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For All of US"

APRIL 2022 VOLUME 12 ISSUE 2

COVER STORY: PG. 40 DR. DIANE CHAPMAN A New Beginning Health & Wellness Center (Cover photo by William "Cash" Stukes, At Your Service Media)



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MISSION AND VISION

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

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

Spanish Version - Translated by: Yadira Santiago, MA **NUESTRA MISIÓN**

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

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

NUESTRA VISIÓN

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

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FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART



Glaceria Brown Mason Editor

With the newness of spring and joy in the anticipation of what's to come, I greet you with a happy heart and a joyous spirit. Welcome to the second quarter of Diversity Works Magazine!

On behalf of the Diversity Works staff we congratulate our Chief Executive Officer, Publisher and Visionary, Diana Murphy-Eaddy as the recipient of the 2022, Small Business Person of the Year Award. Sponsored by Dedicated Community Bank and presented by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, this honor is well deserved. Congratulations!

I am eager to introduce to you, over

90 newsworthy articles that inform and provide the latest on what's happening in the Pee Dee. Our staff has been busy, capturing stories of fellow South Carolinians. We hope you enjoy the interesting and timely articles in our recurring and special sections.

Read about Ruiz foods, and how they've implemented change. Flip the page and learn what the Florence Downtown Development Corporation has in store. Get the jump on the details and see the 2022, line-up at <u>florencedowntown</u>. com. Take a friend and stroll through the Florence City Center Market and enjoy.

Small business stimulates growth. Diversity Works congratulates business owner, Starlee Alexander as the 2021 recipient of the Isaac Wilson Evening of Distinction's Business Person of the Year award. Read her story and learn about the first African American woman to own and operate an insurance firm in the area.

Our opinion editorial article, penned by the Executive Director of the Greater Charleston YWCA, is included. Be the informed constituent and arm yourself with the facts. You decide.

Progress is happening at Santee Electric! Did you know they are putting the power in your hands? You can now apply for electric services, make payments, report outages and more, online. Visit <u>www.santee.org</u>.

Our education section is filled with articles that show the importance of supporting education and the philanthropic generosity of those who think it not robbery, but an investment in our youth, to enrich their experiences in education. Don't stop, read about federal grants to Florence 1 Schools to expand STEM and Fine Arts; the S.C. Commission on Higher Education grant to FMU to support teacher retention; Duke Energy's donation of \$50k to the Farm at Florence One and the Truist Foundation's grant to the Benedict College Women's Business Center and much more. Collectively their interest and commitment to local education enrichment is demonstrated. Financial support is critical to educational growth in the Pee Dee, as is protecting the mental health of students and staff. Read Dr. Kandace Bethea, superintendent of MCSD's implementation of social, emotional, learning utilizing Suite 360. Congratulations to Dr. Arlene Wallace, as she retires from Mayo High School for Math Science and Technology.

Interested in more education news? Continue reading and learn of the collaboration at FMU and the S.C. Governor's School for Science & Mathematics. Spread the word that applications are being accepted for the Inaugural Legacy Scholarship in memory of Dr. Charlotte L. Francis. Visit <u>www.pdmpa.org</u>. There's much more in store and I challenge you to read them all!

Diversity Works features our cover story and special section articles specific to the intellectual disability of autism spectrum disorder, the cruelty of sexual assault and child abuse, alcoholism awareness, volunteer service, mental health awareness and military appreciation.

Melinda French Gates said, "it's hard to be what you can't see," speaking about modern-day women innovating in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Further, she shared her hope that women everywhere imagine themselves as, the next trailblazers. Kudos to women living the best version of their lives! That admiration is extended to Owner and Founder, Dr. Diane Jones Chapman of, A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center. Our cover story features one of Florence's newest locations, open for business. Diversity Works shines a light on holistic health and wellness for the body, mind and soul. Read Chapman's story, and learn the benefits and available services and therapies for better health and well-being.

Acknowledging Autism Awareness Month means you get to learn how SOS Care and Sonar Productions, have formed the Bean Dreaming Coffee Truck to create employment opportunities for those facing challenges of autism. I invite you to read and fall in love with the spirit, drive and commitment of West Florence's Jack Herrington. As we recognize organizations who assist families, we celebrate Pacing 4 Pieces' 10-year anniversary and thank them and other organizations for being a support to children and adults with autism and families that support them.

April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Prevention Month. Be informed with spotting online predators and identifying red flags, indicators of child abuse. You'll find articles with prevention information, support through counseling options and genuine personal stories of those affected.

The NIAAA says, "each year in the U.S., more than 95,000 people die from alcohol-related causes..." The damaging effects of alcohol on the body, abuse and dependency, is the focus of Alcohol Awareness Month. Iris McDuffie shares why the alcohol focus is important. Remembering the minimum legal drinking age, is 21, and with prom season upon us, many young people will attend prom. Erica Buffkin, Circle Park, reminds parents and teens of the consequences of underage drinking and how to not let it ruin prom. I implore you to continue reading as Rubicon Family Counseling Services provides tips on how to lower the risk of alcohol use disorder, and MADD shares their outreach in the region.

Some have spent a lifetime in service to others or perhaps, grew up with the old adage, "it's better to give than to receive." Volunteerism is not new, it's an innate sense of duty. If you know this level of giving, you know, the intrinsic reward one feels when doing a good thing, for a good cause. If ever a sentiment was more fitting and truer, it is the headstone inscription of one of the greatest boxers, the late Muhammed Ali. It reads, "service to others is the rent you pay for your room in heaven." I am excited for you to imbibe these stories and learn about the selfless actions of local volunteers, who share the generosity of their time. As you unpack the articles on Volunteer Appreciation, learn about the philanthropy of the foundations and businesses in the region; and how their generosity supports the community. Find articles that will bring a smile as you learn about the mentors and coaches, who provide a high level of service and commitment with care. Their sacrifice is immeasurable, not only to youth, but to the community. Thank you!

Mental health is real, and our nation's mental health, needs attention. May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Find articles to help, heal, learn and grow. We encourage you to read and share about the proper diagnosis and counseling services, the benefits of art therapy and advice to be good to ourselves. Connie Marie Ford of the PDMHC lives on the premise, "we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit." Ford's life premise spoke to me. I hope that in your reading, something gives you a spark and moves you.

Dates are set aside to honor military service workers, but every day is a day to honor the men and women who put their lives on the line for our freedom. Their service and sacrifice are more than a job. Read impressive stories of commitment and bravery in Military Appreciation about, Captain Milton Troy III, former enlisted airman Crystal Bristow, First Sergeant Antwan Walker and Major Michelle Law-Gordon. The collective We, thanks you for your service! Our financial section shares information on the misconceptions that keep individuals and families from making a will. Because money matters are important, read Palmetto First FCU's solution to living paycheck-to-paycheck. Let the new team at ABB, help you reach your savings goals and hold a good thought for the \$50 million investment made by Food Lion to the second-oldest minority-owned bank in the U.S.

April is full of observances and events. ArtFields Collective 2022, presents its 10-year Anniversary, in Lake City, S.C., April 22-30. The anticipation of the creative energy is exciting. Read their story, plan and witness this nine-day annual art extravaganza. Take a day trip, bring a friend and see over 100 works of art by talented southern artists. Lifestyle also shares the story of the incredible volunteers at the Legacy of Women in Hartsville, as they partner with Amazon.

Diversity Works joins the Lake City Senior Center in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster where America lost U.S. Astronaut Dr. Ronald E. McNair, a Lake City, SC native.

Before you go, read about the upcoming, global phenomenon and highly sought-after, secret event! Le Diner en Blanc de Paris is returning to Florence for a second year, May 14, in one of the city's best-known public spaces. Shhhhhh! The location is secret...

If your interest is peeked, great! Grab a seat in your best chair and take a deep dive into your favorite section or start from the beginning and work your way through 100 pages of good reads. Thank us later! Remember to support our loyal advertisers and visit us online at www.diversityworkssc.com. Happy Reading!



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DIANA MURPHY-EADDY RECEIVES HONOR Article Contributed by Ardath Arvidson, Morning News



Diana Murphy-Eaddy (left) CEO/publisher of Diversity Works Magazine receives 2022 Small Business Person of the Year award from Jim Ivey, president and CEO of Dedicated Community Bank during the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce Outlook Luncheon.

Diana Murphy-Eaddy, owner and publisher of Diversity Works, a quarterly magazine promoting diversity in the community, received the 2022, Small Business Person of the Year award at the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce Annual Outlook Luncheon held at the Florence Center.

The award, presented annually, is sponsored by Dedicated Community Bank and given by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce.

Jim Ivey, president and CEO of Dedicated Community Bank, made the presentation. He said

the bank recognizes that small businesses are the engines of the local, state and national economy.

He said the U.S. Small Business Administration reports that there are more than 445,000 small businesses in South Carolina, and small businesses represent 99 percent of all employers in South Carolina. More than 830,000 people work for small businesses in South Carolina.

Receiving the Small Business Person of the Year award, Murphy-Eaddy said, "means that my hard work is beginning to pay off."

"It is a great honor and a surprise, and so overwhelming," said Murphy-Eaddy.

Diversity Works is published by DMM Advertising and Marketing and is a magazine committed to showcasing organizations and individuals that represent diversity of the workplace. It celebrated its 10th anniversary last October.

Murphy-Eaddy says, "The magazine features articles on those who appreciate, accept and promote diversity. Being able to bring people together is the greatest reward of the job. The magazine focuses on promoting the concept of diversity in our community and in the workplace."

Ivey said of those attending the event, "We are of diverse ages, races and genders. We were raised in diverse towns, states and even countries. We hold the faiths of diverse religions and we have been shaped by diverse educational experiences. To paraphrase our 2022 honoree, this diversity strengthens our community by helping us to appreciate each other, as we recognize our differences while understanding our similarities."

Murphy-Eaddy created the Diversity Works magazine in 2011. For the past decade, Diversity Works magazine has been



Diana Murphy-Eaddy (right) poses with husband, Gregory Eaddy after being presented. (David Yeazell Photo's-Special to the Morning News)

produced and distributed throughout 12 counties of the Pee Dee region.

Its mission statement reads, "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." Diversity Works "features articles on those displaying inclusionary vision in and for the marketplace and who can both encourage and provide role models to others." "In addition to her publishing career, Murphy-Eaddy created a biennial diversity focus training conference aimed at educating and informing businesses on diversity and inclusion practices. The conference has been supported by several local businesses and organizations and has been well-attended," Ivey said.

Murphy-Eaddy is a native of Hartsville, SC. She attended the University of South Carolina and is a graduate of Leadership Florence. She has served on the chamber board of directors and is an active volunteer and leader in many community organizations, including the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, PRISM, the Florence Regional Arts Alliance, Women in Philanthropy, Mingle of the Pee Dee, Empowered to Heal, former member of New Testament Missionary Baptist Church and a renowned member of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. Murphy-Eaddy is the wife of Gregory Eaddy.

GREATER FLORENCE CHAMBER HONOREE

Submitted by the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce



Dr. Fred Carter left, president of Francis Marion University, presents Joe King with the Public Servant of the Year Award. (David Yeazell Photo, Special to Morning News)

Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Outlook Luncheon, Wednesday, March 16, at the Florence Center. Maceo Nance, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce, was the keynote speaker. He talked about how Florence County is positioned greatly for Interstate Road access, rail connections and positioned well geographically between Charleston Harbor and the Dillon Inland Port. Rocky Pearce, chairman of the Florence County Economic Development Progress, spoke about the past economic development

The Greater Florence

successes and what the county is doing now to make sure we are prepared for future growth.

The Small Businessperson of the Year Award recognizes a business owner who exemplifies professionalism, strives to enhance our community and has made a positive impact on the local economy. Dedicated Community Bank sponsored the award with Jim Ivey presenting the honor to Diana Murphy-Eaddy. Murphy-Eaddy is the owner of Diversity Works magazine. "Diana Murphy-Eaddy created the Diversity Works magazine in 2011. For the past decade, Diversity Works magazine has been produced and distributed throughout 12 counties of the Pee Dee region," Ivey stated.

Mike Miller, president of the Florence Chamber said, "Diana Murphy-Eaddy is one of the special people that contributes her time and service for the betterment of all area businesses. She is more than a participant. She is an active planner and a go to resource for area organizations and boards. Because of that, she has had an impact in bettering our businesses and the people that work within those entities."

The Public Servant of the Year Award was sponsored by Francis Marion University and presented by Dr. Fred Carter. The award was created to honor a Chamber member who works in the nonprofit or government sectors. Joe King, Executive Director at the Florence County Economic Development Partnership received the award.

Chamber President, Mike Miller, said, "Joe is a key community leader that has spent his professional career making things happen in business and industry without a lot of fanfare. He has been deliberate and effective in his efforts to bring economic development to our region. He is very deserving of this award."



IT'S TIME FOR EDUCATION, NOT CANCELLATION Submitted by Simma Lieberman



Simma Lieberman

THE INCLUSIONIST

I was recently interviewed by a journalist who asked me to comment on cancel culture. Here are my thoughts.

People who continue to commit harmful actions, support racism, homophobia, other forms of hatred and use free speech as an excuse to let that poison spread should be called out or cancelled.

But I believe that cancelling someone who has taken responsibility for their past words or actions, and not only apologized but has changed and grown. is wrong. That kind of cancellation is lazy and maintains a status quo. I think the self-appointed

cancel police, needs to stop. They need to first look at themselves and their own past.

In the thirty years I've helped leaders with diversity, equity and inclusion, I've seen amazing transformations in people.

We created the Everyday Dialogue Process.

We facilitate dialogues across race, gender and religion where participants feel comfortable enough to share their past, ask questions, and let go of bias, wrong assumptions and beliefs about people who are different.

We take the time for education to help another person grow. Some people, not only change as individuals but they continue to educate others and become outspoken advocates for DEI in their organizations and communities.

If we didn't create psychologically safe spaces to be open, they would have silently held onto biases and fears. They would have continued to only recognize and appreciate people who look like them.

What the cancel squad is essentially doing is declaring their own perfection, setting up tribunals and shutting people down who could be allies.

If we believe in real diversity, equity and inclusion, ending hate and spreading love across the globe we need to help people change and support their growth. We don't have the luxury of throwing people away. Now is the time for education, not cancellation.

What You Can Do to be an Influencing Force for Social Justice and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

As an individual

1. Start with you. Reflect on your own history. Look at times you've said or taken an action that could be seen as racist or sexist. What caused your change? How can you use your experience to educate others?

2. Learn to provide feedback and correction in ways that are constructive and help people grow.

In your organization

1. Incorporate facilitated dialogue circles throughout your organization where people from different backgrounds can have meaningful conversations with each other and find new ways to collaborate.

2. Build a psychologically safe culture so people can learn from each other and ask questions that may be difficult or uncomfortable. **Everyday Conversations on Race for Everyday People**

For the past three years, in order to reach more people and expand the conversation across the globe, I started a podcast, "Everyday Conversations on Race for Everyday People," <u>www.raceconvo.com</u>. We have cross-race conversations about race where guests share their experiences with racism and offer advice and solutions.

So, remember, it's never too late to be part of the solution.



Florence County Council

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

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

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5



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RUIZ FOOD PRODUCTS: CHANGING IN CHALLENGING TIMES Submitted by Ruiz Foods



Dan Antonelli, president and CEO of Ruiz Foods

If you haven't had an opportunity to see the Florence Economic Development's recent e-letter that shared a link to the McKinsey & Company article: "Transforming through disruption: A conversation with Dan Antonelli," we thought you might be interested in a few of the discussions and explanations.

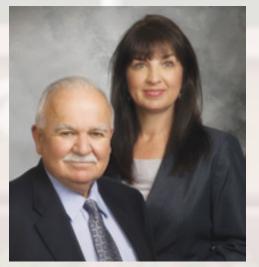
Antonelli, long time Ruiz Foods Board member, became CEO of the company in February 2021. He, along with the company, realized it was time to make the changes Covid-19 pandemic brought to the forefront, but changes they already knew were necessary.

As a family-owned company, established in a small rural California community located in the Central Valley, Ruiz Foods has proudly embraced the need to change many times over the years as they grew from a two-person operation to now over 4,000 team members throughout the U.S. When widespread labor shortages, increasing supply costs and shifts in consumer behavior, began affecting the company, Ruiz Foods knew they needed to act. Ruiz Foods decided to work with McKinsey & Company because of their expertise to identify, prioritize and track opportunities for business improvement throughout the company.

"We took a bottom-up approach to transformation," explains Antonelli. "If it's a top-down, executive-driven change – say, ten people trying to get to a big number – you might be able to force things through and get some of that. But you aren't really transforming the business. You're not changing the way people think about how to participate in running the business. It's absolutely critical to go as far down the organization as possible to get engagement. And I think we've gone a long way toward engaging as many people as possible."

As Antonelli continues to explain, "Everyone who has even touched our transformation effort has been asking themselves, 'How can I contribute to bottomline improvement for the company? How can I increase the value of the company through new ideas?' We've tried to be as welcoming as possible to all team members who bring forward their thoughts and ideas on how to make a significant change, or even a small change, that would lead to improvement in the value of the company."

"What made me so very proud," adds Kim Ruiz Beck, chairman of Ruiz Food Products, Inc. and elder daughter of Co-Founder Fred Ruiz, "is how our team members pulled together to meet the needs of our



Fred Ruiz, co-founder, Ruiz Foods and Kim Ruiz Beck, chairman



Ruiz building

customers while, at the same time, made sure the transformation process did not compromise the quality of our products. To me, our Team truly embrace our values, respect, teamwork, quality, safety, innovation and integrity. These are the values my dad and grandfather embraced from the very beginning, and they are the same values we continue to embrace today."

Through it all, the Ruiz team developed an ability and a discipline, toward a riskmanaged decision-making process that emphasizes prompt action based on the best available data. "We've put in place," adds Antonelli, "a constant methodology around how to identify an initiative, how to value that initiative, how to validate it and how to implement it. It's like exercising a muscle. We didn't know how to do it at first. But we're becoming more fit, and little by little, we'll get pretty good at it, and we hope to transition this into a successful second phase of our transformation next year."

"Our team members, in each of our facilities, are simply amazing," adds Ruiz Beck. "I think my dad says it best when he smiles and shares, 'Our team members are our secret sauce,' dad's right, with our team members, their hard work and dedication, we can accomplish any task, and, for that, we will always be grateful."







7

2022 FLORENCE AFTER FIVE EVENTS Submitted by the Florence Downtown Development Office Staff



2021, Florence After 5

It's been two years since the Florence Downtown Development Corp. has been able to produce and support a full season of downtown special events due to COVID-19. We are excited to announce that downtown events are fully back for 2022, and we've got a terrific line-up of entertainment to share.

First up, the Florence After 5 concert series returns Friday, May 27, with live music by Rivermist, a variety band with beach music roots based out of Fayetteville, NC. Florence After 5 takes place in the 100 block of S. Dargan Street in Downtown Florence, the last Friday of each month, May through September from 5:30 until 8:30 p.m. Admission is free thanks to our 2022, Platinum Season Sponsors, MUSC-Health Florence Medical Center, Victors and Southern Crown Partners. Attendees can expect great live entertainment, plenty of food and drink and some exciting surprises throughout the season including our partnership with the Florence Flamingos baseball team for the month of May.

Earlier in May is the annual Habitat for Humanity Cinco de Mayo event, Friday, May 6, from 5:30 until 10 p.m. with live entertainment by the Pizazz Band.

Also returning this year, is Downtown Florence's largest pub crawl, Tap into Downtown, which transforms downtown shops and boutiques into tasting rooms for the evening. Attendees sample a variety of craft brews while they shop and explore Historic Downtown Florence. This year, Tap into Downtown will take place, Friday, September 16. Tickets will go on sale through the Downtown Florence website, July 1, 2022. Leading up to Tap into Downtown, you don't want to miss Downtown Florence's Restaurant Week, Dig In!

In October, Downtown Oktoberfest returns for its seventh annual appearance. Enjoy German foods and brews, live music by N'Tranze Band, the annual Running of the Weenies Dachshund races, beer stein and barrel races and more. Downtown Oktoberfest takes place, Saturday, October 8, in the 100 block of S. Dargan Street from 5:30 until 9:30 p.m. Admission to this event is free. Also in October are the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce's annual Kickin' Chicken and Wings Festival, Friday, October 21, and the Wilson High School Alumni Block Party Friday, October 28, with a parade downtown, Saturday, October 29.

The South Carolina Pecan Music & Food Festival takes over Downtown Florence, Saturday, November 5 with over 250 vendors, nine stages of live entertainment, Run and Bike Like a Nut athletic event, classic car show, free kids' fun zone and so much more. The festival celebrates its 18, year in 2022, with the promise of exceptional live entertainment and family fun. Admission is free thanks to presenting sponsor, Pepsi of Florence.

Rounding out our Downtown Florence event season in 2022, is the annual Holiday Music and Light Show, a synchronized music and light experience in which lights are set to follow a holiday soundtrack. The Music and Light Show begins Friday, December 2, and runs through Saturday, December 31. Downtown Christmas Magic is also set to return, Friday, December 9, at 5:30 p.m. to transform downtown into a winter wonderland with family entertainment, games, inflatables and more.

To learn more about the events above and see our complete calendar, visit <u>www.</u> florencedowntown.com.









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LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION OPENS CONSTITUENT SERVICES OFFICE FLORENCE - Florence County's square feet, includes four office

Located on the third floor of 142

state legislative delegation has opened an

office for constituent services at Francis

Marion's University Place in downtown

N. Dargan St, the office will serve

Florence County residents living in the

nine districts represented in the South

Carolina State Legislature. The office,

which officially opened this week, is

staffed by an administrator who will assist

all delegation members and their Florence

County constituents on state-related



Francis Marion's University Place in downtown Florence

matters.

"This office will be a wonderful resource to the people of Florence County, and a great tool of service for members of the state delegation," said Rep. Phillip Lowe, chairman of Florence County's state legislative delegation. "Furthermore, it allows us to expand existing constituent service efforts throughout the county."

Florence.

Lowe said the constitution services office is the first step in additional delegation outreach efforts. There are plans to hold annual listening sessions with county residents to hear their concerns and provide legislative updates. Lowe said the delegation also plans to meet with county and municipal elected officials regularly, further building the spirit of collaboration and teamwork to keep the county moving forward as a united community.

"The goal is the betterment of all communities throughout Florence County," Lowe said. "The efforts taken by the state delegation are designed to bring us together and move forward in a positive way."

The office suite at University Place totals approximately 1,000

square feet, includes four offices, a meeting room and access to a shared conference room. The office will be leased to the delegation by the Francis Marion University Education Foundation, which owns the building.

Lowe thanked Francis Marion for their efforts, as well as that of Florence County government, who will provide the office additional support.

The North Eastern Strategic Alliance regional economic development group currently occupies the adjacent suite on the third floor of University Place. The building also houses the University Place Gallery and the Kelly Center for Economic Development.

The constituent services office will operate Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call (843) 661-4662.

The state's Florence County Legislative Delegation includes Chairman Lowe (District 60), as well as Sen. Kevin L. Johnson (District 36), Sen. Ronnie A. Sabb (District 32), Sen. Kent M. Williams (District 30), Rep. Terry Alexander (District 59), Rep. Jay Jordan (District 63), Rep. Roger Kirby (District 61) and Rep. Robert Q. Williams (District 62).

Senate District 31, formerly held by the late Sen. Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., is currently filled by Senator Mike Reichenbach.







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10

EIGHT WAYS TO CREATE INCLUSIVE SPACES

discussing, physical spaces.

GREENVILLE - When we think of

inclusion, we often talk about what we can do

to make a space more inclusive. Like what

attitudes and behaviors we can model to

promote inclusivity in the workplace. While

behavioral changes do matter, there's a lesser-

known aspect of inclusion that many aren't

people's moods which can encourage some

people to come out of their shells or push others

further into them. In this article, we're going

beyond what behavioral skills you can develop

and explore what ambiance you can create to

make spaces more inclusive, accessible and

It's no secret that physical spaces impact

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

comfortable.

Why physical space matters

Think about physical spaces as the first welcome to new employees, potential partners and stakeholders. It's like the business card of your workplace or the first handshake with a potential partner.

If you've worked this hard to make yourself a better and more inclusive leader, you can go a step further by translating that intention into the workspace ambiance. We should think about how we can make our office spaces more accessible and welcoming to people with different needs. Whether someone is a religious minority or sensitive to light and smells, how can we make this space as comfortable as possible?

The benefit of going this deep on your ambiance is that the right environment can offer openness, encourage collaboration and promote comfort for any occasion.

In fact, a good example of this happened to me recently. A few weeks ago, I was having negotiations with a long-standing client. I distinctly remember my client saying, "hey, why don't you choose where we meet and connect. I want you to feel comfortable."

This was a great example of putting me and our future partnership at the forefront of our conversation. Allowing me to choose an ambiance put me at ease and helped the conversation go smoothly.

When we engage in sensitive conversations, there's power in being mindful about space, ambiance and how the person we're talking to will feel. That's what this is all about, unlocking the power of physical spaces to make them as warm and inclusive as possible.

8 Ways to Build More Inclusive Physical Spaces

1. Paint the Walls Light, Calming Colors

In your office space, consider the color of the walls. Are the walls painted a calming hue like green, blue or purple? One study showed that colors like violet and blue are preferred to brighter colors like yellow. The same study shared that lighter colors are perceived as friendlier and more pleasant. When considering what color to paint your office walls, opt for light and calming hues.

2. Offer Tea and Non-Alcoholic Beverages

Beverages can make one person feel at ease while making another person feel totally uncomfortable. Not everyone wants coffee right before an important meeting. Some prefer tea as a calmer source of energy. Offering herbal and non-caffeinated tea can be a small step towards encouraging inclusivity for those who are sensitive to caffeine or prefer more soothing options.

The same goes with alcohol. While some people enjoy alcoholic beverages at company gatherings, others do not. Offering alcoholic as well as nonalcoholic beverages can help each person make the right choice for them.

3. Offer Rooms for Prayer, Nursing Mothers and Mental Health Breaks

If your company doesn't currently offer a room for those who wish to pray, nurse small children or simply take a step back from the workplace, consider creating one. Rooms where people can connect with their spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing are important to inclusivity and accessibility. It ensures that visitors, employees and partners alike have the space to feel grounded, handle their personal needs and show up as their best selves in the workplace.

4. Ditch the Fluorescent Lights

While it may not be obvious, nearly 9 million people in the United States are sensitive to bright light. This means, the fluorescent lighting in your office may be turning off visitors, employees and partners in a way that's counterproductive to inclusivity. Switching your lighting to soft LED or warm colored light bulbs can help those who feel comfortable with bright lights to experience more ease. **5. Let the Sunlight In**

If your office space has rooms with big windows, consider opening them to allow more sunlight in. Indirect, but bright sunlight can be a calming element for many people and can help some people feel more relaxed and comfortable in company gatherings.

6. Consider Food for Various Dietary Preferences

Catered company meetings can be an attractive perk for employees and partners. However, if your company doesn't offer enough options for those with various dietary preferences, it could be a turn off for attendees. When planning the menu, be mindful of who's attending and consider offering vegan, glutenfree, halal, and/or kosher options. For many people, food is a direct link to their spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing. Providing options that are inclusive of many dietary preferences can help the gathering be more amicable and, therefore, successful.

7. Switch up the Waiting Room Entertainment

For office spaces that use TVs in their waiting rooms, consider rotating between the channels. Not everyone loves watching sports or the news while they wait for their meeting with a manager or partner. A great alternative is to put on a channel featuring naturescapes. Studies show images and videos of natural environments can help calm the nervous system. For guests visiting your office, seeing a desert scape or ocean view can promote ease and calmness before an important meeting.

8. Decorate the Office with Inclusive Photos of Staff

It's no secret that 72 percent of company leaders in Fortune 500 companies are white and male. If your leadership team reflects that of the dominant culture, consider adding photos of lesser-known staff of color, women or persons with disabilities. Representation matters. Seeing smiling faces of folks who look like leadership and minority staff can promote feelings of positivity, inclusivity and warmth.

Behaviors Matter, But So Does Ambiance

While behaviors and attitudes matter towards building more inclusive workspaces, ambiance shouldn't be overlooked. The physical workspace can mean the difference between warmly welcoming guests or deterring them from ever returning.

Environments that feel cozy and approachable are key when engaging in delicate conversations like future partnerships, salary negotiations and important team talks. Building physical spaces that allow for prayer, offer calming colors and relaxing entertainment, invites more positive outcomes when engaging in various business activities. Inclusive and accessible spaces allow people from all walks of life permission to relax, be authentic and show up as their best selves.



WOMEN IN PHILANTHROPY GRANT CYCLE OPENS IN MAY

Women in Philanthropy, the giving circle fund of the Eastern Carolina Community Foundation, is pleased to announce the upcoming opening of the 2022, grant cycle. Eligible nonprofits in the Foundation's seven counties, Chesterfield,

Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion and

Williamsburg, are invited to

Submitted by Belle Zeigler, executive director Eastern Community Foundation



WiP Founders

apply beginning early May, with the deadline of July 31, 2022. Nonprofits are advised to watch the WIP website for the official announcement before initiating the application process.

Grants of up to \$7,000 will be awarded to organizations qualified as a tax-exempt 501(c) 3 by the IRS. The objective in awarding grants is to support programs or projects that address existing or emerging community needs in support of health, nutrition and/or assistance to victims of violence, neglect or poverty. Grant proposals should include plans lasting for up to 12 months beginning November 1, 2022 – October 31, 2023.

"Helping nonprofits is our mission and we're opening our grant cycle earlier this year to increase the amount of time to apply," explains Lisa King, who has served on the grants committee for five years and is the current committee chair. "We strongly encourage any nonprofits whose goals meet our criteria to apply for this funding."

Nonprofit representatives can access and complete the application in early May at: www.easterncarolinacf.org

Funding for grants comes from annual contributions by members of WIP, who each have one vote on the final slate of proposals for funding.



The WIP grants committee selects the slate of proposals to be presented to the membership for their vote.

Women in Philanthropy was founded in 2009, as a giving circle based on the theory that women informed about philanthropy and about the needs in their community can collectively make a difference. These women are dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Pee Dee by combining their financial and intellectual resources to award annual grants to nonprofit organizations. Members connect to each other and to the community and bring about change through the power of small grants.





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2021 BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

The Isaac Wilson Project's 5th Annual Evening of Distinction honored

local businesswomen, Starlee B. Alexander, as its 2021, Businessperson

of the Year. The sold-out annual event was held November 12, 2021, at the Southeastern Institute of Manufacturing Technology where the Florence community of organization and business leaders, local business owners and other honorees were in attendance. According to Executive Director and Founder, Isaac

Submitted by Starlee Alexander



Starlee B. Alexander

Wilson, a committee chooses the honorees. The criterion for this honor is to be in business for at least five years, have accomplished significant work in the community and have shown exemplary service in their area of expertise.

Alexander's commitment to entrepreneurship deems her deserving of this auspicious honor. 'Find a need and fill it,' are the words of the Presidential Medal of Freedom awardee and the father of positive thinking, the late Norman Vincent Peale. In business, Alexander has done just that. Since 1985, she has been the Owner/Agent of a State Farm Insurance Agency, located at 2027 South Irby Street in Florence, SC. Alexander was the first African American woman in this part of the state to open and operate a small business which she has grown to one of great respect in the community. Not only is she a 37-year business entrepreneur, but Alexander's business acumen also reaches further as she most recently, along with business partners, Charlene Lowery and Doris Lockhart, opened the MiLadies 182 Boutique in downtown Florence.

A native of Trilby, Florida, Alexander attended Florida A&M University receiving her Bachelor of Science Degree, in Business Management, then continuing to Nova University where she received her master's degree in Human Services. The Businessperson of the Year is married to Representative Terry Alexander, who serves House District 59, Florence and Darlington counties, in the South Carolina House of Representatives.

Alexander continues to be a driving force in the community with her involvement and professional endeavors. She has been a Qualifier of the Legion of Honors, Life Honor Qualifier, Honor Agent Qualifier, Ambassador for Life Qualifier and National Convention Qualifier with State Farm Insurance.

As demonstration of her commitment. Alexander has served in many capacities on the Chamber Board and was instrumental in the formation of the Small and Minority Business Division of the Chamber. Alexander was the first African American Chairwoman of the Greater Florence Chamber Board of Directors in 2002, and the 2007 recipient of the Florence Chamber of Commerce Small Businessperson of the Year Award.

Alexander was a part of the Inaugural Class of the Entrepreneur Forum at the Florence Darlington Technical College. She served on the McLeod Health Pee Dee Regional Health Services District and Foundation Board where she received the 2007 McLeod Fellows Award.

In her community engagement efforts, Alexander has given of her time, talent and expertise and is the recipient of many commendable accolades. She has served as President of the Florence Bethune Section and State Convener of the National Council of Negro Women. She is the recipient of the 2005 Illuminated Scroll Award; the 2007 Excellence in Leadership Award; a member of Crescent Temple #148 and Crescent Court #143. Alexander has served as Gala Chairperson of the United Negro College Fund and she is a current member of the Florence Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Her motto is all things are possible through Christ who strengthens me. Diversity Works congratulates such a leader within our community in Starlee Alexander.

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









Starlee B. Alexander **Owner/Agent**

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FLORENCE CENTER MARKET Submitted by the City of Florence



City Center Farmers' Market

The City Center Market has been open for over two years at its permanent location in downtown Florence at 200 Sanborn Street. The Market is in the City of Florence's Downtown Food and Artisan Warehouse District and is the ideal place for food entrepreneurs to grow their business from a weekly vendor at the farmers' market to a full-scale operation using the onsite commercial kitchen, food truck hook-ups and permanent tenant space. Not only does the market serve the food production folks but it's also the place where the City Center Farmers' Market takes place every week!

Open year-round on Saturdays and seasonally, Tuesday nights, the CCFM is a popular place for customers to purchase seasonal vegetables, hand-made candles and bouquets of flowers. You can also find small groups of friends or large families sharing a meal of Brooklyn South Deli breakfast burritos or the Donut Diva's, made to order, mini doughnuts. Others are looking for a place to spend time outdoors in the well-tempered weather of South Carolina and to catch some shade under the large oak tree next to the market's oversized plaza. In fact, since last February, there have been over 28,700 visitors to the CCFM. Special events like our annual Jam Fest, celebrating all things jam with tastings and music had over 1,000 attendees alone. The farmers' market is certainly growing more than just fruits and vegetables!

The popularity of the Saturday market was exactly what the City of Florence planned when repurposing an abandoned railway station into what we now know as the CCFM. What couldn't have been expected, of course, was COVID-19 taking hold of our world in 2020. Due to the uncertainty of being indoors and shopping in proximity of others we opened the CCFM on Tuesday nights as a mid-week relief market, allowing customers an opportunity to shop outdoors twice a week.

The Tuesday night market is celebrating the start of its third year and still the same goal remains, to serve our community in the safest and most responsible way possible. The Tuesday night market in 2020, was a beacon for the elderly, immunocompromised, new mothers and anyone looking for sunlight while they picked out the freshest tomatoes. COVID-19, hopefully, is on the way out but the seasonal Tuesday night market is here to stay.

Now sponsored by HopeHealth, a local federally qualified health center that serves over five counties in South Carolina, the Tuesday night market has its own path to blaze continuing to grow our community towards healthier lifestyles. The Tuesday night farmers' market will boast seasonal produce from our local vegetable growers, strawberries from Sweet Briar Farm, local meats from Home Grown Farm and baked goods from Annarella's Bakery. In addition to the weekly vendors and free movement classes, the market will host individual workshops highlighting diverse small business owners in our community.

Each week market attendees can expect a free hands-on class featuring candle making with Scented Hug Owner, Lacie Jones, fabric



FLORENCE CENTER MARKET CONT'D



dying with Fantasy Fibers owner Catherine Simpson, bath bomb making with Bubble by Bridget and so much more. In addition to these fun events HopeHealth will be onsite passing out materials and answering questions about, "how to become a patient." Once a month a practitioner will attend the market to meet customers and

CHARLESTON - The South

Even though State Superintendent

Public Works that CRT is not being

taught in classrooms across South

Carolina, the Committee is

advancing five bills that would

censor speech, whitewash history,

erase the lived experiences of

members of the LGBTQ+

community and limit the discussion

of current events. While much of

City Center Market Commissary Kitchen

answer any general health questions related to their field.

A gathering place for friends and family, enjoying the spring weather, picking pears from the fresh fruit orchard and learning about all the ways you can build a healthier lifestyle; the Tuesday night market is the perfect mid-week spot.

Experience the market with HopeHealth at the City Center Farmers' Market every Tuesday from 4-7 pm April-June and September and October. Once you visit us, you'll know, it's the place to grow.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND YOU! Submitted by LaVanda Brown





LaVanda Brown, executive, YWCA Greater Charleston

the debate has focused on how these bills could impact K-12 and higher education, the effects they will have on businesses and nonprofits in South Carolina have flown under the radar.

There are five bills in the House. Two of the bills, H. 4605 and H. 4799 would prohibit businesses and nonprofits from presenting, controversial and theoretical, concepts such as gender fluidity, nonbinary pronouns, unconscious bias and the notion that race and sex are social constructs. According to the bills, slavery and racism cannot be discussed as anything but a deviation from America's founding ideals.

The provisions of these bills are a direct attack on the YWCA's ability to fulfill our mission of eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Because H. 4605 defines unconscious or implicit bias as a controversial concept, any state funded entity that trains on these concepts, including YWCA, could be investigated by the Attorney General and lose its state funding,

tax-exempt status and any other state accommodated privilege. Diversity, equity and inclusion trainings - which often examine implicit and unconscious bias- have been acknowledged as best practices for organizations and government agencies who recognize that implicit biases contribute to many existing racial disparities. DEI trainings are used to foster inclusive workplaces, recruit talented and diverse employees and help businesses and nonprofits remain competitive on the national stage.

In 2017, the YWCA and a coalition of organizations concerned with racial disparities partnered with the Racial Equity Institute, a national leader in addressing racism, to bring the first REI training to Charleston. Each workshop is led by REI facilitators and is designed for leaders and organizations who want to proactively understand and address racism, both within their organization and in the community. The sessions examine the characteristics of modern-day racial inequity and introduce participants to a root cause analysis of racism. The facilitators utilize local, state and national data to illuminate how racism affects people of color, especially Black people, across institutions. With shared language and a clearer understanding of how systems are producing unjust and inequitable outcomes, participants leave the training better equipped to work for change. We've trained government agencies such as police departments that are grappling with how to address racial bias so they can reduce and eliminate racial disparities in traffic stops, arrests, use of force and recruit more diverse officers. Since its inception, YWCA's REI sessions have trained nearly 2,000 community leaders and members, many of whom are sponsored by their companies and organizations who receive federal funding.

YWCA Greater Charleston has been working to foster equity in the region for more than 115 years. While the provisions of H. 4605 and H. 4799 may threaten our ability to conduct programming and operations in alignment with our values, the penalties would threaten our ability to exist at all. H. 4605 creates a public reporting hotline to the Attorney General. Those state-funded entities found to be in violation of the bill, after an undefined investigation process, would lose their state funding, tax-exempt status and any other state accommodated privilege. A publicly funded entity found to be in violation of H. 4799 must return its funding and will be precluded from receiving additional funds for that year and the following ten fiscal years.

As written, these bills penalize any educational institution, trainer, or facilitator that makes an employee "feel uncomfortable or guilty due to their race or sex." This will inevitably create gray areas for businesses and nonprofits trying to expand and improve their workforce. The vague and subjective nature of these proposed laws will result in multiple interpretations of what businesses and nonprofits can and cannot do. To err on the side of caution, and to ensure that critical funds are not placed in jeopardy, businesses and nonprofits may stop offering trainings. These bills do not address any real problem in South Carolina. But they will stifle conversation and chill efforts to create a more inclusive South Carolina where everyone feels respected, heard and valued.

There are many state-funded entities that are not aware that these bills restrict their ability to create their own organizational culture. There are likely others who do know and are afraid to speak out in opposition of fear of possible repercussions.

There are those who out of fear, support this legislation's attempt to maintain South Carolina's racist and queerphobic status quo. They are on the wrong side of history.

Our understanding of history and humanity is expanding, but more importantly, our children deserve an opportunity to engage and grapple with our country's societal flaws, historical and modern. We need our future leaders to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to work together to build a better, more inclusive America. These bills deny them that opportunity. Please stand up for your freedom and defend your organizational values. Please stand up for inclusivity. Please stand up for truth.



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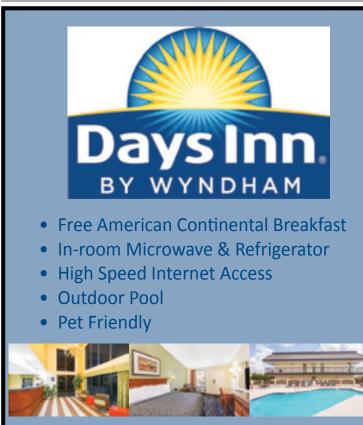
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SOLIDARITY & SCALE

HOW A SMALL NON-PROFIT TEAMED UP WITH A GLOBAL MANUFACTURER TO BRING THEIR ALS DRUG TO CLINICAL TRIALS

Before she lost her own battle to ALS in 2003, Jenifer Estes started Project ALS, raising over \$17 million dollars for the non-profit in hopes of a breakthrough in the fight against Lou Gehrig's disease. As her family continued the quest, in 2019, they got a hit with a new compound that seemed to stop or even reverse motor nerve damage. The promising new drug would need to begin trials immediately, but as a non-profit, all they had was a half gram of material and a journal article, and the deadline was approaching quickly. That's when Chris and his team at Thermo Fisher Scientific sprang into action. They worked around the clock to come up with an ingenious solution to scale a half gram of material into a kilo of purified product suitable for clinical trials. Now, with more than enough material in clinical trials to potentially treat or cure one of humanity's most pernicious diseases, there's hope for ALS patients.

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d.

APPLY FOR ELECTRIC SERVICE ONLINE Submitted by Joanna Arnsmeyer, Manager of Community Relations



Ardweena Bluefort, vice president of Member Services. Ardweena Bluefort is dedicated to YOU, our members. (Photo by taken by Joanna Arnsmeyer)

KINGSTREE - At Santee Electric Cooperative, our members are what matter the most! The goal is to make our services convenient and easy. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had the inside of our offices closed, but our drive-thru has remained open. Offering more ways for our members to be able to connect with SEC online has since become a big goal.

This comes to some very exciting news; SEC is now offering a way to apply for electric service online.

"This is a great next step for SEC," says Vice President

of Member Services, Ardweena Bluefort. "We want to make applying for electric service as simple and convenient as possible."

Bluefort created the online form to apply for electric service in hopes that SEC could make the application process more accessible to everyone.



You can find the application to apply for electric service on SEC's website, <u>www.santee.org/service</u>. The applications are then reviewed during normal business hours -Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., excluding holidays, and you will be contacted by phone to complete the

application process. It is as simple as that!

And every member new or long-standing, don't forget about SEC's SmartHub app!

SmartHub is a payment portal that gives members the ability to make payments right from their phones. But SmartHub is so much more than your average billing system, it also provides data on your hourly and daily power usage in detailed usage reports and provides account management in an all-in-one, easy-to-use system. It includes a personal password-protected gateway and secure socket layer that guarantees your information remains confidential, so you never have to worry!

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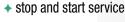
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HONDA ASSOCIATE SPOTLIGHT: DARLENE LEGRANT Article submitted by Honda South Carolina Manufacturing



Darlene LeGrant

TIMMONSVILLE - Darlene LeGrant has been a part of the South Carolina Honda team since January 1999. She started in the weld department and has made her way to Team Leader, Production Coordinator, Business Administrative Coordinator and now the In-House Parts Department Manager. During her tenure, she also managed the Personal Watercraft and Aluminum Wheel departments.

As department head, LeGrant makes key business decisions for the Weld, Plastics and Paint units. As part of her role, she works with the New Model team to plan layouts, scope out what's needed to complete projects and is at the helm of many new ideas.

LeGrant has been a part of many exciting projects while working with Honda, but her favorite was the start of mass production of the Talon side-by-side in 2019. "It was so exciting to be a part of that process. An exciting, brand-new product, which is produced right here in my hometown of Timmonsville."

LeGrant's favorite part of working for Honda is being given the tools needed to adapt to change and grow in the company. She also appreciates the support that management has provided over the years. "They trust my judgement and my opinions, and that really is the root of why I love it here."

She describes herself as a people person who is a country girl, at heart. In her spare time, LeGrant volunteers at her church, New Zion Missionary Baptist Church #1 in Timmonsville. She is a Trustee and Secretary, and even helps with payroll and budgeting.

About Honda South Carolina Manufacturing



Honda South Carolina Manufacturing began production of all-terrain vehicles in 1998, as Honda's second powersports production facility in America. Today,

SCM makes Honda FourTrax all-terrain vehicles and is the exclusive global production home of side-by-side vehicles, including the Honda Pioneer series and Talon sports models.

The plant celebrated its twentieth anniversary in July 2018, with the completion of a \$45 million expansion and the addition of 250 new jobs to meet the growing demand for side-by-sides and to innovate its assembly, weld and paint processes. SCM hit the three million mark in ATV production in 2018, and the production of the Honda Talon 1000X and 1000R sport side-by-sides began in 2019. Most recently, SCM produced it's 300,000 side-by-side.



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MOVING BUSINESS FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING



The last few years have brought incredible challenges to small and micro businesses, plus some amazing stories of tenacity and survival. These businesses have seen enormous changes, fueled by consumer habits that are here to stay.

For many SMBs, digital payment acceptance has become increasingly intertwined with their long-term success. Visa's Back to Business study conducted in nine countries shows that 82 percent of SMBs surveyed plan to accept digital payment options in 2022 and 73 percent said a modern, digital payments infrastructure is fundamental to their growth. Embrace the digital transformation

If your small business does not yet have an online presence and hasn't yet mastered ways to accept digitized payments online or in-store, now's the time to get on board. E-commerce has grown exponentially and it's not going anywhere. On average, 57 percent of U.S. consumers' shopping in the past month was done using digital payments, according to the Visa Global Back to Business Study.

Plenty of tools and tactics are available to help any size business develop and grow their e-commerce capabilities. Here are some tips to help get your business where it needs to be.

Create or improve your website

Developing an attractive, seamless and user-friendly website is not only crucial to compete in today's marketplace, but it can also be the difference maker in a business' survival. In fact, on average, 90 percent of small businesses surveyed with an online presence said they attributed pandemic survival to increased efforts to sell online, the study said.

If you don't have a website, start here:

* Make sure your web address/URL is easy to say, spell and remember. * Select a website host and platform. The host allows your website to have connectivity to the internet, while the platform helps you design and build your website.

* If you don't have a web designer on staff, hire a professional to design a website that's easy to navigate, and that helps consumers quickly understand your business, its services or products.

Create new ways for customers to make digital payments

To help your customers pay for goods and services using their computer or mobile device, Visa offers a variety of resources and digital tools.

"More than ever, people are engaging across multiple channels shopping online, in-store and through mobile apps," said Jeni Mundy, Global SVP Merchant Sales & Acquiring at Visa. "We've seen that SMBs who have embraced digital commerce and made changes to the way they operate not only have weathered the pandemic better but are also setting themselves up to thrive in the future."

Build customer loyalty and engagement

Social media platforms can help you attract new customers, engage with them and reward their participation and loyalty. Creating content like blogs as well as encouraging customer reviews and postings can help build a sense of community with your customer base.

You can also use technology to create a digital customer loyalty program, offering special discounts and promotions for your frequent buyers. Offering benefits like these motivates consumers to do business with you and creates positive buzz about your business.



DEALING WITH EMOTIONS by Robin Lewis



HEMINGWAY - Let's face it; most of us could use an emotional makeover. We tend to focus more on creating an attractive outside appearance instead of taking care of what's going on inside of us. God created us with emotions that are part of our relationship with Him and others. He invites us to honestly bring our feelings, needs, and cares to him.



Many of us, in trying to be a "good" Christian or socially acceptable, may fall into the habit of people-pleasing by denying or suppressing how we really feel. The problem with that is our emotions are real. They are part of us and meant to be expressed in a way that doesn't hurt us or someone else.

When we hold our feelings inside, our emotional cup can overflow onto others with reactions that resemble fireworks on the 4th of July! Emotions buried alive, stay alive and produce stress.

Difficult circumstances are going to happen. When they do, we can easily react in fear or anger towards others or ourselves when we're not practicing the habit of emptying our emotions out to the Lord. When we feel and act out emotions of fear, anger or worry, we have moved away from God. Negative emotions that are kept inside or those that explode onto others will erode faith and peace.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come to give life and life abundant until it overflows." The Greek word in this verse for 'life' is the word zoe, pronounced zo-ey. It means life, the absolute fullness of life, life that's real and genuine, a life that is active, blessed and vigorous, and lastly, life devoted to God. Emotions associated with this kind of life are wonderful, positive, happy, joyous, confident and peaceful! But there are emotions that don't promote the abundant God-life in us.

Emotions like guilt, regret, frustration, selfishness, jealousy, control, pride, anger and others will take us down if we hold onto them. By telling God about your feelings as they come up and even whispering a Shhhhh! to them before they take over, you can preserve your peace.



After all, you have the power to choose your thoughts and emotions. I often tell my coaching clients "Don't give your emotions the keys to the car!" We are not created to be emotions driven. We are to steward and choose our thoughts and emotions. Not all thoughts and emotions originate in you. Some that you experience come from the enemy trying to steal, kill and

destroy in your life, John 10:10. Some thoughts are from God as he seeks to lead you in the best path for your life, Proverbs 3:5-6.

Don't believe everything you think or feel. Learn to discern and choose which thoughts and emotions you want to keep and which ones you want to toss out. Philippians 4:6-7, provides the permission and the result: Don't worry or be anxious about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God how you feel and what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. his peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

A divine exchange takes place when we pour out to God how we are feeling. When we release our feelings to him, he can then bring healing and replace them with his wonderful peace!

2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love, and a sound mind." When fear or any other emotion is the ruling power in your life, you're then missing the power, love and sound mind, that God wants you to enjoy. God isn't mad at us when we are afraid or angry. He is for us especially when we are troubled! His presence provides all we need if we return our focus to him.

The release of emotions, not in denial but in dependence on God, is his design and provides the pathway to peace, healing, and freedom. When our peace and joy are restored, then our inner life is where it was created to be - in trusting relationship with him. That helps us face difficult situations in his strength.

Form the habit of sharing with God how you feel by taking time every evening to look back over your day and share with him any emotions you have about anything that happened. Pour your heart out to him and receive his peace. You may want to start an emotions journal. Forming this habit of emotional exchange with God who loves you will keep you beautiful inside and out!

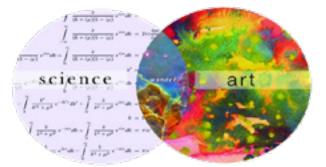
Prayer: Father God, forgive me for times I didn't manage my emotions well and hurt others and myself. I realize I need You to be Lord of my emotions. Please help me bring how I feel first to you and help me receive your peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You're invited to participate in the "Ditch Your Emotional Baggage" free online challenge for women April 17 - 22. Sign up at <u>www.RobinLewisLife.com</u> and increase your hope, joy and peace of mind.



FLORENCE 1 SCHOOLS RECEIVES \$700K IN GRANTS

Submitted by Melissa Rollins, communications specialist Florence 1 Schools



The after-school program at nearly a dozen schools in Florence 1 will be expanding their Arts and STEM offerings thanks to two federal grants, totaling \$770,000. The grant funds will be used to purchase equipment to enhance Fine Arts and STEM as well as for personnel costs, cleaning and general supplies used daily by the programs.

Beverly Woods, F1S extended day coordinator, said she was elated to learn that Florence 1 was chosen as a recipient. "We are absolutely thrilled to get these grants," Woods said. "The most important thing for us is that it will allow us to make a difference in our district, for our students and our families."

Erick Figueras, director of F1S Arts and Innovative Programs, said, "giving students increased exposure to the arts, especially at the elementary school level, opens up a lot of exciting opportunities for them in the future." "The grant will provide funds to make fine

arts programs more accessible at elementary schools across the district," Figueras said. "We are particularly excited to bring band to McLaurin Elementary and expand support for the band program at Greenwood Elementary."

Funds will be used to purchase high-quality flutes, clarinets, saxophones, trumpets and trombones as well as reeds and other essential supplies to reduce or eliminate barriers to participation for some families due to instrument rental costs. This is part of an ongoing effort to expand access to instrumental music at all elementary schools, especially with the addition of the arts magnet programs that students can participate in at the middle school or high school level. For younger students, schools will receive recorders and a wide variety of classroom instruments.

For the visual arts, the grant will fund a potter's wheel, clay and glazes for students at Carver Elementary STEAM Magnet School as well as a wide variety of art supplies for creative art projects at campuses across the district. The district will purchase art panels and accompanying lighting systems to beautifully display artwork created by district students. Student work that is 3-dimensional, such as sculptures and clay pieces, will be displayed on pedestals also being purchased with these grant funds.

One of the grants the district received was a COVID Support Grant for childcare providers and the other was a South Carolina Block Grant. Block grants are federal funds that go toward state and community programs, usually earmarked specifically for programs that support family services and community growth.



Mindy Taylor, government and community relations manager for Duke Energy presents a check to Florence 1 Board of Trustees Chairman Porter Stewart, Farm to School Coordinator Jeff Murrie and Superintendent Dr. Richard O'Malley.

Florence 1 Schools was recently the recipient of a very generous donation from Duke Energy. The \$50,000 grant will go toward The Farm at Florence One, 14 acres located near the Eddie Floyd Tennis Center, which will serve as a space for students and the community to learn about agriculture.

District Farm to School Coordinator Jeff Murrie said that he was thrilled when he received the news.

"Duke Energy has been an amazing partner for many of the Farm to School projects we have across the district," Murrie said. "We appreciate the fact that they believe in what we are trying to accomplish with this educational movement and want to be a part of it. This Farm will be a space for all of our students to learn about where our food comes from, no matter what school they attend."

The donation will be used in a variety of ways to help get The Farm at Florence One ready for students, including purchasing farm equipment like a tractor, fencing for the property and a processing shed for the row crops that will be planted and harvested.

"Agribusiness is South Carolina's top industry, and Duke Energy is proud to power thousands of family and commercial farms and related businesses across the state," said Mindy Taylor, government and community relations manager for Duke Energy. "That's why we are proud to support The Farm at Florence One and their efforts to build the diverse 21st-century workforce this industry will need to prosper and grow."

Florence 1 Board of Trustees Chairman Porter Stewart said, "the support from Duke Energy will make a great impact on The Farm at Florence One project."

"As the Farm now literally grows up from the ground, it will be through the support of thoughtful partners that we can rapidly address needs there to prepare for next school year," Stewart said. "We certainly appreciate this financial support from Duke Energy."

Murrie said, "The Farm at Florence One is an important way that the community can begin to make generational changes." He estimates that The Farm will be ready in the 2022-2023 school year.

"There are so many components to a space like this: raised garden beds, a greenhouse, an education center," Murrie said. "We cannot do it without community partners. We are very appreciative of local organizations like Duke Energy participating in this with us. The Farm at Florence One is not a band-aid solution for food insecurity. We want to make a generational change, so it is extremely important for it to be a project that the whole community is involved in."



25

THE FARM RECEIVES \$50K DONATION

PROTECTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea, superintendent



Dr. Kandace Bethea

MARION - The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the world for over two years at this point, causing concern for not only our physical health, but our mental health as well. Most of us have experienced time in isolation; being away from friends, coworkers and even family. Even with the need to isolate fading away, masks and social distancing hinder our interactions with others. Educators and students alike had to adjust to E-learning and then COVID precautions as we

returned to face-to-face learning. Our students and educational staff have not had a normal school year since the pandemic began. The pandemic has brought about fear and stress, which in turn has led to increases in the number of people experiencing anxiety, depression, sleep disruption and suicidal thoughts. These are serious topics that can be challenging to address, but we must make this effort to support our students and staff members.

First and foremost, in order to support our students and staff, we utilize our school counselors. They support students through lessons and, when necessary, one on one discussions. Teachers refer students to guidance, not just upon request, but when a concern is observed, such as a sudden decrease in engagement during class or an unusual number of disagreements with other students. Our district has also implemented Social Emotional Learning. Each morning, our students complete SEL lessons in an online program called Suite 360. Suite 360 focuses on character development and behavior intervention. It helps students learn how to process their emotions and how to appropriately interact with others. Teachers guide students through these lessons and lead classroom discussions about the given topics.

SEL isn't limited to Suite 360. Other lessons are implemented as well. For example, March 11, the Third Annual International SEL Day, some of our students listened to the story, "I Like Myself," by Karen Beaumont, and then wrote about the reasons why they take pride in who they are.

Our schools have also implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. While setting behavioral expectations is a part of PBIS, another one of its goals is to make sure that students feel good about themselves; and are rewarded for their positive behaviors. PBIS encourages students, who may be struggling internally and socially, to engage with others in positive ways.

The holiday season is a time for joy, but it also brings added pressures for adults. In December, our district partnered with a local agency in order to host a ZOOM meeting on how to handle stress, anxiety and depression. The meeting was recorded and made available for staff members who were unable to attend the live meeting.

The mental health concerns stemming from and heightened by COVID will not just go away on their own. There is more work to be done and we are willing to do the work in order to protect our students and staff, while working towards our ultimate goal, which is to educate our children.



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COKER UNIVERSITY: A COLLEGE OF LEADERS Submitted by Dr. Natalie J. Harder, president



Dr. Natalie J. Harder

in 10 are first-generation college goers.

The Coker you once knew is no more. Coker is now a university making bold moves to both fulfill our mission and improve our community.

I took over as president of Coker less than two years ago. Today, I remain astounded by the spirit and commitment of the Coker community to do all it can to reimagine our college and ensure it is a leader in the region for many decades to come.

What does that mean? Coker University is committed to developing an institution that ensures the success of our growing first-generation student population, doing more to make college more affordable, offering support to students throughout their college experience AND providing internships and job preparation services through our recently launched career success center.

HARTSVILLE - Coker University IS a college of leaders. New Whether in the classroom, on the field, on the stage and in the community, the Coker University community is making a real difference in the Pee Dee, in South Carolina, and across the nation.

Founded in Hartsville, SC in 1908, Coker has evolved to meet the needs of all its learners. Originally founded as a women's college with an unwavering commitment to gender equity, six in 10 of our students today are female. Half of our students are now students of color. Nearly four Coker is developing new degree programs and pathways to provide new opportunities to traditional and non-traditional students, providing opportunities for economic mobility for all learners. This fall, we will be launching four new nursing programs to meet South Carolina's healthcare pipeline needs. The diversity of our approach is also reflected in our recent work to partner with industry to offer new degree pathways for those seeking to work in the pharmacy industry and our commitment to grow our School of Visual and Performing Arts and opportunities in the arts for undergraduates throughout the Southeast.

We are preparing to launch a new center to focus on leadership, one that reflects our roots as a women's college and our efforts to support all learners at Coker. Our commitment to all students can be found in our unwavering commitment to DEI and to a diverse, respected student community.

The entire Coker family is committed to doing whatever is necessary to ensure our long-term success and the success of each and every learner who arrives on our campus. As a result, Coker University is becoming a stronger institution with a stronger impact on the lives of those in need.

We like to talk about our Coker pride and being Coker strong. These are more than hashtags to those of us that call Coker home. They are part of our mantra. As a college of leaders, they are both what we believe and what we continue to strive to be.

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DR. WALLACE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Articles submitted by Christopher McKagen, communications specialist



Dr. Arlene Wallace

DARLINGTON – The Darlington County Board of Education recently accepted the resignation of Dr. Arlene Wallace, principal of Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology. Wallace will retire as principal at the end of the school year.

Wallace spent most of her 38 years in the Darlington County School District at Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology. She began her career as a science teacher at Mullins High School. She also worked at Dillon High School before moving to Mayo

High School for Math, Science, and Technology as an administrative assistant. In 1997, she joined the school's leadership team as assistant principal, and in 2000, she became the school's principal.

"Dr. Wallace is the epitome of professionalism," said Dr. Tim Newman, DCSD superintendent. "She has built an incredible culture at Mayo that students, staff and parents want to continuously be a part of. It has been a privilege to work alongside Dr. Wallace for the past four years and she will be greatly missed."

During her career at Mayo, Wallace earned the following commendations: the Iota Omicron Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Lady of Distinction award, the Alpha Beta Beta Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Citizen of the Year, the Darlington County Chamber of Commerce Educator of the Year, the Darlington County Principal of the Year, the S.C. Competitive Spirit Squads Official of the Year, and, most recently, the South Carolina Principal of the Year finalist.

Under her leadership, Mayo High School won several Palmetto Gold Awards from the S.C. Department of Education, achieved a 100 percent graduation rate, became a National Blue-Ribbon School twice, (2013 and 2021), and earned the Palmetto's Finest Award from the

S.C. Association of School Administrators. The school has been included in Newsweek's "America's Top High Schools" and the US News & World Report's "America's Best High School," where it was most recently ranked No. 4 in South Carolina.



GREENVILLE – The Riley Institute at Furman University has selected Dr. Omoro King, director of elementary education for the Darlington County School District, to participate in the South Carolina Afterschool Leaders Empowered program, a new initiative that equips afterschool and summer learning leaders in the state with the tools they need to grow and improve

King is one of 21 emerging

KING SELECTED FOR SCALE COHORT



Dr. Omoro King

afterschool leaders to be selected for the inaugural cohort.

their programs.

The initiative is offered in partnership with and funded by a \$1.3 million grant from the South Carolina Department of Education as

part of the monies the agency received from the American Rescue Plan to address the academic impact of COVID-19, particularly among youth in need of additional support to complete unfinished learning.

King began serving in the district in early 2021. He is tasked with assisting the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and assessment in providing leadership and support to elementary and middle schools. He also develops, implements and evaluates educational programs and services. He has previously worked as a middle level principal, elementary school principal, assistant principal and mathematics teacher. King holds a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership and Supervision as well as an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership and Supervision from Wingate University. He also holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Cambridge College and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from the University of South Carolina.

"I am honored to be selected to participate and grow through the SCALE program and cannot wait to share my experiences with my fellow educators," King said.

"Afterschool and Summer Programs invest in students' futures by providing engaging learning experiences, developing positive relationships, and supporting equitable access to resources for all children."

Selected participants represent nearly a third of the state's school districts, a variety of

organizations and a mix of rural, suburban and urban areas.

Taking place over the course of 10 months, SCALE offers a curriculum that touches on topics such as school-community partnership development, program sustainability and youth mental health and is led by national and local afterschool and summer learning leaders. In addition to convening on Furman's campus for a weeklong intensive and participating in monthly webinars, members of the cohort will take a field trip to a nationally-acclaimed summer learning program and work on a capstone project related to afterschool or summer learning.

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs have been shown to improve

student achievement, life skills and mental health, all while helping working families keep kids safe. For more than a decade, the Riley Institute has conducted work in the afterschool field at the national level.

"Inspired by the impact we've made through our national afterschool policy fellowship, we're eager to help strengthen and expand access to phenomenal programs that are already in place across the state," said Amy Keely, SCALE director. "In doing so, the Riley Institute is advancing its goals of creating greater opportunity for students and their families in South Carolina."

To learn more about SCALE, visit <u>furman.edu/scale</u> or contact Keely at <u>amy.keely@furman.edu</u>.



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FMU AND GOVENOR'S SCHOOL EXPAND DUEL ENROLLMENT Articles submitted by FMU



Francis Marion University will expand its dual enrollment offerings through a new partnership with the South Carolina Governor's School for Science & Mathematics.

Beginning fall 2022, students at the GSSM in Hartsville will earn college credit for courses in Physics, Chemistry, Economics and English. GSSM will become the fourteenth dual enrollment partner to engage with FMU since the university began its highly successful dual enrollment program in 2019.

"President Dorsel and his faculty are doing wonderful things at the GSSM. FMU is pleased to enter into this meaningful partnership with them," said Dr. Fred Carter, president of Francis Marion. "The strength of FMU's curricular offerings in the sciences, mathematics and humanities makes this a natural alliance. It allows our two schools to work collaboratively and creatively in educating some of the finest students in the state."

Courses available starting in August will include introductions to Microeconomics and Macroeconomics, General Physics I and II, General Chemistry I and II with lab credit, introduction to literature, as well as reading and writing fiction, poetry and drama. Similar to other dual enrollment courses

already offered by FMU, the classes will be offered in-person or fully online.

"President Carter and Francis Marion University have long been supporters of the S.C. Governor's School for Science and Mathematics," said Dorsel, president of GSSM. "We are excited to strengthen this partnership as both institutions continue to educate and inspire the leaders of tomorrow."

The GSSM partnership is the latest success in FMU's booming dual enrollment program. The school reported nearly 500 students – the most ever in the program's history – from participating Pee Dee high schools and institutions.

The popularity of the programs is expected to grow even further starting fall 2022, according to Anna Todd, director of Dual Enrollment and Continuing Education at Francis Marion.

"The response we saw from our partner school districts, and especially the participating students, has truly been incredible," said Todd. "There is such high demand for these courses among area high school aged students. We look forward to the program continuing to grow in the years ahead."

The odds of increased interest are aided by the fact that FMU will expand its dual enrollment offerings for the fall 2022, to include 23 courses. Courses available to students from participating school districts include Biology, Business, Chemistry, Education, Psychology, Sociology, Spanish and several other Fine Arts programs.

For more information on the dual enrollment programs offered at Francis Marion University, visit <u>www.fmarion.edu/</u> <u>dualenrollment/</u>.

FMU TO FOCUS ON K-12 TEACHER RETENTION



Francis Marion University will assist school districts in their teacher retention efforts thanks to a grant recently awarded by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

FMU will receive just over \$347,000 during the next three-years to fund the new Center of Excellence for Teacher Retention and Induction in the Pee Dee. The center will be housed in FMU's School of Education and focus on early-career teachers' effectiveness, resilience and well-being.

FMU was one of three universities in South Carolina to receive the latest Center of Excellence grants in a state-wide competitive process administered by the CHE. Two other centers focusing on different areas of educational preparation already exist at the university. They have been recognized regionally and nationally for the quality of their work.

The new initiative will provide professional development support for first- and second-year teachers in surrounding school districts, Florence School District 3 and Marion County School District. The COE-TRIP will expand efforts to work with more area school districts in the future. "We hope to help partner districts retain and support effective, resilient teachers, which, in turn, will support successful and engaged children," said Dr. Kimberly McCuiston, associate professor of education at FMU.

McCuiston, along with Dr. Michelle R. Murphy and Dr. Jared H. Stewart-Ginsburg, authored the grant, which will focus on first-year elementary and special education teachers.

Teacher retention in K-12 education has long been a critical issue nationally and in South Carolina. A report released March 1, from the non-profit South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement showed nearly 1,000 teachers across the state had left their jobs since the 2021-22, school year began.

In the first year, the grant will fund the center start-up, including support for current student teachers to engage with Professional Learning Communities throughout the region.

Murphy said new teachers will be supported by colleagues who can help them adapt as they begin to deal with the challenges and demands of the teaching profession.

"It is hugely important that we find more innovative and sustaining ways to assist teachers in the early years of their career. They must be at their professional and personal best, so that they can give their best to students," said Murphy. "We can't fill from an empty cup."



FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY HONORS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI



FMU 2022 Alumni Honorees

Francis Marion University honored five of its most esteemed graduates during its annual alumni awards ceremony at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

The winners accepted their awards before fellow alumni, friends, family and members of the FMU community. The event was hosted by the Francis Marion University Alumni Association.

Robert E. Lee ('87) was honored as the Outstanding Alumnus of the Year. Lee is chairman of Francis Marion University's Board of Trustees. Originally appointed to the board in 1998, Lee served as chairman from 1999-2003 before being elected to the position again in 2018.

A native of Marion, S.C., Lee received a Bachelor of Business Administration with a concentration in finance from FMU in 1987. He went on to earn his Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1990. Lee practices law at his firm, Robert E. Lee Law Firm, in Marion, S.C.

Tyler B. Wright ('19) received the Benjamin J. Wall Ingram III, young alumni of the year award. Wright graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry.

Wright is a co-director of Black Creek Wildlife Center in Marlboro County, where he works to rehabilitate injured wildlife, educate the public using animal ambassadors and provide homes for non-releasable animals from around the world.

Stephen N. Jones ('88) received the Professional Industry Award for Business and Industry. Jones, a member of the university's Board of Trustees, graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing.

With more than 25 years of experience as a certified financial planner, Jones is currently the senior vice president of investments at Stifel Nicolaus in Florence. The Florence native has been an FMU trustee since 2011 and has worked with many civic and non-profit organizations throughout his career. Jones was recognized as the FMU Alumni Association Volunteer of the Year in 2010-11.

Charnisse T. Kelly ('96) was awarded the Professional Industry Award for Medical and Health Sciences. Kelly received a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in sociology and collateral in chemistry from FMU in 1996. She received a Master of Science in Quality Assurance from California State University in 2013.

Kelly is the owner of CL&D Pharma Consulting, LLC, where she works as a quality consultant for pharmaceutical and medical device companies. She has also created her own endowed scholarship and has been an active member of the FMU Alumni Advisory Board since 2018.

Jenna Lee Sexton ('07) was awarded the Professional Industry Award for Natural and Behavioral Sciences. Sexton received a Bachelor of Science in Physics from FMU and a Master of Science in Nuclear Engineering in 2009 from the University of Florida.

Originally from Texas, Sexton was a student-athlete at FMU, competing for the softball team her entire college career. She has since been inducted into the FMU's Softball Hall of Fame. Sexton currently works as a health physicist for Sandia National Laboratory in Livermore, California, where she provides comprehensive field health physics support.

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FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY FIRST GENERATION FUND

DANCING FOR OUR FUTURE STARS IS BACK! Submitted by Debbie Hyler, Executive Director



The School Foundation formally announces the 2022 Dancing for Our Future Stars dance couples. After taking two years off due to Covid, our dancers are ready to shake a leg and raise money for grants for the students and teachers of Florence 1 Schools. The dance couples are:

- Ashley Christenbury (First Bank) and Yancey Stokes
- Dr. Michael Foxworth (HopeHealth) and Meggie Baker
- Dr. Jarrod Tippins (The Pharmacy) and Hannah Yarborough
- Dr. Zac DiPaolo (McLeod Health) and Dr. Rachel Fenters
 Greg Johnson (Florence 1 Schools) and Alexis McDonald
- Jay Hinesley (MUSC Health Florence Medical Center) and Georgie Kelley
- Les Echols (Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce) and Maya Chokshi
- Matthew Ethridge (Hodge Ethridge Insurance and Financial Services) and Hailey Swails
- Sarah Duby (Assurant) and Chris Mixon
- William Schofield (Florence City Councilman & Carolina Supply House,Inc.) and Connie Mixon

Tuesday, April 26, 2022, local celebrities and their professional dance partners will square-off at SiMT for a chance to win the coveted mirror ball trophy at the tenth annual dancing competition. The reception will begin at 6:00 p.m. and the competition at 7:00 p.m. A limited number of tables/tickets are available. To make your reservation,

please call Debbie Hyler, executive director at (843) 662-9996. Guests will enjoy food, beverages, fellowship and an opportunity to win a custom designed jewelry piece donated by Lisa and Lex Matthews of Southern Jewelry Design.

Fans can vote online for their favorite couple(s) at <u>DancingForOurFutureStarsOfFlorence.com</u> for only \$10 per vote. The People's Choice mirror ball trophies will be awarded to the three couples raising the most votes. A panel of judges will name one couple, Technical Skills Winne, based on the contestants' overall skills. One couple will also be chosen as, Most Entertaining, by the judges. Dancers receiving the largest number of online votes will be awarded the Social Stars, trophy.

The School Foundation's board member Ed Love and local celebrity Audra Grant will serve as master and mistress of ceremonies and the KFA Fierce team will provide special entertainment throughout the evening.

About The School Foundation

Founded in 2000, The School Foundation promotes educational excellence in Florence 1 Schools through grants for innovative learning and through high impact initiatives designed to prepare all students for success. To date, the foundation has provided \$1,840,572.78 in grants to Florence 1 educators. Their Fellows in Education program is designed to improve education in Florence by involving local leaders in the latest trends and research concerning young children and education programs serving children and families. Their StartSMART



and Start2Read initiatives are continuing to make an impact in the Florence Community. To learn more about The School Foundation, visit <u>www.</u> theschoolfoundation.org.



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EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR AWARDEES



Brandon Haselden



James "Ron" Watkins



Kathy Moore

CONWAY – Horry-Georgetown Technical College recognized three exceptional employees at the South Carolina Technical Education Association's Annual Conference in February.

HGTC's Educator of the Year Award winners recognized at the SCTEA Conference include: • Brandon Haselden, AVP Academic Affairs/dean, in the administrator category,

• James "Ron" Watkins, professor of HVAC, in the faculty category, and

• Kathy Moore, administrative assistant for Student Affairs, in the staff category.

The award recipients were nominated by their peers for superior leadership in their departments, quality work ethic and community involvement.

"HGTC is proud of the outstanding service and achievements of these special individuals. Their dedication to our college is reflected in the unique vote of confidence of their peers," said HGTC President Marilyn Murphy Fore. "We are extremely blessed to have employees whose professionalism is second to none in higher education. Our faculty and staff are working

harder than ever to serve our students and this community." Tuition is FREE at HGTC for the 2022 spring, summer, and fall semesters. To learn more and apply, visit <u>hgtc.edu/admissions</u> or call 843-349-5277. For a complete list of academic programs,

visit the website.

HGTC AND CCU PARTNER Submitted byNicole Hyman, public relations director, HGTC



CONWAY – Horry-Georgetown Technical College is excited about a new partnership initiative with Coastal Carolina University. "Teal Tuesdays" started on the HGTC Conway Campus in February. HGTC now has a dedicated CCU Transfer Counselor located on the Conway Campus in Office 133A, Building

1100. Every Teal Tuesday a CCU Transfer Counselor is available to meet with students on topics such as the Bridge Program, Coastal Bound, University Transfer to CCU, and anything related to Coastal Carolina University. The office is decorated with HGTC and CCU décor so that students know where they can find information about CCU partnership programs.

"HGTC has a strong relationship with CCU, and we are fortunate that CCU has agreed to send one of their employees to the HGTC campus on a weekly basis. HGTC is proud to extend a warm Gator welcome to these CCU representatives," said HGTC President, Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore.

HGTC's university transfer programs provide students with a solid academic foundation, save students money on tuition and helps prepare students for next steps. With over 35 transfer agreements, HGTC makes it easy for students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities.

"If students aspire to earn a bachelor's or master's degree – they can get there from HGTC," continued President Fore. "HGTC is accredited by SACSCOC, the same organization as four-year colleges and universities in the region."



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.

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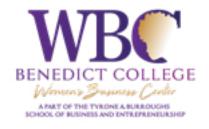
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To request an application, email <u>pdmpascholarship@gmail.com</u> or visit our website at <u>www.pdmpa.org</u>. **Deadline: April 23, 2022**

To make a donation, make checks payable to PDMPA with "Dr. Francis Legacy Scholar" in the subject section. Mail to: 1937 W. Palmetto Street, #342, Florence, SC 29501

All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

BENEDICT COLLEGE RECEIVES \$100K GRANT



COLUMBIA – The Benedict College Women's Business Center received a \$100,000 grant from the Truist Foundation to assist with the implementation of the Benedict College WBC Mobile and Creative Entrepreneurial Demonstration Project, a new

initiative designed to reach socially and economically disadvantaged women business owners in targeted rural areas of Allendale County, Bamberg County, the City of North Charleston, Clarendon County, Dillon County and Lee County.

"Equality for women entrepreneurs will only materialize when they are able to enjoy equal access to the same affordable financing mechanisms as men, including equal access to markets, information, digital technology and services," stated Dr. Roslyn Artis, president of Benedict College. "We appreciate the financial investment of Truist in MCED and partnership in ensuring that minority women business owners in these rural areas have the tools and resources that they need to both grow and sustain their businesses."

As a result of this funding and previous funding awarded to support MCED by the U.S. Small Business Administration Resiliency and Recovery Demonstration program, the Benedict College WBC is well positioned to build a strong base for future economic opportunities for women in the state of South Carolina, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

"Recent studies estimate that 42 percent of African American businesses were forced to close in August 2020. Many of the businesses forced to close were owned by women of color due to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19," said Ms. Cheryl Salley, director of the Benedict College WBC. "We are grateful to receive funding from Truist to assist small, minority women-owned businesses in re-tooling and pivoting their business models, thus enabling them to build resilient systems, networks and mitigation strategies to acclimate to industry changes because of COVID-19."

"Helping entrepreneurs navigate a frequently evolving business landscape not only supports their company, it creates stability for employees and their families and strengthens communities," said Mike Brenan, South Carolina, regional president for Truist, speaking on behalf of the Truist Foundation. "With this grant, we have the opportunity to inspire and build better lives and communities by empowering Benedict College Women's Business Center to help more minority women-owned businesses increase their resiliency and uncover new opportunities to grow and thrive."

MCED will consist of the Benedict College WBC Rural Mobile Initiative and the Benedict College WBC Creative Entrepreneur Initiative.

The Benedict College WBC Rural Mobile Initiative will expand the reach of the Benedict College WBC in the cultivation of minority women owned business enterprises in becoming sustainable, economic engines for South Carolina and the nation. To build upon these innovative practices, MCED will provide critical business support in remote areas through the launch of the Benedict College WBC Mobile Unit funded by The Boeing Company. The state-of-the-art mobile office unit is scheduled to launch next spring and will be staffed with experienced business advisors. The unit will be equipped with seven computer training stations, smart boards and wi-fi access. The Benedict College WBC will continue its focused support of Benedict College WBC clients across the state using online tools and business development curriculum and trainings in emergency preparedness and recovery, bonding and contract readiness.

Also, to build upon the new programs, offered by Benedict College in the areas of music and entrepreneurship, the Benedict College WBC Creative Entrepreneur Initiative will support minority women visual and performing artists, authors, vocalist, musicians and other creative entrepreneurs. Through this collaboration, MCED will target and reach minority women entrepreneurs through two, six-week virtual sessions designed to develop clients understanding of business concepts and strategies, explain business models for artist-entrepreneurs and engage clients in discussions on creative funding, start-up, grants, sales and resource attainment. The first session is scheduled to start in February 2022.

The Benedict College Women's Business Center was launched September 2020, and is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. If you are a small business located in the MCED targeted area, please contact the BC WBC at 803-705-4641, or email the Center at info@bcwbc.org. To learn more about the services offered by the BC WBC, please visit www.bcwbc.org. About Benedict College Women's Business Center

The mission of the Benedict College Women's Business Center is to support economic prosperity for minority women and strengthen communities through entrepreneurial and financial education services that create and grow sustainable jobs and businesses across South Carolina. As a designated Women's Business Center by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the BC WBC is tasked with creating a gateway out of poverty for socially and economically disadvantaged women entrepreneurs by starting, growing and expanding their businesses. Services offered include one-on-one business consulting, education and training, business plan assistance, technical assistance, financial management, networking and contracting and certification preparation.

About the Truist Foundation

The Truist Foundation is committed to Truist Financial Corporation's, NYSE: TFC, purpose to inspire and build better lives and communities. Established in 2020, the foundation makes strategic investments in nonprofit organizations to help ensure the communities it serves have more opportunities for a better quality of life. The Truist Foundation's grants and activities focus on building career pathways to economic mobility and strengthening small businesses. Learn more at <u>Truist.com/</u>Foundation.

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FDTC HELPS FILL EMT SHORTAGE



The SGA takes a photo with FDTC President Dr. Jermaine Ford and South Carolina Technical College System President Tim Hardee.

Florence-Darlington Technical College was well represented at the SCTEA 2022 Annual Conference in Myrtle Beach. Congratulations to the FDTC winners:

Dr. Andre Boyd: FDTC administrator of the year

Angela Edwards: FDTC faculty of the year

Debra Lee: FDTC staff of the year

Student Government Association: 3rd-place for Student Community Involvement Project Award

Also, Dr. Mark Roth and Lauren Holland presented, "Avoiding Fumbles and Flat Footedness: Colleges' Responses to the Changing World of Work as we Know It," and Professor Rebecca Alexander presented, "Mind Mapping for Student Nurses."





Dr. Andre Boyd, FDTC administrator of the year

Angela Edwards, FDTC faculty of the year

FDTC RECEIVES \$100K GIFT



Florence-Darlington Technical College leaders accept more than \$10,000 worth of new tools from Harbor Freight for the college's Automotive Technology students. From left to right: Keith McKenzie, FDTC Automotive Technology instructor; Robby Roberson, Harbor Freight Distribution Center vice president of Workforce Development and Dr. Dan Averette, FDTC associate vice president for General and Technical Education.

Freight's Icon professional-grade tools. McKenzie said, "Our students will get to use tools they'll work with in their careers."

Robby Roberson, vice president of Workforce Development at the Dillon facility made the gift to the college's program, along with a new \$1,600 rolling toolbox to store the tools. Roberson called the gifts a pilot program for his company. He said his company is promoting the Automotive Technician programs supported at Harbor Freight. He also called the donations mutually beneficial to the company and to FDTC's Automotive Technology students.

The tools consist of Icon professional wrenches, socket drivers and other specialty tools used by technicians. Roberson also wants to offer a discount on professional tools for FDTC Automotive Technology students.

Dillon County's Harbor Freight has more than 4,000 employees at the distribution center. Harbor Freight is a family-owned parent company, headquartered in California, and it is one of the top tool distributors in the United States.

Florence-Darlington Technical College Automotive Technology students have plenty of new high-end tools thanks to the generous donation of \$10,000 worth of tools from Harbor Freight Distribution Center in Dillon County.

Debra Lee, FDTC

staff of the year

FDTC Automotive Technology Instructor Keith McKenzie said he's overwhelmed by the gifts that include Harbor



FDTC Corporate & Workforce Development students Unique McFarland, Lisa Marie Kiernan, James Michael Caltrider III and Brianna Hughes train loading patients into FDTC's Ambulance Simulator.

Florence-Darlington Technical College's Corporate & Workforce Development division has recently helped launch a new apprenticeship program that will help address the Emergency Medical Technician shortage in the Pee Dee region.

Over the next 10 years, the national job growth for EMTs is expected to grow from 11-15 percent, and FDTC hopes to contribute to the success in its service area that includes Florence, Darlington and Marion counties. The EMT program at FDTC consists of 240 hours, and a it prepares graduates for their national certification with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians.

"Florence-Darlington Technical College is eager to help its local EMT services fill the jobs that will better serve the Pee Dee region," said FDTC President Dr. Jermaine Ford. "One of the primary goals of the college is to fill the void in local industry so it is our duty to create programs that meet the community's needs. We are excited about the future of the EMT program."

Beginning March 14, Darlington County will launch their EMT apprenticeship program, and their students will have no out-of-pocket expenses thanks to a U.S. Department of Labor grant awarded to FDTC by Apprenticeship Carolina, a division of the South Carolina Technical College System.

"Darlington County is pleased to have a working partnership with Florence-Darlington Technical College to provide on-the-job training opportunities for individuals working to become Emergency Medical Services technicians," said Darlington County EMS Director, Kenny Bowen. "Through this partnership, individuals will have an opportunity to work with Darlington County EMS as they obtain their EMT certification. This partnership will assist Darlington County EMS to recruit, train and retain certified emergency medical services personnel."

Medshore Ambulance Service was the first local business to take advantage of EMT apprenticeships with FDTC. The company is already on its third cohort with FDTC, and so far, nearly 30 students have been educated through the program.

"We know that EMTs are essential workers, and we are excited that our college is a part of the solution to this critical workforce need," said Lauren Holland, FDTC associate vice president of Corporate and Workforce Development.

Dr. Mark Roth, vice president of the SiMT, added, "Our new ambulance simulator is another exciting component of our EMT instruction, and it will greatly enhance this program, and our associated apprenticeships."

FDTC recently installed a state-of-the-art ambulance simulator in the SiMT to help support the EMT program. Students will have the opportunity to simulate EMT scenarios with sophisticated mannequins inside of an ambulance setting. The simulation will help students learn how to load people in and out of an ambulance, and it will also help them get used to operating in a tight space during high-stress situations.

For more information, please email <u>Michael.Hatfield@fdtc.edu</u> or call FDTC Corporate & Workforce Development at (843) 413-2715.

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY RECEIVES GETTY IMAGES GRANT



ORANGEBURG - Claflin University announced it is one of four recipients of the inaugural Getty Images Photo Archive Grant for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, an initiative aimed at preserving and amplifying the invaluable visual history of HBCUs.

Funding from the grant will help digitize roughly 50,000 archival photographs from Claflin University's library, including stories about the Charleston Hospital Workers' Strike; the

Conference of Black Mayors Collection; and photos from Briggs v. Elliott, a case that paved the way for Brown vs. Board of Education. It will also expand Getty Images' collection of renowned photojournalists and Claflin alumnus Cecil Williams to include his personal library, which Williams will help curate. Jackson State, North Carolina Central University and Prairie View A&M University were also selected as recipients of the grant.

"We are enormously grateful to receive the Getty Images Photo Digitization Grant for Historically Black Colleges and Universities," said Claffin University President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack. "This partnership will help Claffin preserve its illustrious history in photographs, documenting the University's emergence as one of the nation's premier liberal arts universities. These images provide compelling visual narratives of how Claffin's dedicated and visionary administrators, distinguished faculty and staff and high-achieving scholars made indelible contributions to Orangeburg, the state of South Carolina and the world."

Launching today on <u>gettyimages.com</u>, the "Historically Black Colleges & Universities Collection" will see thousands of images added throughout 2022. Archivists and librarians from Claffin University will work alongside Getty Images' team of archivists and Adnet Global, a renowned post-production agency that specializes in the digitization, restoration and discoverability of visual analog historic libraries, in the photo digitization process.

"The Getty Images Photo Archive Grants for HBCUs were created to honor the vast history of HBCUs and their contribution to American history," said Cassandra Illidge, vp of Partnerships at Getty Images. We are committed to preserving the visual narrative of all cultures and communities to ensure these vital artifacts are accessible to storytellers around the world.

Claffin University will retain all copyright of its photos and once digitized, the historical content will be placed in a newly created stand-alone Getty Images photo collection dubbed the "HBCU Photo Collection," which will be made available for licensing in early 2022.

All revenue generated from the images that are preserved through the grants will be funneled back into impact programs: 50 percent will go to grant recipients; 30 percent of revenue will be used for a financial donation to a scholarship fund focused on furthering the education of students at HBCUs; and 20 percent will be reinvested to fund the Getty Images Photo Archive Grants for HBCUs each year.

The applications were judged by an esteemed panel which included:

• Dr. Deborah Willis, academic director, professor & chair at NYU Tisch School of the Arts

- Aba Blankson, chief marketing & communications officer at NAACP
- Dr. Tukufu Zuberi, professor of sociology The Lasry Family
- Professor of Race Relations at University of Pennsylvania
- Renata Cherlise, founder of <u>Blackarchives.co</u>
- Raina Kelley, vice president and editor in chief of The Undefeated
- Mercedes Cooper, vice president, Public Programming at ARRAY

The Getty Images Photo Archive Grants for HBCUs is part of Getty Images' commitment to anti-racism, inclusion and dismantling discrimination, including bringing to market unseen historical content and creating revenue streams for organizations working to build a more inclusive society. It is part of the company's wider grants program, which has donated over US\$1.8 million to photographers and videographers around the world since its inception.

About Getty Images:

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For company news and announcements, visit our Press Room. About Claffin University

Claffin University is a comprehensive institution of higher education affiliated with the United Methodist Church. A historically Black University founded in 1869, Claffin is dedicated to providing a student-centered, liberal arts education grounded in cutting-edge research, experiential learning, state-of-the art technology, community service and life-long personal and professional fulfillment. Claffin is a diverse and inclusive community of students, faculty, staff and administrators who work to cultivate practical wisdom, judgment, knowledge, skills and character needed for globally engaged citizenship and effective leadership. For more information, visit https://www.claffin.edu/ or call 1-800-922-1276

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY'S DEEPLY ROOTED COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE Originally published in Stories@Gilead



President Warmack walking with Claflin Students

Dr. Dwaun Warmack was just miles from the town of Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, when the police shooting death of teenager Mike Brown ignited unrest and sparked national debate about the relationship between the Black community and law enforcement.

At the time, Warmack was nearly a month into his new role as president of nearby Harris-Stowe State University. He says Brown's death was deeply felt by the campus community given that 40 percent of the students hailed from Ferguson. To help the community heal, learn and move forward, he made sure that all the ensuing conversations with police, municipalities, leaders and legislators were held on campus.

"We had a civic and moral responsibility to be the think tank to help the community heal," explains Warmack. "I don't believe social justice is an activity or event. It's who you are as a university. It's in the DNA."

Today, he's the president of Claflin University in South Carolina,

CLAFLIN CONTD

one of the nation's top 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities, where his longstanding commitment to social justice aligns with the university's foundation. He explains how Claffin, which opened in 1869, was founded on basic social justice principles and became the first institution in the country to award a degree to a woman of any race or background.

Soon after joining Claffin in 2019, the university established the Center for Social Justice, which is supported by Gilead's Racial Equity Community Impact Fund. He views the Center for Social Justice as a vehicle for transforming attitudes and thinking about race while also reshaping systems that have historically disadvantaged Black communities. The center currently conducts diversity, equity and inclusion training for police departments, civic governments and corporations around the country. It's also focused on health disparities, conducting research on why Black people suffer disproportionately from conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and most recently, COVID-19.

"Blacks are dying at a higher rate than anyone else of COVID-19, but COVID is not racist," Warmack says. Rather, Blacks are impacted by a range of socioeconomic factors such as lack of access to quality health care, he explains. To help remedy the problem, Claffin is forming a partnership with a major healthcare company to provide telehealth services to rural communities in South Carolina using a home-based technology. The goal is to develop a model that can be adapted for use throughout the state.

Early last year, the center launched a Pathways from Prison education program, in which some 100 incarcerated individuals in South Carolina are working toward their college degrees. Warmack understands the value that education brings as he had to fight against prevailing social forces to become the first member of his family to go to college. His grandmother was a sharecropper, and his father was incarcerated when he was a child. His mother, who raised him and four other siblings, had limited schooling but recognized the importance of education and preached that it was, "the great equalizer."

While he admits he wasn't the best student in high school, Warmack was fortunate to have a guardian angel and mentors who believed in him and showed him the way, even guiding him through the process of applying for college financial aid.

"I am unapologetic about mentoring young people," he exclaims. "It's our mission to academically, personally, socially and spiritually develop students."

Warmack notes that HBCUs have been fundamental to building a class of Black professionals in the United States. Though HBCUs represent fewer than three percent of colleges and universities in the country, they produce 23 percent of the country's Black graduates. Some 40 percent of Black individuals with STEM, science, technology, engineering and mathematics, degrees were educated at HBCUs, and 70 percent of Black dentists and doctors practicing today attended HBCUs. He says these colleges and universities succeed by creating a nurturing environment that takes a holistic approach to educating students.

"At HBCUs, no matter how you come in, you are much better when you get out," he says. "It's important that our students have real impact, to create a more just society for all."

Claffin University was awarded \$525,000 from Gilead Sciences, Inc. to support initiatives and programs conducted by the University's new Center for Social Justice.

Claffin received the grant from the company's Racial Equity Community Impact Fund. The University was selected because of its recognition as a high-impact organization that is working to tackle racial inequities affecting Black communities across the United States.

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A NEW BEGINNING HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER OPENS IN FLORENCE

by Glaceria Brown Mason



The Center that Serves the Whole Body, Mind and Soul

When we think of wellness, we should think of the whole body. The way we think about and care for our bodies plays a vital role in our overall health and wellness. To attain better health, we often think of traditional medicine. While there is a place for traditional medicine, we can also consider other avenues of wellness by incorporating a holistic approach to health. For the believer, the apostle Paul tells us, ".... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit," therefore, how are we treating our temple?

Established in 2017, A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center was founded with the purpose of helping those looking for alternative ways to improve their health. Founder and Owner, Dr. Diane Chapman opened the Center to support the community in adopting and maintaining healthy holistic lifestyles. Her unique approach is based on the science that the blood and the quality of the water we drink are the foundation of one's health. An outspoken health advocate, Chapman, has been championing the cause of wellness for many years. Her college years were dedicated to the study of chemistry and biology. A board-certified respiratory therapist, certified hydration specialist, certified



Founder, Dr. Diane Jones Chapman, D.Div,PSc.D,CNM, Doctor of Pastoral Science

nutritional microscopist and alternative health practitioner, Chapman received her Doctor of Divinity degree from Sola Scriptura Bible Institute and her pastoral provider license from the Pastoral Medical Association. Chapman has found the benefits of treating the whole body through her biblebased practice, education, training and life experiences. She works closely with a team of professionals to

provide services that assist clients in adopting and maintaining a healthy holistic lifestyle. A governing Board of Directors provides oversight and assesses the overall direction and strategy of A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center. Chapman has invested her time as a board member for health-based organizations, including the McLeod Hospital Foundation and the American Heart Association. She is one of the founding members of Jack and Jill of America, Florence Chapter. Chapman recently accepted serving on the UNCF Pee Dee Area Leadership Council.



Dr. Diane Jones Chapman

In my recent conversation with Chapman, I was immediately struck by her warmth, her belief and passion for what she does, and her unwavering enthusiasm to help others attain a level of wellness. "We are only as healthy as our cells," says Chapman. A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center promotes wellness through proper hydration. The late Dr. Linus Pauling, a brilliant

chemist, and recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, among other notable achievements, is known for discovering the cause of sickle cell anemia. Pauling said, "you can trace every sickness, every disease, and every ailment to a mineral deficiency." Chapman told me, "The body needs minerals. Water is the key, but not just water, mineralized alkaline water. Water is life to the blood! It supplies and maintains every part of the body with vital nutrients and oxygen. Proper alkaline hydration, hydrates the body on a cellular level." Chapman has a goal of hydrating 2 percent of the U.S. population one family at a time.

You might be asking yourself what holistic health is and what these therapies do. You may or may not have even heard of any or all of them. Holistic health is an approach to life that considers multidimensional aspects of wellness. It encourages one to recognize the whole person, physical, mental, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual. Strides in holistic health have brought us to understand the different paths available to explore for our health. A New Beginning offers professional health and wellness services in a therapeutic, private and serene environment. The services at A New Beginning include, Bemer Therapy, foot detox therapy, medical massage therapy, microscopy, red light contour therapy and weight loss management. Nutritional supplements, stem cell supplements and mineralized alkaline water sachets are also available. Let's take a closer look at the therapies offered.

Bemer Therapy

A post magnetic device that gets the blood flowing through the capillaries and the micro vessels in the body. The therapy improves circulation, relieves stress and increases nutrient and oxygen supply.

Foot Detox Therapy



Did you know that the most prominent pores in the body are in the feet? The medical foot detox device opens the pores in the bottom of the feet to potentially remove toxins. Clients

receive this noninvasive therapy in the comfort of a massage chair.

40

COVER STORY: A NEW BEGINNING

A NEW BEGINNING CONT'D

Medical Massage Therapy

Soft to medium tissue massage therapy. This therapy is for relaxation and medically moving lymphatic tissue in the body.

Microscopy (Blood Analysis)



Live and dried blood analysis reveals health and lifestyle choices, helps to detect nutritional deficiencies, toxins, parasites, bacteria and more.

Live blood analysis – also known as live blood cell analysis, nutritional microscopy or sometimes darkfield microscopy and biological terrain assessment - is fundamentally the analysis of living blood under an extremely powerful microscope connected to a camera and monitor. Live blood testing enables us to see your blood exactly as it behaves inside your body, giving a clear picture of your health at a cellular level.

Looking at the dry blood is called the mycotoxic oxidative stress test, which looks for free radical damage, the acid wastes of parasites and bacteria and where they are settling in the body, causing stress to those areas. By finding out how effectively your blood dries, we can get an idea of your overall health.

Mineralized Alkaline Water Sachets



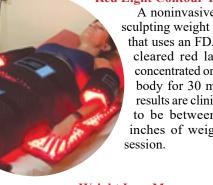
Mineralized alkaline water supports weight loss, reduces inflammation and improves hydration. It supercharges the cells with five electrolytes and over 70 organic trace minerals. The tasteless sachet, dropped into a bottle of water, infuses the water with trace minerals and transforms the pH of regular bottled water to a 9.9 pH.

Nutritional and Stem Cell Supplements

Nutritional supplements offered to clients include multivitamins. probiotics and enzymes. The stem cell supplements enhance cell regeneration for the body's overall wellbeing. Adult stem cells are at the core of the body's self-repairing mechanism. As the body identifies aging or dying cells, adult stem cells are released from bone marrow and used to replace those cells by

literally morphing into whatever cell your body needs to optimize your tissues and organs. Shortly after the age of 20, the bioavailability of these supercells begins to dwindle as they find it more difficult to exit your bone marrow.

Red Light Contour Therapy



A noninvasive light body sculpting weight loss therapy that uses an FDA medically cleared red laser device, concentrated on areas of the body for 30 minutes. The results are clinically proven to be between, 1 - 2.49inches of weight loss per

Weight Loss Management

Weight loss management therapy includes one-on-one consultation about weight management goals, meal planning and physical activity training.



Ronnie Webb lost....over 100 lbs..... and kept it off!!

Chapman is passionate and untiring in her efforts to help others improve their health and level of wellness. When speaking about the success of clients she and her team have had the privilege to serve, she says, "the ideal client has health on their mind and cares about their well-being." Chapman goes on to say, "the ideal client is also one with an attitude of awareness about the healthiness of one's diet and lifestyle, who is healthconscious and understands that health is wealth." A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center offers some of the safest, most affordable, advanced naturally based healthcare services and supplementation available. "We empower our clients through education and assist them in balancing their bodies."

Chapman and her family have been Florence residents for over 35 years and are members of Mount Zion AME Church in Florence, SC, where Reverend Merritt B. Graves is the pastor. She is married to Ron Chapman. They have two sons, Gregory and Evan.

A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center is a place for holistic health and wellness. Clients do not need a referral to visit or receive services. Services can be performed individually but work better if done in synergy. The center accepts all major credit and flexible spending plan cards. For more information, personalized consultation or evaluation, contact Mobile office: 843-621-0194 or visit www.anewbeginninghealthandwellness. com. A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center, 1354 Celebration Boulevard in Florence, SC, is open M-F from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. by appointment only.

Let's get started with A New Beginning Health and Wellness Center.

"By the yard, it is hard, but inch by inch, everything is a cinch." -John Bytheway

CHASING SUB 20 Submitted by Jack Harrington



Jack Harrington won Mr. West Florence and Fan Favorite

Since I can remember, I have been chasing goals. As a person with autism, my journey has been different than most of the kids I know. From my diagnosis at age three, I faced several challenges. I attended speech for language delay, but I was considered gifted, in academics. Socially, I enjoyed being around other kids, but struggled to make friends. There wasn't as much research 15 years ago, and I didn't fit into the typical box of someone with autism spectrum disorder.

Having high functioning autism was tough, but it has also given me some advantages, as well. In elementary school, making good grades was easy, while making friends was hard. I wanted to connect, but just didn't know how to relate to my peers. When I was in kindergarten, I met my first friends, Holden and Bette. Bette was the calm one, while Holden was the one who liked to get into trouble with his own shenanigans. Having friends that, got, me was one of the best things that ever happened. It gave me a feeling that I belonged, and school wasn't as lonely. As I got older, things began to change. Bette and Holden went to different middle schools, and I found myself in a new place, where I knew how different I was from others in my class.

Middle school was very challenging. Things that came easy to others, were difficult for me. Knowing when kids were joking around versus making fun, was hard to figure out. There were few options for kids like me in our area, so my mom decided to enroll me in a virtual school called SC Connections. During this time, I learned a lot about myself. I definitely prefer to be in a real classroom, and virtual school was not a good fit for me. I realized how much I missed being around others, even if it could be hard, or make me anxious. Having friends and being social became even more important to me, and I made a goal to show my parents I could handle being back in a public school. Luckily, they gave me a chance, and enrolled me at West Florence High School for my sophomore year. For me to stay, I had to make good grades, feel safe and be actively involved in some type of school activity or sport. I was on a recreational cross-country team for two seasons when I was younger, so I thought I would enjoy running for West Florence. They have a competitive program, and you had to try out to be on the team. To qualify, you had to run a 5K in 24 minutes or less. I really wanted to be on the team, so I practiced, and on the day of tryouts, I came in at 23:48.



Jack with Coach Wideman, West Florence Cross Country coach, after receiving Athletic Performance of the Year for West Florence

I was never considered the best at cross-country. Most of my teammates had been running for years, and I was coming in as a sophomore that only ran a few seasons in middle school. I was always put on the junior varsity team. It was tough to be a senior that never had the chance to run in a varsity spot, but I attended every practice and did my best for my team. Running wasn't something I really loved, but the friends I made meant a lot to me, so the hard stuff was worth it. I wanted to be a part of a team and



Jack is a member of the West Florence Cross Country and Track teams

since 1986. I wanted to be on that list. At the start of my senior year, my best time was 22:42. Each meet, I tried to run faster, and beat the clock.

Sometimes I came close, and sometimes I didn't. October 26, was the last meet of my high school career. We made regionals and traveled to North Myrtle Beach, where I would run my last race. I have never been so anxious before a meet. I knew this was my last chance to make Sub 20. My whole life has been a series of goals that I have worked for and achieved. Most were academic, so those were easier to obtain. But there were some, like getting my driver's license and getting involved at school, that were hard, but I did it. Knowing everyone else was pulling for me, made me want it more than anything else. The gun went off, and I don't remember much else. I finished that race with a time of 19.58 and made the Sub 20 list.

This year has been filled with some amazing moments. The faculty of West Florence awarded me with The Shining Knight Award for exemplifying character and kindness. I was chosen to represent the Girls' Cross-Country Team for Mr. West Florence, and won first place and fan favorite out of 29 contestants. Last Sunday, I received the Individual Performance of the Year Award during the Fall Athletic Banquet. There was a time I never dared to dream for moments like that.

Chasing a Sub 20 is the theme of my life, and acceptance to Clemson University would be my biggest Sub 20, yet. It has been my dream to attend Clemson University since I was a kid. I knew getting in would be tough, but I worked hard, applied and put the rest in God's hands. On February 10, I received my acceptance letter.

I have no idea what the future holds, but I'll keep chasing my dreams. My wish is that all people of all abilities are valued, and that they see the value in themselves. We aren't defined by a diagnosis, but by the difference we make in this world.

Go chase your own Sub 20, never hold back and dare to dream BIG!



spend time with the friends I made, so I showed up, every day. There are not any regional titles with my name listed, but there were moments that I'll never forget. This season, I helped the junior varsity team get a perfect score, twice. It felt good to truly contribute to something and not be the kid with accommodations. There are not accommodations in cross-country, and I did it on my own.

Being a new runner on one of the best teams in the region wasn't easy. There were times when I felt like I would never be good enough or, one of the guys. Then, I found out about the SUB 20 Club. This is a list of all the runners from West Florence to run a 5K in under 20 minutes,

AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP SPREADS AWARENESS by Anna Bowman



HARTSVILLE – Coretta Bailey, like so many parents, are unaware that their child has autism. She would learn that not only was her five-year-old son diagnosed with autism, but her two daughters were also autistic. And like so many parents she blamed herself. "When I first found out that my three children had autism, I started crying and blaming myself. I felt like my world was crumbling all around me. I kept asking myself, 'Why me?' I was completely numb for a while." She had to learn as much as she could about autism to ensure the best education for her children.

Bailey began educating herself, studying books and researching reputable websites about autism. She received pertinent information from the SC Autism Society and the Autism Division in Florence, SC. But there was still so much about autism she had to learn. She learned autism is known as a spectrum disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience. Bailey would learn that each of her children were diagnosed with different variations of the spectrum.

It's been 14 years since her son and daughters were diagnosed with autism and she is amazed at how much the school system has grown to recognize the educational and emotional needs of children with autism. When her son, age five, and youngest daughter, age eight, were diagnosed, there was a lot of information about autism being introduced in the school system. Unfortunately, her oldest daughter, diagnosed at 18-years old, primarily went undetected as autistic, and struggled to graduate.

As her younger children continued to thrive in the school system, she desired a support system for families with autistic children. Bailey realized that parents were going through similar things that she was experiencing, blaming themselves for their children's diagnosis, struggling with guilt, crying, bouts with depression and a feeling of numbness, she recalled. Not able to find the resources she felt she needed for her family, she took matters into her own hands and sought answers to her questions.

In 2008, Bailey, along with another parent, co-founded the Darlington County Autism Support Group in Darlington County. "My children inspired me to start this group," she said. "We need support and sometimes the best support is from people who are going through or experiencing the things you're going through," she specified. Autism is a struggle not only for the individual diagnosed, but for the entire family. "Let's not forget about the siblings," she said, adding, "There are some children that have other illnesses alongside their autism diagnosis, which was the issue with my family."

Bailey, who presides as president of the Darlington County Autism Group, which is a 501(c) 3 organization, stated that the mission of the organization is to provide a positive environment for parents/caregivers of persons with an autism spectrum disorder and the individual themselves to meet, share experiences, provide training, become better educated and gain support from each other within the community. The organization is guided by a nine-member board and offers support and training to families and individuals affected by autism. The organization, located at 2300 East Home Avenue, Hartsville,

SC, also offers camps for participants to enjoy, share experiences and network. The organization has partnered with other organizations, Autism Division in Florence, SC, and SC Autism Society, to talk with family members and provide additional training sessions at schools.

Everyone has their own, normal, she emphasized, doing what is best for their family, acknowledged Bailey. She is extremely proud that the Darlington County Autism Support Group can provide support for families, regardless of whether they are residents of Darlington County. "We want to continue to spread awareness about autism throughout the communities in hope to gain understanding and acceptance. The autism community needs acceptance – both from themselves and, more crucially, from society at large - to thrive. There is not one way to be autistic; autism can present in many ways. Acceptance can lead to greater support, which is necessary for autistic people to reach their full potential."

SM AWARENESS MONTH

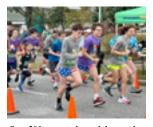
Families are invited to view upcoming events via the organization's Facebook page or contact a board member: Coretta Bailey (843) 307-3386 or Wendy Stokes at (843) 307-4179, and James, JMAC, Easterling at (843) 861-6530. The Darlington County Autism Support Group board members include Ann Easterling, Priscilla Smith, James Easterling, Wendy Stokes, Melissa Shumate, Estelle Covington and Allison Rowe.

Coretta and her husband, Barron Bailey, who also sits on the board of the Darlington County Autism Support Group, enjoy spending time with family and friends. She also enjoys cooking and helping others.



PACING 4 PIECES CELEBRATES A DECADE

Submitted by All 4 Autism



Over 200 runners braved the weather to run and show support for the ASD Community

Despite the unfavorable conditions, Pacing 4 Pieces pressed on and held the tenth Anniversary event March 12, as originally planned. While the heavy rains and high winds brought a smaller crowd than expected, over 200 of the 450 people registered, still braved the weather and participated in the 5K and half marathon to show their love and support of the ASD community.

The purpose of Pacing 4 Pieces is to

"Our goal is to provide

support and resources to the

under-served in our community.

Our programs are free and easily

accessible to those in need. We

understand the obstacles that

families encounter as they try to

navigate services for their loved

ones that are affected by ASD

or other deficits. We want to

raise awareness and inclusion for those with autism, and their families. Proceeds from the event are used to fund All 4 Autism, and the Autism Resource Center of the Pee Dee. All 4 Autism opened the resource center in April of 2017, which is still the first and only resource center in our region. The services provided by All 4 Autism are free and open to the public. Many of the programs offered are beneficial to any individual with a disability, and not exclusive to autism.



A team of family and friends helping to raise awareness for their loved one with autism

create a community of inclusion and appreciation for ALL atypical individuals, regardless of their diagnosis." Jessica Brown, executive director of All 4 Autism.

The newest addition to Pacing 4 Pieces was the Battle of the Teams. Local high schools competed to win bragging rights and take home the trophy for best overall time. West Florence, South Florence, Wilson and Trinity Collegiate all competed, with West Florence coming in first place.



West Florence High School takes home bragging rights and trophy for first place in "Battle of the Teams

"We at West were so excited to participate in Pacing 4 Pieces! It was a great opportunity to bring awareness to an important cause and teach student-athletes about the importance of giving back to the community. We can't wait to run again, next year," said Greg Johnson, athletic director for West Florence High School.

The success of this year's event was crucial. In addition to expanding their services, All 4 Autism has relocated into a new building, which they hope to purchase before the end of the year. This summer, they will offer a dance and music therapy program and resume face-to-face support events. To accommodate these programs, they needed a specific layout. After a year of searching for the right space, they found a building that met their needs. The proceeds from Pacing 4 Pieces will help fund the purchase, along with money raised from a capital campaign that will be announced in early April.

About ALL 4 AUTISM

The mission of All 4 Autism is to increase awareness, resources and support for those of all ages with autism spectrum disorder in the Pee Dee Region, and their families. For information on our program visit us www. all4autism.org.

Contact Us: info@all4autism.org, 843-472-5215

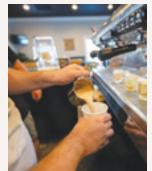
HOW COFFEE HELPS AUTISTIC ADULTS

Submitted by Mallory Laravie, educational director for SOS Care



Liam Pope pumping flavored syrup for a new coffee order

disabilities. SOS Care and Sonar Productions recognize the growing need for employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the Grand Strand. With a solid vision and business plan, the Bean Dreaming coffee truck was developed. Bean Dreaming will be a coffee truck coming to the Grand Strand area, employing adults with Autism and Intellectual Disorders.



Future Bean Dreaming Volunteer learning how to make espresso shots

CONWAY - About 50,000 individuals with autism spectrum disorder will turn 18 years old each year (Burke et al., 2020). With that number rising, 85 percent of adults with ASD are either unemployed or underemployed Employment program doubles employment for autistic youth 2021.

SOS Care, a non-profit in the Grand Strand, leads with the mission to answer the call for help when individuals or families are facing the challenges of autism and intellectual

The mission for Bean Dreaming

is to empower individuals with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities by creating employment opportunities that lead to independence. SOS Care and Sonar Productions has teamed up with a local coffee shop, Rustic Roast, to produce the most efficient and streamlined employment experience for adults with disabilities to gain the skills needed to obtain employment within the community. The equipment on the truck, operating procedures and menu items had been developed by team members who are

experts in the field of disability employment and coffee products to encourage the most efficient learning experiences for the new baristas. Baristas on the Bean Dreaming coffee truck will complete the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Servsafe certification course, Horry County Schools Adult Education classroom training targeted to the skills needed for the coffee truck, as well as a hands-on training experience to become an effective employee of Bean Dreaming.

Bean Dreaming will be coming to the Grand Strand in 2022, with the hopes to serve the community some of the best coffee and a smile from our Baristas that are working to become more independent. Follow us on social media for the most up to date information regarding the launch of the Bean Dreaming coffee truck! Facebook: Bean Dreaming, beandreaming843; Instagram: @ beandreaming843.

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THE TRAUMA OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Submitted by the Naomi Project



All over the world, many individuals of all genders are dealing with sexual assault trauma and April is the month we recognize that struggle and are in the fight to end it internationally. From world famous and rich folks, to the poorest of the poor, this assault is common. The fight goes on publically and legally, for those reported, but because many are depressed and are suffering with heavy anxiety due to this crime.

This is the story of Liz and how she first faced sexual assault as a teenager. As a pretty virgin, she was still determined to keep her promise to her God, her mom and herself, that she would uphold her Christian value of celibacy until marriage. Unfortunately, her resolve was soon to be tested. She had just turned 16 when she fell into the hands of evil men while on a Christmas vacation with Monica, her older sister. Monica lived in the big city, hours away from their parents' village home with Auntie Joy.

One evening, Monica asked Liz and their aunt Joy, to go with her to fetch a Christmas tree branch that she had arranged to pick up from a guy not too far from her downtown apartment. Their country at that time, was under military dictatorship, so Liz didn't feel it right to go out in evening when the streets were empty due to the curfew imposed by the military regime. Her intuition told her, Monica's idea of going out at that time was not a safe move at all, but she felt compelled to honor her sister Monica a do what she had requested. A psychologist would say Liz went right against her own discerning judgment. Furthermore, the back road they were to use to get the branch was one of the kind of areas where criminals thrived. Her fears to bump into some armed soldiers, which were a common phenomenon in their society, were quickly realized when, as they dragged the branch along the road past a basement parking garage used by top Military Officers. At that point, three armed guards hollered at the girls to stop, turn around, and come to the gate. The girls thought of turning a deaf ear and continue with their walk, but the soldiers cocked their guns, threatening to fire at them. Invariably, the young women knew the worst was getting ready to happen. They knew that they had to accept to be raped or to be killed. In that country, it was common for men to be killed for not giving cash or anything valuable when stopped. Also, it was common for women to be raped and even killed by soldiers. Knowing this, the girls braced themselves for the worst to happen. They were ordered to run into the parking garage and each soldier grabbed and shoved them into vehicles.

As Liz had never known a man before, she was more shocked and traumatized than the other women and was screaming out what she knew could help her and that was the word, "Jesus Jesus!" Her assaulter was desperately trying to shut her up by beating her, while he pulled on her panties with one hand, and with the other he was pushing his AK 47-gun barrel into her side, threatening to shoot her. As she just kept screaming into in his face, the other criminals panicked and demanded him to muffle her so that an officer driving into the parking garage shouldn't hear her and they'd get punished. Indeed, it wasn't long before an officer drove into the parking garage but luckily for them, one of their partners in crime had managed to finish raping the auntie, slapped and sent her away and gone back to guarding the gate. Liz heard the driver and stopped shouting because she figured officers and lower rank soldiers were all of the same mindset. So, she thought to herself, "I'll make matters worse if I attract this driver's attention, who will only take me away from the rapist to himself; perhaps he could take me for a wife and never to be seen again by my family." It was common in that country. Those officers grabbed free wives from parents under all kinds of circumstances. The gun was their power.

The guy who was by now so exasperated, attempting to rape Liz just had to let her go, of course extremely disappointed in his failure to pull Lisa's panties off. The Lord had made her too strong for this abuser and so she ran to her sister and aunt who were anxiously waiting for her on the street. When she narrated this story to Monica and Joy, being the youngest girl, they thought this was a miracle of Jesus who Liz believed in. How could such a slim, 120-pound girl could be so much stronger than a soldier who was driven by adrenalin? He threatened to shoot her, but then he just couldn't and after the long struggle, he gave up, sweating profusely and let her go free. She runs out to the street, finding the other two waiting for her. They walked home quietly taking their tree branch home and decorating it for Christmas the following day. Early morning, Monica took Liz to a gynecologist for checkup and treatment in case of any infection from the rape. Liz however assured her sister that she had not been raped. Her sister still could not believe it, but the gynecologist confirmed Liz's claim thus allaying everyone's fears. In military dictatorship, there's nowhere one can go to report sexual assault or rape, so the matter became a buried secret between the three of them and Liz had to deal with the trauma all her life. There were yet other attempted and completed rape cases in her life which went unreported and today Liz literally has a problem relating in a healthy manner to men. Even though she later got married, most intimacy attempts in her marriage appeared to her to be rape attempts and today she's divorced. Her faith still holds and keeps her mentally strong.

Psychologists have concluded that children who experienced trauma sometimes struggle to learn the same boundaries and behaviors that others take for granted and that many people with childhood trauma later question their relationship patterns, asking, "Is this normal?" Thankfully, Liz has chosen to go through therapy. She definitely understands that she does not have to be a victim, knows she is highly valued and recognizes the power of listening of her intuition, so she does not have to get herself into codependency and vulnerable situations anymore.



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AVOIDING ONLINE PREDATORS: KNOW THE FACTS by Adalia Ellis



Shana Sullivan

EXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONT

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month. Every year for the month of April, individuals and organizations are laser focused on educating the public on the critical aspects of sexual assault to prevent occurrences. This year, the National Sexual Violence Resource Center is asking organizations to raise awareness about the role that online spaces play in facilitating sexual assault. The campaign, Building Safe Online Spaces, encourages the public to learn about and look for online

communities that revolve around respect, inclusion and safety. Shana Sullivan, manager of the Community Victim Services Volunteer Program and Victim Advocate for the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Assault, provides a wealth of information that I encourage our readers to share and have conversations with their loved ones as well as any community members they come in contact with.

Sullivan supports victims of online predators on a regular basis and as a result, has amassed a depth of knowledge that is essential to protecting ourselves and our loved ones. "I unfortunately see the effects and the victims of online predators on a regular basis. My role with the organization can be summed up in two words, victim advocate. Through community outreach, speaking engagements, court and hospital accompaniment and crisis intervention, I, along with amazing volunteers I recruit are able to bring awareness and advocacy to those affected by domestic and sexual assault."

"I have found that people seem to be more relaxed online, openly sharing their most intimate details about themselves. If everyone online had great intentions, it would be of no concern to me. Unfortunately that world does not exist, especially not in cyberspace. It has been shown, since the beginning of time, predators exploit power imbalances in society such as demographic factors; age, race, language, faith, disabilities, legal status, immigration, history of crime, dependency and leadership roles in work, school and communities and this is true of online predators as well."

To best understand online predators, you have to know what they do to draw people in online. Sullivan says,

"Online predators or aggressors have many opportunities to connect with unsuspecting victims and draw them in. Any site, game, app or platform that allows one person to communicate with another can and will be used to lure victims. They choose these online areas because; they can gain access without drawing too much attention. Once a connection has been made, the online predator seeks to begin grooming, a time where the predator is seeking to lower the person's inhibitions, or heighten their curiosity about sex, with the ultimate goal being to meet that person and assault them. Online predators are becoming increasingly clever about how they contact people and as technology advances, so do the predators' efforts. Social networking sites and gaming platforms are designed for communication and many allow the sharing of personal information, providing online predators with an endless supply of potential victims. In a 2021 article released by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, it was reported that there are 500,000 online predators active on any given day. Children between the ages of 12 and 15 are especially susceptible to be groomed or manipulated by adults they meet online. The article also shed light on the term, sextortion; a growing trend for online predators and one of the most concerning for the F.B.I. Online predators convince their target to send explicit images of themselves to the predator and in turn these images are used to blackmail the victim into sending more

images and videos.

Predators can take weeks, months and even years grooming their victims, often pretending to be the age of the victim or slightly older. In actuality, the person behind the screen is typically two to three times their age. Predators use this time to make their potential victims feel loved and comfortable, by providing affection, kindness and /or sending gifts. Predators will be up to date on the latest music, lingo, social media platforms and other hot topics in an effort to maintain their online persona."

It is important to know that there are red flags to be aware of to know if a predator has been grooming someone, especially young people. Sullivan lays out specific things to pay attention to, red flags may present themselves as normal teenage/adolescent behavior. It is the duty of the responsible adults to pay attention to the subtle signs and act. The main thing to remember is to not paint the red flags white, if a parent feels something is off with their child, they should act immediately. A few red flags to watch for include:

• Finding nude images or pornography on a child's computer. Online predators may send pornographic images first to 'normalize' their requests for pictures.

• Finding sexualized search results in a child's search history online

- A child engaging online with people they don't know personally.
- A child using sexualized language.

• A child spending an increasing and/or an excessive amount of time online.

• A child receiving unexplained gifts, money transfer apps are common.

• A child is displaying mood changes, hyperactive, secretive, hostile, aggressive, impatient, resentful, anxious, withdrawn and depressed.

• A child is excessively secretive about their communication on these devices.

• A child has people on their "friends' list" that parents do not know and the child has never met offline."

The first line of defense for children and teens when it comes to online safety are their parents. The reality is that the internet is here to stay. In the same way that teens learn road safety before driving, it is important to have conversations about online safety. For parents, Sullivan gives the following advice,

"The most effective way parents can educate their children about online safety is to educate themselves first. Parents have to be as proactive as possible to stay abreast of the methods predators are using in order to reach and prey on their children. Before parents purchase the latest and greatest new device, they need to have a better understanding of just what it is they are bringing into their home and the potential dangers they are allowing into their family's lives. Parents have open and honest conversations with their children. They have to discuss in depth the potential dangers of the internet; it's hard to avoid something that you don't know exists. Set limitations on the amount of time your child spends interacting online and monitor their actions. It's ok to lose cool points if you're protecting them. Parents have to be their kids' safety net."

Parents, are you feeling overwhelmed by the potential threat the internet presents? You are not alone in protecting our youngest and most vulnerable. The Pee Dee Coalition and especially our schools, are allies in this effort. Sullivan outlines tools and interventions for parents and schools to implement,

"The first line of defense in protecting young people using the internet is to express the true weight of responsibility of having any interaction online. If parents are going to allow the usage and schools

AVOIDING ONLINE CONT'D

require it, they must equip the children with the tools to operate in cyberspace safely and responsibly. Talking to kids about posting online content, the importance of privacy settings, and the dangers of disclosing personal information are vital to online safety. Predators are known to target kids who post revealing photos, divulge past abuse or unstable home life, and/or engage in sexual talk online.

Outside of educating kids about online safety, adults can ensure that the chat features are disabled in apps, kids put devices away at night and parental control apps like Bark are installed. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, two out of ten children between the ages of eight and 11 are aware of the issues and are concerned that strangers may find out information about them. And while using social media, 40 percent of children remove privacy settings in order to attract more friends or followers. Parents and schools have to instill and enforce safe, responsible internet usage expectations for young people, follow through with real, meaningful consequences when those expectations are not met, and most importantly stay consistent with their efforts because the predators will."

Though we have spent a lot of time focusing on young people, adults are also targets of online predators. Sullivan explains, "Adults are potential targets of online predators. People are seeking companionship, someone to talk to, especially since the onset of Covid-19. People need people and predators have taken full advantage of this. Adults are interacting online socially more than ever and that leaves them just as susceptible to predatory acts as young people. Online dating apps have been in the news with reports of sexual assaults by people they met online. Sextortion is also very prevalent with adults as well, considering most have more than their reputation at stake if the predator acts on their threat."

As stated earlier, the internet is here to stay. Just as it can have a negative impact it can also have a positive one. The keys are education, open conversations, consistency and accountability.

MULTI-FACETED LICENSED COUNSELOR OFFERS EAR AND ADVICE by Angela Crosland



COLUMBIA - It's rarely as serious as students outstretched on the chaise lounge for the Director of Counseling and Self-Development at Benedict College, Dr. Charlene Moore-Peterson. In fact, she doesn't even have the proverbial counselor's couch in her office. What she does possess is the absolute trust of her students who only ask for a few things - confidentiality, objectivity and an empathetic ear. "They know that my office is a "no

Dr. Charlene Moore-Peterson

judgement zone," said Moore-Peterson. "They know they are talking to me in a confidential and comfortable environment."

She reassures her clients, which are primarily students that licensed counselors by law, cannot share anything they disclose unless it will bring harm to them or someone else. Years of training have taught Moore-Peterson that students will only share when they know they are in a safe space to do so.

Her training includes a Doctor of Education in counseling psychology from Argosy University in Phoenix, AZ.; a Master of Education in counseling and psychology from Troy University in Troy, AL.; and a bachelor's in child development from Claffin University in Orangeburg, S.C. Moore-Peterson holds a professional counselor licensure in both South Carolina and Georgia. Additionally, she serves as the state representative, coordinator and spokesperson for Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.'s Domestic Violence Initiative.

As the Director of Counseling and Self-Development at Benedict College, it is Moore-Peterson's job to promote the personal development and psychological well-being of students. It's a role with which she is all too familiar, having previously worked as a career specialist and homebound coordinator in Aiken County Public Schools.

In her role as coordinator of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc.'s Domestic Violence Initiative, she is responsible for providing customized training and necessary resources to combat intimate partner violence within its membership and throughout the state.

It would appear that the path for Moore-Peterson was already etched based on the progression of her education and ultimate work experience but according to her, that was not the case.

"When I was growing up, I wanted to become a nurse," said Moore-Peterson. "However, I went into the education field and became a teacher."

The field of education was what others thought she should do and though Moore-Peterson believed there was some truth to the assertion, she knew there was more. Her family has a history steeped in healthcare and that piqued her interest.

"I have cousins that are in the mental health field, and I loved how they helped individuals with mental illness," she said.

That is why Moore-Peterson decided to become a licensed professional counselor, while also teaching psychology at Aiken Technical College - becoming all of who she is.

Peterson said since she entered the field there have been huge strides of progression but there is still a ways to go in dispelling the cultural stigma associated with mental health.

"Talk openly about mental health and educate yourself as well as others about mental health," said Moore-Peterson. "Be honest about treatment and discuss to choose power over shame."

As for domestic abuse, Moore-Peterson cites the following myths as hindrances to combating that problem.

- It's easy for a victim to leave their abuser.
- Victims provoke their partner's violence.
- Domestic violence is a private family matter.

Domestic violence is an impulse control or anger management problem.

Peterson said that according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, from 2016-2018, the number of intimate partner violence victimizations in the United States increased 42.7 percent. In South Carolina, 42.3 percent of women and 29.2 percent of men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner sexual violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes. In 2019, 36 women and 6 men were victims of domestic violence homicide, while 78.5 percent of these homicides were committed with firearms.

Domestic violence and counseling are what Moore-Peterson deals with on a daily basis in both her roles. Her advice concerning them is to seek help.

For assistance, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673.

SURVIVING IS STRENGTH by Jennifer Robinson



Eric Daniels

When you see the word maleness or masculinity, what comes to mind? Do you see a muscular man lifting heavy bales of hay on a truck on a farm in Wyoming? Or do you see a superhero saving a woman from the dangers of a robbery? Does the picture of a fireman running in to rescue two children from a fire on the second story of an apartment building? All those examples have often been associated with how the world sees strong male behavior. The notion that men are not weak, they do not cry, nor do they allow themselves

to be vulnerable is toxic because men's experiences are not monolithic.

These portraits of masculinity are the reason men who are victims of sexual trauma find difficulty reporting to law enforcement or disclosing to friends or family. Men often are stigmatized based on behaviors that are considered dangerous or threatening to others. Eric Daniels, a community leader in Lake City, SC, understands the feeling of being outcast because of the inability to communicate the pain of years of sexual abuse. Eric is a survivor of childhood sexual trauma, but he has not allowed himself to be a labeled a victim. He has strong family support and gives voice to his pain as an accomplished painter. He said he chose to share his story of surviving abuse now because "he wants to shed light, open eyes and bring awareness to this dreadful, heartless act of violence on children and kids." Eric also added, "Parents should look for telltale signs that someone is preying or have already preyed upon your child in the most evil way possible. In a way that even counseling can't erase. If I can, I want to somehow bring hope that the sun will always shine again. We must try to pick up the pieces and continue to live through this and be victorious in our quest."

Eric's story is not uncommon. According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, "about one in four male victims of completed or attempted rape first experienced it between the ages of 11 and 17. Over half, 52.4 percent, of male victims report being raped by an acquaintance and 15.1 percent by a stranger." Eric said he can cope with and express his feelings about the tragic experiences through painting. "Through my paintings, poems, various works of art, meditation and music I create, Eric stated, "I stay involved with the community and city that live in. I have several projects that are always family-oriented and kid-friendly and provides a safe atmosphere for children to have fun and learn." He said he was also able to "pull himself up out of a very dark place by his relationship with God." "That dark place, Eric said, consumed me for years." His mother and family friend, Ms. Lillie Katherine always told him that he had talent for art. They reminded him the talent was a gift from God and what he did with his talent was a gift back to God and to the world. He expressed that his art reflects grace and peace in the midst of brokenness, and he projects hope and beauty with the colors he chooses to tell his story.

Even though Eric is active in his community, he says he stays mostly to himself. When he does engage with people, he said he talks mostly to his mom, sister, a close cousin, his brothers, nieces, some associates and his best friend of about forty years. Eric said his niece, Samantha, is always there for him with no judgement. She allows him to be silly and goofy, behavior he missed having as a child. He can enjoy being silly and goofy now because he was not happy enough as a child to experience those childhood behaviors due to being abused. Eric says he disclosed his abuse to his mother and school guidance counselor. He acknowledges his mom as his biggest supporter. It wasn't until recent years that he shared his story with Harriett Rose, a local advocate from the crisis agency, Pee Dee Coalition. He began working with her to create workshops and classes teaching appropriate and inappropriate contact called Good Touch Bad Touch to children and their parents.

Eric's healing journey has him in a good place. He says, because sexual abuse is still occurring in schools, churches, daycares and homes, it's time to use his voice to fight for other victims. He doesn't want to use his voice to cry for the little boy inside him, but he wants to free him to help others and be the man he was born to be.

For more information or assistance, contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline, 24/7 at 1-800-656-4673.

THE INNOCENT SURVIVING SEXUAL

ABUSE Submitted by Joyce Ford, executive director Naomi Project



Tears rolled down my cheeks, and anger swelled in my chest. The results of the HIV test for an 11-year-old girl who had been brought to the children's home came back positive. Sexual abuse was one of the reasons she had been taken from her family and placed with us. I did not

know when the abuse started or how many times, she had been subject to such horrific treatment. Did it matter? Once was enough. No, once was too much.

I recount the story of this precious girl, but several children, both girls and boys, at the home shared similar stories. Their shared experience often has common effects. Shame, guilt and a sense of low self-worth are just a few of the consequences survivors face. Frequently, they act out sexually or become sexually promiscuous based on the belief that they have lost their innocence and are already ruined.

How can we offer hope and bring healing to these survivors? Wise words from a college counseling professor ring clear in my mind, "She didn't lose her innocence. She was innocent in the abuse." Don't get me wrong, survivors of sexual abuse do suffer loss. But if you are a survivor of sexual abuse, you are not the one who committed a shameful act against someone else. You are not the guilty party. You are innocent. You are a marvelous, beautiful creation. If you are a survivor of sexual abuse, do not be ashamed to speak up. There is hope for healing. You could very well be the one who offers hope to someone else. And if you know someone who has been sexually abused, you can be the voice for the innocent. We all have a part to play to break the cycle of suffering and bring healing to the hurting.

The Naomi Project is committed to educating the community about abuse. We are available for workshops, health fairs, and presentations at schools, churches and social clubs. Please contact us if you are interested in having someone speak to your group. We can be reached at (843) 615-1548 or by email at <u>naomiproject06@</u>.

XUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONT

A STORY OF HOPE & HEALING Submitted by Alice Curry Gallego, outreach coordinator at the CARE House of the Pee Dee



Will anyone believe me? How will my parents react if I tell them? Will I have anywhere to stay? Will my family be safe? Will they still love me? These are only a few of the thousands of questions Diyanie asked herself regularly throughout childhood and adolescence. Diyanie was sexually abused by

a family member beginning at age 10 and like many situations of abuse, her abuser used fear, coercion and manipulation to keep her from sharing the truth.

Diyanie, who had once enjoyed wearing pretty dresses and trying out new hairstyles, began to wear very loose-fitting clothing, including sweatshirts and pants even in the heat of the summer, and her hygiene and grades began to suffer. "I did everything I could to seem less desirable," Diyanie explained. "Anything girly was out the window."

Until one night, looking across the street from her bedroom window into the room where so much of the abuse had taken place, Diyanie found the courage to share with her mother what had happened. "My mom could tell that something was wrong," Diyanie shared. "I was so scared that I couldn't speak, but I picked up my journal and wrote the words 'he touched me." Her mother's support in that moment helped Diyanie to take the next steps in processing and healing from her trauma. "I knew in that moment that everything he told me was a lie."

With the support of her mother, and after a report to law enforcement, Diyanie was referred to the CARE House of the Pee Dee, a nationally accredited children's advocacy center, for investigative and supportive services. She received a non-leading forensic interview facilitated by staff specifically trained to reduce re-traumatization and was connected with a child & family advocate who provided support throughout the lengthy legal process. Through evidence supported, trauma informed therapy from a CARE House licensed therapist, Diyanie began to heal from the trauma of abuse. "The support is never over," Diyanie shared. "They came to court with me and to medical exams. They always checked in on me and my mom and worked around my schedule for therapy. My trial ended in 2019 and they are still checking in on me. They will fight for you."

Following an extensive trial, Diyanie's abuser was found guilty and received a 12-year sentence for his crimes. While not all legal cases have this same outcome, Diyanie wants others to know that there is hope. "He didn't stop my show or steal my light. He may have dimmed it for a short time, but my story did not end there. I can write the rest of my own story." Since coming forward, Diyanie has graduated high school, become a state certified phlebotomist and is currently pursuing a nursing degree at Florence Darlington Technical College. Additionally, she has become a fierce advocate not only for victims of abuse, but for mental health in general, utilizing Snap Chat and other social media to provide encouragement, promote mental health services and fight to reduce stigma. "It's time to stop sweeping child abuse under the rug," Diyanie stated. "It can lead to even more future issues if you don't get the support you need."

Diyanie is committed to telling her story, as she puts it, "from the mountain top" because she wants other survivors to know that they are not alone and that those lies they may have been told by others, and maybe even themselves, about their worth are just that, lies. "You are not dirty. You are not broken. You are not less human. These things are not true."

The CARE House of the Pee Dee is a children's advocacy center with a mission to promote help, hope and healing to child abuse victims and their families in a nurturing environment through investigative and support services. CARE House is located at 1920 Second Loop Road in Florence, South Carolina. For more information visit us at <u>www.thecarehouse.com</u> or contact us at 843-629-0236.

"You are not dirty. You are not broken. You are not less human. These things are not true."

DIYANIE Abuse Survivor

1920 Second Loop Rd 843.629.0236 www.thecarehouse.com



Child Abuse Prevention Month

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION REQUIRES: COLLABORATION, EDUCATION, A VOICE AND ACTION

by Adalia Ellis



Michelle Brewton-Smith, Marion County Services coordinator

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month which is a time to give targeted focus on raising awareness of the dangers of child abuse as well as ways to prevent it in our communities. This year the focus is on the collective responsibility of the community with the theme, Growing a Better Tomorrow for All Children, Together. Michelle Brewton-Smith, the Marion County Services coordinator, for the Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic & Sexual Assault, provides

community education and awareness on the issues of domestic/ sexual violence and program services. She plans and implements county activities for special awareness months that include, child abuse prevention, sexual assault and domestic violence awareness. She is responsible for the provision of services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and their families to include victim assistance, advocacy, hospital and court accompaniment, information and referrals. She provides or arranges follow-up services to victims and their families. She has over 28 years working with the South Carolina and North Carolina Department of Social Services.

The community working together to prevent child abuse is an integral part of prevention and there are many ways individuals, community organizations and educational spaces can work together. Brewton-Smith outlines two approaches.

"One way the community can work together to prevent child abuse is receiving education on what is and is not abuse. I believe that if the community is educated more on the signs of abuse/ neglect, then they become more empowered and confident to intervene by the way of making a call to the Department of Social Services or to their local law enforcement."

"Another way is that they need to know that it is ok to speak up when they see a child being physically, sexually and emotionally abused, or being witnesses of domestic violence. A lot of individuals feel that it is not their place to intervene, but we want them to know that it is not just their place, but their responsibility to intervene for the sake of the children. As a mother, I know the frustrations of raising a child alone, but the community should be there to help seek the available resources needed to alleviate the stressors from that parent and therefore reducing the risk of the child being subjected to abuse. When the community becomes the voice for the children and stands in aid of the parents, then this gives the child an opportunity to live a healthier life, free of abuse and neglect."

As with any societal issue, there is never just one factor that contributes to the problem. When communities understand this, the protagonists in the community can find ways to address the contributing factors. Brewton-Smith points out three factors that facilitate the abuse or neglect of a child.

"One issue is that a lot of parents that abuse their children have been victims of some form of physical and/or sexual abuse themselves. They have learned this behavior and believe that what they are doing to their child is ok, because they have experienced it as a child, as well as their parents may have experienced it. That is why it is so important that the family receives the appropriate resources to break the generational cycle of abuse.

Another issue is that people do not want to speak up. They fear retaliation or being singled out as a snitch. Some people feel that they may not be making a difference but making things worse for the child. Individuals feel that spiritually, the bible says to, 'spare the rod and spoil the child.' Although the bible speaks this, it still means discipline and not abuse.

Lastly, I feel it is an issue that some people may not know the differences between discipline and actual abuse. Unfortunately, this should never be the case when a child's life is hanging in the balance. It is never ok to not speak up. As we want people to know for Durant Children's Center's April awareness month that our theme for child abuse prevention month is #It's Your Business. So be the change agent you would like to see in a child's life."

For parents who may be struggling with abuse they experienced as a child and/or are having a difficult time with parenting, you are not alone. Brewton-Smith shares resources and tools that are available, "Here at the Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Assault, a part of the United Way, our mission is dedicated to the reduction of sexual assault, family violence and child abuse and to the needs of victims. Through the Durant Children's Center, one of the Coalition's programs, and in partnership with Child help National Child Abuse Hotline, the Pee Dee Parent Helpline was launched. The Pee Dee Parent Helpline is a free 24/7 service that consists of certified counselors that provide information, resources and emotional support to individuals in the Pee Dee area and across the state. We have three ways a person can connect with counselors. They can connect through telephone, at 843-618-2420; it offers a text-based chat service for South Carolina residents at 843-305-6755 and an online chat service at www.durantchildrencenter.org.

DCC also offers a parent education parent support group that is a 12-week parenting program designed to build families by assisting parents in developing caring and positive relationships with their children. The first hour is designed to include conversations about self-care, communication skills, Adverse Childhood Experiences, parental styles, five protective factors, domestic violence and mental health. A person can make a selfreferral or referrals can be received from DSS to the Durant Children's Center to Director Sharon Woodham, at 843-580-6511, ext. 1046."

Sometimes, despite all the support that is available to parents, children are still abused. It is at times like this that it is critical for the community to protect the child while also not causing more harm. The crucial time is from when a community member becomes aware of the abuse, reports the abuse and the actions taken immediately after. Understanding the process that is set off after a report is filed, is important and Brewton-Smith describes this process, "You can support this child by trusting the process to work. When you call DSS or your local law enforcement, they will make a referral to one of our child advocacy centers at Durant Children's Center. When a referral of abuse and/or neglect is made to the DCC, a forensic interview is conducted by one of our certified forensic interviewers whose primary purpose is to determine facts about the alleged abuse. These interviews are recorded, and individuals involved in the investigative process,

Child Abuse Prevention Month

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION CONT'D

like DSS, law enforcement, school officials, etc. may observe the interviews through a one-way mirror and utilize an earbud to speak with the interviewer if clarification is needed.

DCC then provides a comprehensive health care evaluation for children suspected of having been physically or sexually abused. A qualified advanced practice registered nurse or a physician who has specialized training provides this detailed forensic evaluation.

A family advocate is assigned to the child and seeks to identify specific needs of the family that can be addressed or coordinated through referrals to other Pee Dee Coalition programs or to other community agencies. The advocate works to remove barriers and help families navigate the system.

The advocate will assist the family in receiving traumainformed therapy and counseling that may be provided on or offsite for children and their non-offending parents, individually and in a group setting. The therapist, either an LISW or LPC, has the training and experience required to help abused children heal from the emotional damages of the trauma they have experienced.

Lastly as an integral component of the Child Advocacy Center's services, DCC under the leadership of the Center's Program Director, Gloria McClary, meet monthly with community professionals through the multidisciplinary team meeting to review and staff the children's cases. The case review begins with information provided by the center's forensic interviewers and medical staff. Sharing of critical information enables all professionals involved in the review process to make an informed case determination and to provide for the protection and treatment of the child and his/her family. Members of the MDT may include representatives from, the Department of Social Services, Law Enforcement, Solicitor's Office, Guardian ad Litem, Medical and Mental Health, Durant Children's Center and the Pee Dee Coalition's staff."

At the core of community responsibility to all children is that adults see all children as their own. That abuse to even one child, breaks their heart and leads them to act. Critical to this collective belief is being aware and educated about what abuse looks like, how to involve agencies best positioned to help the whole family and not cause further harm. A community that cares about all children is one of the most powerful ways to protect all children together.

KNOW THE RED FLAG INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE by Adalia Ellis

BENNETTSVILLE -

Becoming aware of all of the

factors that play a role in the abuse

of children is an important way

to prevent it from happening and

to act when abuse does happen.

Sharon Woodham is the Parenting

Program director for the Pee Dee

Coalition in Bennettsville SC. She

has a Bachelor of Social Work

degree from Limestone College,

Gaffney SC., and almost sixteen

years of experience working with

child abuse and neglect.



Sharon Woodham

Woodham identifies a number of red flags that indicate a child is being abused, "Abuse in children resembles a child holding anger for long periods of time or aggressive behavior with others, children who appear unhappy, children whose developmental stage is delayed, including poor weight gain, a child who does not dress properly for weather and/or is severely unkempt and lacks medical attention, a child who may have little energy, even to cry, a child who does not play with toys or is withdrawn, a child who displays sexual actions with others/objects and a child who displays anxiety and depression are all indicators of abuse." When she considers the parents, she has served who live at or below the poverty line, occurrences of abuse can happen. Food, job and housing scarcity, lack of transportation and lack of ability to manage these stressors can lead to the abuse or neglect of children. This is why it is so important for the community to not only be able to see that a child is being abused but is also concerned with the well-being of the parents.

One resource Woodham has utilized in her service is, Stewards of Children, an abuse prevention training program offered by the organization, Darkness to Light, "I believe the best way to intervene if someone sees evidence of child abuse, is to take actions you have never taken before such as, talking with your children about boundaries, redirect an adult who's, crossing a child's boundary and above all make an actual report to law enforcement."

Children who have been abused carry trauma that will stay with them well into adulthood. It is for this reason that further harm must be avoided once abuse is confirmed or reported. Woodham says, "If a child is unfortunately abused, no one should victimize them again by yelling at them to repeat details of the incident, over and over again; instead, offer them your support, make sure they understand that no matter what has happened, they can share with you without fear of being blamed."

In her service to parents, she focuses on, strength based educational sessions from, Strengthen Families, and Nurturing Parents curriculum which allows parents to learn more effective styles of parenting. They learn non-corporal disciplinary techniques, develop clear and effective communication skills and identify personal feeling, struggles and how they affect children. Woodham also presents lessons that will allow them to increase their knowledge of ages and stages of child development in order to better meet the children's physical, social and emotional needs as well as acknowledging the personal need for self-care.

For children in pre-K-sixth grade, she teaches, "basic safety skills and rules for protective action in all types of dangerous situations. We explore examples of both safe and unsafe touches, and what the child should do to remain safe if he/she received an unsafe/unwanted touch that made them feel uncomfortable. This personal safety curriculum teaches children to recognize, resist and report unsafe behaviors; regardless of that person's relationship to the child."

When preparing presentations for children and/or parents, her goal is to bring awareness to a community of people that will prevent child abuse and neglect. If parents or teenagers would like to receive more information, the Durant Children's Center, in partnership with the Pee Dee Parent Helpline, the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline: CALL 843-618-2420; TEXT 843-305-6755; CHAT DURANTCHILDRENCENTER.ORG. or reach Woodham via email at swoodham@peedeecoail.org or by phone: 843-580-6511 ext.1046.

ALCOHOL AND NUTRITION! Submitted by Iris McDuffie, registered dietitian nutrition



Alcohol Awareness Month

April is National Alcohol Awareness Month and the focus for this year is increasing awareness about alcohol abuse and dependency before it becomes serious. Alcohol awareness became a social movement in the 1800s to brand alcohol consumption. In the 1920s, a ban on the manufacturing, sale and consumption of alcohol was issued. Due to the illegal trade of alcohol, this led to the cancellation of the

prohibition law. Hence the rise in alcoholism developed. As a result of this timeline, National Alcohol Awareness Month was created. The awareness of alcohol stirred conversations about alcohol abuse. As result from the abuse of alcohol many lives were impacted by this habit.

Fast forward, COVID-19 created a whole new bottle of beers! During the pandemic, liquor stores were deemed essential businesses that were allowed to remain open. Other changes that spiked alcohol sales included local businesses making this product easily accessible. One might say this was an opportunity for improvement in the economy, however it created a bigger public health concern.

Why is National Alcohol Awareness month so important? It's important because alcohol can damage your liver cells and ultimately increase your risk of cirrhosis of the liver. Cirrhosis causes the normal liver cells to form hard fibrous scar tissue resulting from overconsumption of alcohol. The scarring of tissue in the liver severely weakens the liver function and can affect other organs such as the heart and kidneys.

Alcohol has a significant effect on the body and is easily abused. Nutritionally speaking, alcohol has the following effects on the body: Significant Effects on the Body

Alcohol and weight changes - Individuals who drink heavily often eat poorly and therefore lose weight. This weight loss is due to a limited supply of essential nutrients and the inability of the body to properly digest, metabolize, store, utilize and excrete nutrients. Simply put, adding moderate amounts of alcohol in place of an adequate diet causes weight loss.

Alcohol and overeating - While some individuals may be prone to weight loss, alcohol consumption for others can have a reverse effect. Alcohol can cause weight gain due to its high calorie and sugar content. In a nutshell, the result is weight gain.

Alcohol and malnutrition - Alcohol consumption can lead to malnutrition. Malnutrition sets in when the body uses alcohol to replace essential nutrients. When this happens, the process of



Each drink above is an example of one standard drink (or one all

metabolism, storage and absorption is interrupted resulting in nutrient deficit.

Heart problems and alcohol - Heart problems can develop from unhealthy lifestyle habits. Unhealthy lifestyles to consider include smoking, high cholesterol levels, physical inactivity and alcohol use. Limiting your alcohol intake can help lower your risk of heart disease, decrease triglyceride levels and over all protect your heart.

Brain disorders and alcohol - Alcohol can literally strip the body of a specific B-complex vitamin known as thiamine. Thiamine is required for neurological function and is essential for converting the foods we eat into energy for the body. Thiamin deficiency causes inflammation of the digestive tract making it difficult for the body to absorb vitamins. Individuals with an alcoholic addiction tend to have poor dietary habits thus creating an opportunity for malnutrition related to nutrient deficiency.

Recent studies indicate that men consume more alcohol than women. However, the effects of alcohol are much different for women than men. Alcohol affects women differently due to the enzyme known as alcohol dehydrogenase that breaks down alcohol before it reaches the blood stream. Women have less of the enzyme dehydrogenase. Therefore, one drink for a woman is equivalent to two drinks for a man. So, what is a serving size of alcohol for men compared to women? I am glad you asked. Moderate use of alcohol for healthy individuals is up to one drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men. From a dietary perspective, alcohol provides no nutritional value, hence the term "empty calories." In simple terms, this translates to alcohol contains lots of calories. There are seven calories per gram which is 78 percent of the calories found in one gram of fat.

A recipe for good nutrition includes a balanced diet, physical activity and moderate consumption of alcohol. Do your part by preserving your liver, heart, brain and the risk of malnutrition. Moderate consumption or no alcohol at all. It's your health-you be the judge! Chow!

DON'T LET UNDERAGE DRINKING RUIN YOUR PROM

Submitted by Erica Buffkin, prevention specialist II



This spring ushers in brighter days for our community as we slowly begin to return to some sense of normalcy. With COVID-19 restrictions declining, many teens have renewed dreams of their high school years being full of traditional and memorable events including Prom Night and Spring Break. While we share in the exuberance of these events, we also want to bring awareness to the danger associated with underage drinking.

Erica Buffkin

Though alcohol use in teens has

declined, during the pandemic, alcohol remains the number one drug of choice for teens. Statewide, nearly 50 percent of high school students will consume alcohol at some point during their high school years. In addition, according to a brief presented by The Journal of Adolescent Health, one in six parents allowed their children to drink during the shutdown. Research also shows that many young people are participating in the growing epidemic of binge drinking, which causes the blood alcohol content level to rise to dangerous levels. Those that participate in this activity are

DON'T LET CONT'D

more likely to be involved in risky behaviors.

Some of the health risks and consequences of underage drinking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, include:

School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades.Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in

youth activities. • Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting

• Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.

- Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.
- Physical and sexual assault.
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide.

• Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls and drowning.

- Misuse of other drugs.
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.
- Death from alcohol poisoning.

To minimize the potential dangers and consequences involved with underage drinking during prom season, Circle Park Behavioral Health Services and the Florence County Coalition for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention, along with local law enforcement agencies have joined forces to support the Don't Let Underage Drinking Ruin Your Prom campaign. This campaign emphasizes the illegality of persons under the age of 21 purchasing, possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages.

In an effort to address and minimize these potential incidences in our community, the Twelfth Judicial Circuit Alcohol Enforcement Team, a multi-jurisdictional team of various agencies throughout Florence and Marion Counties, will be utilizing a series of enforcement activities during prom nights that may include:

• Source Investigations – AET members will be utilizing their resources to identify the source of alcohol that is being possessed or consumed by underage youth at prom activities. Those found to be providing alcohol to minors will be charged and prosecuted.

• Party Patrols – AET members will be patrolling neighborhoods, rural areas, bonfire sites, etc. where before and after prom parties may be taking place.

• Parking Lot Patrols – AET members will patrol parking lots of local establishments and locations where prom activities may be occurring to ensure that underage alcohol possession and consumption is not taking place.

• Restaurant Walk-Throughs – AET members will be visible making walk throughs at local restaurants popular with prom goers and interacting with them to ensure that they understand the importance of having an alcohol-free prom night.

• Compliance Checks – AET members will be checking local establishments to ensure that alcohol is not making it into the hands of underage consumers.

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

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

DON'T LET UNDERAGE DRINKING RUIN YOUR PROM.



www.circlepark.com

Funded through a Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (SABG) Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplement Appropriations Act of 2021 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), CFDA Number 93.959 FAIN - B08TI083544

WHEN ONE MORE BECOMES ONE TOO MANY

Submitted by Brandi Shepherd, ADSAP coordinator at Rubicon Family Counseling Services



HARTSVILLE - Alcohol Awareness Month is a time for all of us to reflect on our drinking patterns and the part alcohol plays in our lives. With alcohol being the third leading cause of preventable death in the nation, we could all use some tips on how to lower our risk for an alcohol use disorder and alcohol related problems.

What Is Low-Risk Drinking?

Drink Responsibly. We've all seen that disclaimer on ads for alcohol, but what does it actually mean?

The Department of Health and Human Services decided that these standards were too vague and thus created the 0, 1, 2, 3 low-risk guidelines based on decades of research. The guidelines are as follow:

0 – At certain times and in certain places, zero is the only lowrisk choice consistent with laws and policies for everyone. For example, it's against company policy to drink at work. In addition, anyone who is pregnant, might be pregnant, underage, on medication or has certain medical conditions is not recommended to drink at all. Anyone who is in recovery or has had trouble controlling the amount they drink should also not have any alcohol.

1 -One standard drink is the largest amount someone can have in an hour that will not increase their risk for alcohol-related problems.

2 – Research indicated that up to two standard drinks daily would be low risk for most people. This means that someone who has two drinks every day would still be at low risk for alcohol related problems.

3 - The most a person could drink on any one day that would be low risk is three standard drinks. This standard is used for nondaily use.

According to these standards, the most anyone can have is 14 drinks per week in order to stay at low risk for alcohol related problems. While we may hope this means that we could drink all 14 in one or two evenings, any time we have more than three drinks on any one day we increase our risk for AUD, legal problems, injuries and chronic health problems such as breast cancer.

What Counts as a Drink?

A standard drink is any drink that contains about 0.6 fluid ounces or 14 grams of pure alcohol. This is the same as having

- 12 ounces of beer 5 percent alcohol content
- 8 ounces of malt liquor -7 percent alcohol content
- 5 ounces of wine 12 percent alcohol content, or

• 1.5 ounces of 80 proof liquor or distilled spirits – 40 percent alcohol content

This does not mean that every drink at a bar or restaurant is equivalent to a standard drink. For instance, most bartenders make a pina colada with two shots of rum. So even though you may have ordered only the one pina colada, it counts as two standard servings of alcohol.

These guidelines also prove that beer and wine are not safer to drink than liquor or other forms of alcohol. A serving of beer or wine has the same amount of alcohol in it as a serving of liquor. Therefore, it's not the type of alcohol that affects a person, but the amount consumed.

How Do You Know If Drinking Has Become a Problem for You or a Loved One?

Alcohol becomes a problem when it impacts our lives in a negative way. If your alcohol use has changed the way you feel, the way you work, your ability to control yourself or the way you interact with others, it may be time to rethink the role alcohol plays in your life.

Alcohol Use Disorder can be diagnosed when someone has as little as two of the symptoms listed below. See if you recognize any of these symptoms in yourself or your loved ones.

In the past year, have you:

• Had times when you ended up drinking more, or longer, than you intended?

• More than once wanted to cut down or stop drinking, or tried to, but couldn't?

• Spent a lot of time drinking, being sick from drinking, getting over other aftereffects?

- Wanted a drink so badly you couldn't think of anything else?
- Found that drinking—or being sick from drinking—often



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interfered with taking care of your home or family? Or caused job troubles? Or school problems?

• Continued to drink even though it was causing trouble with your family or friends?

• Given up or cut back on activities that were important or interesting to you, or gave you pleasure, in order to drink?

• More than once gotten into situations while or after drinking that increased your chances of getting hurt, such as driving, swimming, using machinery, walking in a dangerous area or engaging in unsafe sexual behavior?

• Continued to drink even though it was making you feel depressed or anxious or adding to another health problem? Or after having had an alcohol-related memory blackout?

• Had to drink much more than you once did to get the effect you want? Or found that your usual number of drinks had much less effect than before?

• Found that when the effects of alcohol were wearing off, you had withdrawal symptoms, such as trouble sleeping, shakiness, restlessness, nausea, sweating, a racing heart, dysphoria feeling uneasy or unhappy, malaise - general sense of being unwell, feeling low or a seizure? Or sensed things that were not there?

The more symptoms you or a loved one has, the more urgent the need for change is. But don't worry. Even if you have symptoms, you can still reduce your risk for an AUD and alcohol-related consequences by following the low-risk guidelines stated above. What Should I Do if I Think I Might Have an AUD?

If you think you might have an AUD, don't panic. You don't have to face this condition alone. Rubicon Family Counseling Services is here to answer any questions you may have, provide you with treatment and connect you to other local agencies and healthcare providers that may help. Please give us a call at 843-332-4156.

MADD ABOUT INTOXICATED DRIVING

by Jennifer Robinson



COLUMBIA - One of the most important things to teenagers in social gatherings is that they like to get together and discuss school, social happenings and the latest trends. But, even with having activities to engage them like cellphones, tablets and games, sometimes they may want to explore things that will alleviate the boredom they may begin to feel the longer they hang out. Alcohol may be at their disposal and based on the circumstances of their environment and

Ashley Merrick

feelings, they may drink alcohol and become intoxicated. An intoxicated teen cannot make rational decisions so they may think that getting in their car or cars to go to another place to have fun, is fun. But what they do not realize is they are no longer having a casual day of teen activities. They have become potential criminals and the vehicles they drive are considered weapons.

When drivers get into their cars each day, they expect to get to their destinations safely. Many drivers use precaution and follow traffic lights and signs to ensure they will arrive without being harmed. Unfortunately, too many people have not arrived at their destinations safely because their travels turned tragic. People who get behind the wheel and drive intoxicated make dangerous and life threating decisions. Mothers Against Drunk Driving, reports that South Carolina had 315 drunk driving deaths in 2020. That's the tenth most in the nation, though we are twentythird in population. It was a 14 percent increase over 2019, even though driving in 2020, was down significantly. MADD also reports that there are 4,700 deaths each year in the U.S. due to underage drinking. In South Carolina, it's estimated that 85 South Carolinians under 21, die each year from alcohol use.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, was founded in 1980, by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, MADD is the nation's largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. One of the main areas of focus within the underage drinking prevention programs is to raise awareness to middle and high school teenagers about the dangers of underage drinking and riding in a car with an impaired driver. The most popular times of the year to bring awareness to students and their families are during prom time which is normally in April or May and Red Ribbon Week which is usually in October.

Merrick, program specialist for MADD South Carolina, travels throughout the state presenting their underage drinking prevention program information to students and parents. One of the reasons Merrick came to work with MADD was because she got the opportunity to impact the lives of young people. She said, she likes working with young people and giving them tools and resources to make good decisions. "Most of young people's choices are influenced by the people they are around," she said. Peer pressure and influence is one of the topics of discussion during her presentation with students. The presentation that Merrick uses is interactive and has a game show format to keep students engaged. Merrick has had the opportunity to speak to thousands of students around South Carolina. She finds their programs to be effective with teens and said, "After my presentations student will often approach me with a, thank you, or share their own personal experience of being impacted by underage drinking or impaired driving."

MADD partners with agencies and organizations all around the state such as churches, libraries, law enforcement, schools, mental health organizations, and behavioral health facilities. Merrick enjoys presenting at all the various organizations but recalls a time she presented at a school to middle school students. "After presenting to the entire middle school, I received a follow up email the next day from the school counselor explaining how impactful my presentation was to their students. The school counselor reported that several students came to their office to express concerns they have with themselves, friends, peers and even family members." Those are the moments that remind Merrick and MADD why they do what they do.

Although Merrick is passionate about her job and is effective in speaking to teenagers about the dangers of underage drinking and impaired driving, parents are the ones who have the greatest impact. Reports show that three in four teens say their parents are the leading influence on their decisions about drinking alcohol. One of the messages that MADD encourages is, it takes ongoing conversations with their children/teens about the consequences of underage drinking, drug abuse and impaired driving. Through research we have found that underage alcohol use puts teenagers at risk for alcohol dependency and they are more likely to be in an alcohol related crash. Parents, guardians or persons of influence, have an impact on the teen in your life and they are listening more than you may think they are. Take the time to have those important impactful conversations.

THE BYERLY FOUNDATION AND THE "HARTSVILLE" OF IT ALL Articles by Angela Crosland



HARTSVILLE - It's sometimes difficult to know just which initiatives in the Greater Hartsville area have garnered the support of the Byerly Foundation. Not because its impact isn't highly visible, but because the scope of the organization's assistance is so all-encompassing. The Foundation is widely known for taking an interest in the large and small concerns of those it serves.

The Foundation was created in 1995 with an educational focus in public education and economic development and began awarding grants in 1998. Social needs were added later and that involves myriad endeavors.

"Often people like to use the metric of what is the economic impact of the investments?," said The Byerly Foundations Executive Director Richard Puffer.

At The Byerly Foundation, Puffer said their metrics are based on how many visions have become reality throughout the Greater Hartsville area over the years of its existence.

Approximately \$900,000 of the more than \$22 million awarded by the Foundation since its inception was awarded in its last fiscal year.

"The Byerly Foundation has provided in excess of \$23 million in grants of cash or property over its existence, yet a case can be made that its role as a connector and catalyst for visions and actions might be the most important contribution," Puffer said.

In fact, the Foundation's role in joining in a pool of resources from multiple agencies over a number of years to remove the freight train headquarters from downtown Hartsville resulted in the establishment of the Governor's School for Math and Science in its current location.

"Leadership came from state, city, college and Foundation leaders to make that project happen," Puffer said. "This multiorganizational, multi-year effort was a collaboration that made a major difference."

Examples of some of the more recent educational and economic development grant awards include: a \$207,500 award for the renovation of the former Butler High School gym through a request made by the Butler Heritage Foundation; a multi-year grant for the startup and operations of Butler Academy, a charter school in Hartsville, which received \$275,000 this year; the establishment of a new nursing degree program at Coker University in the amount of \$300,000; a joint venture with the Sonoco Foundation to contribute \$100,000 each to support non-profit organizations experiencing hardship due to the pandemic and \$150,000 grant to the City of



Hartsville to fund mini loans/grants to Hartsville businesses.

A few examples of recent grant awards made by the Foundation involving the social needs within the area include: a \$50,000 grant to the Pee Dee Coalition against Domestic and Sexual Abuse to sustain the activities of the Hartsville Durant Children's Center; a \$20,000 grant to Trees for Tomorrow of Hartsville to help

Brianna Douglas

with the planting and maintenance of trees and a \$17,500 grant to the Free Medical Clinic to assist in its efforts to hire a nurse practitioner.

The Foundation finds its roots in the medical field, having been established through the sale of the Byerly Hospital in 1995. Its Board of Directors decided to sell the hospital to a for-profit hospital group because of a shift in the healthcare industry. The proceeds of the sale left the board with \$22 million and the need for a strategy on how to reinvest the funds to serve the Greater Hartsville area. The Board has invested the assets hoping that the gains will allow the Foundation to continue its grant-making for years to come.

"Over the decades, Hartsville citizens have built a "can-do" culture where they reach out beyond their natural groups and neighborhoods to join forces to make things happen for the larger community," Puffer said.

The Byerly Foundation has had a crucial role in continuing to help make connections happen, and he's been fortunate to have been a part for the past 22 years, Puffer added.

The Foundation is led by a volunteer Board of Trustees which include, Linda Weatherford, chair; Susan Henderson, secretary; Pat Youngblood, treasurer; Orville Dyce; Terence Hassler; Brandy Johnson; Corey Lewis; Roger Schrum; Chris Shirley and Lunella Williams.

"The Trustees cycle through with six-year terms and their major reason for serving is their pride of place - Hartsville, and how the Foundation gives them an opportunity to be involved with discussions on issues to help make a great community."

Recently, Brianna Douglas joined the Foundation as the associate executive director. She formerly chaired the Foundation and was most recently a vice president at Coker University.

Qualifying 501-C-3 organizations and other public or governmental entities or charities in the Greater Hartsville area are eligible to apply. For details about the process, go to www. byerlyfoundation.com. Grant requests may be made by emailing byerlyfdn@yahoo.com or by mailing to The Byerly Foundation, P.O. Box 1925, Hartsville, S.C. 29551.

THE BRUCE & LEE FOUNDATION'S INDELIBLE IMPACT



Bradlev Callicott

The vitality of any city, county or region begins with the quality of its facilities, specifically its urban centers. Florence, S.C. is home to the Drs. Bruce & Lee Foundation, which can easily be credited with shaping the city and certainly with making its downtown better.

Grants awarded since the Foundation's inception in February 1995, through December 2021, total more than \$143 million and its total assets have more than doubled, totaling approximately \$240 million today. When asked what he believes has been the Foundation's greatest contribution, founding executive director Bradley Callicott said, "Well, it would have to be where the greatest concentration of our grants have gone - downtown, but that's not the whole story."

The construction of branch libraries throughout the county, healthcare and educational facilities, cultural centers, theaters and the list could go on and on of the structures the Foundation has, through strategic partnerships, either constructed, enhanced or expanded. Characterized by its support of, brick and mortar, projects throughout the county, the Foundation has made the likes of Irby, Dargan and Evans Streets, a field of dreams for nearly every industry sector.

THE BRUCE & LEE FOUNDATION'S CONT'D

True to the findings of economic development studies nationwide, an investment in downtown is a wise one. The Foundation's and its public sector partners' investments in Florence's revitalization has resulted in the creation of jobs, an increase in property values and have proven to be a major draw for tourists. It has been a greater than 25-year process, said Callicott.

"We didn't have the capital to do all of these things right out of the box," said Callicott. "It took a little time, and we were fortunate and prudent and made some good choices."

Just as the, if you build it, they will come, approach has breathed life into once underdeveloped spots of downtown Florence the Foundation's support of cultural and human service organizations for decades now has been quite substantial.

"We've served nearly every sector of the population through strategic partnerships with non-profit organizations and with local and state governments," said Callicott.

A few examples of the Foundation's reach include its support of Harvest Hope Food Bank, the Manna House's soup kitchen and emergency food pantry and the general support of the Boys and Girls Club and the Salvation Army Empty Stocking Fund.

The man whose responsibility it has been to administer the Foundation from the beginning, Callicott reckons that he was, at the right place, at the right time, to land a position which affords him the opportunity to proactively engage the needs around him.

With no website, and virtually no marketing or fund raising the Foundation, through its endowment, has made an indelible mark on the fabric of the Pee Dee and its plans for the future are a "continuation of the geographic and programmatic focus" followed from the beginning, according to Callicott.

The process for acquiring a grant from the Foundation begins

with a phone call to the office followed up with a letter of inquiry as described in its Grant Guidelines.

"Our grantmaking decision process can be described as competitive and interactive," said Callicott. "A preliminary telephone discussion of a grant idea in the first instance will inevitably result in an initial proposal, which is better focused and more in tune with the Foundation's stated mission."

The two-to-three-page letter of inquiry should include:

• A copy of the applicant's IRS exemption letter confirming its 501(c)3 status.

- A brief statement of the applicant's needs for funding.
- A project description including total funding required.
- How the project relates to the Foundation's program goals.
- The applicant's ability to realize the proposed project and to sustain it in the future.

• The preliminary project budget, including all other sources of funding.

Specific program/project objectives and how they will be measured.
A description of the constituency who will benefit from and/or be interested in the project; and

• A description of how the applicant will engage its constituency.

Applicants are typically notified within 90 days of the Foundation's level of interest. Additional information may be requested at that time.

Proposals are accepted throughout the year and are reviewed and processed on a rolling basis. If a proposal is appropriate and complete, it will be scheduled for the Foundation's Grants Committee to review. The Foundation's Board will consider grant proposals reported by its Grants Committee on a semi-annual basis, usually in April and November.

EMBRACING A PASSION FOR VOLUNTEERING THROUGH SINGING by Anna Bowman



HARTSVILLE – At the age of 24, Anisha Green has accomplished more in her young life, than most people have dreamt about pursuing in their entire lifetime. Her first love, without a doubt, is music. In fact, her mother, Paula Wise, said her daughter began singing at the tender age of two. Her love of music has allowed her to share her talent by singing for various organizations and church events in her hometown and surrounding areas.

Green fell in love with volunteering

Anisha Green after observing her mother passionately volunteering in their community as she grew up. "She has always had a giving heart and spirit. I can remember as a child we would secretly tape dollar bills to items we felt were "essential" like pampers, baby wipes, baby formulas," she revealed. "My mother's love of volunteering helped to solidify my passion for engaging in my community."

She has volunteered to sing or participate in events for organizations such as, the NAACP, the Boys and Girls Club and community events like the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration and the Butler Heritage Foundation. Green said she has several organizations in Hartsville that she enjoys volunteering, however, the Boys and Girls Club is her favorite. "I was a member of the Boys and Girls Club growing up and it really helped me grow and develop with various activities developed for youth. Being a part of the Boys and Girls club has enabled me to be around positive role models, helping to mold me into the individual I am today and to develop the ability/skills to bring people of all ages and different ethnicities together."

Green said that volunteering to help others has empowered her to learn new life skills. "I learned how to organize more efficiently, additionally I learned how to become a better active listener," she said, adding, "It's important to listen to the needs of all who are in the community." She currently participates and volunteers as a member of the Hartsville Peace Tribe, the Orangeburg NAACP Chapter, the Darlington County Democratic Women and the Gospel in the Park series Committee.

She encourages everyone to consider volunteering for an organization or event that piques their interest. "It's important for people to see how even the smallest gesture to someone in need could completely change their lives for the better. Volunteering is one of the keys to building and sustaining a better community for all. It's a great and rewarding feeling to just do something for someone else out of the kindness of your heart with no strings attached."

As she prepares to continue her dream of pursuing a career in the entertainment industry after graduating with a master's in music business and Entertainment, from the University of Miami Frost School of Music in May 2022, she plans to continue to incorporate volunteerism in her life.

Green, who was born in Charlotte, NC, is the daughter of Donnie and Paula Wise of Hartsville, SC. She is an accomplished singer, who can sing in six different languages, French, German, Italian, Latin, Spanish and Czech, and can play the piano and viola. The multiple talented songstress is a graduate of Claffin University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music. She hopes to utilize her talents to raise funds to help find a cure for Alzheimer's Disease.

TROY'S DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN & THE MIRROR OF MENTORING by Angela Crosland



Eric Troy & the Distinguished Gentlemen lining up for a group picture at Palmetto Middle school

MULLINS - Sometimes passion is revealed through hardship. Sometimes it surfaces through searching. In the life of Palmetto Middle School eighth grade social studies teacher Eric Troy, the start to fulfillment of passion began with a need.

A grant written in 2012, by Marion County School District's former Director of Secondary Instruction and Student Services Robert Small was designed to address the challenge of academic underperformance among black males at Palmetto Middle School. Troy, who is also Mullins High School's Varsity Men's Basketball head coach, and eighth grade math teacher Eugene Bellamy were chosen to lead the Distinguished Gentlemen. Their role was to guide students socially and academically toward better decision-making and optimal performance. After the first year of the grant, funding for the program was cut.

"Because the need was so great, the program continued with grassroots financial backing," said Troy.

Already walking the path of mentorship in his role as a coach and teacher, Troy's experience with the group over the past decade has given rise to his vision of creating a non-profit and expanding the services beyond the walls of the school, the district and even the state.

"Mentorship is the single-most effective means of producing positive change in a young person's life," Troy said. "A mentor understands that the sacrifices they make when it comes to time can mean the difference between a mentee doing actual time in a correctional facility or matriculating through their studies in an institution of higher education."

Not unlike many of the stories of the young men he mentors, Troy said, "he's faced many of the same challenges growing up in rural South Carolina."

"I share my life experiences with the mentees - the good and the bad," he said. "I do not hide, nor do I glamorize my mistakes or my successes. I find that mentees are more open to those they relate to the most, so I try to be as human as possible."

The human element isn't lost on the young men who travel throughout the region serving and interacting with people of varying ethnicities and from every walk of life.



Teen Cuisine Clemson Cooperative Extension-Expanded Food and Nutrition Program Palmetto Middle School

"We all are responsible for society and those that are still learning their place in it," said Troy.

Having had his grandfathers, father, uncle, coaches and even a physician as a mentor growing up, it's no wonder Troy can quantify its value in the lives of young adults. As head coach of the Mullins High School basketball team, he stands in the shoes of one of his former mentors.

"I care because I was blessed with mentors throughout my life that showed me love when they did not have to. Their love and willingness to spend time with me, made all the difference," Troy said. "Mentorship is the cure to so many of the illnesses that plague our community. Other methods can treat the symptoms, but the problem will still remain."

Troy requires the students to sign a contract agreeing to adhere to academic and dress code standards, and all males of Palmetto Middle School who successfully complete an application are eligible to participate in the program.

At the end of their time in the program, Troy's hope is that the students take away a modicum of what he received from his parents through the power of his example: a love of God, education and family.

VOLUNTEERING: A GREAT WAY TO GIVE BACK! by Anna Bowman



LAKE CITY – Christopher Moore, like so many fathers, enjoys watching his children play team recreational sports. So, when he offered to volunteer as a coach, he was met with a bit of skepticism by a member of the staff, as he vividly recalled. "On my first day meeting with and offering to be a volunteer coach, I spoke with Ms. Cynthia," a member of the staff at the Lake City Recreation Department. As we spoke

Christopher Moore

of my desire to volunteer, she said something that stays with me even today," he remembered. "When I said I wanted to be a volunteer coach, she promptly responded, 'You will probably be like most coaches who came before, and after your child is done, you are done." Fast forward 25 years, and you will find him on the sideline as a coach for three sports, football, baseball, and basketball, with the recreation department.

Moore has dedicated his time, energy and talents for the past 25 years, but he realizes that he could not have started and successfully continued his journey as a volunteer without the support of his immediate friends, "There's a lot of sacrifice of my personal time and a whole lot of support from my family and my future wife, that has allowed me to be focused on my volunteerism and the growth and development of the youth that I coach," he acknowledged.

He attributes the recreation department's motto, Everyone Plays, as one of the most important reasons for his longevity as a volunteer. Making sure that each child is treated equally allows everyone to participate and have fun. "I love teaching the youth and even educating the parents that winning is not everything," he said. Working alongside, Ms. Cynthia, and a stellar staff has been a wonderful experience that has enriched my life.

Over the years I've had the privilege to work with children ages six to 18 and watched them grow up and become outstanding young people. The Covid-19 pandemic presented a unique problem that no one could ever imagine, but this did not stop the volunteers from reaching out to the youth to encourage them to be patient and to let them know that they could utilize various methods of communication, phone, text and email, to reach out to a member of the recreation staff. "In a 25-year career span, I've watched kids turn into adults and return to the sidelines with their own kids, wanting to engage

reciating Our Volunteers / Community Service

VOLUNTEERING CONT'D

them in the same live building experiences that shaped their own lives. "You truly become an extended family," he acknowledged. "This is the emotional side of volunteering that is the most rewarding. I would say to anyone that wanted to volunteer that it is a great way to give back to the community and to give the youth leadership skills and guidance," he emphasized.

Moore is excited to be back coaching, especially after a medical issue forced him to relinquish his duties. A strong believer in faith and family, he is grateful that God allowed him to recover, and return to the sideline, as both mentor and coach.

LAKE CITY RECOGNIZES VOLUNTEERS

Article/photos submitted by Donna Tracy



Two Lake City Boys & Girls Club members, Quintavis Peterson who was recognized as team leader of the week for a third time, and Britelin Godfrey, who was named artist of the month for the second-grade class.

LAKE CITY - Two Lake City volunteers were recognized by the City of Lake City, Thursday, Jan. 27, for their "ongoing commitment and dedicated service to the City of Lake City and the Lake City Boys & Girls Club."

Lacy Washington and his brother Lee Washington were presented with certificates of appreciation by Lake City Mayor Lovith Anderson Jr., and Councilwomen Wilhelmina Scott and Yamekia Robinson.

"Volunteerism is the cornerstone of America," said Anderson. "That's what makes us great. You are role models for those kids



Lake City Councilwoman Yamekia Robinson, left, presents a certificate of appreciation to Lacy Washington for his volunteer efforts with the Lake City Boys & Girls Club. Washington and his brother Lee Washington serve as mentors, sponsor programs and devote much of their time to helping the club and its members

are role models for those kids coming up behind you because they are watching."

"We're watching them too," joked Lacy Washington.

The brothers volunteer with the Lake City Boys & Girls Club and routinely donate their time and money to help support the kids said Stormey Gillens, director of the club.

"Every month they are doing something," he said. "They've brought horses out for the kids, taken them on hayrides, helped with the Breast Cancer Awareness walk, funded jump

castles and donated our parade float. They are always giving their time and materials."

The two were surprised by the presentation; Gillens had invited them to award presentations for two of the center's members: Quintavis Peterson who was recognized as team leader of the week for a third time, and Britelin Godfrey, who was named artist of the month for the second-grade class.

The Lake City Boys & Girls Club is open on school days from 2-6 p.m. and membership is \$10 per school semester. To learn more about the club, visit <u>bgcpda.org</u>.

TWO DECADES OF MENTORING, COACHING AND ENRICHING LIVES



LAKE CITY - For the past 21 years, Michael Singletary has savored his role as both, football coach and mentor for males, ages six to 17, at the Lake City Recreation Department. What Singletary loves the most about volunteering is working with the youth, staff and parents, within the community. "Throughout the years, the staff have become like a close family, and together we bond with the youth and their families, sharing the highs and

Michael Singletary

lows of these young people's lives. It's a joy like none other," he said.

Singletary shares his time and talents with young males who are easily influenced by their surroundings, he's grateful that he can be viewed as a positive adult role model in their young impressionable lives. "I love encouraging the youth, giving them positive advice from an adult that truly cares about their life and future," he stated. "I believe to make a difference in a person's life you must be involved." He emphasized, "Sometimes they may want to just talk to someone outside of the home, and I let them know I am here." Volunteering has afforded him the opportunity to utilize both his time and talent in being a positive change agent in their lives and within the community.

Being a part of the recreation department's cohesive team, Singletary, along with other staff members, work to ensure that the children not only learn about sports, but he mentors them in various aspects of their lives. "Sometimes we give guidance with schoolwork. A few of my colleagues and I will take the youth fishing, share information and invite them to participate in organizations like the Knights of Pythagoras, a Masonic organization for young men.

As the world began to shut down due to the pandemic, Singletary understood the importance of staying connected with the youth during these very tumultuous times, so he made sure to engage with his students on a regular basis. Singletary, who is an ordained minister, knew how important it was to have a dialogue with the parents and students. When he realized that all the field activities were cancelled, he did the next best thing to ensure the stability of his players. "I made plenty of phone calls talking to parents and constantly following up to make sure our young men were doing good," Singletary, proudly proclaimed.

The reason for his longevity as a volunteer, said Singletary, is the fact that he genuinely loves what he does, and volunteering has enriched his life. "I would strongly advise others to volunteer and interact with the youth, encourage them to do the right thing and help them to grow in a safe and healthy environment."

Singletary and his wife Jessica are the parents of Samalelia and Michael Singletary, and the grandparents of Trey'shawn Singletary, Antwan Brown, Tayten Singletary and Aiyden Brown. He is the son of Sam Singletary and the late Daisy L. Cockfield Singletary. He has two sisters, Samella Barr and Cindy Singletary. He is an ordained minister; a member of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church Lake City and he is affiliated with the Masons – Red, the Order of the Eastern Star, Shriners and the Knights of Pythagoras.

Appreciating Our Volunteers / Community Service

SIX INSPIRING BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING Submitted by HopeHealth



Want to live longer? Be happier? If you answered "yes" to both of these questions, you may want to consider finding a place to volunteer. That's right; a growing body of research suggests volunteering promotes health benefits in addition to the social benefits. Those who volunteer tend to live longer with higher

functional ability and lower rates of depression. In other words, the process of giving back not only helps others but includes a host of health benefits for the person who volunteers. Here are six inspiring reasons to volunteer:

1. Build bonds and create friendships – For those that are lonely or want to develop connections with others, volunteering increases social interaction and can help create friendships with other volunteers, those in the organization you volunteer for and the people you help.

2. Improve mental health – Along with the desire and commitment to help others, the time spent volunteering can stimulate dopamine, a feel-good neurotransmitter in the body that gives the "warm glow" feeling which can help decrease stress and improve mood and outlook on life, which helps reduce depression and anxiety.

3. Increase self-esteem and confidence – Doing something worthwhile and valuable for others can produce a sense of purpose which can increase energy and feelings of fulfillment, boosting self-esteem and confidence.

4. Promote overall health – Completing mental and/or physical tasks in a volunteer setting is good for the brain and body. Research indicates volunteering at least 100 hours a year (an average of 2 hours a week) is linked with improved brain function, lower blood pressure, increased functional capacity and overall better quality of life.

5. Build skills and work experience – If you're still in the work force or in between jobs, volunteering can help build skill sets and experience in a variety of settings, which can be added to a resume. Meeting others may also help you find mentors and build a professional social network.

6. Add fun to your life – Getting out of the house and volunteering can turn on the fun factor. Working toward a common goal and giving back to your community can increase creativity and motivation and this can spread to your personal and professional life.

If you're ready to move to the next step, there are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in the Pee Dee. Explore opportunities with local nonprofit and cultural organizations, service organizations, schools, faith-based communities, hospitals and clinics for potential options.

You can even join the volunteer program at HopeHealth! HopeHealth is a federally qualified health center serving over 60,000 patients in five counties, with volunteer opportunities currently in Florence and the Pee Dee area. Cindy Averitt, director of volunteer services shares, "We're currently working on expanding our volunteer program and have plenty of opportunities for people interested in volunteering."

Opportunities include:

• Lobby Greeter - Lobby greeters are the first person to provide a friendly face and cordial welcome with prompt assistance to the guests of HopeHealth.

• Suite Guest Guide - To help guests of HopeHealth find their way - directing, assisting, and supporting at visits as well as supporting staff within the provider suites.

• New Patient Welcome Center- Help orient and familiarize patients to their new medical home.

• Special Programs Volunteer - Serve with special programs at HopeHealth such as seniors, veterans and patients with certain medical conditions to help with phone calls, surveys, clerical duties and special events.

• Hope "Buddy" - Join this pioneer program for volunteers to send cards and make calls to help support people who may be isolated or without family close by.

• Event Volunteer - Help with social events such as the monthly Seniors with Hope education and support program.

"We'll train and support each volunteer every step of the way," Averitt assures, "we want each person who volunteers to enjoy all the benefits from their time helping our patients."

If you're interested in exploring any of these volunteer opportunities, please call Cindy Averitt at 843-687-4172 or email volunteer@hope-health.org.

FREE VISION SCREENINGS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



HARTSVILLE – Elementary students in the Darlington County School District are taking advantage of free vision screenings thanks to the philanthropic vision of the Hartsville Lions Club.

The Lions spent the past

several months – and will spend the next few – traveling to every elementary school

Lions Club Vision Screenings at TSA

in the district to make available quick and free eye screenings for any child that would like to participate. The screenings are performed by a state-of-the-art Welch Allyn Spot pediatric vision screening camera, and the machine provides an immediate print with diagnostic information for a family to take to an eye doctor.

The Hartsville Lions Club will also work with families to provide up to \$150 each per child for further eye evaluation and/or glasses.

"The Hartsville Lions Club is excited about our new partnership with the DCSD," said Allen Grantham with the Lions Club. "We have been given the chance to provide eye screening for approximately 3,500 elementary school students in Darlington County. What an opportunity to serve! We've been looking for an opportunity that will allow us to be more involved with our community and provide us the chance to deliver on our organization's motto which is to serve."

Recently, the Lions Club purchased their own screening camera thanks to a grant from the Byerly Foundation in Hartsville. Previously, the club had borrowed cameras from

FREE VISION SCREENINGS CONT'D

other Lions Club chapters.

The screening for students takes just a few seconds and is handled entirely by the camera, which is operated by a Lions Club member. The one-page printout will, if warranted, include a recommendation for further evaluation by an optometrist. DCSD school nurses across the district help coordinate the eye-screening events.

The additional funding that is available to children in the district for further evaluation and hardware is mostly provided through the Hartsville Lions Club's Annual Vidalia Onion Sale, which typically takes place in mid-May. Last year, the club offloaded 20 tons of onions for the event. In recent years, the Hartsville club has partnered with other Lions Club chapters from across the area to bolster the services available to their communities.

"The Hartsville Lions Club is challenged by Lions Club International to give our time and effort to improving our community," Grantham said. "We hope that by identifying vision challenges early in life for elementary school students that we can be a part of improving their academic success."

HARTSVILLE - Tyler

McCoy has been ambitious about the need to assist

people since he was in

middle school. His first

experience in service was

running for political office.

Unfortunately, he did not

win, but it did not stop him

from trying again in high

ANSWERING THE WHY by Jennifer Robinson



Tyler McCoyschool. His perseverance
was rewarded when he was
electedTyler McCoyelectedrepresentative. As he matriculated through his final years of school,
McCoy was elected student Body vice president as a junior and
as Student Government Association President his senior year.
Volunteering is not new to McCoy. Even as a young child he
knew he wanted to help people. He said being involved makes
people productive citizens. McCoy suggests people volunteer
because it means taking ownership of their community. It is a
great way to have platforms to address community issues and he
says he also volunteers because he enjoys meeting people.

This May, McCoy will be a graduate of Coker University. The university will not be void of his presence because he is leaving a legacy of service and unity. In 2020, McCoy created Black, Optimistic, Legit and Distinguished Men. The mission of BOLD is to be committed to creating a sense of belonging for males of color on campus while fostering the value of community service. He said he had conversations about the Black male experience at predominately white institutions. The retention rates for males of color in those schools are much lower than those of a Historically Black College or University. Unfortunately, many predominately and historically white institutions do not employ enough people who reflect a diverse population. McCoy said because of the lack of diversity he was driven to become a leader in student body government. He was a candidate for SGA vice president but unfortunately McCoy said he could not finish the campaign due to some personal issues. After he left the student government association race, McCoy revisited the conversations he had about lack of Black representation in predominantly and historically white institutions and their student organizations. He also had the unfortunate experience of witnessing the death of George Floyd and other Black victims of police brutality in 2020. These instances touched him and other students with whom he had conversations about racial tensions and the uprising in the nation. McCoy said, "I began to question my safety and who I am as a Black male." Because he spoke to several young Black men about their feelings and his personal fears, he decided to create the organization, BOLD Men.

Millennials and Generation Y, contribute close to 30 percent of volunteer service hours in the U.S. Data reports a little over 40 percent of young people do favors for their neighbors, just over 20 percent participate in local groups or organizations, and 10 percent donate \$25 or more to their charity of choice. Unfortunately, how younger citizens impact communities often goes unnoticed and unappreciated. However, they do offer innovative ways to reach people, especially during the pandemic. The current generations of volunteers are answering the why of questions about committing to community improvement. McCoy stated, "Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and other leaders answered the question, why, of the importance of serving their communities. They dared to fail and yet were bound to succeed." He also stated that people who want to make positive change need to start with themselves. Evaluate your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, then use that data to try again better than our predecessors have.

McCoy said it is important that young Black men seek out opportunities to work with other young men to provide educational opportunities. They must also know that many success stories start with a change in mentality. McCoy says that if you are ever staring failure in the face, there are four things you should do. The first is do not dwell on it; instead, choose optimism. No one ever gets far by beating themselves up. The second thing you can do is not to wing it; instead, analyze the data and try again better. There is no need to blindly make rash decisions because you already know at least one way not to do it and it would be foolish to repeat it. The third is that you should never threaten yourself but should set goals and celebrate small victories. Many times, the pressure of society causes us to forget all the great things we are already doing but remembering those things is exactly the positive reinforcement and encouragement young people need to succeed. The last thing you should do is take a holistic approach to your problem by doing a SWOT analysis for all the goals you are trying to achieve. McCoy said that success is not for the swift nor the strong but for those who can endure. Figure out your why and do not let your fear of failure stop you from learning all that you need to know to achieve your goals. If you dare to fail, you are bound to succeed.



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LEATHERMAN, HAMILTON RECEIVE 2022 MARION MEDALLION HONORS

Submitted by FMU



Pictured left to right: Matt Tranquil, Jean Leatherman, Ellen Hamilton and Dr. Fred Carter

A local advocate for education and a longtime crusader against domestic violence were recognized for their service to the Pee Dee region and awarded the 2022 Marion Medallion.

Jean Leatherman, owner of ERA Leatherman Realty, and Ellen Hamilton, executive director of the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, were presented with the medallions before a crowd of friends, family and supporters during a ceremony at the FMU Performing Arts Center.

Leatherman was given her award by Dr. Fred Carter, president of Francis Marion University. Carter lauded Leatherman's charitable contributions to Florence and the Pee Dee, including her advocacy for medical, nursing and healthcare education, as well as other extensive civic, community and philanthropic efforts. Sr., Jean has worked tirelessly for over four decades to improve educational opportunities for students in the Pee Dee.

Hamilton, the second to be recognized, was introduced by Matt Tranquil, president of the Florence Morning News and Amplified Digital. Tranquil shared Hamilton's story, which began with helping victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in 1977. She has served as executive director of the Pee Dee Coalition since the organization was established in 1986.

In addition to working directly with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, Hamilton's contributions to the community are numerous. She was involved in the development of statewide plans for domestic and sexual assault victim services, helped establish the first rural domestic violence emergency safe shelter in 1982, and has worked with elected officials on the development of public policy related to the field.

The Marion Medallion was created in 2012, and is sponsored jointly by Francis Marion University and the Florence Morning News. Named after American Revolutionary War Hero General Francis Marion, the award is presented on or about Feb. 27, which is Francis Marion Day in South Carolina. Executives of the two organizations select each year's recipients, seeking individuals and groups imbued with the spirit of service and willing sacrifice exhibited by General Marion and his men.

Over the last 11 years, 28 women, men or organizations have been recognized for a variety of ministries, good deeds and services conducted on behalf of their fellow citizens.

Together with her husband, the late Sen. Hugh K. Leatherman,

SHOP FOR A GOOD CAUSE CREATING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Submitted by Staff United Way of Florence County



L to R is Shad Hargrove, general manager of QVC, Cameron Packett, president of United Way of Florence County and Evelyn Wright, senior operations manager at QVC

Since January 2022, United Way of Florence County has been placing a spin on contributions. For four months, community members have made an impact by participating in our monthly, Shop for a Good Cause, event.

The community member making the greatest impact is QVC. After months of discussing how QVC and United Way could partner, QVC General Manager, Shad

Hargrove, decided to make an in-kind donation of luxury beauty products to United Way of Florence County. These products consist of Philosophy, Beekman 1802, It Cosmetics, Josie Maran, Isle of Paradise, Calista, Tarte, Mac, Laura Gellar, Supersmile and lots more. Since these are luxury items rather than necessities, QVC and United Way worked together to offer a creative opportunity- Shop for a Good Cause.

Shop for A Good Cause allows community members to donate to United Way in exchange for a bag to fill with QVC skincare, haircare and makeup products. It has become a way to spread awareness, engage volunteers, collaborate in new ways with local industry and drive donations. Overall, it is a win-win for all involved.

Shad Hargrove, general manager of QVC Distribution Center, said "QVC is one of the largest employers in Florence County. It is important to me to ensure that QVC has a presence and stays connected to the community. The partnership with the United Way of Florence just made sense."

Not only is this partnership generating revenue to help fund 30 key community programs, but it is generating volunteer opportunities for individuals in our community.

Before each event, products must be sorted and organized to enable ease for donors looking to fill their bags. Thus far, QVC has donated over 150 boxes of products, and over 15 volunteers have supplied 60+ hours to make this operation successful.

"Volunteering with United Way of Florence County has allowed me to give back to our community in an interesting and fun way," said Christie Hebler, United Way of Florence County volunteer. "The buzz this partnership is creating is fascinating. Individuals can support their community in a new way."

Without dedicated volunteers, it would take months to sort through all the boxes donated by QVC, the frequency of events would not be possible, and the impact on our community would be less. Volunteers are vital to the process, and United Way of Florence County is grateful for each one that has stepped in to help make this partnership successful.

Success comes from all involved, and without QVC, none of these opportunities would be possible. Their support and ability to impact the community in various ways is meaningful. We are grateful for this partnership, their presence in the community and their support.

Individuals looking to give back to the community can donate their time or money. To get involved with United Way of Florence County, please reach out to us via email at <u>uwflorence@uwflorence.</u> org. To learn more about Shop for a Good Cause and our next event, please follow us on social media.

reciating Our Volunteers / Community Service

FLORENCE ROTARY PRESIDENT COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

April celebrates the impact

volunteers have on our lives and

encourages active volunteerism in

generations to come. Ashley

Christenbury is active in the

community as a volunteer and dedicates a portion of her time talent

and treasure to helping several area

organizations and agencies. A family

woman and business development

officer with First Bank, Christenbury

manages to find time to help make

Articles by Les Echols



Ashley Christenbury

her community a better place.

Christenbury's journey into community service began in 2012, when she moved to Florence from Sumter. Because she was new to Florence and did not know many people at the time, Christenbury joined the Florence Rotary Club. According to their website, Rotary is a global network of 1.4 million members that provides service to others, promotes integrity and advances world understanding, goodwill and peace through the fellowship of business, professional and community leaders. Being a part of Rotary gave Christenbury the opportunity to grow her professional network while simultaneously working on the many service projects that Rotary does. As she began to learn more about the people in the area, she joined other boards and committees in the community. From Friends of the Florence County Library to Florence Chamber Ambassadors, Christenbury made a mark with her trademark smile and positive demeanor.

Presently serving as President of the Florence Rotary Club, Christenbury is an advocate for community service, stressing how instrumental it is to the growth and development of a community. "Community service is instrumental and very important to me personally," said Christenbury. "I am thankful First Bank allows me to be involved in the community through various boards, as an ambassador of the Chamber and in Rotary," Christenbury continued. Along with giving \$10k - \$20k in community grants given to local nonprofits, Rotary programs include, A Christmas Shopping Project that takes 20 underprivileged youth shopping who would otherwise not get much for Christmas; dictionaries given to third graders in Florence - public and private; the Florence Beauty Trail; Rotarians in Drug Deterrence Education and building awareness of community initiatives through weekly speakers that inform and engage members.

Service is nothing new to the Florence Rotary Club. They celebrated their 102nd anniversary in February 2022. "I joined, Rotary initially to network and have stayed in Rotary because of the service projects and the ability to give back and impact the Florence community. Rotary's motto is, Service Above Self," concluded Christenbury.

Christenbury lives in Florence with her husband Kyle, daughter Jayden, son, Liam and dog, Jake. She is a member of Florence Baptist Temple.

PALMER'S TUESDAY SWEET TREATS AT MCLEOD



Mark Palmer and his loving family

A native of Clio, South Carolina, Mark Palmer is well known in the Florence area for being a professional architect. But through his company, Sweetleighs, Palmer also has built a reputation for delicious baked treats and community engagement. Palmer frequents many events throughout the region, and his Tuesday Treats have become a weekly routine that Palmer takes very seriously.

Palmer has been baking since he was in middle school, learning the art of baking from his aunt and grandmother. Palmer explained that Sweetleighs began as a hobby in 2008. "I baked treats for my church and my wife's school as gifts. Because of that, I started getting more requests for sweets and in 2012, I converted a portion of my house to a licensed DHEC bakery. The business name is derived from my daughter's names, Ashleigh and Nataleigh, said Palmer.

Palmer's Tuesday Treats program came about because of his involvement with the McLeod Fellows, a program that he participated in, in 2018. As the group toured the hospice facility, we were told how a couple of local restaurants donate lunch to the patient's families and staff on a regular basis. "I immediately thought Sweetleighs could be a part of this and contacted the volunteer coordinator on how to be involved," says Palmer. "She came up with the idea of Tuesday Treats for our cake donations and we have been doing it ever since."

Palmer is a strong proponent for continuing to be of service to the community. "As residents, we have been a part of this community for over 20 years. Florence is home and community involvement is an integral part of who we are. God puts us in places where we can meet the needs of others. All of us have something to offer to those who are in need; whether it is a sweet treat, a kind word, a smile or your time, we all have something to offer," Palmer continued.

Palmer is married to Diamond, a teacher and his wife of 25 years. The couple has two daughters, Ashleigh and Nataleigh. He has a BS in Design and master's degree in architecture from Clemson University.

ABOUT US

We bake BY ORDER ONLY and do not have a retail location. Cake jars are available at Tomlinson Sales Company in Florence,

2264.



Red Velvet Mason Jar Cake

that taste great from first bite to last.

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Our mission is to create cakes

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ADDRESSING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ISSUES Submitted by HopeHealth



Recent news stories have shown what can happen when society ignores behavioral health issues until something tragic happens. According to the National Institutes of Mental Health, one in every five people experience a mental health condition in any given

year. That's an estimated 43.6 million U.S. adults and doesn't include those living with substance use disorder, homeless persons and those residing in institutions.

Being aware of warning signs can help to prevent future tragedies. Paying attention to our own mental health can be an important first step.

"There are things we need to do to take care of ourselves and, as a society, we generally are not very good at that," said Dr. Farrah Hughes, director of behavioral health services at HopeHealth. "An individual struggling with anxiety, for example, might not consider themselves to be anxious, but yet they may become agoraphobic as stressors accumulate. By stepping back and paying attention to stressors, whether family, work, illness or finances, we can monitor our reactions to them and improve our coping skills."

Addressing mental health needs does more than just help the affected individuals. These concerns also impact families and, as we have seen in recent events, entire communities. Behavioral health difficulties are a root cause of more than a third of high school student dropouts, and in the workforce, serious mental health conditions cost the U.S. more than \$193.2 billion in annual lost earnings.

Indicators that you may need to address your own behavioral health can include changes in routine behavior – anything that seems atypical for you. For example, indicators of depression can include not wanting to do things you usually enjoy, feeling down on yourself or worthless, not having enough energy to complete daily tasks, appetite changes and sleeping problems. "Almost every psychiatric illness has a sleep disturbance associated with it," said Hughes. "Too much or too little sleep, the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep; all can be symptoms of an underlying difficulty."

Hughes notes that most people underestimate the impact of daily stressors, saying that we develop a "grin-and-bear-it" mentality toward cumulative stressors as we go through our day. So, what can you do to help improve your own mental health? Hughes recommends the first thing to do is to listen to your instincts and talk to someone.

"You don't have to start with a physician, though that is a good place to go for a first step if you are not sure what else to do," she said. "We tend not to pay attention to our gut and speak up when we feel like something is going on, and we are much harder on ourselves than we are on others. It's important to get perspective: Talk to someone close to you and find out what they have observed, reflect back on what's been going on in your life, and think about the stressors you have been dealing with."

Providers such as psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors,

clinical social workers and marriage and family therapists, can help address any concerns. These professionals assess and diagnose mental and behavioral health difficulties and use evidence-based psychotherapeutic methods to treat them. Their help can ward off clinical depression, prevent suicide, combat opioid use disorders, strengthen relationships and even improve physical health.

"Sometimes, people just need a few sessions to regain their perspective. Sometimes, people need more intensive clinical treatment, and, sometimes, people need counseling or psychotherapy combined with medication to get back on track," said Hughes. "The good news is that these forms of help are more available than many people may realize. All we have to do is reach out."

HER STORY – HOW PROPER DIAGNOSIS LED TO A FULLFILLING LIFE

Submitted by Aisha Jones



LAKE CITY - My name is Aisha Jones and I have been dealing with Mental Health issues since the age of 19. I'm now 45 years old. The first 15 years was a struggle due to waiting for a correct diagnosis and proper medications to treat me. I went through many phases. I was involuntarily admitted to an inpatient facility at age 21 for treatment.

Aisha Jones

It was then; I was properly

diagnosed with bipolar depression. Even with a new diagnosis, I still struggled at the time to find the right medications that would keep me stable. Being that my doctors and I were trying to find the right medications to treat me, it left me feeling hopeless and wondering if I would ever fit in and be normal again.

There was a period of time when I was off all medications because I felt that they weren't addressing my symptoms. I then moved to Columbia, SC, and sought help there. It was the doctors there that found a combination of medications that successfully kept me stable. When I relocated here, my case was transferred to Pee Dee Mental Health. The Staff at Pee Dee Mental Health welcomed and diligently worked with me to continue keeping my mental health stable. In my several years at Pee Dee Mental Health, I have been treated with respect and I greatly appreciate my care team. They make sure all my needs and concerns are addressed and taken care of properly.



AENIAL HEALTH

SECOND CHANCE COUNSELING, LLC PROVIDING SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY

by Jennifer Robinson



Wendy Washington

Our brains are powerful organs! They guide our thoughts and control our senses. We fill our brains with information and then in turn share with others. They are working machines! Yet, the brain is one organ that people tend to treat with little care, because it is not seen or felt as another organ or limb would be felt, if injured. Our brain can be unhealthy. There are stressors and disorders that causes the brain not to function normally. If untreated, as with any other part of the body, the problem could become worse and/or be fatal.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and it is used by medical centers, agencies, mental health centers, organizations and others to bring awareness of mental disorders and the ways to treat them. Treating mental health disorders promotes healthy minds and bodies. Treatment of mental disorders is based on the symptoms, history, physical issues, patterns of behavior and the severity. Our psychological health is just as important as our physical health.

Psychotherapy is essential to bringing awareness to mental wellness and its outcomes. Licensed Professional Counselor, Wendy Washington, offers various therapeutic services through her counseling practice, Second Chance Counseling, LLC. Washington shared that intake-assessments are provided in a 90-minute session to identify symptomology, behavioral patterns, obtain additional information about other services, mental or medical, and to determine whether additional services are needed. This assessment consists of inquires about the clients' culture, social functions, family history, physical and mental, education, legal history, employment status and past trauma. It is imperative to obtain as much information

about the client and his/her symptomology to begin to develop an appropriate Individual Plan of Care. Each goal in the IPOC should be based upon the client's needs, not the therapist wants. Part of Washington's IPOC is encouraging, selfcare. She recommends her clients take at least one hour per day to engage themselves in an activity he/she enjoy without interruptions. Activities can be as simple as watching a funny movie, reading a book, taking a walk in the park, listening to music, drawing, coloring, finding a craft and/or fishing. Clients are encouraged to take time out to reset their mind and body, daily. This means no family interruptions, no work, no cell phone, no social media and no outside influences that take away from his/her, self-care, for that one hour. This daily activity is just as important as taking medicine for any physical issue. Washington likes to think of, self-care, to assist with providing emotional support for the mind and the body. Washington also stated, "A person's mental health is affected by his/her physical conditions. Learning the body has a disease or an illness, such as heart problems or diabetes, can cause a person to panic, worry and become overly stressed. Again, the mind and body are not separate, they are one."

Washington shared being mentally or emotionally well is also about being educated about current events and how these events affect our well-being. The pandemic caused people to become overprotective and misinformed about world events. She stressed the importance of learning facts and talking about positive things that are happening instead of negative. She said clients are stressed about the death rates of COVID, but she shares with them that death can occur with any form of physical illness. Often people are not informed about the medications they are prescribed, and they are unaware of their medications' side effects that can promote symptoms of depression and anxiety. Washington suggest clients should research their prescribed medications by talking with their prescribing physician and with their pharmacist, because combinations of certain medical medications can promote changes in the body's chemical makeup. Also, some medications do not work well with certain antidepressants or mood stabilizers, which can cause additional medical and mental issues. She also suggests that people change their unhealthy eating habits, which also affects the effectiveness of medications, to become physically and mentally healthier.

Lack of education about mental illness, diet and physical illness is why underserved communities are misinformed about mental health. African Americans and people of color tend to self-diagnose or diagnose family members when they witness unexplainable behaviors or behavioral patterns. Our irrational fears and belief systems cause more issues, and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to trust counselors or seek the assistance they need.

To assist those who are underserved or anyone who wishes to engage in therapeutic services, Washington said she offers individual therapy, family therapy, couples therapy, group therapy and/or parenting education classes. She shared that she also offers free monthly parenting support sessions and grief support sessions on Saturdays. Washington provides volunteer services to domestic violence shelters and homeless shelters, by providing psychotherapy services based on the individual needs of the residents. Washington provides services utilizing evidence-based therapies that include narrative therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness therapy, time management skills, stages of grief and loss therapy, trauma focused therapy, and/ or family systems therapy. At this time, all services are fee-based, and we do not bill private insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare.

Second Chance Counseling services are available to everyone, who wants to begin their second chance at being a better, you. Washington is passionate about the services she provides to her clients and her communities. Washington stated, "Second Chance Counseling, LLC exists to assist its clients in reaffirming, restoring and reconnecting relationships by working with and helping individuals to create the lives they want and deserve in a meaningful and responsible manner. Second Chance Counseling, LLC empowers its clients to change their circumstances regardless of those circumstances. We believe that every person deserves a second chance to create change and be a part of the process that results in a better him or her."



MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF ART

Articles by Susan K. Carter, LPC/S



Susan K. Carter

AL II

Research strongly supports the contention that art therapy improves mental health. Benefits are seen in patients' clinical, occupational and environmental recovery. "Identifying the evidencebase for art-based practices and their potential benefit for mental health recovery: A critical review," Lith, Shofield & Fenner (2012) <u>https://doi. org/10.3109/09638288.2012.</u> 732188 Art-based practices

are readily accepted by patients and are consistent with the whole-person recovery framework now in use in the mental health field. Significantly, therapy participants in a 2007 case study reported that they experienced improvements in self-confidence and self-esteem. Therapeutic artwork provided a "safe space for reflection on mental health issues." Supportive, positive non-clinical environments such as art therapy groups can encourage and facilitate recovery and empowerment through creative expression. "Art as Therapy; an effective way of promoting positive mental health?" (Deirdre Heenan, 2007) https://doi.org/10.1080/09687590500498143.

Children and adults, in therapeutic and natural environments, can experience the pleasures and healing art provides. Painting, drawing and sculpting with clay are known to lower stress levels and promote mental calmness. Focusing on the details of an art project provides a relaxing distraction from everyday concerns as well as more traumatic ones such as memories of a past trauma. Adult coloring books are helpful for those who prefer a guide for their art.

Problem-solving skills are essential for good mental health. Art encourages creative thinking and imagination in kids and adults, allowing our thinking to become more flexible and encourages us to consider alternatives in life as we work out creative choices in a drawing. Our brains are stimulated by the opportunity to work out innovative solutions and this prepares us to engage in complex thinking, similar to the way that learning a new language does.

Because art activities result in a finished product, they provide a sense of accomplishment and boost self-esteem. Many people even experience a surge of dopamine, a neurotransmitter which increases the sense of pleasure and can improve motivation and attention.

The mental health benefits of art are accessible to everyone. Simply by using your hands, creating something, and enjoying the process, you will stimulate the development of new neural pathways in your brain. This will improve your overall sense of well-being, prevent depression and even slow down the aging process. "The Mental Health Benefits of Art." Scripps <u>https://scrippsamg.com/mental-health-benefits-of-</u>art/#:~:text=There%20is%20a%20relaxing%20distraction.

Whatever your age or life circumstance, art can increase your feelings of happiness and self-worth. If you're not ready to create, consider going to museums and art fairs to experience others' works. You may learn something new, rediscover your passion, or simply enjoy a pleasant escape from your daily routine. The health benefits of taking a mental health day to engage in art and connect with others will reignite your imagination and improve your health!

THE ART OF RECOVERY

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health conducts an annual program in which artwork created by children and adults currently receiving care is displayed at SCDMH's Central Office and offered for sale to the public. This anti-stigma initiative encourages patients to heal through art while also allowing the public to benefit from their creations. In 2006, The Art of Recovery received the Elizabeth O'Neil Verner Governor's award for the arts, South Carolina's highest Art honor. More than 150 pieces from artists across the state are part of the Program's collection. The works rotate frequently and are displayed at events and venues across the state.

Artwork helps Brandi Beaufort with recovery.





pursuits with helping her perspective and improving her personal relationships. "Art teaches me to enjoy the time I have to myself."

Beaufort has been drawn to color and art since grade school. Her second-grade teacher, Mrs. Kline, always encouraged her by displaying her work in the classroom and entering it in contests which she sometime won. To Beaufort, "art is absorbing, like putting a puzzle together, including the background details."

Beaufort first turned to art for therapeutic reasons at age 13, when she received in-patient treatment for symptoms that were ultimately diagnosed years later as bipolar disorder. Drawing, writing and journaling helped her cope as she moved between different residential facilities. From that point on, Beaufort has used art to help her manage stress. "Everything fades into the background when I'm drawing and painting." She loves to photograph her 14-year-old cat and then put the pictures on her architectural drawing board so that she can sketch out all the details in the picture.

Several life stressors, including a mental health crisis and the death of her beloved brother. compelled her to draw more frequently beginning in 2013. Faced with an overwhelming urge, Beaufort went to Walmart and purchased colored pencils, notebook paper, a canvas, and other art supplies to express her powerful feelings. Most recently, she completed, A Mother's Gaze, a digital picture she completed for her mother who requested a picture of her holding Beaufort as an infant. Beaufort gives away much of her work, as she wants others to experience the joy, she felt in producing the work. Beaufort credits her artistic

EXPRESSIVE ART LEADS TO INNER RECOVERY by Susan K. Carter, LPC/S

As a child, Tom Sivilai had

a wild imagination, and was fascinated by how things are

put together. He frequently

dismantled objects at home and at school to his parents'

and teachers' chagrin. Sivilai says an exasperated math teacher told him, "You won't be satisfied until you break something!" Sivilai explains that he was intrigued with, "what things look like on the

inside." "I had to see for



Tom Sivilai

myself as I don't trust the process."

Along with his intense curiosity, Sivilai has battled a serious mental health challenge. He had a manic episode in 2015 and found out he has bipolar depression. He still has, periodic challenges, but is learning how to deal with his condition by completing art projects for others.

Sivilai started out making clocks in 2016, after being laid off from Aluminum Ladder. Although he had never made a clock before, he bought supplies so that he would have something to do on his first day of unemployment. "I just tried it and was amazed at watching the dial move."

After clock-making, Sivilai turned to wood-working and finds the process of, "choosing simple, random objects and turning them into something meaningful," satisfying. He specializes in personalizing the pieces to fit the receiver's hobbies, such as using football, pet and state motifs in the signs he frequently gifts others. Sivilai says that after making his first piece, he felt, on fire, with creativity and quickly made more to give.

Sivilai is an inspired and inspiring artist although he modestly demurs to accept the title. He says he enjoys the way woodworking makes him feel, "I like watching the saw eat through the wood." He describes this almost hypnotic state as calming and meditative and gives him something to focus on. Practicing his chosen art helps Sivilai keep his worries at bay, including anxiety about the future. Sivilai acknowledges that he had an "imperfect background," and struggled to meet his parents' expectations. Sivilai took to heart his father's response to his apology for past behavior – "I don't need you to be sorry, I need you to change." Sivilai vowed to make positive changes despite his mental health challenges and credits his woodworking for his long-term recovery, "Art helps you change. What you start with isn't where you have to end up."

Tom's art work which helps him with recovery.



INSIDE OF MY LIFE'S JOURNEY Submitted by Carol Wells



Carol Wells

SCRANTON - Throughout my lifetime, I have experienced many things, but the most memorable experiences that I have had was when I was diagnosed with mental illness. I really did not know how to cope with life. I found myself withdrawn from people, anxiety levels were so high, and I cried myself to sleep every night. I was afraid of what people would think of

me and I tried to fix the problems myself, which caused me to be in a deeper depression. It was until one day I snapped and had to be institutionalized for several days and put on medications. This is when I realized mental illness is real and that it is ok to be placed on medication and undergo counseling. It helped me

to become a better me. I went back to school and received my bachelor's and master's degrees.

The important lesson to grasp is that mental illness is not always loud but can sometimes be very quiet. It sometimes can be caused by people you least expect such as doctors, lawyers, athletics, etc. It is essential that people pay attention to the warning signs. Mothers, fathers, friends and co-workers should all be mindful of how their counterparts behave from day to day. Whether the warning signs are emotional or mental, mental illness is real. Never knowing that growing up, I always felt like a loner and knew I was different from my siblings. Going to Pee Dee Mental Health was the best decision that I could have ever made. Now I am able to cope with everyday living and want the world to know that taking medicine does not make you crazy. Life is all about choices and I make a conscious effort each morning to remind myself of what is important in life and that the day ahead will be a great one. I feel that when we are in unhappy situations, we need to look for something good. I am committed to working hard at everything I do.

SELF-CARE IN THE MIDST OF A PANDEMIC by Jennifer Robinson



Lynn Melton

SUMTER - It's April 2022. Two years and one month ago, our world experienced an epic disengagement that had not been lived before. People were isolated and limited in their contact with friends and loved ones. People's brains were overloaded with exposure to loss and media outlets. There were few outlets to express their fears, pain and sadness. There was so much access to the opinions of people about

CONWAY - We often hear

how important it is to have a

yearly physical. A check up of

the physical body to ensure all systems are working to their

optimal performance levels.

The same care and concern

aren't always highlighted in

regard to mental health. The mental awareness and acumen

of an individual will, at some

point in their life, directly affect

their physical and emotional

wellbeing. The fact alone drives

the effectiveness of personal protection equipment and if wearing masks to fight the spread of Covid-19 were violations of people's rights. Many experienced overloads and few people knew how to not listen or turn away.

Lynn Melton, clinic director for Santee Wateree Community Mental Health, knows first-hand the importance of self-care as people try to navigate through a world that is trying to recover from a major pandemic. Many experienced feelings of isolation, changes in their daily routines and roles, loss of jobs, homes and loved ones. There was media overexposure that triggered fears, anxiety and uncertainty. Social media and its influencers were either positive or negative in their opinions and a lot of time was spent on gazing at mobile devices for several hours daily. Social media saturation seemed to replace human interaction. With the pandemic seeming to come to an end, people are more aware of who is in and who they want in their social circle. Melton suggests that people learn about self-care

ACTS OF SERVICE AND CARE by Ta'Meeka Epps



Milicent E. Haley

the need for mental health awareness.

In 2022, the stigma attached to mental illness has lessened however, few are aware of the resources available to them in their communities or how to get the assistance they need. The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Month is, "Together for Mental Health."

Milicent E. Haley is the patient affairs coordinator and out-patient clinician, at the Waccamaw Center for Mental Health, in Horry County. She has served in the capacity as the patient affairs coordinator for two years and as the out-patient clinician for the last year. The mission of WCMH is, "Supporting the recovery of individuals with mental illness while bridging the gap between patients, staff and community." As the patient affairs coordinator and out-patient clinician one of Haley's most impactful responsibilities is understanding each client is a unique individual who matter. Haley provides hope and encouragement alongside mental health interventions in the outpatient settings. and find ways to alleviate the stressors they feel every day. It is also important for staff and caregivers to engage in self-care activities. She maintains a safe space and an open-door policy for her team because she understands the pressures of caring for others. Melton's team supports each other, and they talk about the things they encounter so to aid in this process. Throughout the pandemic the South Carolina Department of Mental Health also offered confidential and supportive services to their employees throughout the state.

Self-Care is important to all people and may mean different things to different people. Life in general seems to have people juggling many things at one time. Sometimes, we don't even recognize how many things are being juggled. Self-Care encompasses developing a healthy balance in life. It is extremely important to take care of your overall self; physical health through health care avenues PCP, diet, exercise, engage in a lot of laughter, participate in social, recreational and relaxation activities.

For mental health awareness observance month, Santee Wateree Community Mental Health Center will host a May Fest event, May 6, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's a drive through event where information will be shared about the services available in the Sumter Communities. Attendees will also be able to park and enjoy onsite food truck vendors. The goal of this event is to support our community by providing educational information on services available throughout our communities and reduce stigma associated with mental health needs. There are programs available for adults and children. Services rendered by Santee Wateree Community Mental Health are to provide hope and promote stability. Staff and counselors will be available to answer questions about services.

Her duties include but are not limited to conducting one-on-one and group sessions, assessing new clients past and present history and determining appropriate treatment options in consultation with the patient and other mental health professionals at WCMH.

The WCMH of Horry County serves a truly diverse population from transients to retirees. Making the theme so fitting for the work they are doing up and down the Grand Strand. Haley believes, "Together for Mental Health is a message of Hope for all who have a mental health condition and those who are struggling with their mental health issues." Haley went on to explain that the theme for Mental Health Awareness Month is what she sees in action at WCHM. "Together for Mental Health is what I see on a daily basis as our doctors, nurses, therapist, clinicians, front office staff and our directors here at Waccamaw Center for Mental Health work together as a team in an effort to provide effective services to every individual who come through the center doors requesting help."

Haley serves to give hope to those who need it most. Through her act of service, she helps the clients tap into their confidence to expect and anticipate positive change. She builds trust with the individual which builds trust in the treatment services.

Haley was born in Manhattan, NY, raised in the Bronx, NY, but spent memorable and impactful times with her grandparents in Myrtle Beach, SC, during her formidable years. She lives her life on the belief that, "motivation and enthusiasm creates positive energy which in turn helps the impossible become possible and it's at this point, we can move forward."

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIES FOR ADOLESCENTS Articles by Ta'Meeka Epps

MULLINS - The mission

of the Pee Dee Mental Health Center

is to support the recovery of adults, children and families, with mental

illness by offering comprehensive mental health services. PDMHC

strives to provide support to the

recovery of people with mental

illness and to treat emotionally

disturbed children and their families.

They offer an array of outpatient

services and programs through Adult

and Children Services such as



Connie Marie Ford

assessment, individual and group therapy, case management and psychiatric assessment to name a few. The PDMHC serves three counties in the Pee Dee region one being Marion County. Ms. Connie Marie Ford is an adult clinician and school base counselor at Creek Bridge Middle/High School and Mullins Schools employed through the PDMHC.

Ford deals with emotional, behavioral and mental disorders through individual, group and family sessions. She has been employed in mental health for 15 years, 12 of those years as a school base counselor. Children are the most vulnerable members of our community. Without a place or a person where children feel safe, they may never be exposed to healthy ways to manage emotional and mental health. "As a school base counselor having love for children, especially those in my community, I was gifted with the opportunity to provide quality therapeutic care for adolescents with specific mental health conditions; ADHD, conduct disorder, depression, anxiety, grief, suicide, psychosis and substance use. Being a product and now staple of the surrounding community, I personally know the families, connections and was able to engage and develop a relationship with not only the child but with the family, community and church in making sure the needs of the children are not only understood but addressed and met." Those words, spoken by a compassionate mental health therapist who takes on the responsibility of creating a comfortable environment for patients, being professional yet empathetic in making sure her patients feel at ease during therapy, diagnosis, creation of treatment plans, through and beyond recovery.

Ford believes the 2022 Mental Health Awareness theme, Together for Mental Health, amplifies the message that within our families, villages, communities and professional organizations, we all must join together in educating, supporting and advocating for those individuals with mental illness. Together we can raise awareness to the needs of mental health in our society and defend, denounce and reduce the barriers individuals encounter on a daily basis. Actions speak louder than words and together, everyone achieves more.

Ford was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and raised by her aunts, Sarah Belin and Marie Leonard in Marion County. She currently resides in the family home with her 9-year-old son, Micah James Ford and the matriarch of their family, her sister Victoria Belin. Ford lives on the premise that we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit. She has overwhelming compassion for the patients she serves, just as Jesus shows compassion to us daily. Her purpose in life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, and to reach out eagerly without fear for newer and richer experiences.



CONWAY MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDES BRIDGE TO COMMUNITY

CONWAY-The COVID-19

Pandemic placed a spotlight on how

sensitive mental health has the

propensity to be. It also showed how

sudden change and isolation can be

triggers creating a mental health

crisis. Chloe Tere' Davis, clinic

director at Conway Mental Health

and her staff strive to deliver

exemplary service in furtherance of the mission of South Carolina Mental

Health. Through their service they

give priority to the seriously mentally



Chloe Tere' Davis

ill and to emotionally disturbed children and their families. Their treatment services are geared toward a model of recovery. They used an evidence-based practice and deliver culturally competent quality care. Their patients are served on their individual strengths, needs, abilities and preferences.

As clinic director, Davis is patient driven. She believes her number one priority is to ensure all patients are taken care of once they enter the building. During Mental Health Awareness Month, her and the staff use the time to refocus their efforts in helping the clients understand their diagnosis and improving societal acceptance and understanding of the illness. When asked how the theme, Together for Mental Health, resonate with her, the response was enlightening. "I believe it is important that we take care of our mental health as well as our physical health. There are so many things occurring right now, the Covid pandemic, the war in Ukraine and all the demands of daily living pulling us in so many directions. So many are facing difficult times just adjusting and coping with the rapid and continuous changes. We must all work together to take care of each other and be available for each other. Sometimes it's more important to show up for someone and to be there to listen or lend a helping hand."

Davis and the Conway Mental Health clinic serves as a bridge to assist the community with their mental health concerns and needs. They believe in treating the whole individual and they aim to meet them where they are in their journey. They realize external factors impact their clients in numerous ways. "With our nation's inflation and gas prices soaring; we have to be available for them, be it food for their pantry, clothing for their family or any essential need," Davis explained. She implemented the evening clinic on Wednesday nights to assist clients who need nontraditional afterhours clinic. The clinic has started a clothing and shoe drive to help source items, they collect and disseminate toiletries for the homeless and connect individuals with resources for personal care items.

Davis was born and raised in Florence, SC. She graduated from Wilson High School, received her undergraduate degree in child and family development from Benedict College in Columbia, S.C and her master's degree in counseling from Webster University, Myrtle Beach campus. She chose a life of service because she is a Christian and she believes it is her duty. "Those with mental illness are our brothers and sisters, our responsibility, we must do all we can to answer the call."

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MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING SERVICES SUPPORTS COMMUNITY Articles by Les Echols



Christian Jackson

COLUMBIA - Diversity Works joins the National Alliance on Mental Illness in recognizing May as National Mental Health Awareness Month. This month is used to raise awareness of trauma and the impact it can have on the physical, emotional and mental well-being of children, families and communities. Christian Jackson is a national board-certified, licensed professional addiction counselor and supervisor in South Carolina. She

supports women in recovery from relationship trauma. Jackson has been in the field of counseling for more than 10 years. Jackson was raised in, and currently resides in Columbia, SC. After earning her bachelor's degree from Winthrop University in Psychology, she obtained a Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Jackson began her career as a substance use counselor working with adolescents. The nature of her work evolved into supporting families and developing community partnerships for wraparound services. She became well versed at developing rapports between client needs and the appropriate organizations. She also has experience developing curriculum for various nonprofit organizations. The content of which is based on personal life experiences and that of the women she serves in therapy. Jackson supported students at risk for emotional neglect, physical abuse and DSS involvement. As an addiction counselor, she was able to help adolescents break the school to prison pipeline by offering alcohol and other drug education. Jackson continued to grow as a therapist and support people at different stages of life. She worked with adult men in intensive outpatient settings before being hired at an agency that supports survivors of sexual assault. It is there, Jackson said, she received the bulk of her training on trauma specific interventions.

Jackson currently owns and operates a private practice where she specializes in trauma, educating clients on what post-traumatic stress looks like in various areas of their lives. This includes helping them identify how their current symptoms are connected to past experiences. "I use effective interventions that help clients address different parts of themselves. This means identifying the time in their lives when the trauma happened; it is likely where they are stuck. I help them consider the self-talk that is likely a cycle from that time, and we challenge the negative self-talk so they can make room for more helpful narratives to be healthier overall," explained Jackson. Jackson also stressed that she offers many different workshops throughout the year at no, or minimal cost, with the goal of helping people access mental health support all the way up to treating their pathology.

Jackson identifies family and faith as two main tenets of her life and drive. "I am a wife of six years and a mother of two. My husband and I are raising our 11 and five-year-old boys. Everything from the beginning of my career up until now has been intentional on God's part. I used to wonder why I would be in certain spaces. I am thankful to have enhanced my education and experience to learn things on a smaller to a larger scale to support the clients," concluded Jackson.

People can connect with Jackson at <u>www.couchwithJackson</u>. <u>com</u> or <u>instagram.com/couchwithJackson</u> to find her books, courses and other opportunities to learn and grow. She also launched an online course to help people address how their insecurities, traumatic experiences and self-sabotaging behaviors, can get in the way of having a meaningful connection. It is called "Is it me? How my daddy issues may be jacking up my relationships," and can be accessed at <u>https://couchwithJackson.thinkific.com/courses/isitme</u>

PEE DEE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS CLIENTS TO WELLNESS

Living with mental illness is a

challenging and ongoing process for many

people throughout the world. According to

National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in

five people are diagnosed with mental illness,

sometimes resulting in a rise in negative

outcomes, such as incarceration, lost earning

and higher suicide rates. But with the proper

resources, treatment and support, many

people who suffer with mental illness can

thrive and develop personally and

professionally. Breanna Shelton has lived

with mental illness and spoke to Diversity



Breanna Shelton

Works about some of the challenges that she has faced and overcome throughout the years.

According to Shelton, her mental health issues started at a very young age. "I would hit my head and scream a lot, was kicked out of school for being disrespectful to teachers and became destructive" Shelton explained. "After being diagnosed in my early teens, several things helped me to thrive and get where I am. My counselor with Pee Dee Mental Health helped me with my coping skills among other things, and my mother and grandmothers were key in inspiring me spiritually," Shelton continued. Shelton stresses that people in her church and throughout the community played a big part in motivating her. Continuing to build on her self-sufficiency, Shelton was recently approved for an apartment with help from Pee Dee Mental Health. "Through my experiences and growth, I feel like I'm a better person, not just a person with an illness," Shelton concluded.

As they did with Shelton, Pee Dee Mental Health has treated

thousands of Pee Dee residents by offering comprehensive mental health services efficiently, effectively and safely. Pamela Thomas has worked with Shelton and many others in her 17-year career with Pee Dee Mental Health. Thomas currently serves as children, adolescent, and family supervisor in the Hartsville office. When asked about the importance of mental health treatment Thomas responded that "mental health treatment has been known to reduce stress, anxiety, depression and substance abuse. I feel that anyone struggling or dealing with mental health issues shouldn't be afraid to seek help. Taking care of our mental health is very important because it affects our daily lives with our friends, family and coworkers. It determines the way we're able to operate emotionally and socially."

Thomas went into detail highlighting some of the challenges in the field, with one of the biggest challenges being a lack of family support and resources to assist patients in transitioning into the community. Because of busy work schedules and lack of transportation, it becomes difficult to get some families involved in the patient's treatment. "The community can assist by taking away the stigma of mental health and try learning more about mental illness by researching NAMI or consulting with providers or agencies who deal with mental illness. Individuals could join classes to become more educated about recognizing signs and symptoms and learn ways to support family members or others who are dealing with mental illness," Thomas stated.

Thomas received a Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Francis Marion University and a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling from Webster University. She is well respected throughout the Pee Dee for her dedication to mental health treatment and awareness.

SELFLESS AND SACRIFICIAL by Jennifer Robinson

Military life is about service

and sacrifice. Many people are

proud to see service members in airports in or outside of the United

States dressed in their uniforms,

traveling to various destinations where they will defend and protect

citizens against the enemies of this

country. Or in a local restaurant, a retired veteran may be having

dinner with family and be

recognized by a black hat with gold

letters that show his branch of

service. These images of patriotic



Captain Milton Troy III

sacrifice make many people proud to be Americans. Active-duty military members and those who previously served in the Armed Forces, deserve so much for what they do/did for our freedom.

May is the month reserved to appreciate those who sacrifice their lives for their fellow Americans. Armed Forces Day was started by President Harry S. Truman as a way for the country to show its appreciation to those in uniform and those who previously served. There is Military Spouse Appreciation Day because spouses serve our country too by not only taking care of their own families, but they come together to support each other in the absence of their service member(s) who are defending the country. May culminates with the observance of Memorial Day, a day to pause, remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

During May observances, the President, who is Commander in Chief reminds Americans about the importance of the U.S. Armed Forces. Historical information is shared about how the U.S. was formed and developed by the achievements of our service men and women. Parties, parades and picnics are a few events held across the nation to show love to military members and their families. Many businesses offer discounts on their products and at sporting events, military guests receive free admission.

Mullins, South Carolina native Captain Milton Troy III deserves high praise and appreciation for his accomplishments in the U.S. Navy. Since his graduation from Morehouse College in 1995, Troy's extensive educational background and Naval assignments have sent him to various stations in the U.S. and across the world. Some of his operational assignments include ex-USS SPRUANCE (DD-963) then stationed in Mayport, Florida serving as the supply officer; the Office of Military Cooperation-Kuwait where he served as the naval logistics advisor to the Kuwaiti Navy; and an Individual Augmentation to Joint CREW Composite Squadron ONE located on Victory Base Compound, Iraq. His last operational assignment was as the commanding officer of Explosive Ordnance Disposal Expeditionary Support Unit TWO located on Joint Expeditionary Base, Little Creek,

Virginia.

A few of Troy's shore assignments include U.S. Fleet Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia where he served as the fleet services officer and Lead for the Fleet Financial Improvement and Audit Readiness Team; the executive assistant to the commander, Naval Supply Systems Command and the 47th chief of supply corps, in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; the director for the internal review and Evaluation Division and Chief of Staff for the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Operations) at the Washington Navy Yard; Commanding Officer of Navy Service Support Advanced Training Command headquartered in Dam Neck, Virginia; and the Commanding Officer of the Center for Service Support, headquartered in Newport, Rhode Island. Troy's current assignment is the Chief of Staff, Naval Sea Systems Command, headquartered in Washington Navy Yard, DC, but with more than 83,000 military and civilian personnel located around the world.

His humble and excited spirit about military service motivates others to become a part of an entity that few understand. He says that over his twenty-six years in the Navy, he has learned that making the decision to enlist in any military branch means that people want to be a part of something bigger than themselves. When ex-slaves were called to serve in the 54 Regiment during the Civil War, they served with pride. Serving in the military meant respect for a soldier from their peers and fighting in service of their communities. Bonds are created based on shared experiences such as bonding during boot camp or training exercises, deploying for months on end aboard ships, or service in active war zones. You may have different cultural backgrounds but when you spend so much time with your comrades, your military relationships are sometimes stronger than family ties. The fellowship of military camaraderie is an added bonus to serving. "We are grateful when people take the time to thank us for our service," Troy expresses, "we really appreciate it." But he also shares his concern of the lack of appreciation for those who served in the Vietnam War. Those who served during the Vietnam War did not receive a hero's welcome when they returned home 50 years ago. Instead, they were harassed, spit upon and criticized because of they served the nation during an unpopular conflict. "While we as a nation have made efforts to right this wrong, there is still much that can be done to honor these heroes with the accolades they truly deserve." Troy stated.

The increased public appreciation of servicemen and women since 9/11 has been great, but all those who have served and continue to serve should receive appreciation because serving in the military is a choice that people make. That choice may cost them their lives, but it is a sacrifice many are willing to take. Appreciation is more than offering discounts and free admission. It is about living the life of gratitude by continuing to make this country great.



IILITARY APPRECIATION

AIRMAN TURNED ENTREPRENEUR ESTABLISHES A GRACE SPACE Articles by Angela Crosland



Crystal Bristow, ushering for a Melba Moore Concert at Coastal Carolina University, Conway SC

MULLLINS - These days, Mullins native, Crystal Bristow, is known more as the mother of seven-year-old Grace, her active and extremely bright daughter, for whom her business, Graceful Beauty & Brazilians, is named.

Grace has been credited with being a living example of the unmerited favor Bristow has enjoyed much of the child's life.

"Grace is simply that – amazing," said Bristow. "She has been my teacher, and I am forever grateful God has blessed me with her."

Carolina University, Conway SC Bristow is owner and operator of the establishment located in Fort Mill, S.C., which offers a gamut of spa treatments ranging from yoni steams and Brazilian waxing, to brow and lash tinting and facials.

"We encourage women to see their beauty starting within, so they can see their own beauty before the rest of the world," she said.

Her life prior to Grace and that of entrepreneurship was as an enlisted airman in the U.S. Air Force. Bristow was inspired to enlist because her father also served as an airman. She was trained as a health services management specialist and security forces augmentee in the U.S. Air Force.

As a Health Services Management Specialist, Bristow was

responsible for handling everything involving patient visits, including processing and maintaining medical records, providing payment options and addressing staffing issues. Her Security Forces Augmentee assignment was part of a special duty military unit formed to address short-term emergency and training needs.

The military prepared her somewhat for the difficulties of business, she said.

"The principles I learned as an airman, I still employ today - being detail-oriented, hardworking, staying focused and not being easily distracted," said Bristow, who said her goal has always been to be an example of the devoted airman. "I feel being dependable, loyal, committed and selfless constitutes being a good airman."

Admittedly having had a challenging upbringing, Bristow said her faith and the support of family and others in her rearing made a world of difference for her.

"I grew up in the church. It's where my foundation was built," said Bristow. "It took the village to raise me, and I am truly grateful for that."

Even today, she said her faith in God and her mother's strength of character keep her grounded and hopeful for what's next. Plans for the future include a franchise of full-service spas in multiple cities with some form of outreach for young women.

But if it doesn't happen just as she planned, Bristow said, she will remain open to God's plan.

"Sometimes, the things we pray for don't turn out how we envision because God can see the bigger picture," Bristow said.

FLY, FIGHT, WIN



Taj Troy

COLUMBIA - Columbia resident, Taj Troy's résumé reads like a novel, with him currently holding four jobs at once. Add to that his roles as a devoted husband and father, and it's hard to fathom how he manages it all.

Troy is the owner of Propel Aviation Center, LLC in Newberry, S.C. a flight training school he founded 11 months ago. He has been a pilot for United Airlines for more than six years and a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force National Guard for the past 24 years. Additionally, Troy is a licensed funeral director for his

family's business in his hometown of Mullins, S.C. It seems that nearly every road has led Troy to one destination - flight.

"I became an Air Force fighter pilot through a commitment I made to myself at a young age," said Troy. "Before I could drive a car, I knew I wanted to fly a fighter jet."

Doing so for the U.S. Air Force was also by choice, though Troy had a host of family members who also served if he needed any further reason. His uncle served in the Army during the Vietnam War and retired as a Lt. Colonel and two of his cousins retired as Air Force Lt. Colonels. One of his cousins is currently serving as a Naval Officer.

"I choose to serve for two reasons - out of obligation to protect those that I love and our nation and out of a passion to fly," Troy said. "There is no other profession where you can earn an opportunity to fly the world's most technologically advanced aircraft."

As a fighter pilot, Troy masters all aspects of aviation, not only steering the dynamic machines, but he also ensures it is operational by performing preflight inspections. The highlight of the job is to lead and train others to perform the same duties.

"I mentor many aspiring and current aviators," said Troy. "As an African American wearing an Air Force flight suit, I'm often approached by curious people. I quickly share what I think the recipe for success is, no matter the profession: commitment, persistence, dedication and patience."

Armed with that recipe, an MBA from Webster University and a bachelor's from the University of South Carolina in Technology Support and Training Management, Troy has taken his love of flight into business.

Training at the school includes private pilot lessons, flight review for aircraft owners, ground and drone certification instruction and so much more. The vision and mission of the company reads, "We are aviators with a purpose...motivated by flight and inspired by God." The anchor scripture for the school is Isaiah 40:31, "They shall mount on wings as eagles..."

"God's divine purpose motivates my existence, executing God's purpose for my life, essentially, doing my mission for his kingdom," said Troy. "This includes but is not limited to living as an example of Christ's teachings, loving my wife as Christ loved the church, nurturing my two children and raising them to be humble, loving, warriors for Christ.

It hasn't been the easiest of journeys for the family of four. A few years after his Kingston, Jamaica-born wife Maya established citizenship, their first child was born. Known mostly as Miracle Mila, the child suffered from a congenital heart defect. The couple has invested time in mitigating its impact on her life, and Mila is doing just fine. Not long after, the two welcomed their son Dutch into the world. Through the illness of his daughter and his impossible schedule, the family unit has become more closely knit, said Troy.

"I can honestly say that my family has been very supportive of my military career. Before every combat deployment they've been there to see me takeoff at two or three a.m.," said Troy. "When I return home, by the grace of God, they're there with open arms and a warm embrace. The foundation of support constructed by my family has enabled me to live to my fullest potential."

It's their support that has propelled him toward entrepreneurship and fulfillment of his most profound longing - flight.

For information about Propel Aviation Center, call (903) 776-7351, email <u>propelavc@gmail.com</u> or visit the website at <u>propelac.</u> com.

PERSEVERANCE AND RESILIENCY

Article Submitted courtesy of Berlinda J. Egleton



Major Michelle Law-Gordon Photo courtesy of Delward Brown Brown's Photography & Print)

As we come to the close of yet another month of celebration, we ask ourselves, "Why is it so important that we celebrate women?" The month of March is Women's History Month here in the United States, and we take this time to highlight our very own, Chaplain, Major Michelle Law-Gordon, who was added to the history books - not just those of the United States or South Carolina but in those which will be archived in her hometown of Florence.

It was Saturday, March 26, 2022, that we watched Law-Gordon be

promoted to her next rank during a celebratory event in the Florence Veterans Park in the presence of family, friends, as well as ministerial and military colleagues of all ranks and titles. It was a most delightful and memorable event.

Reaching this point in life was no easy task for Law-Gordon. Being a woman - an African American woman, at that - had its obstacles which could clearly have kept her disenfranchised from moving upward in her personal life and in her military career. But she knew who she served and what God had promised her, "noweapon formed against her would prosper." (Isaiah 54:17)



From her childhood days to her Wilson High School days, to her having to transfer from Knoxville College to Morris College to complete her studies and eventually graduate with a BA, as well as, from Troy State University and Shaw University with master's in Public Administration and Divinity - respectfully, Michelle overcame being stricken with periods of illness after illness. Then there were her ministerial then Pastoral appointments and dealing with death

after death of so many loved ones, she persevered through it all. No longer bound by infirmities or the opinion of others, she made it her goal to help others in whatever way she could.

Law-Gordon is not only a daughter, a sister, an aunt and godmother of four, she is an advocate for all children. Although she has always had an indescribable love for children, that love was clearly displayed when she organized and founded the Pee Dee Community Youth Choir, a 100-voice children's choir which included those from all walks of life from the Florence and surrounding areas.

Law-Gordon did not stop there. She continued moving forward knowing that there were so many who needed her compassion and love, in general - thus she, eventually, enlisted in the US Air Force and became a chaplain. It did not take long to accomplish what she aimed to do and that was to be the best that she could and was called to be: a servant. From First Lieutenant to captain to major and now to this current promotion, she kept on praying for and encouraging soldiers and civilians, alike. She declares she will not stop loving, caring, encouraging or praying. She is just that "resilient" as her mentor, Brigadier General Terrence A. Adams, stated throughout his heartfelt remarks of Michelle.

So, to her loving family, faithful friends and courageous colleagues, I re-present to you, and to those who are hearing of her for the first time, I introduce to you Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel Michelle Law-Gordon, a woman, to whom we all say, "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE" - to God and man.

MULLINS NATIVE MAKES STRIDES

Sergeant.

First Sergeant Antwan D. Walker

assumed responsibility of Golf

Forward Support Company of the 1st

Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment on

Feb 25, 2020. Walker has held several

enlisted leadership positions in

logistics, ranging from equipment

record and parts specialist to First

Walker is the senior advisor to the

company commander for all tactical,

promotion, assignment and retention

decisions. Responsible for the

As the First Sergeant of GFSC,



First Sergeant Antwan D. Walker

professional development and mentorship of 35 NCOs and 120 soldiers in 18 different MOS.

Walker is a native of Mullins, South Carolina, and enlisted in the United States Army in July 2001. He attended Basic Training at Fort Jackson, SC, and attended Advanced Individual Training at Fort Lee, VA and was awarded military occupational specialty 92A Automatic Logistical Specialist. Walker's deployments include Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Spartan Shield and Kosovo. Walker's pervious assignments include Senior Operations Sergeant, 244th Quartermaster Battalion Fort Lee, VA; First Sergeant, Papa Company 244th Quartermaster Battalion Fort Lee, VA; AIT Platoon Sergeant, Alpha Company, 244th Quartermaster Battalion Fort Lee, VA.

Walker has attended numerous military schools and training programs to include the following courses, Company Command and 1SG; Senior Leadership; Basic Leadership; AIT Platoon Sergeant; SHARP Foundation and GCSS Army Middle Management. Walker holds a Bachelor's in Management from Post University.

His awards and decorations include Meritorious Service Medal 2 Oak Leaf, Army Commendation Medal Ribbon 3 Oak Leaf, Army Achievement Medal 7 Oak Leaf. He has earned the Army Recruiter Identification badge.

Walker has two daughters Alaila 14 and Zuri 13.



ABB ANNOUNCES NEW POSITIONS OF TEAM MEMBERS

Submitted by Michele Rogers, brand ambassador



Jamie Carsten

Jamie Carsten is the vice president/ Florence City executive for the Florence area.

In his role, he will oversee profitability of Anderson Brothers Bank's three Florence branches, work on larger loan requests with lenders and increase deposits and loans in the overall market.

Carsten joined Anderson Brothers Bank in 2020, as vp/commercial loan

officer in the Hoffmeyer Branch. He brought with him over 22 years of financial experience. During his time at Anderson Brothers Bank he has helped lead the bank's efforts to better serve the communities of Florence.

"We look forward to Jamie leading by example in the Florence area by being involved in the community, taking care of customers' needs and growing the Anderson Brothers Bank brand," said Bryan Lenertz, vp/regional executive with Anderson Brothers Bank. "We've got a great team in Florence and we're excited for the future."



Breona Russell

Breona Russell recently promoted to branch operations coordinator of the Hoffmeyer office in Florence.

In her new role, Russell will provide administrative, supervisory and motivational support within the branch office to ensure effective and efficient customer service and teller operations. She will manage work activities of branch tellers by overseeing, planning and

scheduling duties; confer with retail sales and service leaders to resolve operational issues and extraordinary occurrences and also assist loan officers as needed.

Russell began her career in banking in 2013, as a teller and progressed to head teller with her previous employer. She joined Anderson Brothers Bank in November 2020, as head teller/CSR. She is a graduate of Midland Technical College where she obtained her degree in business administration.

"We are very excited to have Breona in her new role as branch operations coordinator," said Pam Sawyer, branch manager/loan officer with Anderson Brothers Bank. "When she joined our team she brought a wealth of banking knowledge and has continued to grow. She has demonstrated outstanding customer service consistently and is focused on building strong customer relationships. She has been, and will continue to be, a great asset to our customers and to our continued growth in Florence."



James, Jim, Hanley is vice president/ North Myrtle Beach City executive for the North Myrtle Beach area.

In his role, he will oversee profitability of Anderson Brothers Bank's North Myrtle Beach and Longs branches, work on larger loan requests with lenders and increase deposits and loans in the overall market. In 2015, Hanley joined Anderson Brothers

James (Jim) Hanley Bank as vp/commercial loan officer in the North Myrtle Beach branch. He brought with him over 20 years

of financial experience. He is also 2011, graduate of the South Carolina Bankers School.

"We look forward to Jim's leadership in the North Myrtle Beach area. He is involved in the community, has a proven ability to assist clients with all their financial service needs, and will make a significant impact in our continued growth in the North Myrtle

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Beach area," said Bryan Lenertz, vp/regional executive with Anderson Brothers Bank.



Teresa Lutz promoted to branch operations coordinator in the Market Common office.

As branch operations coordinator, Lutz will continue to assist customers with a full array of financial products and services including commercial and consumer deposits. She will provide administrative and supervisory support within the branch to ensure effective and

Teresa Lutz

efficient customer service and teller operations. Lutz joined Anderson Brothers Bank in 2019, in the position of teller/CSR. She was later promoted to head teller in 2021.

"Teresa leads by example in doing all that she can to assist the customers of ABB and we are excited to have her in the role of branch operations coordinator," said Lenertz, vp/regional executive with Anderson Brothers Bank. "Teresa is well versed in product knowledge. She is enthusiastic and sincere in her efforts to provide outstanding customer service."



Shanda Logan



Anderson Brothers Bank continues to expand its lending team with the recent additions of Shanda Logan and Miranda Ray. Logan is based in the Florence Cashua Drive office and Ray is based in the Conway Main Street office.

In their role, as loan officers, they will assist customers with the various financial services offered by the bank including consumer and automobile financing.

Logan is a 2005, graduate of the University of South Carolina. She joined Anderson Brothers Bank in November as loan officer, bringing with her over 10 years of experience in consumer lending. Ray joined Anderson Brothers Bank in 2014. Her previous positions as teller/ CSR, call center representative, and indirect lending led her to her new position as loan officer.

Miranda Rav

"Anderson Brothers Bank is here to serve the great communities we are located in, and to serve the customers well, that frequent the branch locations," said Jeff Williamson, vp consumer finance director. "Both Shanda and Miranda will fit in well with this servanthood mindset and mentality. Adding both of them to the Anderson Brothers Bank team has strengthened our ability to further serve the public. We are fortunate that they have joined the team."

About Anderson Brothers Bank

ANDERSON



Anderson Brothers Bank is a full service community bank BROTHERS BANK offering a complete range of competitive loan services and

deposit products. Founded in 1933, this family-owned bank blends the elements of traditional personal service, local market awareness and advanced technology to meet the financial needs of its customers.

Anderson Brothers Bank offers 25 branches conveniently located in 17 communities throughout the Pee Dee, Coastal and Low Country regions of South Carolina. The bank's main office is located at 101 North Main Street, P.O. Box 310 in Mullins, South Carolina. For additional information about Anderson Brothers Bank, call (843) 464-6271 or visit ABBank.com.



FOUR STEPS TO REACH YOUR SAVING GOALS

Whether you're planning for a short-term goal, e.g., emergency fund, home project or a long-term goal, e.g., retirement, planning can help you succeed.

It's never too late to start making saving a priority. We want to help our members meet their short- and long-term goals, and there are several ways they can get started.

1. Make SMART goals

A SMART goal can help you make a plan you can achieve. It can help you focus on what it will take to reach your goal and make a plan that's doable. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. So, whether you're saving for a new phone or a down payment on a house, make your goal specific, set a deadline, decide what it will take to reach it and then make sure it's realistic. **2. Find ways to make small changes**

The next step in your plan should be to look at how much you can afford to save and if there are expenses you might be able to cut. For example, are there subscriptions or streaming services you don't use? Can you ask insurers, or services like internet or phone providers, for a discount on your plan? If you make small changes gradually, you'll be more likely to stick to your plan.

Keep in mind, cutting back on certain expenses doesn't have to be forever - you can choose some for a temporary break. 3. Separate and automate your savings

It can be easier to see your progress if you set up two accounts: a checking account for regular bills like rent, student loans and car payments and another account for everything else.

Once you've decided what you can afford to save, consider setting up an automatic transfer. You'll only have to do it once and then your savings will grow automatically.

This is a guaranteed way to boost your savings. If you have direct deposit, consider sending a set amount into your savings each pay cycle. This way you'll be consistently saving without even thinking about it.

4. Earn more on your money

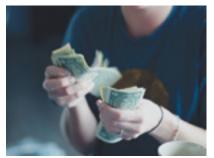
If you're looking at short-term savings goals, e.g., a dream vacation, you might want to consider putting your money into a certificate account. In general, certificates typically earn higher dividends than regular savings accounts, so you may reach your goal even sooner than you expected.

By making small, habitual changes over time, you will set yourself up for success - it's never too late to start.

The best time to start building your future is now. Making SMART goals can help make saving more doable.



LIVING PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK: A CREDIT UNION SOLUTION



Making ends meet. A shoestring budget. Scraping by. Scrimping. No matter what you call it, a recent study finds that seven out of ten Americans are now living paycheck-to-paycheck. If you've never had to adopt this lifestyle, consider yourself lucky. At Palmetto First, we understand the immense

burden that a paycheck-to-paycheck budget can place on you and those you love. The last thing you need is someone wagging their finger at you chastising you for not managing your money better. That's why we've compiled a list of ways you can save money on a month-to-month basis, as well as some solutions unique to credit unions.

Track Your Spending – Seems obvious, right? You may think so, but a common financial pitfall is that many people don't really know where their money is going. They swipe and they spend, not keeping track of how those dollars are adding up. Once you start taking stock of where your money is going each month, you will quickly see the things you can cut out to save some money. Do you really NEED a pint of gourmet ice cream each week?

Have A No-Spend Day – It is time to embrace the joy of NOT spending money. For many, getting something new or treating themselves to a Starbucks adds a little sparkle to their day. However, not every day needs that sparkle. Once a month, designate a No-Spend Day. This means you aren't going to spend money on anything. No Starbucks, no afternoon snack. While a No-Spend Day will take some planning, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the extra money you have



leftover. Just don't spend that money the next day.

Try Incognito Mode -This could be one of the simplest ways to remove temptation. Use an incognito

browser to thwart tracking data from serving you targeted ads. After all, how many times have you seen an ad for something and thought, why don't I already own that?

These are but a few ways you can make minor changes that will have a big impact in the long run. However, you're a member of a credit union, you have access to some unique opportunities that can help improve your financial situation.

Refinance Your Home – A home payment can be a huge hurdle between you and financial stability. That's why it might be beneficial to refinance your home with us. When you refinance your home, you can potentially get a lower monthly payment and a lower rate. This will allow you to pay your home off quicker and free up funds that can be allocated to other things.

Specialized Loans – Sometimes, you just need that little extra to get you over the next big hump. As a credit union, we have the opportunity to offer more specialized loans at lower rates than big banks. We offer personal loans and debt consolidation loans that can help you build or re-build your credit or pay off higher interest loans with a lower payment, setting you up for a better financial future.

Dedicated Resources – As a credit union, we're a small group of dedicated individuals. That's why we offer money management resources to our members. Whether you need help developing a budget or determining if a refinance is right for you, we can help. Contact us today to make an appointment.

Sources: https://www.studyfinds.org/living-paycheck-to-paycheck/

LOCAL lending decisions mean a faster YES. UNbank with us.



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\$50 MILLION DEPOSIT SUPPORTS DIVERSE-OWNED LENDING AT M&F BANK Submitted by Food Lion



SALISBURY, NC - Food Lion deposited \$50 million in M&F Bank, the second-oldest minority-owned bank in the United States. M&F Bank has branches located in Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, Greensboro and Winston-Salem, NC. The deposit will provide financial opportunities for the communities it serves, loans to small businesses, investments in technology and financial literacy programs.

Through J.P. Morgan's Empowering Change program, the deposit underscores Food Lion's commitment to support diverse-owned suppliers and communities. Food Lion's deposit is an extension of community work that began more than 30 years ago. Support of diversity, equity and inclusion drives all aspects of the business, including an integrated workforce, inclusive workplace and inspirational marketplace.

The funds will be managed by J.P. Morgan Asset Management through their Empowering Change program, part of their commitment to bringing new economic opportunities to historically disadvantaged communities.

About Food Lion

Food Lion, based in Salisbury, N.C., since 1957, has more than 1,100 stores in 10 Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states and employs more than 82,000 associates. By leveraging its longstanding heritage of low prices and convenient locations, Food Lion is working to own the easiest full shop grocery experience in the Southeast, anchored by a strong commitment to affordability, freshness and the communities it serves. Through Food Lion Feeds, the company has donated more than 800 million meals to individuals and families since 2014, and has committed to donate 1.5 billion meals by 2025. Food Lion is a company of Ahold Delhaize USA, the U.S. division of Zaandam-based Ahold Delhaize. For more information, visit www.foodlion.com. Job applicants may visit www.foodlion.com/careers.

About M&F

Founded in 1907 in North Carolina, M&F Bank is the second-oldest African American owned bank in the United States. With \$372 million in total assets, M&F Bank is the eighth-largest African American owned financial institution in the United States and the only bank in North Carolina to receive CDFI designation. The bank's mission is to promote personal and community development by providing capital to small- and medium-sized businesses in its local communities.

About J.P. Morgan Asset Management

J.P. Morgan Asset Management, with assets under management of USD 2.7 trillion, as of 30 September 2021, is a global leader in investment management. J.P. Morgan Asset Management's clients include institutions, retail investors and high net worth individuals in every major market throughout the world. J.P. Morgan Asset Management offers global investment management in equities, fixed income, real estate, hedge funds, private equity and liquidity. For more information, visit www.jpmorganassetmanagement.com.

DON'T LET THESE 5 MISCONCEPTIONS KEEP YOU FROM MAKING A WILL



Have you put off making a will? If so, you're not alone. According to a 2020 survey conducted by <u>Caring.com</u>, only 32 percent of American adults have estate planning documents, like wills and living trusts, in place.

While preparing a will may not be the most pleasant way to spend an afternoon, it could be the most productive—especially for your heirs. Without a valid will, your assets could be tied up in probate court for months, possibly years. What's more, the court will be forced to make decisions that may not

conform to your wishes.

Why are so many people reluctant to take this basic—but important step? In many cases, it is the result of five common misconceptions: **1.** I'm not wealthy enough to need a will.

If you consider the value of your car, furniture, and other worldly possessions, you may be worth more than you think. Plus, some items may have sentimental value to your heirs and will need to be distributed fairly. You can also use a will to make legal arrangements—such as naming a guardian for your minor children—that have nothing to do with your wealth.

2. My spouse will inherit everything.

Consider children from a previous marriage and discuss with your attorney how to include them in your estate planning. Plus, there's always a chance that you and your spouse could pass away at the same time. If so, the distribution of assets could get tricky. Also, be aware that assets with a designated beneficiary, such as life insurance, IRAs or 401(k)s, goes to the designated beneficiary. So, check periodically to make sure your beneficiaries are up to date.

3. All my assets are jointly titled.

Legal titles, such as Joint Tenants with Right of Survivorship can be helpful when it comes to transitioning financial accounts. In some cases, however, they can make things more complicated—especially if the joint owner has also passed away and no further instructions have been provided.

4. I don't have any heirs.

If you don't have any surviving family members, your assets can still be put to good use. You can leave them to a trusted friend, to your alma mater, or to a favorite charity.

5. I'm not ready to set my final wishes in stone.

Updating a will is very common, and because circumstances can change, almost expected. Once the basic framework is in place, adjustments are relatively easy to make and can usually be done at a modest cost.

Please don't let these common misconceptions keep you from preparing a will. Given the vital role a will plays in distributing your assets, protecting your loved ones, and making sure your final wishes are carried out, now is the time to seek out a qualified attorney and make sure you have a legally viable will in place.

This educational third-party article is provided as a courtesy by Julie A Cord, Agent, CA Insurance. Lic. #4166847 New York Life Insurance Company. For information on life insurance for your estate planning needs, please contact Julie A Cord at jacord@ft.newyorklife.com or 317.289.301.

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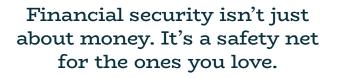
Nick DiUlio, "More than Half of American Adults Don't Have a Will, 2017-2020 Survey Shows," <u>Caring.com.https://www.caring.com/</u> <u>caregivers/estate-planning/wills-survey</u> -

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THE LONG, WINDING ROAD TO RECOVERY

Submitted by Katie Baxter, D.O., MUSC Health Pulmonology and Critical Care



Being a patient or having a family member in the intensive care unit can undoubtedly be a scary and lifechanging experience. What most people, including many clinicians, don't realize is surviving the illness that caused someone to be in the ICU often marks only the beginning of the recovery journey. Post Intensive Care Syndrome is a term used to describe the physical, cognitive and mental health impairments that can persist

Katie Baxter. D.O.

even after a critical illness and a person is no longer in the hospital. Critical care medicine has advanced, and more people survive a critical disease than ever before. There is now increasing recognition of the after-effects of critical illness. It is difficult to capture precisely how often ICU survivors develop post-intensive care syndrome. Still, it's estimated around 50 percent will have some form of impairment even one year after their ICU stay.

What are the symptoms?

Physical impairments often include persistent weakness or problems with mobility like walking. Cognitive impairments include trouble with memory, attention and thinking clearly. Mental health effects can be more difficult for others to recognize but are often very distressing to the patient. They can include symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including vivid nightmares, severe anxiety, flashbacks, depression, excessive tiredness, irritability and sleep difficulties are common.

Who is most at risk?

ICU patients who develop shock and require medications to increase their blood pressure. Those with respiratory failure requiring a ventilator or breathing machine to breathe for them for several days. Also, patients who develop delirium, a type of alteration in a patient's mental status, and patients above age 65 or who have certain other pre-existing conditions.

What can you do to help?

While it's difficult to see a loved one so sick, especially when they are unable to communicate with you, having family at the bedside is extremely helpful. In person family support has been more difficult with the COVID pandemic. Make sure to ask about the hospital's visitation policy. Some evidence suggests diaries kept during an ICU stay can help fill in the memory gaps of what happened for patients later on. Physical therapy, both in the hospital and after, is essential. One of the essential things is to raise awareness of the condition. Patients, families, and caregivers need to be aware of this condition for multiple reasons. For ICU survivors affected by PICS, it's important to know you are not alone and there are support groups. Families and caregivers, including primary care physicians, should be aware of what to expect and what resources are available, including counseling, support groups and referral to the appropriate specialists.

Dr. Katie Baxter is board certified by the American Board of Internal and Pulmonary Disease medicine and specializes in Pulmonology & Critical Care Medicine at MUSC Health -Pulmonology in Florence. She is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, please call (843) 673-7529, or visit MUSChealth.org/florence.

MANAGING THYROID DISORDERS

Submitted by Dr. J. Mark Harris, FACS, MUSC Health Florence



Our thyroid gland, that tiny organ in the front of our neck just below our Adam's apple, has a powerful role in how our body functions. "The thyroid gland produces hormones that help with essential metabolic function," says Dr. J. Mark Harris, FACS, an MUSC Health Florence surgeon. "These hormones regulate our weight, heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature." A malfunctioning thyroid, called

Dr. Mark Harris

thyroid disease, leads to a variety of symptoms, including weight gain or weight loss, difficulty sleeping, anxiety and blurry vision.

Harris says thyroid disease is very common, with an estimated 20 million people in the United States having some type of thyroid disorder. Women are about five to eight times more likely to be diagnosed with a thyroid condition than men.

"Thyroid disease can be benign or malignant," Harris says. Benign thyroid disease includes hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism, as well as goiter disease. Both types can be caused by other diseases that attack the thyroid gland. "Hyperthyroidism occurs when the body overproduces thyroid hormones, causing the body to burn energy excessively," Harris says. "Some of the symptoms include weight loss, rapid heartbeat, insomnia and blurred vision. "Hypothyroidism occurs when the body produces too little of the hormone, leading to weight gain and fatigue."

Hypothyroidism is treated with medications. Hyperthyroidism can be treated with medications, radioactive iodine or surgery, Harris says. Goiter occurs when the thyroid grows irregularly or as a result of nodules that develop on the thyroid gland. "Although thyroid disease is complex, it is generally managed by a patient's endocrinologist and primary care physician with referral to a surgeon when the condition becomes more severe or cancerous," Harris says.

When a patient with hyperthyroidism does not respond to medications or radioactive iodine, Harris recommends a thyroidectomy, a surgical procedure to remove a portion of the gland or the entire thyroid gland.

Other common indications for thyroidectomy are an enlarged goiter, which can be compressive and cause problems breathing or swallowing, swelling in the neck, changes in voice and cosmetic issues, the presence of multiple or suspicious nodules after a needle biopsy with ultrasound and thyroid cancer.

The surgery, which takes about 90 minutes and is performed with general anesthesia, involves a small incision across the lower neck. Patients usually stay in the hospital one night and can resume their normal activities in one to two weeks, Harris says.

Patients who have their entire thyroid removed must take medication daily to replace the hormone originally produced by the thyroid, but can expect to live a normal life, Harris says.

"This medication is easily managed by a primary care physician," Harris says. "We work closely with our patients' physicians to make sure they're appropriately taken care of. For patients who need additional care and follow-up, we have the ability to send them to our colleagues at MUSC Health in Charleston."

Harris is associated with Floyd Medical Group in Florence. He practices general surgery and has extensive experience performing surgery for thyroid disease. He is accepting new patients and can be reached at 843-669-1220.

HOPEHEALTH PARTNERS WITH TOGETHER SC FOR GREATER IMPACT

SANTEE/ LAKE CITY - Through an

initiative made possible through the American

Rescue Plan Act, HopeHealth and Together SC recently launched a series of conversations

with community leaders to address partnership

needs and identify the critical social

determinants of health conditions impacting

the people they serve. After several Zoom gatherings, more than 50 nonprofit

representatives gathered at the Bean Market

in Lake City and the Santee Conference Center

for meaningful conversations about how we

can best serve the citizens of Clarendon,

Submitted by Sheridan K. Murray, BS, BA, publications coordinator, HopeHealth



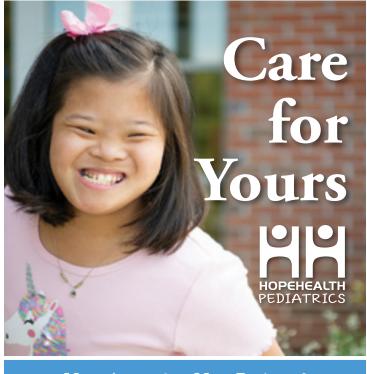
Nicole Echols and Falecia Moore both of HopeHealth discussing partnerships in Clarendon County at the Santee meeting

Orangeburg, Lower Florence and Williamsburg Counties.

HopeHealth has enlisted Together SC, a state network of nonprofit, philanthropic, and community leaders, to facilitate a program to connect and build truly collaborative partnerships in HopeHealth's four-county service area.

"It's exciting when organizational leaders working closely with community residents identify unmet needs, and then we can help connect those leaders with other groups who can help meet those needs. These partnerships reduce redundancy and improve service delivery," said Madeleine McGee, president of Together SC. "HopeHealth's commitment to encouraging and supporting such collaborations with community groups will be a game-changer for these groups and those they serve."

The meetings in Santee and Lake City brought together several organizations from Clarendon and Orangeburg as well as Williamsburg and Lower Florence counties to discuss details of the collaboration. It



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Erin Johnson with Central Carolina Community Foundation and Andre Woods Reach out and read at Santee meeting



Filippo Ravalico South Carolina Environmental law project speaking about the community needs and the services his nonprofit offers.

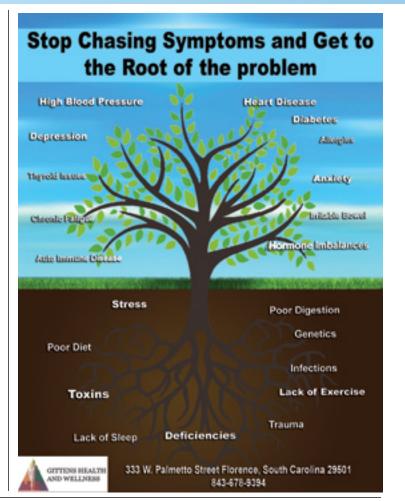
also included training and facilitated discussion by the leadership team of Fact Forward, which let attendees understand the important roles played by nonprofits in all areas of social determinants of health.

This initiative is currently in the stages of developing program objectives. "I am thrilled to be working with these organizations who serve some of the most underserved areas in our state," said Nicole Echols, director of external affairs at HopeHealth. "We look forward to addressing five critical areas of social determinants of health." These five areas Echols refers to include: 1. economic stability, 2. education, 3. health and health care, 4. neighborhood and built environment and 5. social and community.

To learn more about the initiative, go to togethersc.org/hopehealth-partnershipinitiative.

HopeHealth is a nonprofit leader in providing affordable, expert primary and specialty health care services for all ages in Aiken, Clarendon, Florence, Orangeburg and Williamsburg Counties. Our federally qualified health centers are the health care home of choice for nearly 60,000 patients. To become a patient, call 843-

667-9414 or visit hope-health.org.



MUSC FIRST IN THE STATE TO CONDUCT ROBOTIC-ASSISTED BRONCHOSCOPY

MUSC Health Florence

Medical Center is the first in

the state of South Carolina to conduct a shape sensing

robotic-assisted bronchoscopy.

This new procedure allows

physicians to identify lung

cancer earlier and give patients

much better outcomes through

early detection and treatment.

Medical Center is the first in

the state to perform a shape

sensing robotic-assisted

bronchoscopy and first in the

"MUSC Health Florence

Submitted by John Russell, MUSC Health Florence Division marketing manager



Pulmonologist Dr. Ramzy Hourany, left, conducts the first robotic-assisted bronchoscopy in the state at MUSC Health Florence Medical Center. Also attending are Chief Medical Officer Rami Zebian and pulmonologist Dr. Katlyn Baxter.

region to perform robotic-assisted bronchoscopy," MUSC Health Florence Division Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Rami Zebian said.

"This life-enhancing procedure allows us to visualize and biopsy remote parts of the lung typically inaccessible using a traditional bronchoscopy. Robotic-assisted bronchoscopy will allow more precision and accuracy in lung nodule biopsies, and it is a safe and effective way to target areas far into the peripheral lung. This is extremely beneficial for providers and patients, as it will allow us to detect, diagnose and treat lung cancer much earlier."

The robotic-assisted bronchoscopy is able to access all 18 segments of the lung's airways using an ultra-thin catheter and integrated vision probe. Shape-sensing technology allows the operator to precisely locate the lung nodule for biopsy. Immediately following the biopsy, it is sent to determine if the sample is benign or malignant.

For more information, please call MUSC Health - Pulmonology at 843.673.7529, or visit MUSCHealth.org/florence.

About MUSC

Founded in 1824, in Charleston, SC, MUSC is the state's only comprehensive academic health system, with a unique mission to preserve and optimize human life in South Carolina through education, research and patient care. Each year, MUSC educates more than 3,000 students in six colleges: Dental Medicine, Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy, and trains more than 850 residents and fellows in its health system. MUSC brought in more than \$327.6 million in research funds in fiscal year 2021, leading the state overall in research funding. MUSC also leads the state in federal and National Institutes of Health funding, with more than \$220 million. For information on academic programs, visit musc.edu.

As the health care system of the Medical University of South Carolina, MUSC Health is dedicated to delivering the highest quality and safest patient care while educating and training generations of outstanding health care providers and leaders to serve the people of South Carolina and beyond. Patient care is provided at 14 hospitals with approximately 2,500 beds and five additional hospital locations in development, more than 350 telehealth sites and connectivity to patients' homes, and nearly 750 care locations situated in all regions of South Carolina. In 2021, for the seventh consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report named MUSC Health the No. 1 hospital in South Carolina. To learn more about clinical patient services, visit muschealth.org.

MUSC and its affiliates have collective annual budgets of \$4.4 billion. The nearly 25,000 MUSC team members include world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers, scientists, students, affiliates and care team members who deliver groundbreaking education, research, and patient care.

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN!!! We wanted to take another moment to thank our patients, family, friends, and entire Pee Dee community for the outpouring of love and support throughout the years. We are excited about another season of the "Best of the Pee Dee" Events Best of the Pee Dee Rest of the Pee Dee Best of the Pee Dee WINNERS PUBLISHED: NOMINATIONS: VOTING-MARCH 29 - APRIL 14 MAY 10 - MAY 28 SATURDAY, JULY 30 ollow us on social media at One Source Integrative Med for updates and first access to the exciting news to come! We have always prided ourselves in bringing the most innovative, advanced, and best options to our patients. **ONESOURCE**

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE – CHANGING LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH LUPUS by Helen Adams, MUSC



Edith Williams, Ph.D.

CHARLESTON - Edith Williams, Ph.D., believes good old-fashioned footwork combined with science-based care can change the lives of people with lupus. "A mantra of mine is making the invisible visible, and I feel like my work has done that in a number of different ways," said the associate professor in the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Medicine.

We're profiling Williams to highlight all she has done to elevate and address the concerns of women suffering from lupus, which has been called an invisible illness. The chronic disease causes the immune system to attack healthy tissue.

Williams' efforts began more than 20 years ago with the Buffalo Lupus Project, which explored cases of lupus and other autoimmune diseases near a hazardous waste site. These days, her work involves a study looking at whether women with lupus can help each other improve their health through culturally tailored peer mentoring.

In graduate school at the State University of New York, she got involved with the federally funded Buffalo Lupus Project. The work was career defining. "I learned about lupus and how these ladies and their families were affected in a very real way, how they managed the disease within their own families and their roles as mothers and wives and community advocates," she said.

She knew she wanted to improve the lives of people with lupus and launched some self-management programs for the women she'd met. As she built on that, she became a faculty member at the University of South Carolina, won a Pfizer fellowship, received an NIH, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Skin Diseases Mentored Research Scientist Development Award and moved to MUSC, where a mentor was building a public health program.

That mentor, John Vena, Ph.D., chaired the Department of Public Health Sciences. "We recruited her to continue her important studies of lupus in the African American community with a dual appointment in the Department of Public Health Sciences and the Division of Rheumatology in the Department of Medicine. Dr. Williams has shown herself to be intelligent, diligent, careful and insightful."

Williams was recently named one of the great women behind great lupus discoveries. And she's thinking big. "Not only am I working to make the issues that African American women with lupus face more visible, more meaningful - I'm trying to make other experiences of women more visible."

She pointed to a phenomenon known as the Superwoman Schema. "That's what they call it in scientific literature. We care for children. We care for elders. We care for other generations of children that aren't ours. So we have a lot of grandparents who are now in the role of parents and particularly a lot of marginalized women," Williams said.

"Underrepresented women face a lot of these different roles. They put their own care on the back burner and then end up in pretty bad shape. I want to make those circumstances visible as well, and let women know that it's OK, it's even best, that you take some time to care for yourself."

That's especially important for women living with lupus. Williams loves watching the changes that can take place when they get the support they need — and feel seen.

"It makes them feel like they can do things they didn't think they could do. It allows them to feel motivated about getting up in the morning and facing their day and communicating with their families about how they're feeling. We've seen women switch careers, buy homes and start businesses - things they really needed a boost of confidence to do. They've received it from the camaraderie that we've been able to build within these projects that really link ladies together."



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".



TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

Submitted by Kendrea Moore, FNP-C



Kendrea Moore, FNP-C

During the pandemic, many individuals have taken advantage of convenient healthcare services such as home health and telehealth services and many have been made aware of the health disparities within our communities more than ever. Practical Purpose Solutions' goal is to continue to help individuals enhance their quality of living through various services. Now, that we have been made aware of the many health issues that we all are at increased risk of, due to factors such as stress and lifestyle habits,

we believe it is time to normalize, the luxury of healthcare, in order to continue to live through life.

Practical Purpose Solutions helps those who need convenient healthcare services. Many patients have taken their self-care to new levels. This has led to increased self-esteem and motivation to stay focused on their purpose, daily duties and more. Through elite healthcare services, patients have seen a decrease in hemoglobin A1C levels and controlled blood pressures.

Dehydration is one of the leading causes of many acute and chronic conditions. Dehydration can lead to headaches, dizziness, brain fog, sunken eyes, dry skin and so much more. Oftentimes, individuals are working day-to-day with symptoms, not realizing they are simply dehydrated. Practical Purpose Solutions' IV Hydration therapy consists of minerals and vitamins which are infused into the patient. IV Hydration services have been most beneficial for patients. It has allowed many individuals to sustain their hydration status and enhance their energy simultaneously.

Practical Purpose Solutions has prevented many individuals in the community from having to go to the Emergency Room due to being able to receive IV Hydration services at their practice. When individuals are not feeling strong enough to leave home they are able to provide services at home. Being able to provide this healthcare service at home has helped aid in the healing process of individuals who are weak and don't have the strength or refuse to leave home to go to a hospital or urgent care facility.

Obesity is one of the leading causes of many chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea and more. Practical Purpose Solutions believes that weight loss management does not always have to require medications to get results. They understand that individuals who are busy find it challenging to slow down and take care of themselves. Necessities such as hydration and proper nutrients can be the most challenging at times, but our services are designed to help individuals who struggle with these problems. Practical Purpose Solutions encourages patients struggling to take care of themselves and to take control over their health. Stop stressing, slow down, pace yourself and focus on your health. There is no need in running a race to make money, excel to obtain new titles and positions and, when the vision is met, you can't enjoy it.

If you are ready to look and feel better internally as you succeed in life, take a chance and try Practical Purpose Solutions' luxury healthcare services. It is time for you to forget about your past experience and focus on your future when it comes to your health. Take the practical steps to live on purpose, starting with your health.

Practical Purpose Solutions is located at 2215 West Palmetto Street, Suite F, Florence, SC. To learn more about its services, contact 843-799-2210 or visit <u>www.practicalpurposesolutions.com</u>.



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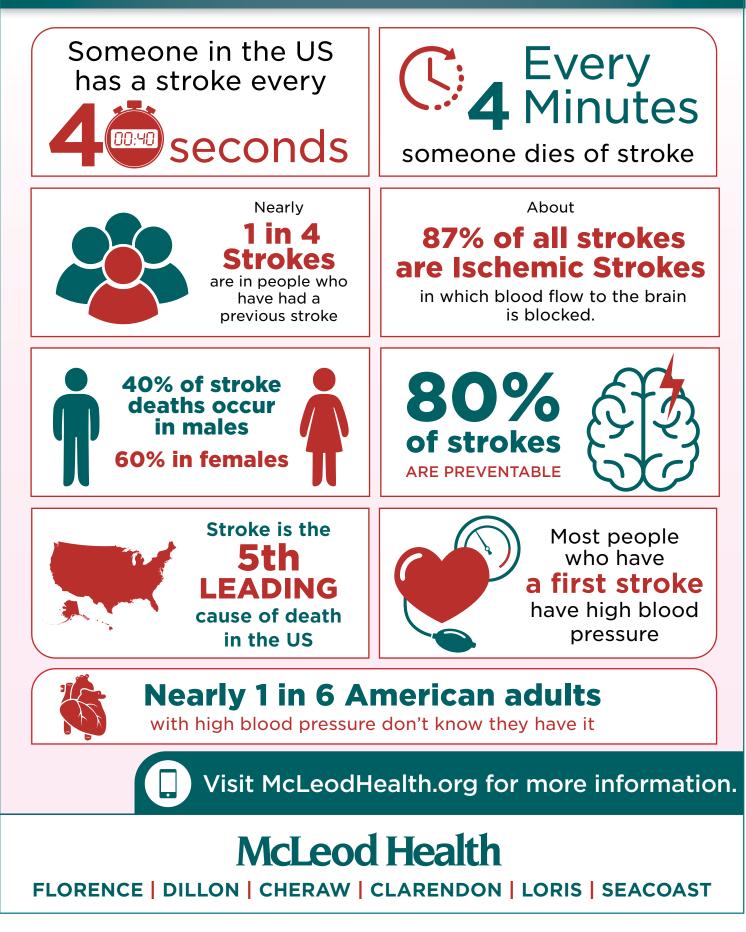
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GET THE FACTS ON STROKE



SAVE A LIFE. ACT FAST.

Stroke is the fifth cause of death in South Carolina and a leading cause of disability. A stroke occurs when blood is prevented from reaching the brain. This lack of blood flow causes the brain cells to die.

It's important to be able to recognize the symptoms of a stroke and act fast for the best chance of survival and recovery. Talk to your primary care physician on actions you can take to live a healthy, stroke-free life.



Know The Symptoms of a Stroke.

- Numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg – especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, trouble speaking, or understanding
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Severe headache with no known cause





Call 911 immediately if you have any of these symptoms.



McLeod Health.org

ORPHAN APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR

Articles submitted by McLeod Health



Crystal Orphan

all State and Federal regulations, while maintaining the excellent patient care that differentiates McLeod on quality and service.

On accepting this new role, Orphan said, "I am very excited about the future of our Hospice and Palliative Care programs and truly honored to continue the great work started by Joan Pavy."

Born and raised in Vermont, Orphan graduated from the University of Vermont with an associate degree in Nursing in 1994. She moved to South Carolina and began her nursing career at Marion County Medical Center as a staff nurse in 1994. She held various roles at Marion County Medical Center including Unit Nurse Manager and House Supervisor. Orphan began her career with McLeod Hospice in 2005, as a referral nurse. In 2019, she graduated from Walden University with a Master of Science in Nursing and was promoted to director of Clinical Services, 2019 - 2021and then director of operations.

Orphan lives in Florence with her husband, Chris, of 24 years. They have one son, Nicholas.

Crystal Orphan has been promoted to administrator of the McLeod Hospice and Palliative Care Programs.

In her new role, Orphan is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the McLeod Hospice and Palliative Care Programs. She provides oversight in these areas, a position previously held by Joan Pavy for more than 30 years. Orphan also supports plans to grow these programs in the inland and coastal communities served by McLeod Health. Additionally, she is responsible for ensuring compliance with

HURT NAMED VICE PRESIDENT



McLeod Health is pleased to announce that Kelly M. Hurt, DHA, MHA, MBA, BS, has been named vice president of Human Resources for McLeod Health.

Hurt comes to McLeod from Southeast Health in Dothan, Alabama, where she served as vice president of Human Resources and Support Operations. In her new role, she will be responsible for the day-to-day leadership on all Human Resources Operations including recruiting and staffing, compensation and benefits administration, employee partner relations and retention,

Kelly M. Hurt

organizational learning and Human Resources Information Systems and records management.

Hurt received a Doctorate in Healthcare Administration in 2020, from Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio. She also has a Master's in Healthcare Administration and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Hurt is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

"It is an honor to join the McLeod Health family. The mission and values of McLeod and the organization's dedication to serve others align with my personal goals to improve the lives of our employees," said Hurt. "I look forward to working with our Human Resources staff to ensure we recruit and retain the right talent to meet the changing and growing needs of McLeod Health."

McLeod Health welcomes Hurt to its team of professionals caring for patients and staff in the 18 counties the organization serves in northeastern South Carolina and southeastern North Carolina.

not for profit tax exempt charitable organization whose mission is to

generate philanthropic and community support to perpetuate medical

MCLEOD HEALTH FOUNDATION RECEIVES \$25,000 GRANT FROM TRUIST FOUNDATION

McLeod Health

The Choice for Medical Excellence

The McLeod Health Foundation today announced it received a \$25,000 grant from the Truist Foundation to support the purchase of a new Mobile Mammography Unit.

"We are pleased to receive this funding from Truist Foundation," said Jill Bramblett, executive director of the McLeod Foundation. "This support will continue to ensure life-saving access to annual mammograms through the new McLeod Mobile Mammography Unit."

Donors to the McLeod Foundation made it possible for the purchase of the original unit in 2008. Since that time, breast cancer has been detected in 152 women and more than 33,000 women have been able to conveniently receive a screening mammogram -- many at industries throughout the region. This incredible resource needs to be replaced so it can reliably travel throughout the region to offer this special service to women, according to Bramblett.

"Providing convenient access to medical care and screening supports our communities and can save lives," said Mike Brenan, South Carolina, Regional President for Truist, speaking on behalf of the Truist Foundation. "The new Mobile Mammography Unit is an important addition that will help McLeod Health fulfill its mission and is another way Truist inspires and builds better lives and communities."

About McLeod Health Foundation

The McLeod Foundation was established in 1986 as an independent

excellence at McLeod Health. Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Foundation has raised more than \$100 million and has provided support for numerous programs at McLeod Health. These programs include support for the McLeod Children's Hospital, The Guest House at McLeod, McLeod Hospice, the McLeod Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, McLeod Heart and Vascular Institute and McLeod Diabetes Services, just to name a few. Simply put the Foundation funds better health for thousands of families throughout northeastern South Carolina and southeastern North Carolina. Separately chartered, the McLeod Health Foundation is governed by a voluntary Board of Trustees. Gifts to the McLeod Foundation are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law and 100 percent of every gift received goes directly to the designated area.
About Truist Foundation The Truist Foundation is committed to Truist Financial Corporation's

The Truist Foundation is committed to Truist Financial Corporation's purpose to inspire and build better lives and communities. Established in 2020, the foundation makes strategic investments in nonprofit organizations to help ensure the communities it serves have more opportunities for a better quality of life. The Truist Foundation's grants and activities focus on building career pathways to economic mobility and strengthening small businesses. Learn more at <u>Truist.com/</u> Foundation.





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.

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NEW CARESOUTH CAROLINA AND DHEC LOCATION IN DILLON COUNTY

Submitted by Amanda Adelman, marketing director CareSouth Carolina



DILLON - Through a collaborative effort, CareSouth Carolina and the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control will open a new location in Dillon, May 10. The office, located at 1016 Old

Latta Hwy, Dillon, S.C., will take over as the new location for both CareSouth Carolina-currently located at 207 E. Monroe Street-and SC-DHEC, Dillon County Health Department, currently located at 201 W. Hampton St. The partnership will allow the two organizations to provide more convenient and accessible services to Dillon County.

"This is a great opportunity for collaboration, and we couldn't have better partners in this than CareSouth Carolina and Dillon County Government," said Jim Bruckner, DHEC's public health director for the Pee Dee. "The co-location of DHEC and CareSouth Carolina services will expand access to more comprehensive health services by making them more convenient and accessible to the residents of Dillon County."

"In this partnership CareSouth Carolina will be assuming some of the direct clinical services currently provided by DHEC. DHEC will continue to see WIC clients and will focus on the more traditional core public health services like community epidemiology, communicable disease surveillance/ management; tuberculosis surveillance and treatment; compliance work, Title X, vaccines for children, newborn home visits when applicable; community health promotion and education efforts and working with the community-on-community health assessment and community health improvement planning. DHEC's goal in all of this is to make Dillon County a healthy and thriving community to live and work in," Bruckner said.

SC-DHEC will continue to provide both WIC services and COVID

vaccinations at the new office.

CareSouth Carolina will begin providing several preventative health services currently provided at DHEC, including family planning, STD/STI, HIV and immunizations.

CareSouth Carolina will also be providing all the services it currently offers at its medical office.

CareSouth Carolina CEO Ann Lewis said the building will be a, one-stop shop innovation.

"This will be a one-stop shop innovation that brings together partners who have been successfully working together for a considerable length to make the vision of this new building and the combined services a reality: DHEC, CareSouth Carolina and Dillon County," Lewis said. "With the DHEC provision of WIC services combined with the expansion of the CareSouth family planning and immunization services, residents of Dillon County will have simple, easy access to a wide array of care and services-in one building."

The new 18,640 square foot facility, more than quadruples CareSouth Carolina's capacity to provide services to Dillon County and surrounding areas. In addition to the services provided at the current location, the new facility will provide space for additional primary care providers and additional support services including a drive thru pharmacy.

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 a veterans' choice provider.

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HOPEHEALTH WELCOMES NEW PROVIDERS

Articles submitted by HopeHealth



Dr. Mitch Chere is a gynecologist providing women's health services at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. Fluent in English and Spanish, Dr. Chere is a member of the American College of Physician Executives, the National Association of Managed Care Physicians, American College of OB/ GYN, and the Association of Advanced Operative Laparoscopy. He is certified by the American Board

of OB/GYN, the American Institute of Ultrasound and is also certified in advanced operative laparoscopy. He specializes in the evaluation and management of abnormal pap smears, abnormal uterine bleeding, pelvic pain and menopause, utilizing modern office-based procedures such as colposcopy, endometrial biopsy, LEEP procedure, and gyn ultrasound.



Scott. PharmD

He is committed to providing the highest level of outpatient gynecologic care in the office safely and comfortably.

Alanna Scott, PharmD, provides clinical pharmacy services for patients of HopeHealth. She provides clinical consultation for medical providers regarding therapeutics, direct patient care by performing Annual Wellness Visits and performs chronic care management contact with patients.

Zachary Crane provides clinical pharmacy services

for patients of HopeHealth. He provides clinical consultation for medical providers regarding

therapeutics, direct patient care by performing Annual

Wellness Visits and performs chronic care

Dr. Gilbert is a family medicine physician at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence. He is a member of the American Board of Family Medicine

and the American Academy of Physicians and

Surgeons. Fluent in English and Spanish, Dr. Gilbert cares for patients and families of all ages and enjoys practicing the full scope of family medicine. He is passionate about early treatment and prevention of

COVID-19 as well as delivering exceptional individualized health care to his patients. His goal is to help educate his patients, so that they feel

management contact with patients.



Zachary Crane, PharmD





Emmy Boring, LPC



Javonnia Kelly, LPC

empowered to make better decisions that will positively impact their health and quality of life Emmy Boring is a behavioral health consultant in the Pain Management department at HopeHealth on Palmetto Street. Boring provides effective treatment and is passionate about social justice. She has experience working with children, adolescents and adults with behavioral health and substance use

disorders. Javonnia Muldrow Kelly, LPC is a behavioral health counselor in the substance use disorder treatment program at HopeHealth in Kingstree. A

native of Florence, Kelly is passionate about caring for patients in the Pee Dee area.

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 nearly 60,000 patients. To become a patient, call 843-667-9414 or visit hope-health.org.



New Locations!

HopeHealth has expanded to Pine Needles Road in Florence and recently opened a new location in Hemingway!

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IN OUR NEW SKILLED NURSING & REHAB CENTER

Community is a word that has become more important worldwide as Covid has forced us into varying degrees of isolation over the past two years. Simply put, we need each other to live and thrive. Bethea Retirement Community has captured and fostered the essence of community for senior adults from all walks of life. Seniors who choose to live or rehabilitate at Bethea find themselves feeling part of one big family, surrounded by dedicated staff and other residents who share a common goal - to nurture relationship and to create an environment of wellness.

Bethea Retirement Community is celebrating the one year anniversary for its most recent expansion, the healthcare and rehabilitation center. As Director Ben Spurling has stated, "We all live our lives in pursuit of opportunities to grow, to learn, to experience moments of joy. At Bethea, we refer to these principles as 'Abundant Living'. Working toward this goal of providing Abundant Life for seniors is always a challenge, and nowhere is this truer than in the skilled nursing environment, where it's easy to lose sight of those principles focusing on the very real health needs of residents. That's why we are so excited about the Household Model, which provides us with an innovative framework that weaves the threads of Abundant Living directly into the fabric of care that we provide to residents every single day." The household model features four distinct households that prioritize residents' privacy and the feel of being at home with well-appointed and comfortably sized living spaces, private bedrooms or suites with private bathrooms, and spa/amenities of personal choice.

One of these households is devoted to rehabilitation guests for short-term stays while recovering from illness or injury. The new healthcare center also contains a new state-of-the-art rehabilitation gym where seniors both within the retirement community and senior adults outside of the community referred by physician for rehabilitation can receive physical and occupational therapy.

What our Rehab Grads are saying about Bethea:

"Bethea Retirement Community is the best place to go if you need to rehabilitate from an illness or injury. I stayed here in October and November of this 2021 year. I was most comfortable and very happy during my stay...The food was good, the service excellent and the staff most competent. The Community is located in Darlington, SC, just 4 miles from Florence. Registered Nurses (RN's) and other medical providers and a doctor are on staff...Everything inside and out was freshly painted and the home smelled so good. My goal was to be able to walk again. The best Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy trained professionals helped me meet my goal. I have been to many Rehabilitation Centers and they do not compare. Yes, they pushed me but not where I just could not stand it. They were all so personable...When I was leaving to go home, I was given the choice of "in home" Physical and Occupational Therapy. I chose to do outpatient therapy with Bethea as they were so good in helping me"

- Kathy Belew

When I came to Bethea, I was in a wheelchair. In the month that I have been here, I went from a wheelchair to a walker and now I use a cane. The next goal is to be able to independently walk without support. Tyler and all the physical and occupational therapists are professional and treat everyone equally...All in all, everyone was friendly and supportive. I couldn't have done rehab without the prayers of people and God working through these people to move my heart and bring me to where I am now. It is through God's strength, power, and His love that I have successfully completed treatment. I give God all the praise and glory! Thank you Bethea from the bottom of my heart!

- Kenneth Turner

Visit BetheaRetirement.com or contact Jenny Doll, Director of Marketing, 843-395-4402 for more information or to schedule a tour.

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COULD IMPORTING MEDICINE SAVE YOU MONEY?



COVID-19 The pandemic has underscored the importance of having access to safe, reliable and affordable medications. This is especially critical for Americans with underlying medical conditions who struggle to afford medications. To offset rising drug costs,

many Americans import pharmaceutical drugs from Canada and other international pharmacies.

According to the Campaign for Personal Prescription Importation annual survey, savings on prescription medications are greater than ever - \$3,744 a year on average. The CDC estimates that over 5 million Americans personally import medicines from abroad, where prescription drugs are 50-90 percent cheaper than in the U.S.

"I have been ordering necessary, affordable prescriptions from licensed Canadian pharmacies for over 10 years," said Linda Bull. "If I hadn't found this alternative, I couldn't have afforded my prescriptions for COPD and hormone replacement therapy for post-menopausal symptoms."

Bull is just one of over 131 million Americans who take prescription medications and need immediate and long-term cost-saving solutions. The CPPI survey uncovered several surprising facts about American personal drug importation. Below are five key findings from the report. 1. Price drives drug importation

In January 2022, U.S. prices increased on over 800 medications, causing unreliable access to affordable prescription drugs for millions of Americans. Nearly one in three Americans say they've skipped medical treatment due to costs in the previous three months. Missed medication

is a leading cause of rising medical expenses, medical complications and even death.

2. Savings

On average, Americans save 73 percent by personally importing pharmaceutical drugs from certified online Canadian pharmacies. Personal drug importation resulted in about \$3,744 in savings in 2021, an average savings cost of \$312 per month compared to U.S. pharmaceutical costs. 3. Drug importation on the rise

Because of access to lower-priced medication, personal drug importation is on the rise. In 2019, 8 percent of Americans reported ordering prescription drugs from online Canadian pharmacies, which increased to 17 percent by 2021.

This trend is likely to continue increasing as more and more people experience reliable, affordable access to life-saving medications. Of those surveyed, 98 percent of respondents would recommend importation to their friends and family members.

4. Cost of prescription drugs affects voting habits

Prescription drug costs aren't just a personal finance and medical issue. The rising cost of medication in the U.S. is affecting how Americans vote. Over 96 percent of CPPI survey respondents say that addressing the high cost of prescription drugs in the U.S. is important to the way they vote. Also, 84 percent say it is very or extremely important to their voting behavior.

The future of personal drug importation

Unfortunately, new legislation may make it impossible for many to afford their medications. The Domain Reform for Unlawful Drug Sellers Act would prevent Americans from personally importing pharmaceutical drugs from licensed international pharmacies.

To learn more about how the DRUGS Act may impact you, visit PersonalImportation.org. There, you can also find certified websites for prescription drugs from licensed Canadian pharmacies.

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HOW THE GUARANTEES OF WHOLE LIFE INSURANCE CAN HELP SECURE YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE



This year, many people are making financial wellness resolutions. From budgeting better to saving for a big-ticket item or investing more income into a 401(k), there are plenty of financial goals to choose. However, one that you've likely overlooked is whole life insurance.

According to the

American Council of Life Insurers, 90 million families in the U.S. rely on life insurance policies for financial and retirement security. In addition to protecting dependents from financial hardship if the policyholder dies, many policies also accumulate savings that can be used to cover needs beyond funeral expenses.

Whole life insurance provides financial protection for as long as the insured policyholder lives. A whole life insurance policy is a type of permanent life insurance that accumulates value throughout your life. Benefits of whole life insurance

There are three main benefits of investing in a whole life insurance policy.

1. Guaranteed cash value

Unlike term life insurance, whole life insurance accumulates a cash value that you can dip into during your life if a financial need arises. More importantly, as long as you pay your premiums, the cost of your policy will not increase, and the face amount and the interest rate are guaranteed. To access the value of the account, you essentially take a taxable withdrawal or tax-free loan you can pay back. You can use the money as needed - such

as to buy a car or put a down payment on a house. Even if you never access the cash value during your lifetime, it will act as a safety net that can be used in financial emergencies.

Whole life insurance can also supplement your existing retirement accounts, like your 401(k) or IRA account, helping you enjoy your golden years.

2. You own the policy

The policyholder owns their whole life policies for themselves and their family members, not their employer. If the person who holds the policy changes jobs or retires, they can take their policy with them and pay their premiums directly to the insurance carrier.

3. Support loved ones

Whole life insurance is guaranteed coverage for your whole life and can help support your beneficiaries. Depending on the size of your chosen policy, your life insurance policy can help set beneficiaries up for success and financial security by contributing toward college tuition, a home mortgage or short-term expenses such as funeral costs.

Also, life insurance payouts are not considered taxable income. If you pass while your coverage is in effect, your beneficiaries do not have to report the death benefit on tax returns.

Whole life insurance policy allows you to choose the amount of insurance or premium that best suits your needs and budget. Other benefits include: *** Family coverage.** Family coverage is available to cover spouses, children and grandchildren.

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and Life drane

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF GREATNESS IN THE ARTS by Glaceria Brown Mason



LAKE CITY - ArtFields Collective 2022, celebrates 10-years of success in debuting, exposing and sharing extraordinary and thoughtful images of creativity from artists throughout the Southeast. The highly popular, decades long annual art competition will shine a light on its ten-year anniversary in downtown Lake City, S.C., from April 22 – 30.

Nobel Prize winner Alex Tolstoy tells us art is subjective. How does art make us feel? What emotions are conjured when viewing the vision, creative imagination, skilled expertise and execution of an artist? With many styles, colors and the cultural exposure, ArtFields has something for everyone.



Anna by Charles Eady was the ArtFields 2021 Grand Prize Winner

Residents, school children, visitors around the Pee Dee and neighboring states look forward to this annual springtime arts extravaganza. We are weeks away from the annual ArtFields competition and the buzz and excitement will surely be worthy of celebrating ten years of success in the community.

Sponsored by the Lake City Creative Alliance, a federally recognized 501© (3)

ArtFields celebrates the tenth annual event this year April 22-30

organization, ArtFields, is a charitable program and event, originating from the vision of a group of women interested in tapping into Lake City's potential. ArtFields was founded in 2013, as a way of revitalizing a small town and celebrating Southern art. It is made possible because of the generosity of the Darla Moore Foundation and many other donors, including businesses and individuals. Once successful in agriculture, Lake City faced an industry shift which resulted in an economic downturn that affected the community. The beginning and continued success of ArtFields is the boost the city needed to keep businesses thriving and give its residents pride in their community. Another motivation for ArtFields was to give exposure to underrepresented Southern artists whose stories needed to be shared. During the nineday celebration of creativity and beauty, approximately 68-acres of downtown Lake City will become the backdrop to display the artistry and talent that this competition has become known for. As ArtFields celebrates its 10th anniversary, art seekers will witness original works from up to 400 artists from states in the Southeast who bring their artwork to display for the adult competition and an average of 200 student artists for the ArtFields Jr., competition.

The art is displayed in up to 40 venues, to include fine art galleries and businesses in the area. Local business owners agree to display the vibrant and colorful work during the competition, in their establishments. One local business, which ArtFields displays beautiful original pieces, is Joe's Barbershop in downtown Lake City. Located on Main Street along the city's Architecture Walk, where visitors can view distinctive 19th century buildings from an era of days gone by. The historic building with its Renaissance Revival architectural style, still dons its original framework, which, is art in itself. With its rounded corners, Joe's Barbershop is the site of the original 1907, Farmers and

Merchant Bank. Owner Joe McGee has owned the location for over 20 years and proudly shared that, "Joe's Barbershop is the first African American-owned business on Main Street to be in operation this long." McGee has an appreciation for art as a former artist himself and looks forward to the art displayed in his shop. He has participated in displaying the work from the ArtFields competition on the walls of his barbershop from the beginning and enjoys the annual competition. "Every year, people come from all over," says McGee. He gets to meet the artists and the visitors. He added that the competition brings the city to life.

As with any successful venture, there are a plethora of individuals who make it happen. Annually, a dedicated staff successfully plans, organizes and executes the ArtFields competition. With the old adage in mind, that, you never get a second opportunity to make a first impression, the steadfast ArtFields staff, supported by a generous contingent of loyal and committed volunteers, combine efforts for the success of this event. In this, their 10th anniversary, the commitment and excitement reign supreme. "The ArtFields team typically has five full-time or contracted employees and five part-time employees who primarily work in the galleries but step up to help in a million different ways as we head towards the big event. We rely heavily on our volunteers



Flamestitch by Coulter Fussell was the ArtFields 2021 Second
Place Winner

CELEBRATING A DECADE CONT'D



Horizontal Vertical by Norton Pease on display at the ROB during ArtFields 2021

and volunteer leads to get us through the event itself and recognize that they are an important part of the visitor's experience," says Director, Jamison Mady Kerr.

Kerr, a native of Florence, South Carolina, and graduate of Francis Marion University, oversees all programs within the Lake City ArtFields Collective. This includes the nineday event and competition, three fine art galleries, public art projects and other programming throughout the year. Kerr shared, "We are so proud to offer ArtFields Jr. to students across the state and provide monthly art classes to local kids. Since this is a milestone year, we have spent a lot of time reminiscing about the last decade and even more time planning for the future. We have so many exciting things ahead of us and can't wait to expand what we have to offer."

Artists from 12 Southeastern states, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia participate in the annual competition. In the ArtFields history, there have been winners from each state. "Though the prize structure has varied over the years to include awards based on medium, state or general merit awards, top prizes have consistently totaled \$100,000 since the first year with additional prizes bringing the prize amount as high as \$145,500. We have given 132 awards thus far and will give away our millionth dollar during ArtFields 2022," said Kerr.

The Lake City ArtFields Collective operates three fine art galleries throughout the year and the ArtFields competition is their flagship event. Kerr explained, "This is beneficial because it allows people who may not feel comfortable entering a gallery or museum a chance to view artwork, it brings people into local Lake City businesses and

allows the inclusion of hundreds of artworks and is even more exciting to attend as it takes over and enlivens the entire downtown." The ArtFields event and competition are spread across existing spaces and unconventional venues like barbershops, bakeries or boutiques. Visitors hoping to walk away with an original purchase are in luck as the majority of artwork on display as part of the ArtFields competition is for sale, but Kerr added, "we do give artists the option to list art as, Not for Sale, if they wish." The Lake City ArtFields Collective has many components, some limited to the nineday event. "We have worked hard over the last few years to ensure that no matter what day of the year you may visit, you will be able to experience something artistic and special," says Kerr.

The future of ArtFields in Lake City looks bright and holds exciting new ideas and approaches. Kerr informs, "We've been working hard on our plan for the future of the arts in Lake City and we are looking forward to rolling it out as part of the event! We have lots of fun and surprises in store and you will just have to come to Lake City to see it all!" Over the last 10 years, ArtFields has constantly evolved to best serve audiences near and far. Kerr says, "We have grown as an organization and grown as a community, and I think anyone who has been a part of ArtFields should be really proud when they look back to see how far we have come."

In savoring the pride of a decade of existence, its effect on the community and success, the ArtFields Team will be celebrating BIG this year, by changing up their finale event and incorporating ways to honor the last ten years throughout its programs. Kerr shared, "ArtFields is bigger than me, bigger than the team, bigger than Lake City. I have seen the way it has positively impacted people's lives and inspired both masterpieces and other hometown initiatives. To be a part of something that I truly believe is beneficial to all who participate has been incredibly rewarding. For this to ever happen in a small Southern town was a triumph all in itself, but to reach our tenth year, feels like a victory worth celebrating BIG!" She also shared that ArtFields has new public art projects in the works, including



Visitors admire Grace by William D. Massey III, winner of ArtFields 2021 People's Choice Award

multiple mural projects, and one which will have a big interactive component that everyone will surely enjoy. Lastly, Kerr shared the excitement ArtFields experienced when it opened the very first artist studio in 2021, and the thrill of welcoming Herman Keith, Jr., one of the mural artists and all-around friend of Lake City, to town. ArtFields anticipates and looks forward to welcoming more artists to Lake City year-round and continuing to expand their reach. Stay tuned for more from ArtFields because the best is yet to come! Visit Lake City, SC for ArtFields 2022, April 22-30. You won't be sorry you did. Happy 10th Anniversary!



Molly Eckes Flowers There Be Dragons on display in Sip Co Wine and Beer



APRIL 22 - 30 ARTFIELDSSC.ORG

INTERNATIONAL POSH PICNIC RETURNS TO FLORENCE by Tonita Perry, APR



Bring out your chicest white for the global phenomenon and highly sought-after, secret, event as Florence, S.C. will once again host Le Dîner en Blanc, Saturday, May 14, 2022, in one of the city's best-known public spaces.

"We are excited to have Le Dîner en Blanc back in Florence in 2022. It was a fun time last year at our inaugural event that everyone is talking about it to date," says Nicole Dixon, co-host of Le Dîner en Blanc in Florence, S.C. "Though we experienced rain during our inaugural event, our attendees shared how they lived out their bucket list experience of dancing in the rain. This year we want them to have an even better experience making new memories."

Pee Dee region's city, Florence, S.C., is the fourth city to celebrate Le Dîner en Blanc in the state of South Carolina, which includes Columbia, Charleston and Greenville. The 2021 inaugural event had attendees from all over the Pee Dee and the state, as well as from Florida, Texas, California and Pennsylvania.

In addition, Le Dîner en Blanc, Florence S.C. is also pleased to announce Diversity Works magazine as the official magazine partner for this year's event.

"I had the opportunity to attend last year and thought it was a unique event," said Diana Murphy-Eaddy, the magazine's publisher. "When asked to be the official magazine partner, it was a no brainer, as the event brings together diverse groups all across the globe, with Florence, S.C. included."

Over the years, Le Dîner en Blanc has become a worldwide epicurean phenomenon. What was a friends and word-of-mouth only event, has grown into an international sensation, celebrated on six continents. Launched in Paris in 1988, by François Pasquier and a handful of friends, Le Dîner en Blanc de Paris marked its thirtieth anniversary in 2018, with a record 17,000 guests from Paris and around the world. While the technology behind the event may have changed over the years, the principle fueling this fantastic event has not, guests dressed in all white continue to gather at a secret location for the sole purpose of sharing a gourmet meal with good friends in one of their city's most beautiful public spaces. Founded in 2012, and headquartered in Montreal, Canada, Dîner en Blanc International is responsible for developing this secret posh picnic in over 80 cities in 30 countries around the world. Each event is headed by

passionate local organizers who fell in love with the concept and wanted to bring it to their city, giving this rendezvous a local flair.

To the Florence, S.C.'s local organizers, community is most important to the hosts of Le Dîner en Blanc – Florence, S.C., Nicole Dixon, Charlene McKnight and Tonita Perry, as to why they brought the event here. It is their hope to organize an event that provides an evening of allure and grace through fellowship with old and newfound friends, while also being a part of the Le Dîner en Blanc global community. They look forward to the annual event being a much-anticipated staple on the list of community events of Florence, S.C.

Dixon said, "It is our second year, and we are hoping to continue to grow the event each year. It can only get better, bigger and even more unique each year. A uniqueness that is representative of Florence and the Pee Dee."

Le Dîner en Blanc is an event that transports attendees into another world. The sea of people all adorned in white, meeting new people or reuniting with long-time friends missed during the pandemic. In essence, the event promotes friendship, elegance and gallantry. Over the course of the evening, guests experience the beauty and value of one of their city's public spaces by participating in the unexpected.

To maintain its uniqueness, as well as staying true to tradition, Le Dîner en Blanc attendees must observe certain requirements and follow these key rules:

• Dress code: elegant and white only. Originality and creativity are encouraged as long as it is stylish and tasteful.

• Table setting: all white!

• To ensure that the location is kept secret until the last minute, guests meet at assigned departure location and are escorted by Le Dîner en Blanc volunteers.

• Leave the event location as clean as when they arrived, guests are required to leave with all their belongings, leftovers and litter. All attendees must bring:

A table, two (white) chairs, white tablecloth.

• A picnic basket comprising fine food and proper stemware and white dinnerware.

o An option to pre-order food, which can be picked up at the site, will be available for those who do not wish to pack their own picnic baskets. Guests wishing to do so must purchase online through the Dîner en Blanc Florence's e-store.

Champagne and/or wine. Beer and hard liquor are prohibited.

o Though guests can bring their own wine and/or champagne, those wishing to pack lighter can pre-purchase online through the Dîner en Blanc Florence's e-store. In addition, guests are welcome to bring their own non-alcoholic beverages.

If you are interested in attending the 2022 event, make sure to sign-up on the waiting list which can be found under the registration tab on the website. To keep up to date on event announcements, visit <u>florence</u>. <u>dinerenblanc.com</u>. Also, on Facebook DinerEnBlancFlorenceSC, and Instagram dinerenblancflorencesc.



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1 Serving | 30 Minutes





INGREDIENTS:

Roseberry Simple Syrup

- 10 oz. water
- 3 tsp. sugar

Cocktail

- 1.5 oz. Cucumber Mint Ketel One
- 2 oz. Simple Syrup
- 1 cucumber juiced
- 1/2 oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- mint & a cucumber slice for garnish

Directions:

- 1. Combine water and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Stir until sugar dissolves. Let the 2 oz you will use for your cocktail stand for 5 minutes until ready to use.
- 2. Combine vodka, simple syrup and cucumber juice in a shaker filled with ice. Shake vigorously for 15-20 seconds.
- **3.** Add ice to a rocks glass. Strain the contents of your shaker into the rocks glass. Garnish with a mint leaf and/or cucumber slice and enjoy!

CHANGE STARTS SMALL Submitted by Adalia Ellis



Art**Fields**



Changing weather patterns are a clear indication that climate change is a reality. We must begin to look at alternative energy sources and start adjusting our lifestyles for the effects of climate change. In addition to the impact on the climate, rising costs of gas exacerbates our dependency on fossil fuels, especially in rural communities where cars are the most convenient mode of transportation. In recent weeks I have had the opportunity to have conversations with college aged people who are being impacted by rising gas prices like everyone else. I

suggested that we may need to start considering biking, walking, rethinking travel routes that include biking and walking paths, driving electric cars and going back to the neighborhood-based resources such as grocery stores that are popular in urban settings. Their response was a resounding "NO" to such measures and it reflects the challenge inherent in a society that has become dependent on fossil fuels and the ease of vehicle-based travel. Phillip Rodgers, Special Events director with the Lake City Creative Alliance and the Director of Education and Events for Moore Farms Botanical Garden has found in his work that change starts in small, incremental steps.

When considering the impact of climate change on the Pee Dee region, Rodgers points out, based on historical weather reports from over the past 25 years, that the Pee Dee region is experiencing the effects of climate change as seen by the changing weather patterns. There are universally accepted approaches to lessening harmful environmental footprint such as recycling, reducing our consumption, changing to solar and electric cars, using plant-based products and planting more trees.

Despite these efforts there are already irreversible consequences of climate change. When considering what we can do to adjust to these changes Rodgers says, "We should all take a step back and analyze our daily routines. Change starts small. By working with your local city governments and community leaders to devise and activate plans to adopt more sustainable practices within our own homes and communities, we can start the domino effect for a brighter, more eco-friendly future."

In his role as director of Education and Events at Moore Farms Botanical Garden, Rodgers is noticing that there is a collective movement towards using research to find best practices for the implementation of eco-friendly practices. "We put our findings to use by composting and recycling, to name a few. The environment is also strongly considered in the design and functionality of our buildings and structures. For example, we implemented geo-thermal energy resources both in the garden and downtown Lake City. We also combined cutting-edge horticultural techniques with modern environmentally conscious architectural applications to build the first living green roof in the Pee Dee. These practices found at Moore Farms not only educate and inspire myself and my coworkers, but also serve as our voice to the community that change starts small."



MOORE FARMS botanical garden



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LEGACY OF WOMEN, INC. DISTRIBUTES BABY SHOWER CARE PACKAGES

Submitted by Toyinda L. Smith, executive director



HARTSVILLE -The Legacy of Women, Incorporated is an organization with core functions centered around the needs of

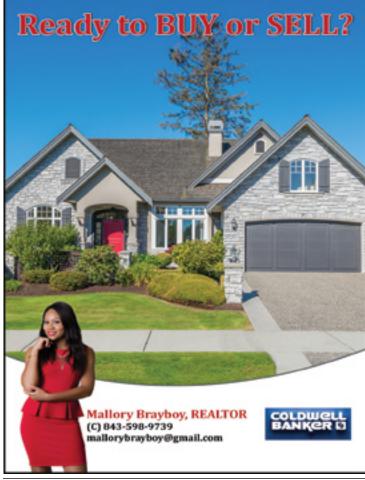
women and families. Our organization is about building capacity through the distribution of essential supplies, training, development and educational programs created around the three components, mental and heart health, philanthropy and leadership.

Through our partnership with Amazon, Legacy of Women, Inc. has received complimentary essential supplies. The March "Baby Shower" care packages were distributed to 20 registered women and their babies, Saturday, March 5, 2022. The distribution took place at 1103 South Sixth Street - Hartsville, SC. Those interested registered at https://legacyofwomeninc.org/support-services.



acquired essential baby supplies to distribute to those in need.

"As a resident of the Hartsville community, Legacy of Women, Inc. is uniquely positioned to positively impact this region through the creation of job training programs and decreasing economic strain on women and Through partnership with Amazon, Legacy of Women, Inc. their families," said



Toyinda L. Smith, founder and CEO of Legacy of Women, Inc.

Legacy of Women, Inc. is committed to actively engaging underserved communities by fostering innovative collaborations to respond to community needs. This partnership with Amazon is just one of many initiatives to build generational wealth and legacy.

Legacy of Women, Inc. was established in September 2017, with the specific purpose to focus on the distribution of essential supplies, education, leadership training, development and growth for women and families at all levels in an effort towards advancement, support and capacity building.

For more information on Legacy of Women, Inc. visit our website: www.legacyofwomeninc.org

LAKE CITY SENIOR CENTER COMMEMORATES **DR. RONALD E. MCNAIR**

Articles and photos submitted by, Jonathan Laster, Lake City Public Information Officer



Gloria Tisdale, president of the Ronald McNair Committee, speaks about Dr. McNair's life and achievements during the Lake City Senior Center commemoration for Dr. Ronald E. McNair. The annual event returns after a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LAKE CITY - The Lake City Senior Center held their annual commemoration for Dr. Ronald E. McNair, Jan. 26 after a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guest speaker Gloria Tisdale, president of the Ronald McNair Committee, spoke about McNair's life and achievements and invited participants, many of whom were McNair's friends and classmates, to share their memories of the Lake City native.

McNair's life was tragically cut short when he was killed during the Space Shuttle Challenger tragedy on Jan. 28, 1986. In 1978, he was one of 35 people chosen from a pool of 10,000 applicants

to join the NASA astronaut program, and the 1986 flight would have been McNair's second trip into space.

Hailed as a local hero, McNair served as a civil rights role model from an early age. In 1959, at the age of nine, he successfully checked out books from a segregated library that is now home to the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Life History Center. The center details more about McNair's legacy as an accomplished saxophonist and Tai Kwon Do practitioner. Nationwide and local scholarship programs have been introduced in his honor.

A candlelight vigil was also held at the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Memorial Park, 235 E. Main Street, Lake City, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. The Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, 112 Deep River St was used in the event of inclement weather.



Through partnership with Amazon, Legacy of Women, Inc. acquired essential baby supplies to distribute to those in need.



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HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS of women everywhere

The much-admired women on our leadership team uphold women's equality, and diversity and inclusion, a driving force in our culture, every day. That's why we're so passionate about celebrating Women's History Month and recognizing the achievements women have made throughout history that have helped shape our lives today.



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