertisements • Brochures • Business Cards
- Flyers • Logos • Publication Layout • Typesetting
- Social Media Management • Website Maintenance & much more!

*Let us help you stand out!*

# 843.601.9290

distinctivedesigngraphics@gmail.com

www.distinctivedesigngraphics.com

## Summer Cocktail: *Caipirinha*



### Ingredients:

- Lime
- Sugar or Sugar Substitute
- Cachaça
- Ice
- Mixing Spoon
- Muddler
- Channel Knife
- Rocks Glass

### Directions:

Remove all stickers and wash your lime before use. Use your channel knife to cut your lime into wedges. Cutting your lime into wedges should yield 8 lime wedges.

Place 2-3 lime wedges in your rocks glass. Add the sweetener. Use your muddler to press the limes into the bottom of the glass. Press the limes until it appears that no juice is left in the limes. Add the Cachaca to the glass. Use the mixing spoon to stir the mixture combining the Cachaca, lime juice and sweetener. Lastly, add ice to almost fill the glass, but be sure to leave enough space so that you'll be able to stir the mixture and blend it with the ice and not spill any of the mixture. Garnish your drink with a lime wedge and serve!

**EFIRD**

CHRYSLER Jeep DODGE RAM

COME SEE THE 2021 JEEP CHEROKEE LATITUDE

The 2021 Jeep Cherokee Latitude features an award-winning interior with clever storage and flexible design along with a simply striking exterior. And with reassuring safety and security features, you'll find that the Latitude is a step beyond the competition.

**HWY 52/I-95 EXIT 164 IN FLORENCE**  
**www.efirdautogroup.com 843-669-1881**



# COLLABORATING TO CREATE GOOD HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

by Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



The Marion County Coordinating Council (MCCC) is a non-profit corporation dedicated to strengthening the systems that provide services to

the county's citizens through improved communication, adequate linkage and collaboration. Specifically, MCCC strives to partner with other agencies/businesses to work together in order to strengthen the systems (businesses, agencies and local/state/federal government) that provide for the citizens of Marion through improved communication from and to all advocates that work to assist the community. While the council officially became a nonprofit in November of 2018, its impact thus far has been quite profound.

MCCC has been going strong to achieve "a healthy and prosperous Marion County." MCCC believes that healthy, hard-working citizens can create a money-producing community. Therefore, it has been striving to produce just that. In December 2019 MCCC had its first food drive in the rear parking lot of the Creative Healthy Food Environment (CHFE) office. It began 2020 with the newly hired CHFE Team training and learning for Marion citizens. From January through February 2020 MCCC worked on getting participants for the CHFE classes. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the organization saw the need to help its community in other ways as well.

As a result, MCCC and CHFE Program started the COVID-19 Pandemic Food Drive Thru. The MCCC/CHFE Program had monthly food drives, including one in April where the line of cars spanned two street blocks and another in May at Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Mullins where over 300 people received supplies. At times the program hosted weekly food drives in areas such as Sellers, Nichols, Mullins, Britton's Neck and the city of Marion. Between and July and November, the program continued its drive-thru services, distributing food in Centenary, Zion, Friendship and Ariel Cross Road.

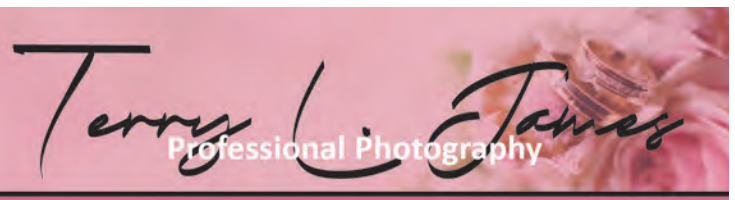
The MCCC CHFE Program Emergency Food Bank provided food for the homeless and senior citizens as well as provided masks, gloves, Lysol and Lysol wipes to individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. The group also provided supplies to and sanitized over 25 homes and 10 businesses with its Home/Office Sanitizer Kit.

MCCC's work is not done. "We certainly must continue to work for connections and a professional way to link together with all that wish to make a difference for all people," said the council's chair from 2019-2020, Reverend Marvin Hemingway. The collaboration is what is needed for MCCC and other agencies to be effective, he added.

With 42 active members and nine on its board of directors, MCCC will soon be electing new officers for 2021-2022 as it continues its trek toward a healthier, more prosperous Marion.



Marion County Coordinating Council Members



Over 25 Years Experience  
Associate Degree in Photographic Technology Portrait  
Studio Management

Weddings • Portraits • Corporate  
Anniversaries • Special Events



Cell: (843) 319-0660 • Office (843) 661-5679  
james955@att.net

## Ready to BUY or SELL?



**Mallory Brayboy, REALTOR**  
(C) 843-598-9739  
mallorybrayboy@gmail.com







# Nationally recognized for **patient safety**

For the 8th consecutive time MUSC Health Florence Medical Center has achieved a prestigious “A” rating—the highest grade given from Leapfrog Group—an organization dedicated to patient safety.

This hospital safety grade represents how well the hospital protects our patients from errors, injuries, and infections. We are proud of our care team members’ work every day in delivering quality, safe care!

When it comes to your safety, it matters where you go.



Florence Medical Center

[muschealth.org/florence](https://muschealth.org/florence)





# THANK YOU — *to* — OUR NEIGHBORS

Celebrating the spirit of Juneteenth and the new bonds of friendship and understanding it brings.

**FOOD  LION**  
*community*  
Nourishing a Sense of Belonging