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DIVERSITY WORKS

JANUARY 2023 VOLUME 13 ISSUE 1

"For All of Us"



COVER STORY: PG. 40

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Business: (843) 669-5929 / (843) 413-2743
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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 employees that represent best practices in workforce diversity and supplier choices. We feature articles on those displaying inclusionary vision in and for the marketplace and who encourage and provide role models for others.

Through editorial content and other signature promotions, Diversity Works© is a vessel to inform the readership on appreciating and accepting the physical, social, cultural and other differences in one another and to promote better outcomes through interacting with those unlike ourselves. Our mission is to promote the concept of 'community,' in the workplace, to stimulate literacy and save the planet via recycling printed material.

This platform serves our present age with a focus on the Pee Dee region of South Carolina which includes the counties of Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter and Williamsburg. The magazine targets the general public and is rapidly expanding statewide and globally. Our chief demographic consists of 54 percent male and 46 percent females, middle to top-level management, professorship and fellowship positions.

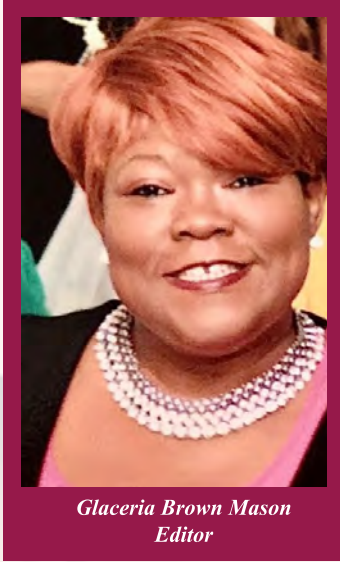
OUR VISION

To create a more collaborative world where balanced diversity is practiced, to encourage a return to reading and to protect the environment by recycling the ink and paper products our materials are printed with.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART



Glacia Brown Mason
Editor

Greetings Diversity Works readers!

I greet you with enthusiasm as we start a New Year! The Diversity Works Magazine staff is holding a good thought for a year filled with diverse topics, interesting local Pee Dee area news and quarterly special articles. Our goal is that each quarter brings you rich content and consistent enlightenment that will keep you anticipating the next edition.

If we believe in the principles and practice of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), we intentionally embrace the practice of inclusion, to make someone or something, a part. As we build on our 2022 watch word, we intentionally set

the 2023 word as, “inclusivity.” Inclusivity - having equal access to opportunities and resources for people who are excluded or marginalized.

The January cover story leads with high praise and congratulations to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee, Executive Director Neal Zimmerman, for receiving the highest honor bestowed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Read Zimmerman’s story, his long history with the club and accolades from friends and colleagues alike. We don’t stop there, with tax season fast approaching, take notes as Dr. Constance Dixon shares the most up-to-date information on how your refund may be smaller. The nature of business is to find a need and fill it. The City of Florence gives resources to help you succeed. In that same manner, look further for tips to build your online profile to land skilled trade jobs. Those jobs are in addition to the 100 employees of local entrepreneur, Arnett James IV as he emerges as one of the area’s newest franchise owners of not one, but two McDonalds restaurants in the area. Read his story and learn how this, would be doctor, turned business owner is thriving in Florence.

There’s more to be informed of in our business section, keep reading. Find congratulatory articles as we celebrate wins in the Pee Dee area with Duke Energy and Harvest Hope, packing the pantry in support of food insecurity and business entrepreneurs William Schofield Carolina SupplyHouse, Inc. and Lawrence Chipper Smith, Smith Funeral Home as they assume their elected seat on the Florence County Council and Florence City Council respectively. Read about Ron Freed receiving the 2022 Operations Professional of the Year award at Honda and last but certainly not least, and worthy of mentioning, Diversity Works congratulates Yameika Robinson as she makes history as Lake City’s first Black female mayor.

History tells of the important contributions of ancient Greeks to the Western world. Greek philosopher Socrates said, “Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.” In our education section, Diversity Works shares good education news and congratulations from around the Pee Dee! See stories of students shining through academic excellence in the Lee County School District in Bishopville; HGTC student Corey Meeks completes the Inline System Certification at the Yamaha Training Facility and Tanisha Tart and Ursula Townsend as first graduates of FMU’s class of psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners. For those with college bound students, learn and interpret the key information on how college is changing. Also, be informed about new scholarship opportunities with the new Cooper-Toney Endowed Scholarship at Clafin University. In this section, join in the congratulatory sentiments shared as FMU names its computer lab

after its 33-year employee, Teressa McDuffie; Florence 1 Educator, Jessica Crowson wins the 2022 Betty J DeWitt Outstanding Educator Award; we congratulate FDTC President Jermaine Ford on the progress of major changes ongoing in Darlington and more. Continue to peruse this section for more education news and success.

One thing we all can attest to, is that financial matters move us to act. Yes, “money makes the world go round,” and in the first quarter, even more so. Diversity Works encourages you to read with interest Julie Cord’s NY Life Insurance’s five misconceptions which keep people from making a will. Further see what women are doing to take control of their finances, and if needed, learn who the new Anderson Brothers Bank employees are. If you or someone you know suffers from financial anxiety, learn the five tips to help attain financial goals. As you move thru informative content, be sure to immerse yourself in the lifestyle section where you’ll find stories on how to protect your physical and mental health in the New Year. As the responsibility of caregiving falls on many, read the tips to navigate caregiving remotely.

Our special sections recognize the national observances of Black History Month, the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, Women’s History Month and Social Workers Month. Be assured you’ll end the sections having been informed on the consistent and first-rate stories to increase your awareness of what’s happening in the Pee Dee.

The 2023 Black History Month observance centers around the theme, Black Resistance. We invite you to read for edification and be empowered by thoughtful articles from local Pee Dee area professionals. You’ll find stories shared on, writing our history; embracing the brilliance of our people; rebuilding political power and advancing economic and political opportunities. Black History Month is the shortest month of the year, so don’t wait, read them today!

January 16, 2023, is the 28th national holiday where all Americans observe the contributions of the slain civil rights leader, the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we celebrate Dr. King’s birth, we do so with the knowledge that he dedicated his life to the nonviolent struggle for civil rights of all people. With the theme of Cultivating a Beloved Community... you’ll want to plunge into this section and imbibe the great content shared by African Americans.

Social Workers care for our community, without respect of race, ethnicity, politics or gender. In this special section, we thank and honor social workers for the service they provide. Learn about the many local champions who continually care for citizens of the Pee Dee. Find stories about the history of social work and advocates with a servant’s heart, who educate and promote a better quality of life for residents. See social workers who are proud to be a part of this well-respected profession who help others and offer a sense of hope to vulnerable families and children.

Lastly, with the close of the first quarter, we celebrate national Women’s History Month and honor women in the media, who tell our stories in print, television, radio, stage, podcasts and social media. Since the early 1800s women have made substantial contributions. In this special segment, get to know local women in the media. Read their stories and perhaps be inspired to follow a path in media. Whichever branch of the media they have found success in, these women help us find our voice by raising our level of awareness. They are beautiful inside and out, professional, articulate and determined women who make a difference in our community, and are paving the way for the next generation.

Enjoy this first quarter issue and let’s kick off the New Year being informed Diversity Works readers who stay abreast of the most useful and up-to-date content in the Pee Dee. Happy reading!

Glacia Brown Mason
Editor
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BEHAVIORAL CHANGE IS A WIN FOR DEI. HOW WE CAN CULTIVATE IT

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



Dr. Nika White

GREENVILLE - As we prepare for the end of the year, leadership teams tasked with improving diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) may be assessing what went well in this year’s DEI work. If this kind of assessment is on your to-do list, you may find yourself asking some challenging questions: Did we increase the diversity of our workforce? Did our employees with marginalized identities feel safer or more seen this year? Did our employees become more

inclusive because of our programming?

DEI is a journey, not a destination. Only time will tell the long-term impact of DEI programming and initiatives. But if leadership teams are serious about gauging the effectiveness of the DEI initiatives they implemented this year, one key way to do that is to pay attention to behavioral change.

As DEI practitioners and those of us deep in the work, we place so much emphasis on changing hearts and minds that we forget to celebrate the wins of behavioral change. One program, session or event may not change someone’s deep-seated racism, sexism, ableism or homophobia. But one program or session may change someone’s behavior in a subtle yet powerful way which can foster a cultural shift towards inclusivity in the workplace.

I recently wrote a tweet about this topic:

As we focus our efforts on this year’s work and beyond, the critical questions we ask ourselves should be focused on whether or not we can observe evidence of behavioral change. Behavioral change boils down to accountability and consequences. Did the people who really needed to modify their behavior feel accountable for their actions? Did they know that consequences would arise if they didn’t adjust their behavior? Did they feel compelled to go against their preconceptions to practice more mindful and respectful behaviors? These questions are the first step toward assessing inclusive workplace behaviors.

Behavioral change becomes a habit and inclusive habits improve DEI.

We know behavioral change can become a habit and habits can change our mindsets. If we can support employees in changing their behaviors and then making those inclusive behaviors a habit, we can see lasting DEI change in the workplace.

It takes a lot to turn bias into change. We’re human beings and bias is inevitable. While every human is capable of bias, at the same time, every human is capable of empathy. It’s about being exposed to diversity, being in a community with those who have vastly different experiences and then choosing to walk the path of empathy and compassion to develop more inclusive habits and behaviors even if one’s own beliefs haven’t changed.

For example, let’s say I’m a hiring manager tasked with hiring for a role, and I’m expected to keep DEI in mind. I may not necessarily believe people of color, folks with disabilities or LGBTQIA+ individuals should have an advantage, but I do want to give them a fair shot in the hiring process. I can’t snap my fingers to increase DEI in the workplace overnight. But what I can do is make sure the application is accessible, the language about the company’s DEI stance is clear and I keep the application open long enough for a diverse applicant pool to stream in before starting the interview process.

This behavior change, despite one’s own personal beliefs, would give diverse candidates more of an opportunity in the job market than if I closed the hiring application in a shorter window of time without the accessible application or DEI information. Focusing on behavior and actions that are in our control can lead to better outcomes for DEI.

How can this dichotomy exist? How can someone still have racist, sexist, ableist and homophobic beliefs and still make a positive behavioral change that promotes DEI? It can be as simple as hearing someone else’s story. It can be about getting close to someone with a certain lived experience and understanding they deserve respect and acknowledgment even if their opinions differ. It’s about developing empathy and compassion while holding oneself accountable for the impact our beliefs and actions may have on others.

Thoughtful acts of kindness and compassion can go a long way toward DEI.

Big behavioral changes are great. However, there are smaller ways to make a change and build a warm and inclusive workplace. A few weeks ago, I heard a story about a woman who was having a terrible morning at work. A colleague with an empathetic and compassionate eye noticed her. He offered to bring her a cup of coffee. This simple act made the woman feel seen and acknowledged and brightened her spirit for the rest of the day.

This is an example of how a simple behavioral change, in this case, offering a colleague a cup of coffee, can make a world of difference in building an inclusive and compassionate workplace.

Another example might be seen in a situation where someone who has deep beliefs about homosexuality works alongside someone who is non-binary or trans. They can choose to use the pronouns their colleague prefers as opposed to the pronouns they think their colleague’s gender most resembles. This small behavioral shift may feel like a conflict in their soul or values. However, it demonstrates respect for someone else’s lived experience and shows a conscious choice to be inclusive.

Sometimes when we think about individual accountability, we don’t factor in how there are simple, everyday actions that we can do to be more thoughtful and move the needle. DEI can be as practical and straightforward as bringing a colleague who you know is struggling a cup of coffee or using someone’s correct pronouns even if you disagree with them. Making DEI simple and practical is at the heart of what we do at NWC.

Final thoughts

When we think about diversity, equity and inclusion, it can feel so daunting and complicated. The truth is, we make it harder than it has to be. Let’s use the end of the year to center our thoughts and reflect on how many individuals have experienced behavioral change in the workplace. Let’s celebrate how small acts of kindness and compassion make more of a difference in the workplace than a one-off training. Let’s think about how we can keep the momentum going into the new year. Let’s focus on changing behaviors, not minds.



Behavioral
Change

is a Win for DEI.

How We Can Cultivate It.

NW
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LEGACY, THE SECRET TO TIME

Submitted by Barbara Hemmingway, Your Premier Insurance Agent



Barbara Hemmingway

As we welcome the New Year, we often find ourselves reminiscent of time. We ponder time well spent and time lost too soon. Time's illusive and mysterious nature keeps us wondering how we can master it. But it still keeps moving. In Florence, we have found the secret to time, and it's called legacy.

No matter your background, we are all connected to someone who shares time with us. At Hemmingway Insurance we specialize in a wide variety of policy types to help you save time, remove worry and secure the coverage you need. We offer Riders Insurance, Hospital Indemnity, Cancer Policies, Term, Whole Life and more! Regardless of your situation you can be insured. Whether you're on dialysis, experiencing nursing home admission, have HIV or even high blood pressure you have a legacy to build.

I was born and raised in small town Marion, SC and as a people person; I know firsthand what it takes to reach the community. Growing up in a rural area, I learned early on that hard work and discipline was needed in order to succeed. My mother and father instilled in me the core values of work ethic and entrepreneurship at a young age. After relocating to Florence, SC, I served in various capacities from industrial work to clerical and community service, all while pursuing a bachelor's degree in business administration. I have been blessed to contribute to the Florence School District, McLeod Hospital Systems and many other local businesses. I am a proud Evangelist and committed believer, eager to spread the love of Christ. Ministry is important and I desire to let everyone I meet know they can live impactful, purpose driven lives.

With over 30 years of experience, I am able to use my background to provide a unique perspective to making sure you have the coverage that you need. Although I am most often known for my bubbly personality, I am passionate about family which gives me a tenacious disposition regarding getting you and your family covered. I am a mother of three beautiful children, a grandmother and a spiritual mother to many others. I was always an active mom, not only to my children but, to those who gravitated to me. I loved instilling the same principles in them that my parents taught me. While life hasn't always been easy, life has taught me to keep pushing! This all centers around my love and passion for people and the desire to see that they are able to live their best lives.

You deserve advocacy, you deserve to be insured. I've seen so many people put themselves aside and not prioritize themselves at the time when they need it most.

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**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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Chris Goss
Head of Pharmaceutical
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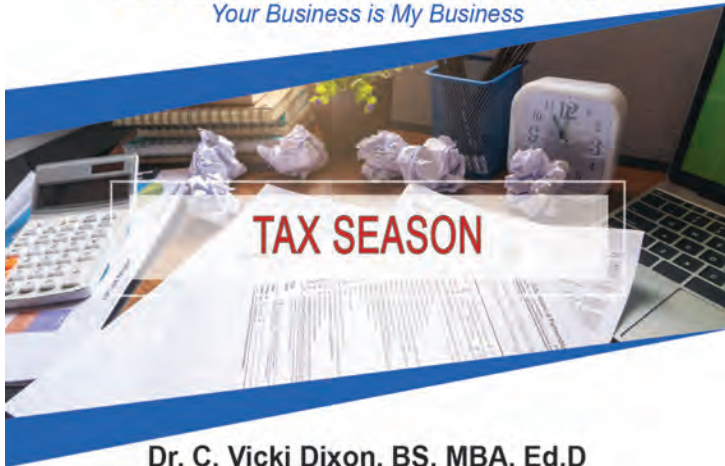
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YOUR REFUND MAY BE SMALLER THIS YEAR!

Submitted by Dr. Constance Vicki Dixon



Dr. Constance Vicki Dixon

My, how time flies! It's another tax season again, and that means more changes. According to the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) prediction, some of these changes will result in taxpayers getting smaller refunds this season. I am not able to cover all the changes in this one article, but I will address the most pertinent ones that will affect many individuals.

The Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit received a temporary boost through the American Rescue Plan of 2021, but the enhanced tax breaks were not extended to this year. In 2021, the child tax credit offered up to \$3,600 per child under age six, and up to \$3,000 per child ages six through 17, with half available via upfront payments. But for 2022, the tax break reverts to the previous amount — up to \$2,000 per child under age 17 on December 31, 2022.

Child and Dependent Care

For 2021, this credit was fully refundable; for 2022, it reverts to a non-refundable credit. The credit was allowed for up to \$8000 in expenses for one child/disabled person and \$16,000 for more than one. However, for 2022, those caps returned to \$3,000 and \$6,000, for one or multiple dependents, respectively.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Last year, more Americans were eligible to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on their 2021 tax returns. This year, the EITC reverts to its pre-pandemic rule. For your 2022 tax return, the maximum that can be claimed for the EITC if the taxpayer has no children or dependents is \$560, a \$942 decrease from last year's maximum of \$1,502. The age

requirements have also shifted back to the original rules – taxpayer must be between 25 and 65 to qualify. However, the income requirements for the EITC and maximum credits for those with children have increased slightly due to inflation. The special lookback for Earned Income Tax Credit DOES NOT APPLY TO 2022 and on.

Other Changes

Charitable Contributions

Fewer filers may be able to claim charitable donation tax breaks for this tax year. The expanded charitable cash contribution benefits that were offered in 2020 and 2021 to non-itemizer filers have ended. The temporary suspension of the 60 percent adjusted gross income limit in 2020 and 2021 is now back, limiting the amount taxpayers can claim in charitable contributions.

Educator Expense Deduction

Educators (classroom teachers, etc.) could previously deduct up to \$250 (\$500 if married filing jointly) for qualified out-of-pocket classroom expenses. For tax year 2022, up to \$300 of out-of-pocket classroom expenses (\$600 if married filing jointly and both are educators) can be deducted.

Reporting of Third-Party Network Transactions (Form 1099-K)

Originally reported, payments received through apps like Venmo, PayPal, CashApp etc. in 2022, may get Form 1099-K, which reports income from third-party networks. The form applies to business transactions, such as part-time work, side jobs or selling goods, according to the IRS.

Before 2022, the federal Form 1099-K reporting threshold was for taxpayers with more than 200 transactions worth an aggregate above \$20,000. Now, however, the threshold is just \$600, regardless of transactions number; therefore, even a single transaction can trigger the form.

However, in a late decision, the IRS has decided to delay the reporting thresholds for third-party organizations to take effect for the upcoming tax filing season; therefore, organizations will not be required to report for tax year 2022.

Standard Mileage Rates

The IRS adjusted the standard mileage rates for 2022 in the middle of year (thanks to rising gas prices).

From January 1 to June 30, the 2022 standard mileage rate for business driving is 58.5¢ per mile (56¢ per mile in 2021). The mileage allowance for medical travel and military moves for the same time span is 18¢ per mile (16¢ per mile in 2021).

From July 1 to December 31, the 2022 mileage rate for use of an automobile for business purposes rises to 62.5¢ per mile. The standard rate for medical-related driving and military moving expenses jumps to 22¢ per mile for the second half of 2022.

Note that the standard mileage rate for the use of an automobile for charitable purposes didn't change from 2021 to any part of 2022. It stayed put at 14¢ a mile because it's fixed by law.

There are many more changes to the tax laws that have been made and will take effect in 2022 for both businesses and individuals. These new laws and changes can be confusing. Don't "rack" your brains trying to piece the puzzle together. Let the friendly, knowledgeable staff of Professional Business and Tax Services LLC assist you with your tax needs. Give us a call at (843) 413-2826 for an appointment or feel free to make an appointment on the website at: <https://probusinessandtaxservice.com>.



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DESA AWARDED SOUTH CAROLINA MBDA BUSINESS CENTER

Submitted by Teowonna Clifton, marketing communications manager



COLUMBIA—The U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) recently extended an award to DESA, Inc. to operate South Carolina’s MBDA Business Center. This award allows DESA to provide technical assistance and support in access to capital and

contracting opportunities to MBEs (minority business enterprises) in South Carolina.

Through this public-private partnership, DESA will serve businesses from across South Carolina with at least 51 percent minority ownership, at least \$500,000 in annual revenues, are involved in high-growth industries, and/or have demonstrated rapid growth potential.

This award marks DESA’s 36-year commitment to the growth and development of MBEs through federal contracting. Project Director, Camille Shaw said, “It is an honor to serve minority businesses. They are key to generational wealth and building stronger communities.”

This award to DESA and five other new business centers delivers on the Biden Administration’s mission to expand access to capital and procurement opportunities for America’s minority business enterprises (MBEs). Expanding MBDA’s footprint is critical to the Agency’s mandate under the Minority Business Development Act of 2021, which seeks to expand MBDA’s influence and reach to support the nation’s 9.7 million minority-owned businesses.

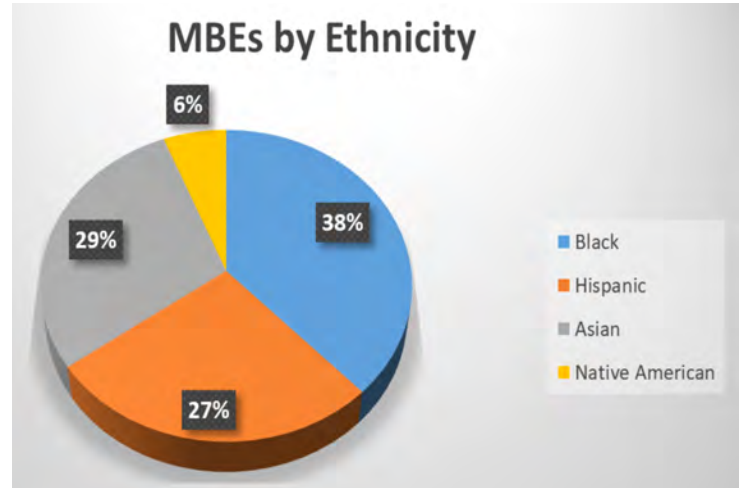
Donald Cravins, under secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development, said “To give minority-owned businesses the tools they need to succeed, we must meet people where they are. The greatest obstacle facing minority-owned businesses is access—access

to capital, access to contracts and access to markets. Strengthening MBDA’s existing business centers and expanding our footprint is critical to breaking down those barriers.

Businesses interested in learning more about the Center should call 803-743-1152 or email info@desainc.com.

About the MBDA Business Center

The mission of South Carolina MBDA Business Center is to assist MBEs (minority business enterprises) compete in the global economy and to stimulate the national and local economy through job creation. To fulfill this mission, we assist MBEs with access to contracts and capital, strategic business counseling and becoming export ready. For more information on the MBDA Business Center and its services, visit scmbdacenter.com or call (803) 743-1152.



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TIPS FOR BUILDING AN ONLINE PROFILE TO LAND A SKILLED TRADES JOB



(BPT) - Across the U.S., there is a strong, growing need for highly skilled tradespeople. According to the Home Builders Institute, more than 300,000 skilled labor job openings remain unfilled. There are many reasons for this labor shortage, but one that doesn't get enough attention is the lack of networking opportunities between hiring trades professionals and skilled tradespeople.

Unlike other professions, skilled trade workers looking to hire use word-of-mouth referrals as their primary or only recruitment method. Without a jobseeker platform to connect skilled tradespeople, many positions remain unfilled.

Before you can make connections and apply for jobs to advance your career, you'll need to create a strong profile that will make you stand out to potential employers. If you're new to making a profile or resume, check out these profile-building tips.

1. Pick your best work

When it comes to skilled trades, no project is too small to show off your mastery of the craft. However, hiring professionals are pressed for time. They need to be able to quickly assess if you're the right person for the job.

Write a list of the jobs you've done and pick only the best ones

that highlight your skills and experience. Make sure that the jobs you pick relate to the skilled trade job you're hoping to land. Also, ensure the skillsets you include in your portfolio demonstrate familiarity with your desired trade's job.

2. Take photos of your projects

You've probably heard that a picture is worth a thousand words. Hiring pros need to see that you can produce quality craftsmanship when they are looking to hire a skilled professional for their team. The easiest and more impactful way to show your skill is to take and upload high-resolution photos to your profile.

During a job, take photos before, during and after to show key stages of your process. Generally, three to five photos of each project highlighting the details of your handiwork will be enough to show hiring pros what you can do.

3. Describe your job process

Make sure to accompany your photos with descriptions of the steps and stages of each project. These descriptions give potential employers confidence in your ability to plan and execute your work.

You don't need to write a novel. Keep it simple, short and clear. If you completed a project as part of a larger team, highlight your specific contributions, including examples of when you suggested a solution or collaborated with team members to solve a problem.

4. Sell yourself

At the end of the day, potential employers need to know who you are and that you have what it takes to work in the skilled trades. Make sure you have a profile photo that shows off your smile and personality.

Lastly, don't skip the "About Me" section. It doesn't have to be long or super detailed. Make sure to touch on your current position or title, relevant skills and career goals. This short description gives Pros a quick snapshot of how you sell yourself professionally and if you're a good fit for their needs.

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HONDA SOUTH CAROLINA MFG. MANAGER RECEIVES SCMA AWARD Submitted by Honda SC Mfg.



(L to R) - Scott McKenzie, Assembly Department Manager, Ashley Hopwood, S.C. / N.C. Communications Manager, Darlene LeGrant, In-House Parts Department Manager, Sunny Philips, VP of Member Relations, SC Manufacturers Alliance, Ron Freed, Production Support Manager, Andi Rawl, Executive Director, SC Automotive Council, Chad Hensley, Production Quality Manager and Brian Kent, Suppliers Operations Department Manager

TIMMONSVILLE-Ron Freed, production support manager at Honda South Carolina Manufacturing (SCM), was recently awarded the Operations Professional of the Year for 2022, by the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance (SCMA). Freed is one of four individuals in the manufacturing industry recently awarded with the SCMA 2022 Professionals of the Year Award.

“Ron is very deserving of this award,” stated Chad Hensley SCM production quality manager. “He successfully managed our weld and assembly departments for years and has worked to strengthen our corporate services department and connections in the community. Ron is a tremendous asset to Honda, and South Carolina Manufacturing has benefitted from his drive and passion for 24 years.”

In Freed’s current role as production support manager, he works to improve associate development and strengthen connections with existing Honda business units such as human resources. He is also responsible for business planning & operations, manpower control on the factory side and cross functional roles like cost and delivery.

“We are proud to recognize Ron Freed as the 2022 SCMA Operations Professional of the Year,” said Sara Hazzard, president & CEO of SCMA. “Ron embodies the spirit of American manufacturing through his leadership of an incredibly talented team making world-class products every day which advances our state’s economy and supports our local communities. This prestigious recognition celebrates Ron’s career and the meaningful impact he’s made as a leader for South Carolina’s manufacturing community.”

Freed began his career with Honda in 1998 as a production welder at SCM in Timmonsville. He served as the Assembly Manager for the launch of the production for the Honda Pioneer side-by-side vehicle in 2013.

“Honda has given me a lot of opportunities that I wouldn’t have had any other place,” said Freed.

Ron says he loves the manufacturing environment because it offers new challenges every day, and he considers himself very fortunate to work for a company that offers stability and plenty of opportunities for growth.

“Whenever you tell someone, you work for Honda, no matter where you go, there’s always some level of ‘wow’ because you can find us everywhere,” continued Freed. “We build cars, airplanes, motorcycles, ATVS, you name it. I’m very proud to be in manufacturing and be part of a company that produces so many quality products.”

Freed’s passion for manufacturing extends beyond his role with Honda. He has served as a member and chair of the S.C. Manufacturers Alliance Plant Operations Committee and is a passionate supporter of the manufacturing industry and the opportunities it offers to South Carolina’s workforce.

He is honored that his peers in this industry recognize his desire to help grow and develop better conditions for manufacturing in Palmetto State.



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PEE DEE ENTREPRENEUR BUILDS ON THE LEGACY By Glacia Brown Mason



William Schofield

“The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.” - Billy Graham

If you’ve lived in the Florence area for any measurable amount of time, you are no stranger to the Schofield name and their legacy of entrepreneurship, politics and service. For the Schofield family, hardware and contractor supplies has been a family tradition. In the early 1900s, Robert P. Schofield, Sr. established Schofield Hardware in the 100 block of W. Evans Street. In 1950, the store moved to a larger

facility at 276 W. Evans Street. In 1960 Robert P. Schofield, Sr. passed away and left the operation to his sons, Robert and Charles who operated the store until 1963, when it was moved to Cashua Drive. Robert and Charles Schofield separated their business relationship in 1967. Charles and his two sons, Marshall and James at that time, owned and operated the Heritage Inn and Restaurant along with several shopping center real estate holdings.

In the early 1970s, Robert Schofield sold Schofield Hardware to outside investors. But, like a phoenix rising, in January 1985, Carolina Hardware & Supply Inc., opened its doors for business. Charles, Marshall and James Schofield along with John Frank established the company in a 24,000 sq. ft. facility on three acres of land. The name was changed in 1996 to, Carolina SupplyHouse, Inc., which now occupies a 125,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility on 12 acres of land.

The Carolina SupplyHouse Inc. is a family-owned corporation whose mission is to maintain an unsurpassed inventory of high-quality products and make them available 24-hours at competitive prices. The corporation includes multiple stock holders, some are family members, others are key employees (work family), that have dedicated their lives to business success and its continuity. The Carolina SupplyHouse Inc. is located at 218 West Second Loop Road, Florence, SC 29505. They are open Monday thru Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The lighting showroom hours are Monday thru Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

William Schofield is the co-owner of Carolina SupplyHouse Inc., and currently serves as the company’s vice-president. A native of Florence, SC, he attended Camden Military Academy from eighth grade thru his senior year and went on to The Citadel. Schofield says, “the deepest pleasure of my life was serving in the United States Navy Ceremonial Guard, the Navy’s Presidential Honor Guard.” From conducting funerals and other services at Arlington National Cemetery, Schofield went on to work for U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in his public affairs office before transferring to a Minesweeper and a Guided Missile Cruiser.

The Journey from Military to Community Service

In July 2020, James Schofield, a visionary leader whose compassion and love for the county and everyone in it, was second to none, transitioned. The legacy of James Schofield continues today, thru his son, William Schofield. “I watched my father from childhood in the political arena from his service on Florence City Council and then to Florence County Council.” Schofield has followed in his father’s footsteps in Florence City and County, by stepping into the role of service. Initially not ever wanting to be in the political spotlight, Schofield ran for and lost the district eight seat which his father had held. However, practicing the words of Robert the Bruce, the first King of Scotland, “If at first, you don’t succeed, try, try, again.” Schofield says, “my father’s passion for this community and county lit a fire in me to seek out the best for Florence,” and, he has, emerging as local entrepreneur, Florence City Council member and now as a Florence County Council member.

During the 2020 election cycle, the Florence City Council district one seat, vacated by current Mayor, Teresa Myers Ervin became available. After much consideration and discussions at length with his wife, Caroline and family, they, “made the decision that now was the time for me to prove to

the citizens of Florence that I wasn’t just the son of the late James Schofield; that I had the same passion and drive as he did.” Schofield was the first Republican to ever win the district. He believes, “it was because of my passion and commitment for the betterment of all our neighbors’ lives. After all, we are all family in God’s eyes. They put their faith in me. I will never forget that. They gave me a chance to show them what I had to offer. That my words were not just scribbings on a piece of paper but if given the chance, I would breathe life into those words.”

A family man, business entrepreneur and local politician, Schofield felt God pushing him yet again, and in the 2022, election cycle, just a year and a half later, he would win the Florence County Council district eight seat. Of the experience and election results, Schofield says, “It is the most humbling feeling to know that people, some whom you barely know or don’t even know at all put their trust in you to do good for them.” Schofield was sworn in for the Florence County Council on January 1, 2023.

His goal for Florence County is to constantly improve in every aspect. “I grew up watching my family and father in particular dedicating their lives to service to the community not only through politics but service to the community and putting Florence First.” As both an entrepreneur and County Councilman, Schofield has a dual perspective and vantage point about the Florence area community. When asked about the future forecast of small business in the community, he said, “the future for small business in Florence is bright.” He fully expects to see multiple new small businesses begin with the recent announcement of the \$810M investment of the Electric Vehicle Battery Facility.

With the new lucrative investment in Florence County, combined with a heart for the community in which he lives and works, Schofield recognizes and is committed to workforce diversity, equity and inclusion and recognizes that working together results in a win for all. “My father and uncle saw an opportunity for our business to continue no matter what. While this business will always remain a family business there are a few that have been given stock in our corporation that are lifelong employees and when they choose to retire that stock is then reinvested back into another employee. We value our employees and their dedication to not only this business but to their community,” shares Schofield.

The value Carolina SupplyHouse, Inc. has for its employees is apparent, when shared by its co-owner and vice president. He recalled how the dedicated and selfless women and men, “really shine when disasters strike our area. These men and women come thru for their community like nothing I’ve ever seen. Whether it is showing up in the middle of the night to unload a truck full of generators or most recently the infamous toilet paper shortage, they always go above and beyond.” Of those steadfast efforts, Schofield says, “It is what makes us great! It doesn’t matter what position you start at in this business, if you put in the hard work and dedication, you can rise all the way to the top positions of this corporation.” The Carolina SupplyHouse, Inc. employees have many years of experience in the construction and contracting industry. This real-world experience allows the staff to help customers find solutions to their problems. “We are not just a hardware store. We carry 188,000 different items in stock., from HVAC, electrical, plumbing, paint, hardware, tools and even designer lighting and bath fixtures,” says Schofield.

Schofield is married to his wife Caroline, and they share four amazing children Joe, Thomas, Haleigh and Myers.



William Schofield pictured with wife Caroline and their four amazing children



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GOD'S GUIDANCE LED TO BECOMING LAKE CITY'S FIRST FEMALE MAYOR

By Mallory Brayboy



Yameika Robinson

LAKE CITY - January 2023 will always be a memorable time for Yameika Robinson. During this month, she will be sworn in as not only the first female mayor of Lake City, SC but the first African American female mayor.

Robinson, 43, is a proud native of Lake City. She graduated from Lake City High School with honors and went on to earn a bachelor's in biology from the University of South Carolina. After college, she remained in Columbia and began her career as a Pharmacy Technician. This soon proved to be a tough task for the

mother of two, and she relocated back to her hometown in 2009.

"I really, truly have a story of my own and I tell people that your story is your strength - everyone has a story, and you should not be ashamed of it," Robinson says. "I came up as a teenage mother and had my first son in high school. It was tough." Years later, she married the father of her last four children. However, the couple went on to divorce after five years of marriage, leaving her a single mother of five. Though times were not easy, she is able to reflect on the good that came from the experience. "It gave me a moment in time to actually strengthen my relationship with God and that's exactly what I needed." Robinson considers the strength, determination, and resilience gained through her life experiences as qualities that will allow her to succeed in her new role as mayor. Her experiences also brought out the leader in her. She started a group called Women of Wisdom in 2019, with the mission to celebrate, educate and empower all women. "I really felt like he laid this on me to do, because it took me a while to know my worth. When we separated and I was alone with five children I felt like no one would think I'm worthy of anything," Robinson recalls. She attributes her family, friends and faith in God as helping her overcome that difficult time.

A few of the major areas Robinson will focus on as mayor are economic development, community safety and affordable housing. Robinson says there is currently an affordable housing initiative in place



now, with the city building new homes. This is a touching subject to her as she has dealt with the issue personally. After her divorce, Robinson and her children moved in with her mother and lived in the former Wedgefield mobile home park. They received an unexpected, certified letter in July of 2017 stating residents had 60 days to move. Unbeknownst to any of the park's residents, management had sold the property and it was now under new, private ownership. Residents were suddenly forced to up and move out of city limits. "It takes a lot of paperwork, processing,

and funding to move. People did not have the funding," says Robinson. The community came together and asked Robinson to be the spokesperson for them. Robinson agreed and worked alongside Tatum Bostick and Garena Conyers to find a resolution. "Everyone took pride in their home. Yes, we had mobile homes, but that was our home," Robinson says. The trio held local meetings, met with city council and went to court twice, resulting in multiple extensions for the residents. The majority of the mobile homes were moved by their final deadline in March of 2018.

During this ordeal, Robinson had paused her own home search but says that God was still looking out for her. "I received a phone call from someone who knew what I was going through, and they asked if I wanted to look at a house," she recalls. Robinson and her family now reside in that very home within Lake City's city limits. "God was ordering my steps. Mostly everybody had to go out of county, and county residents couldn't vote or run for a city government seat in city limits. God placed me in that house knowing that he was going to place me on city council."

Robinson initially ran for mayor in 2018 and lost to the city's sitting mayor, Lovith Anderson, Jr. The loss, however, did not defeat her. She received 32 percent of the votes and viewed it as a sign that people wanted a change. She continued to support Mayor Anderson and vowed to do all she could as a community leader. When Robinson discovered that Mayor Anderson would not be running for a fifth term, she decided to run for the position again and was met with lots of encouragement.

Robinson's win makes her the first female elected as mayor in Lake City. "I'm very proud of myself for that accomplishment. I'm not a bragger but you have to celebrate yourself. I don't think people do that enough for themselves," she says. "I'm glad that I was able to do it. Not for myself, but to show our other Black females that they can do whatever they want to do as long as they put their mind to it. That's why I call myself a transformational leader." She wishes to encourage others to take on leadership roles and says, a mantra she lives by is, "Be the first to do it, then encourage others to do it even better."

Many people ask how she will "run the city" as a single mother, but Robinson makes it clear that she is not running the city alone. "I have a great administrative staff and many citizens that are supporting me. When it comes to new jobs, new businesses and youth engagement, it takes us all to pitch in and make those things happen." She is eager to hear from different demographics in the city. "For me to represent the community, I need to know from them what they want to see. It's about our young people, our seniors, fire department, police department, small business, big businesses- they all make up the city. I want to have that one-on-one with them." She also plans to build relationships with local leaders including House Representative Roger Kirby, County Councilman Jason Springs, State Senator Ronnie Sabb and Congressman Jim Clyburn along with other municipalities, mayors and council members within the state. Robinson is not just believing in great things for Lake City. "We are all South Carolinians, and we should not be at competition among municipalities. We can all come together to make South Carolina strong."



IS 2023 YOUR YEAR TO START A BUSINESS? Submitted by the Florence Downtown Development Office Staff



Downtown Florence, 2022

Photo credited to True Light Photography

If you've chosen 2023 as the year to start your own business, you are not alone. We like to take our first article of the New Year to encourage, celebrate and inspire local entrepreneurs, existing small business owners and ensure you have the resources you need to start your small business journey.

Before beginning any new business venture,

an entrepreneur needs to ask themselves one question: "Why do I want to start my own business?" Whatever your reason is, you need to be able to objectively answer this question, work on strategies and develop plans prior to opening your doors to set yourself and your small business up for success. If you are interested in opening a business in the Florence area, there are several resources located in Florence that can help you get on the right path for success:

- The Greater Florence Chamber and their Pee Dee SCORE Chapter provides free business advice and mentoring offering low or no-cost business training and the sharing of free business templates and resources. New entrepreneurs can count on confidential free advice from expert advisors who are committed to helping your small business succeed. Resources can be found online at www.grandstrand.score.org/peedee or by calling 843-665-0515.

- The Francis Marion University Kelley Center for Economic Development, located at 142 N. Dargan Street in downtown Florence,

offers three areas of program services including small business incubation, business planning assistance and low or no-cost training programs led by industry experts and seasoned entrepreneurs. Additional information can be found at www.fmarion.edu/kelleycenter/ or by calling 843-661-1205.

- The Florence Area Small Business Development Center (SBDC), located at Florence-Darlington Technical College, serves Florence, Marion, Dillon, Darlington, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Williamsburg and Lee counties and is a program of the Winthrop Regional Small Business Development Center and the U.S. Small Business Administration. The SBDC provides free management and technical services training from idea to open. They can also assist small business owners with referrals, government contracts, business planning and identifying financing. Additional information can be found at www.winthropregionalsbdc.org/florence-sc-sbdc or by calling 843-661-8256.

- The Florence Downtown Development Office offers free technical assistance, business plan review, market research, and acts as a conduit for connecting entrepreneurs to available resources for starting a small business within the City of Florence. The office also administers various grant programs to assist small business owners with building up fit within target improvement areas in the City of Florence and assists small business owners operating within the city limits with navigating the various permitting processes at the city. More information can be found at www.florencedowntown.com or by calling 843-678-5912.

Whether you are at the very beginning of your entrepreneurship journey or are a seasoned pro looking to be reinspired after a few years of challenging conditions, these resources can be a great place for you to start. Don't give up on your small business dream, take advantage of the local resources available for entrepreneurs, and make your resolution a reality in 2023. The resource teams included in this article are here when you're ready.

Congratulations

to our newest Downtown Florence entrepreneurs for opening small businesses in 2022!

- Agathoula's Boutique
- American Sign Language Studio
- Anime Attic
- BCH Healthcare Staffing
- Central Executive Offices
- Coastal Health, LLC
- Cortney's Cupcakery, LLC
- Cru Wine and Tap
- Flair Boutique and Studio
- Little Sapiens
- Narzhio the Artist Studio
- Nick's Renovation Wholesale
- William Barefoot, CPA

Happy
NEW YEAR

FROM DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

Ready to open your own business?
Visit www.florencedowntown.com for resources.

ARNETT JAMES IV EMERGES AS PEE DEE AREA FRANCHISE OWNER By Glaceria Brown Mason



Arnett James IV

We're all familiar with those Golden Arches! McDonalds is one of the most recognizable fast-food restaurants, in the world. Since the 1950s, McDonalds has maintained service and consistency in brand and product worldwide. Today, 80 percent of the McDonalds worldwide, are franchises. In fact, McDonalds ranks number one among the top 200 franchises.

In the Pee Dee area of Florence, our neighbor, friend and local business entrepreneur, Mr. Arnett James IV, is a

McDonalds franchise owner, operating two local franchises. James is the eldest son of former 25-year franchise Owners, Mr. Arnett James III and Ms. Wanda James, originally from Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

From Chemist to Entrepreneur

The 32-year-old James is a graduate of SC State University with a degree in chemistry. At the point of preparing for the MCAT, the test for prospective medical students in the U.S., James underwent a major life shift, emerging as owner/operator of not one, but two McDonalds franchises at 3805 W. Palmetto Street and 1908 W. Lucas Street, in Florence. As owner, James runs a successful business and manages everything from finances to legal matters. James' franchises employ 100 local residents. He believes that everyone has a place in the community and that the dialogue with his employees has to be a two-way street. James values dedicated employees like Sheretta German who began her McDonalds career at an early age and has risen to director of operations for both locations and Melissa Abraham, whom James is happy to have assisting in the growth of the franchises.

James' up-front leadership style is rooted in his family's history of being the eldest son and cousin. When asked about his biggest challenge, James shared that, with a chemist mindset, although he had previously served as general manager, "the change from doing everything solo to rallying everyone to get the job done together; relying on others to complete responsibilities; making sure that your message is constantly evolving so everyone understands and the ability to maneuver and juggle different personalities to get the same result has been the biggest challenge." He talked about the diversity of people and personalities and how people respond to feedback differently. "As a leader, it's your responsibility to identify what kind of personality you're dealing with and to cater your message to said personnel."

James believes in community and the importance of taking care of the immediate area. He said, goals and aspirations can't be achieved without the ability to network, communicate and build relationships. Annually the franchise sponsors the Wilson High School Christmas Tournament and in conjunction with the three additional McDonalds



Father Arnett James III, Arnett James IV and Mother Wanda James

franchises, they join forces to support the Florence Heart Walk and the Breast Cancer Awareness Walk.

"Everyone has a place in the community, and fit in, in their own special way," says James. There are other opportunities, and he hopes that minorities see that they can own a business and be successful.



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DUKE ENERGY AND HARVEST HOPE FIGHT HUNGER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Submitted by Ryan Mosier, Corporate Communications



GREENVILLE—Duke Energy joined Harvest Hope Food Bank in Florence to “Pack the Pantry” and kick off a monthlong campaign to support organizations in

South Carolina that address food insecurities and inequities across the state.

In addition to purchasing the food that volunteers packed, the event also included a \$100,000 grant to Harvest Hope to help expand mobile food pantries to those in the most rural areas of the Pee Dee. Duke Energy’s monthlong initiative provided over \$325,000 to more than 40 feeding programs that lead up to the Thanksgiving holiday and culminating in final surprise grant announcements on Giving Tuesday.

“Every community in South Carolina is home to families who face hunger,” said Mike Callahan, Duke Energy South Carolina state



Pack the Pantry Campaign



Mindy Taylor District Manager Government & Community Relations, Duke Energy and Erin Rowe, CEO of Harvest Hope

president. “The statistics are startling – nearly 500,000 of our friends and neighbors lack consistent access to high-quality meals, and one in seven of those are children.”

“As thoughts turn to the holidays and gatherings with families around dinner tables, it’s important

to support the organizations who do the great work to fight hunger across our state,” Callahan said. “Our hope is by shining a light on these efforts, these organizations will continue to receive the support they need to help reduce and hopefully one day eliminate hunger in our communities.”

The inaugural “Pack the Pantry” event brought together dozens of volunteers from the downtown Florence business community to help pack a thousand boxes of shelf-stable food at the FMU Performing Arts Center that was distributed at food banks during the Thanksgiving holiday. The event also included a public drive-through for food donations.

Harvest Hope is South Carolina’s largest food bank, providing more than 20 million meals on average to neighbors in need across the Midlands, Pee Dee and Upstate.

“It truly takes the entire community to end hunger, and we’re so

DUKE ENERGY CONT'D



Pack the Pantry Campaign

glad to have the continued support of Duke Energy,” said Erinn Rowe, CEO of Harvest Hope. “So many holiday memories involve food, and together we’re able to ensure our working families across South Carolina have memories of their favorite dish this season and not of an empty plate.”

Throughout November, Duke Energy highlighted the critical community partners like Harvest Hope that do this incredible work, including Mill Village Farms, FoodShare South Carolina, United Way Association of South Carolina and AIM, among many others. Duke Energy employees and retirees were volunteering their time and efforts with these and other organizations throughout the month to assist in packing and distributing food boxes, as well as providing sweat equity to other feeding programs in their neighborhoods.

Duke Energy

Duke Energy (NYSE: DUK), a Fortune 150 company headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., is one of America’s largest energy holding companies. Its electric utilities serve 8.2 million customers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky, and collectively

own 50,000 megawatts of energy capacity. Its natural gas unit serves 1.6 million customers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky. The company employs 28,000 people.

Duke Energy is executing an aggressive clean energy transition to achieve its goals of net-zero methane emissions from its natural gas business by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions from electricity generation by 2050. The company has interim carbon emission targets of at least 50 percent reduction from electric generation by 2030, 50 percent for Scope 2 and certain Scope 3 upstream and downstream emissions by 2035, and 80 percent from electric generation by 2040. In addition, the company is investing in major electric grid enhancements and energy storage and exploring zero-emission power generation technologies such as hydrogen and advanced nuclear.

Duke Energy was named to Fortune’s 2022 “World’s Most Admired Companies” list and Forbes’ “World’s Best Employers” list. More information is available at duke-energy.com. The Duke Energy News Center contains news releases, fact sheets, photos and videos. Duke Energy’s illumination features stories about people, innovations, community topics and environmental issues. Follow Duke Energy on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: DELIVERING CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE



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A HANDS ON MANAGEMENT STYLE AT ADP By Jennifer Robinson



Jessica Morris

Automatic Data Processing (ADP) has been providing human resource solutions for companies for over 70 years. One of their dedicated 12-year staff members is Jessica Morris. She is currently director of Client Services but started out as an account manager. Morris progressed to senior account manager and eventually was promoted to manager. The transition going from being a peer to managing the team was difficult at first, but things slowly began to improve once trust was gained. As director of Client Service, Morris leads a team of fourteen account managers who assist clients with federal tax incentives

– mainly the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

To be successful in her job as a director, Morris knows the importance of collaboration. Collaboration is essential in ADP as things change from day to day and it's not always a one size fits all solution for every client. Morris said, "It's great to share what we do and how we help many businesses both small and large with tax incentives for hiring people who may have consistently faced some sort of barrier to employment." Along with collaborations, her efficient management style is effective in team success. She stated, "I like to think that my management style is more hands on and lead by example approach. I have worked in a few industries and have had some wonderful and not so wonderful leaders. I have tried to take a little of both and used them as guides of what to do and what not to do. I try my best to ensure that I wouldn't ask one of my associates to do something that I would not do myself and it is not unusual for me to get in the trenches and work alongside my team. I may be in a position of authority; however, I don't let that get to my head. We are all working towards a common goal."

Diversity and inclusion have become even more important in business culture in recent years. People from all backgrounds are being prompted to share their talents with business for optimum success. Team leading means working with a diverse group of people. Knowing she works with people from all backgrounds, it encourages her to strive to be more efficient in the way that she communicates. Morris said, "I want to make sure that I am meeting the individual in the place that they best understand what it is that I'm teaching or directing them to do." Her passion for people and her love of her work.

Morris loves that ADP is a global company with a solid foundation. "I am a part of the Adelante Business Resource group which bands together those associates that identify with or want to celebrate their Hispanic culture. ADP is also a huge proponent of social responsibility, and they provide each associate with eight hours of paid volunteer time each year. These are some of the programs from a corporate perspective of why I love ADP. However, at the end of the day the one thing that I love the most is the people that I work with."

Though there are few, but some of the challenges people face in this position are advocating on behalf of the associates when a business decision has been made. This doesn't happen too often but there may be times where I don't necessarily agree wholeheartedly with some of the directives. However, she accepts those decisions and ensures the team understands the reason the decisions were made. The key is being open and honest with the team. Morris said working with her clients as well as her team is gratifying.

"The most gratifying thing to me about working with clients is building deep relationship with them. I have had many clients become friends over the past twelve years and we share stories of our families and careers. Another thing that is extremely gratifying is taking a client escalation – where the client is unhappy with the product or service that they are receiving – and I can work with them to get them back on track. Outside of mentoring and developing my associates,

which is one of my favorite things to do.

Morris stated that success in this role is about her associates. "When one of my associates who is struggling with understanding or mastering a task "gets it," because I am able to share my knowledge with them then I feel successful. My greatest acknowledgement of my role in this business is when I can help develop and mentor one of my associates and get to watch them soar. At the end of the day, I feel that is what my purpose is here at ADP. However, my greatest accomplishment is my team."



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YOUR LOVED ONE DESERVES THE BEST By Glaciera Brown Mason



J. Lawrence "Chipper" Smith II

It is said that the best cornerstones of healing, after loss, are honoring and celebrating life.

For more than 70 years, Smith Funeral Home has served the Pee Dee area with compassionate, professional end of life care. Their story begins in October 1950, when husband-and-wife educators, owner and manager J. O. and Annette McCollum Smith, natives of Bennettsville, SC, came to Florence after receiving encouragement from some of the city's leading citizen, that a first-class business of this nature was needed here.

Today, Smith Funeral Home is owned by Felicia Smith Charles and J. Lawrence "Chipper" Smith II, licensed funeral director. Smith, a lifelong resident is co-owner and vice president of Smith Funeral Home and the newly seated Florence City Councilman for district two, having won the seat in the 2022 election.

A native son, Smith is a graduate of Wilson High School, the University Maryland Eastern Shore and Gupton Jones College of Mortuary Science. Immersed in the funeral services business since his youth, Smith shared how experience has taught him that every challenge becomes a lesson. "There are many lessons that you learn about yourself and the business; those lessons have helped me, and my staff serve the Pee Dee Area," said Licensed Funeral Director Smith. He goes on to say, "The best part of my day as an owner is serving families and my community. The best reward is to serve families and guide them through one of the most difficult times in their lives and provide them with a final celebration service to their loved one."

Smith Funeral Home offers burial and crematory service. They perform many different religious services to meet a family's need. That level of service to residents extends to the community at large, as Smith Funeral



Homes participates in outreach opportunities to support community events like back-to-school and representation and service on giving boards such as the United Way, Boys & Girls Club of Florence County which serve the community in so many different ways.

Smith Funeral Home is a part of the National Mortician Association, the South Carolina Mortician Association, National Funeral Directors Association and South Carolina Funeral Directors Association. The personnel of the SMITH FUNERAL HOME appreciate the patronage and the support that the community has given across the years. No one is ever denied because of financial circumstances.

Smith Funeral Home is located at 307 S. Johns Street, Florence; SC. Families in need of Smith Funeral Home services may call 843-662-7192.

Smith is married to Alyssia D. Smith and is the doting father to of Alyse Journi Smith and J. Lawrence Smith III.

Smith Funeral Home of Florence offers distinctive, personal, and affordable services designed to help you honor your loved one in a way that is unique to them and meaningful to you.

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2023: BUILDING A GROWTH CULTURE

Submitted by the City of Florence



Home Demolition at 408 Johns Street

“Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” Warren Buffett.

Incorporated, December 24, 1890, Florence became an essential transportation hub for the Pee Dee region as a known stop on the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad. Since, it has flourished and advanced with each generation. Previous generations built a city that could be appreciated. It is the hope that each improvement will continue to spur growth that can be enjoyed for generations to come.

The City of Florence kicked off 2022, with grand openings for two new fire stations. New playground equipment was installed at Dr. Iola Jones Park. In July, Florence received state-wide recognition at the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) Annual Meeting after being selected for the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Award for Economic Development. This award was for the city’s Food, Artisan and Warehouse District, a policy action to leverage existing small-scale manufacturing assets and cultivate local innovative food/artisan-driven businesses. On August 16, the city was honored with the 2022 Outstanding Tennis Facility Award at the USTA Western & Southern Open. The Florence Sports Complex is slated for completion in December. The new complex provides recreation for baseball and track to support local youth leagues, and a permanent home for the Florence Flamingos.

In 2022, the Florence City Council allocated \$500,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds to demolish deserted and blighted homes. Community development is a focus for council with the anticipation the effort will help reduce crime, promote health and safety and create future development. As of November, eight homes had been demolished, five were out for bid and more are expected to follow. Another significant demolition began this past September, the motel located at 1300 E. Palmetto Street reached completion in early November. The new open space is currently intended to become an extension of Levy Park.

The city anticipates many projects in 2023, to aid in the progress for future generations. The city will adopt its new Comprehensive Plan to establish new goals and objectives focusing on infrastructure improvements, housing and neighborhoods, transportation and economic development. The Downtown Masterplan, focusing on the central business district will provide recommendations. There are over 20 roads under contract for improvements funded by the Capital Projects Sales Tax. The development of the city’s new Stormwater Masterplan will oversee the observation of current stormwater conditions and make recommendations. The city will also witness the first phase of its Stormwater Capital Improvement Program, which includes cleaning the drainage infrastructure. The city initiated an engineering evaluation in November 2022, to design and construct improvements to the Pee Dee Regional Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to expand the WTP permitted treatment capacity from 10.0 to 20.0 million gallons per day. The initial phase is projected to reach completion by December 2023.

There is no doubt the city continues to move forward and provide necessary resources, and drive to create a flourishing and successful environment for residents. The participation of the citizens of Florence is vital for development and enhances the city for generations to come. While appreciating the impact and outcomes of past efforts, our job is to continue that work ethic and instill the promise of growth for those to come, continuing the tradition of moving Florence – Full Life. Full Forward.

The City of Florence is kicking off the first phase of its Stormwater Capital Improvement Program



City staff is requesting **public input** to help refine locations that are experiencing flooding, drainage concerns or water quality issues in preparation of a **Stormwater Master Plan**. Signs of stormwater issues include flooded yards, impassable streets, discolored or foul-smelling stormwater runoff or sediment deposits after a storm.

Scan the QR code to engage with our interactive portal or visit our **Capital Improvement Page** on our website at [visit www.cityofflorence.com](http://www.cityofflorence.com)



SCAN ME

GET THE DOUBT OUT OF THE HOUSE! By Robin Lewis



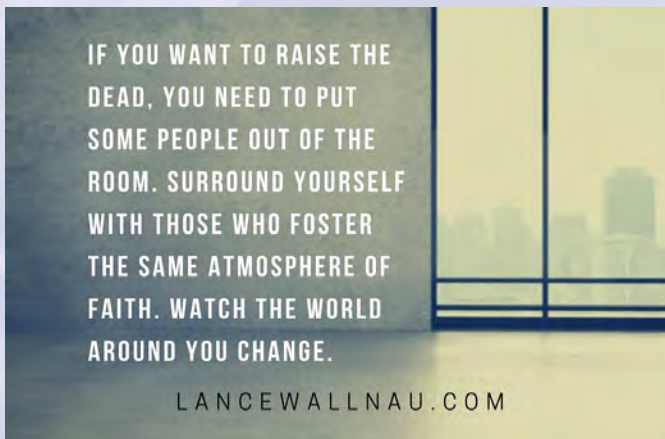
HEMINGWAY - Have you ever been so plagued with doubt, fear and worry that it was hard to imagine a solution? If our minds are not renewed, we all have the tendency to expect a negative outcome. Paul wrote in Romans 12:2, "Don't take on the image of the world around you but let yourself be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In other words, change your thinking and you change your life.



Doubt, fear and worry are a big problem! A mindset filled with these things can actually block the blessings that God wants to get to you. There's a story in Mark 5 where Jesus was asked to come and pray over a little girl who had a severe fever. She was the daughter of Jairus, a leader in the synagogue.

Jairus pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."

When they were on the way, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher anymore?" Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."



When they arrived, the house was filled with mourners. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. The scripture then says something very interesting. "After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around. They were completely astonished.

When Jesus had all the mourners leave, He was moving doubt out of the house. He knew that negativity in the atmosphere could influence the faith of the girl's parents. He got doubt out



saying? Are you writing a negative outcome in your mind, like a bad story? Are you expecting the worst? This is spiritual doubt, and it is powerful. It can block you from receiving what you need most. Get doubt out of the house by "catching" the negative thoughts and stopping negative words from coming out of your mouth.

Why does this matter? We are each made in the image of God. Remember, God created everything with his spoken word. Since we are made in his image or like him, our words have power as well. Our very words have power to create. Proverbs 18:21 teaches that "Life is in the power of the tongue." Our thoughts and expectations give birth to our words. We have to practice renewing our minds to the truth of what God's word says.

In Luke 11:9-10, Jesus says, "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."



Many people think this means that the more we pray, the more God hears us, as if we have to convince him of what we need. But Jesus said we have a good Father in

Heaven who wants to bless us. To "keep on asking" means we keep hearing ourselves say what we need. The more we hear ourselves say it, the more we believe it is possible, and the larger our faith grows. After all, "faith comes by hearing!"

If we renew our minds and learn to focus on the positive outcome, we will be able with our expectations, thoughts and words to not only imagine and begin to believe in what is possible, but we will be removing the negativity from our life. This is how you get doubt out of the house.

Use the following declarations of faith daily for seven days and see if your faith grows! It's guaranteed! Speak these out loud and you will renew your mind:

1. My prayers are powerful and effective (James 5:16).
2. God richly supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19).
3. My faith is being strengthened to possess all that Jesus won for me (Romans 4:17-23).
4. I walk in ever-increasing health (Psalm 103:1-3, Isaiah 53:5).
5. God is on my side; therefore, I declare I cannot be discouraged or defeated (Romans 8:37, Psalm 91, Philippians 4:13).

You're invited to visit www.RobinLewisLife.com to book a Free Discovery Session and get a three-step action plan for renewing your mind. Truly anything is possible!

COLLEGE 2030: NEW STUDY FINDS KEY INSIGHTS INTO HOW COLLEGE IS CHANGING



(BPT) - Research from Barnes and Noble Education (BNED) reveals insights into how education institutions are adapting. The study called “College 2030 - Emerging from the Pandemic: Reimagining Higher Education,” explores changes and visions for the future of higher education by surveying over 2,500 U.S. students, faculty and administrators regarding five areas: the value of higher education, career preparedness, student loans, mental health and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

“This study provides a snapshot of higher education at an inflection point,” said BNED CEO Michael Huseby. “These insights are not only indicative of how higher education is evolving but can help educational institutions respond more effectively as they set goals for the future.”

Here are five key takeaways from the report, and what higher education institutions can learn from them.

1. The value of higher education

Rising tuition costs and student loan debt have made many question the value of higher education, however, one-third of the students surveyed 33 percent said the value of college has actually increased. The majority of students seeing increased value were community college students, graduate or professional students and students 25 years or older. One reason can be attributed to class format, which has pivoted in response to the pandemic. Nearly half the students, 49 percent, said they preferred a hybrid format, while more than half of faculty, 54 percent, favored a fully in-person environment. This difference poses a challenge for institutions.

“Over the next decade, institutions need to continue listening to students by creating personalized learning experiences based on their needs,” said Huseby. “This can be achieved by giving students choices between a variety of class types - in-person, remote and hybrid.”

Hybrid/online learning can provide better access and equity for students of all ages and backgrounds. To further help students have equitable access, Barnes & Noble College (BNC) has created First Day Complete, a program providing all required course materials (digital and physical) to all students before the first day of class, bundling costs as part of their tuition.

2. Career preparedness

The perceived value of higher education is strongly connected to career preparation. When asked, 73 percent of students said they feel prepared for the industry/field they’re pursuing. However, students also wanted more school support with networking (46 percent), resume help (43 percent) and mentors (38 percent).

“Institutions need to better connect students with the business community,” advised Huseby. “They can do that by building strong networking opportunities with businesses, assessing employers’ requirements and tailoring curriculum to develop a clear path between college and career.”

3. The state of student loans

While tuition rates remained steady during the pandemic, rising inflation and the end of federal stimulus funding will likely increase costs, impacting students’ ability to pay. According to the survey, just under half of students, 47 percent, had student loans, and of that half, 53 percent were forced to apply for additional loans due to the pandemic.

4. Supporting mental health

Many institutions saw spikes in student mental health concerns throughout the pandemic. While over half of students (53 percent) and faculty (58 percent) say mental health has improved since returning to campus, 28 percent of students and 21 percent of faculty noted that mental health has declined, indicating that the transition itself caused challenges, including a lack of preparation to be back in person.

While on-campus mental health support continues to be crucial, a majority of students and faculty are not using available mental health resources. And although 81 percent of students and 92 percent of faculty indicated they knew their school offered mental health resources, only 20 percent said they have used them.

5. Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Schools could benefit from proactively seeking feedback from students and faculty on DEI efforts, and by educating everyone on DEI issues. Only 35 percent of students indicated they had been asked for feedback on DEI efforts, while 58 percent of faculty indicated they had been asked for input.

“Through the next decade, it will be crucial to ensure schools are not just asking for faculty feedback, but are also listening to their students,” said Huseby. “Ensuring student needs are met helps build an inclusive campus that provides mental health support, plus the financial, career and life services students need to succeed.”

As in many aspects of life, the past two and half years have forever changed higher education - and it will continue to change over the next decade. Institutions need to understand the needs of their students and ensure that they are providing them with what they need to continue to succeed in school and beyond.

To read the full report, visit [BNCollege.com/insight/report/college2030](https://www.bncollege.com/insight/report/college2030).

FMU'S FIRST CLASS OF PSYCHIATRIC MENTAL HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Submitted by FMU



Tanisha Tart | Ursula Townsend

Francis Marion University graduated its first class of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners. This program is the newest in a growing list of advanced healthcare offerings available at FMU. The degree coursework is designed to prepare advanced practice registered nurses to be psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners across the lifespan in acute and non-acute settings.

"The program began enrolling students in fall 2020 to meet the demand for psychiatric healthcare professionals across the Pee Dee region and the state.

These psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners will play a critical role in assessing and treating behavioral health issues across South Carolina, most especially in the Pee Dee Region," said FMU President Fred Carter. "These well-educated graduates are prepared to tackle one of the most complex healthcare problems in this nation. We are so proud that they made this career choice."

Tanisha Tart was one of the first students to enroll in the program

in fall 2020. Shortly after she began her career as an ICU nurse following her graduation with a BSN from FMU in 2018, she felt a strong urge to go into the psychiatric mental healthcare field. During her first semester in the program, a series of events in her personal life solidified her decision.

"No one is exempt from sadness, worry and anxiety, and during the first few months of the MSN program, I experienced great loss in my personal life with the passing of both my brother and my best friend. It was at this time that everything came full circle for me and I knew that these experiences would only help me to provide greater care to my patients in the years to come," said Tart.

Tart will begin working in pediatric mental healthcare in the Pee Dee in the new year and credits FMU with creating this program that will bring much light to an underserved population in the region.

Ursula Townsend also enrolled in the program when it began just two short years ago. Townsend has spent nearly her entire career—over fifteen years—as a nurse working with patients in need of in-patient psychiatric care. She has seen firsthand the need for additional healthcare providers in this area and knew she wanted to enroll in the program as soon as it was announced.

"When I first heard that Francis Marion was beginning a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Program, I knew I wanted to be a part of it. There is a critical need for this specialized type of provider in our area. This program has been tremendous in preparing me to provide a different level of care to patients," said Townsend.

As the first cohort of the Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioners received their diplomas, new classes of competent and capable healthcare professionals are ready to enter the workforce and community, resulting in a vital boost in the availability of mental healthcare in the Pee Dee region.

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*U.S. News and World Report Rankings Include:

- Top 10 HBCU for 12 consecutive years.
- Claflin University ranked third among HBCUs with the highest four-year graduation rates among first-time, full-time students.

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CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY RECEIVES REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION

Submitted by J. Craig Cotton, director of public relations, Office of Communications and Marketing Claflin University



ORANGEBURG-Claflin University received reaffirmation of accreditation from The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) following a rigorous evaluation of the University's on-campus and online academic programs. SACSCOC is the body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. "This reaffirmation of accreditation is the successful culmination of a process that began in January 2020," said Claflin President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack.

"This reaffirms that Claflin is fulfilling its mission of providing students access to an exceptional academic, cultural and spiritual experience that will prepare them to become globally-engaged visionary leaders. Our re-accreditation results from the collective contributions of our world-class faculty, highly skilled administrators, talented scholars, leal and loyal alumni and other supporters of this historic university. It also reflects the elevation

and transformation we are experiencing at Claflin."

After being granted initial accreditation, new member institutions are reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation after five years, then every 10 years thereafter. Claflin last received SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation in 2012. U.S. News and World Report has ranked Claflin in its list of the Top 10 HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges/Universities) for 12 consecutive years. The prestigious publication ranked Claflin number one in annual alumni giving percentage for all HBCUs. Claflin was also ranked No. 20 in the Top Performers in the Social Mobility category among national liberal arts colleges/universities. Claflin is among the colleges/universities that are more successful than others at advancing social mobility by enrolling and graduating large proportions of students awarded Pell Grants.

"I applaud the Reaffirmation Steering Committee and the Quality Enhancement (QEP) Committee for their diligence and commitment to organizing and submitting the necessary documentation during this process," Warmack said. "They also did an extraordinary job of preparing the campus community for a visit by members of SACSCOC's On-Site Review Committee."

Dr. Zia Hasan, vice president for institutional effectiveness, was chair of the Reaffirmation Steering Committee. Dr. Bridgette Dewees, assistant vice president for institutional effectiveness, was the chair of the QEP Committee.

SACSCOC serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices primarily among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America, and specific international sites approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees.

To gain or maintain accreditation with the SACSCOC, an institution must comply with the standards of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and the policies and procedures of the Commission.

COOPER-TONEY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED AT CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY

Submitted by Clafin University



Left picture: L-R Keely, Yolanda Cooper-Toney, '78; Allen, Mallory, A. Gerald, Allen IV; Middle picture: Hester Cooper-Smith, '57; Right picture: Rupert Z. Cooper, '19

ORANGEBURG - Colleges and universities across the nation take tremendous pride in enduring traditions that help define the culture and personality of their respective institutions. Some have earned national and global reputations for producing graduates that have excelled in leadership positions in business, government, medicine, religion, science and other professions. Others are renowned for the impressive number of athletes they produced, their success in intercollegiate athletics - or their high-stepping bands.

However, Clafin University can thank its leal and loyal alumni for a significant aspect of its growing reputation. According to U.S. News and World Report, Clafin's annual alumni giving percentage of more than 40 percent is the highest among all Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The prestigious publication has also ranked Clafin in its list of the nation's Top 10 Best HBCUs for 12 consecutive years.

Yolanda Cooper-Toney and her husband, Gerald Toney, represent the philanthropic spirit that inspires alumni and non-Clafin graduates to support the university. The couple and their children made a \$25,000 gift to Clafin to establish the Cooper-Toney Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship pays tribute to two generations of a close-knit South Carolina family that profoundly appreciates the academic, cultural and spiritual experiences Clafin provides.

The Cooper-Toney Endowed Scholarship honors Hester Cooper-Smith, Toney's mother, Rupert Z. Cooper, her brother and Toney. Rupert passed away on December 17, 2001.

The primary focus of the scholarship is to support education and business majors. However, if no applicants in those majors are eligible, history majors can apply for the award. More than anything, the Cooper-Toney family and other contributors to the scholarship want to give to other young people what the honorees cherish most about Clafin.

Toney is a 1978 graduate who, like her mother, was an English major with a minor in education. Toney said she practically cut her teeth on the Clafin legacy. Her mother graduated in 1957. Toney's brother earned his degree in business administration in 1986. She has other relatives who also attended Clafin.

"I probably knew Clafin University's name soon after I learned my own," said Toney, a retired high school English teacher and certified lay minister who lives in Memphis, Tenn. It was Cooper-Smith, the matriarch, who inspired the endowment.

Her son-in-law, Gerald Toney, observed Smith's tireless crusades through the years to raise awareness and money for her alma mater.

"I have been around her more than 39 years, and I have watched her dedication to Clafin," said Toney, a graduate of The Citadel. "I am impressed by the passion of the Clafin University alumni. The entire time I have been associated with Clafin through my mother-in-law and my wife, I can tell they appreciate their Clafin education. They always try to give back, which says a lot about the school and its graduates."

Cooper-Smith's post-graduate association with her alma mater includes a term on Clafin's Board of Visitors. She is a member of the Clafin University International Alumni Association (CUIAA) and has been a fundraiser for the Lake City and Florence chapters. As a membership chairperson, she recruited Dr. Henry N. Tisdale, the University's eighth president.

"He had never joined the CUIAA," Cooper-Smith says. "I got him to become a member after he was appointed president."

Cooper-Smith's career and personal trajectory are also noteworthy. She grew up in rural Williamsburg County, where she and five younger brothers and sisters helped their parents farm cotton, tobacco, beans and corn. On Sundays, she attended Bethesda United Methodist Church. By high school, Cooper-Smith says she knew she wanted to be an educator, to emulate her teachers who "spoke well, dressed well. I just wanted to be like them."

She came to Clafin as the first in her family to attend college. Cooper-Smith was so afraid to speak in her classes that she trembled. Aletha Worthy, the English Department advisor, challenged her to assert herself.

"She said I needed to speak out and be more confident," Cooper-Smith recalled.

Clafin is an affiliate of The United Methodist Church. To Cooper-Smith, the entire campus seemed to align Christian principles with the University's educational mission. Cooper-Smith blossomed.

"When I got to Clafin, there was so much love, and we were a family," she said. "Everyone seemed to care about one another – the students, the professors, the dorm matrons. They really nurtured us. They wanted to ensure that everyone received an opportunity to get that education – and with the help we needed."

Clafin helped make Cooper-Smith's dream come true. She taught in South Carolina public schools for 37 years, first in her native Williamsburg County and then for 32 years in Florence County. Although four of Cooper-Smith's siblings graduated from colleges other than Clafin, the educator's oldest two children did attend their mother's alma mater. It was their own decision.

Cooper-Toney said Clafin's United Methodist Church affiliation was prominent in her decision to travel to Orangeburg to continue her education. Worship services were not just available, but students were encouraged to attend. This helped her and others to maintain important religious traditions they learned from their parents while living away from home. The scholarship is a way for the family to honor Cooper-Smith and highlight their regard for Clafin's influence on its students.

U.S. News and World Report also ranked Clafin No. 20 for Top Performers of Social Mobility – an indicator of advancing social mobility by enrolling and graduating large proportions of economically disadvantaged students that are awarded Pell Grants. These students launched successful careers or continued their education after earning a Clafin degree.

Although the federal Pell Grant program was instituted after Cooper-Smith had graduated – she recognizes its significance. She said that her parents paid for her education from crop sales.

"When the semesters ended, I needed to have completed my classes and all of my assignments," she said. "I had to return home to work on the farm. I had to finish my Clafin journey in four years."

Her roots were rural, but many in the region recognized the value of a college education and made accommodations for it. Cooper-Smith was able to return as a teacher, marry, afford a home and begin a family. She moved her ailing father into her home, drove him to doctor appointments in the new car she bought, and was able to take care of him in the last several weeks of his life. Because of Clafin, her dreams were not deferred.

"I graduated with the Clafin Confidence," she said. "I felt that I could achieve anything. I became a new person. I started talking, and I haven't stopped."

For the past 65 years, so much of her conversation has praised Clafin for enriching and transforming her life and the lives of other leal and loyal alumni.



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FLORENCE 1 TEACHER WINS AG EDUCATION AWARD *Submitted by Melissa Rollins, communications specialist*



Jessica Crowson

Theodore Lester Elementary School teacher Jessica Crowson is the recipient of the 2022 Betty J. DeWitt Outstanding Educator Award, SC Farm Bureau recently announced. Crowson is the second Florence 1 educator to win this award.

“I am grateful that Ms. Crowson is being recognized for her hard work,” said Florence 1 Superintendent Richard O’Malley said. “Our school garden programs are growing and thriving across the district and it is because of people like her investing their time and talents.”

Crowson, who currently teaches in the STEM Lab at Lester, has been at the school since 2002.

“I am extremely excited to win the Betty J. Dewitt award,” Crowson said. “It is a huge honor. Teaching is my passion and I have had the privilege of teaching at Lester Elementary for 21 years. Since I have stepped into the role of STEM teacher I have also become passionate about agriculture and teaching students about agriculture. A lot of hard work goes into bringing agriculture concepts alive for our students. Receiving this award helps me realize the importance of my efforts and the impact that they make on the students at my school.”

This award is presented annually to recognize a K-12 teacher who engages in integrating agricultural concepts into non-vocational agriculture classroom settings, according to SC Farm Bureau. The Betty J. DeWitt Outstanding Educator Award, sponsored by the SC Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee, was implemented to honor Betty J. DeWitt, a SC Farm Bureau Women’s Committee member since 1975. With a background in teaching and youth work, her

accomplishments represent a life dedicated to agriculture and education.

Lester Principal Janette Williams said that Crowson is very deserving of this award.

“Jessica Crowson exemplifies the essence of a teacher,” Williams said. “Her selfless, supportive nature, coupled with her knowledge of STEM content and expertise in providing student-centered, research-based instruction is evident in every facet of her instructional day. Jessica Crowson is one of the key people that make Theodore Lester Elementary an extra special place to learn.”

Crowson said that her love for gardening and agricultural learning grew from time at home with her son.

“During COVID my son and I spent a lot of time gardening at home,” Crowson said. “My son (who was 3 at the time) was always my handy assistant. The learning that occurred for him during our time in the garden was huge. The garden stimulated all of his senses. He was able to observe textures, smells, tastes, sounds and so many colors. He was able to start learning how to problem solve and deeper develop his beginning math and science skills. His prereading skills also strengthened with the new vocabulary he was learning. Giving him the physical activity of composting, digging, raking, also helped give him an outlet for his wiggles. Watching the learning that occurred during his time in the garden helped me see the need for a garden at my school.”

In 2021, Crowson helped start the Susie Bennett Garden program at Lester.

“The benefits of academic skills, as well as real-life skills will increase across grade levels,” Crowson said. “When pulling together help and resources for our garden I decided to honor one of our former employees who had a huge love for gardening and also the students of Lester Elementary. During the past year and a half, my students have been immersed in many agricultural concepts through time spent

FLORENCE 1 TEACHER CONT'D

in our school garden. Students across grade levels have had a helping hand in planting, harvesting and maintaining the school garden. I have also immersed my students in agriculture in many other ways including hydroponics and embryology. Our garden has had a lot of success. It has been fun to grow fruit, vegetables, herbs and even little learners who love agriculture!”

Jeff Murrie, Florence 1’s Farm to School Coordinator, said that Crowson has done exceptional work at Lester.

“We are so proud of Mrs. Crowson’s accomplishments at Lester,” Murrie said. “Her work in the field of Farm to School validates the importance of teaching agriculture and sustainability from an early age.



Guests walk across the newly reopened 5000 building bridge after the Florence-Darlington Technical bridge reopening ceremony

DR. FORD TALKS BRIDGE REOPENING

Submitted by FDTC



Florence Darlington Technical College President Dr. Jermaine Ford cuts the ribbon to the college’s 5000 building bridge during a reopening ceremony

One year has passed since Dr. Jermaine Ford took over as Florence-Darlington Technical College President and in that short time the college has seen major changes including an increase in fall-to-fall enrollment, a new strategic plan, increased donations, an increase in morale on campus and, the most visual of these changes, the restoration of the college’s 5000 Building Bridge.

“It’s a new day at Florence-Darlington Technical College,” Ford said. “Upon my arrival, I realized that we needed to revitalize interaction with our market, our community and our stakeholders. This bridge symbolizes the work that we have been doing. It’s been a long process, but I think people are finally starting to see that things are changing at Florence-Darlington Technical College, and they want to be a part of it.”

FDTC officially reopened their 5000 Building Bridge during a ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, November 29. They had several speakers including Ford, FDTC Area Commissioner’s Chair Paul Seward and the FDTC Student Government Association President Letia James.

As to the other changes on campus, Ford’s words can be directly reflected in the numbers, as the college saw its first increase in fall-to-fall enrollment in more than five years with a 3.6 percent increase.

“This increase is a direct reflection of the FDTC team coming together and realigning our goals of student success and workforce development,” Ford said.

Those two goals were selected as the focus of the college’s new strategic plan, “The Road to 2027: Committed to Student Success and Workforce Development” which was completed earlier this summer. Upon arrival, Ford realized the college needed a strategic plan to serve as its North Star over the next five years.

The college involved a total of 108 local stakeholders in a series of discovery sessions and individual strategic planning interviews in April. Participants included faculty, staff, workforce development leaders, business and industry representatives, members of the FDTC Area Commission, students and alumni. Their job was to create a cohesive and visionary pathway for FDTC’s future.

“We are one college with many programs and campuses, and we wanted everyone including members of our extended community to be married to our new goals and vision,” Ford said. “By putting this group together, we were able to create this comprehensive plan that truly focuses on the student and their experience. That’s our goal and that is now our plan for success.”

As the plan emerged, it introduced five new strategic pillars that will create the foundation for the college’s planning efforts moving forward. Those pillars included student success, relevance, fiscal environment, visibility and engagement. The strategic planning team also created seven core values including accountability, excellence, innovation, integrity, leadership, teamwork and communication.

Those pillars and values will inform the process over the next few months as master plans are developed campus wide with specifics for such key elements as academics, facilities, institutional advancement, information technology, marketing, quality enhancement, enrollment and workforce development.

“As the President of Florence-Darlington Technical College, I am extremely pleased with the outcome of the new strategic plan, mission, vision and values and the five new strategic pillars designed to guide our work over the next five years,” Dr. Ford said. “Through this new strategic plan, we will continue to fulfill our promise to the Pee Dee Region that FDTC is where our students can learn locally and earn globally.”

With a new strategic plan in place, the college has also begun to work on building moral for its employees. Through a series of on-campus committees, employees were given a chance to express changes they want to see across a litany of topics. These committees then had the opportunity to report their findings in a public forum for all college employees.

“We are creating an environment where employees feel empowered to share their ideas to help us make FDTC a world-class college,” Ford said. “It’s important that they know we listen to their ideas, and we actually take action on them.”

Ford added several more exciting changes are on the way, but the work is not done yet.

“The future looks exceptionally bright for Florence-Darlington Technical College, and we will continue our collegewide effort to build a high-performance culture where everyone is accountable for student success and workforce development,” he said.



FMU COMPUTER LAB NAMED IN HONOR OF LONGTIME EMPLOYEE

Articles submitted by FMU



Pictured University President Dr. Fred Carter and Teresa McDuffie

Francis Marion University has named a computer lab in Stanton Academic Computer Center in recognition of former campus technology employee Teresa McDuffie.

Members of FMU's Board of Trustees, faculty and administration gathered at the newly titled Teresa McDuffie Computer Lab to unveil the official commemorative plaque.

"Teresa has been the heart and soul of FMU campus technology for over three decades. She has always been patient and understanding in resolving the most perplexing of problems. Everyone on this campus adores, respects and admires her. We are all honored to recognize her service with this unique recognition," said Francis Marion President Dr. Fred Carter.

An employee of 33 years, McDuffie joined FMU's campus technology department as a computer technician in 1989. She later advanced to systems support technologist and network specialist, before becoming network systems administrator, a position she held until her retirement in summer 2022.

"I am honored and so touched that the University chose to name a computer lab after me," McDuffie said. "It was truly a privilege to work with such great people and serve our students, faculty and staff each day throughout my career."

McDuffie's contributions to FMU were numerous. In addition to updating the network infrastructure on campus, McDuffie served as a founding member of the African American Faculty and Staff Coalition.

McDuffie was also presented with the John J. Kispert Leadership Award in 2016.

DARLINGTON'S CHARLES GOVAN ELECTED SCSBA SECRETARY/TREASURER

Submitted by Christopher McKagen, communications manager DCSD



Charles Govan

COLUMBIA— Charles Govan, a member of Darlington County School District's (DCSD) Board of Education, was installed as secretary/treasurer of the South Carolina School Boards Association's (SCSBA) Board of Trustees during Delegate Assembly, SCSBA's annual business meeting, held in December, in Charleston.

The assembly is part of the association's Legislative Advocacy Conference each year, which serves as the precursor to the upcoming legislative session.

Govan joins seven others elected to the SCSBA board by delegates hailing from the state's 73 school boards.

The others include:

- President, Gail Hughes, Dorchester School District Two
- President-Elect, Michele Branning, Fort Mill School District (York Four)
- Region 6 Director, Dr. James Smith, Kershaw County School District
- Region 10 Director, Hannah Priester, Hampton County School District
- Region 13 Director, Scott Childers, York School District One
- Region 14 Director, Dr. Sarah Simmons, Spartanburg School District Two
- Region 15 Director, Glenda Morrison-Fair, Greenville County School District

In addition to the election of association officers, delegates adopted resolutions to guide the association during the 2023 legislative session and approved proposed changes to the SCSBA Constitution and Bylaws.

Govan was educated at Christ the King Catholic School and Wilkinson High School before receiving a bachelor's in social studies from Claflin University and a master's in social work from the University of South

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP AND SUCCESS STUDENTS INDUCTED



The Francis Marion University chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success held its first induction ceremony at the Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center on Sunday, December 4.

The National Society of Leadership and Success was established in 2001, and it is the nation's largest leadership honor

society, with 755 chapters and over 1.7 million members. NSLS supports "building leaders who make a better world."

The ceremony was officiated by Dr. Jennifer Kunka, associate provost for advising and advisor for the FMU NSLS chapter. Kunka spearheaded the effort to start a NSLS chapter at FMU in August 2022. The chapter currently has 318 active members, making it the largest student organization on campus. Of these members, 213 students completed ten hours of leadership training and became inducted members at the December 4 ceremony.

Throughout the fall semester, NSLS members engaged in motivational leadership training focused on goalsetting, persistence, resilience, teamwork, inclusion and impact. NSLS provides member schools with live speaker broadcasts from well-known leaders in government, business, entertainment and sports. This semester, FMU NSLS members participated in live speaker broadcasts from Andrew Yang, Kelly Ripa and Kevin Hart.

V' Auna Sinkler, a junior healthcare administration major, stated, "The most valuable lesson I took away from NSLS was how to use my leadership abilities to further my future objectives. I've learned the right way to create goals, how to accomplish them, and how to take the right actions to develop into a leader. I've met new people through NSLS who share similar goals and ambitions and have gained new friends as a result. Because of all the effort I put into this semester, it feels incredibly nice to be recognized and inducted into NSLS."

Bonét Hylton, a junior healthcare administration major, said, "I think the most rewarding aspect about my experience with the NSLS was feeling a sense of responsibility. It felt amazing to be able to fulfill my weekly goals and then congregate with my group to let them know what I accomplished. Knowing that I had weekly goals that needed to be executed within a limited amount of time motivated me to get it done quickly and efficiently."

"I have been impressed by the tremendous response that Francis Marion students have had to NSLS. It is rewarding to see so many students working on goal setting and building their leadership skills," said Kunka. According to Kunka, future chapter plans include selecting a student executive board, enhancing leadership training for students and starting an initiative to support the Florence community.

Carolina. He also attended Francis Marion University, South Carolina State University, the S.C. Criminal Justice Academy and the S.C. Department of Corrections Academy.

He began his career in education in 1967 as a teacher and coach at Edgewood High School in Ninety-Six, S.C. From 1968-1991, Govan was employed with the Neighborhood Youth Corp. in Orangeburg, S.C., the S.C. Alcohol and Beverage Commission, the S.C. Department of Mental Health and the S.C. Department of Youth Services. In 1991, Govan decided to return to a career in education as a teacher and coach in Lee County School District. He retired from public service in 2007, as a teacher from Marlboro County High School in Bennettsville, S.C.

Govan is a past chairman of the DCSD Board of Education and a member of the S.C. School Boards Insurance Trust Board of Directors. He is married to Carolyn McCoy Govan, a former DCSD art teacher.

LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FALL 2022 ACADEMIC AWARDS CELEBRATION

LEE CENTRAL HIGH

LEE CENTRAL MIDDLE



WESTLEE

DENNIS

LOWER LEE

LEE COUNTY STUDENTS CELEBRATED FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Submitted by Shawnta McKenzie, Lee County School District Office of Human Resources

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

BISHOPVILLE - It is commonly said that a person who is appreciated will always do more than is expected. Appreciating and rewarding is a great approach to celebrate hard work and success especially in a student's school life. Awards and accolades are pivotal in a student's academic career. Even the smallest recognition works as a great motivation for students and encourages them to work even harder.

On Thursday, December 8, 2022, Lee County School District honored over 200 students for excellence in academics during their first district-wide academic awards celebration. The event took place in the gymnasium at Lee Central Middle School and a reception immediately followed in the cafeteria.

"The Academic Awards Celebration is an opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable achievements our students have earned in the classroom," said Mr. Bernard McDaniel, Sr., superintendent. "This celebration also provides an opportunity to share students' accomplishments that otherwise might not be known within our district community and beyond. This is the first of many district-wide academic awards celebrations."

Awards were presented for academic achievements on the Spring 2022 SC Ready, SC PASS, End of Course Algebra I, English II, Biology, U.S. History exams and Advanced Placement exams. Digital/Media Literacy and Culinary Arts service awards were also presented

to students and staff members by Ms. Betty Scott, director of the Lee County Transit Department.

"We want our students to know that their achievements in academics are important and they deserve to be honored beyond the school level," said Dr. Michelle McDonald, assistant executive director of Curriculum and Instruction.

The ceremony began with remarks from Mr. Bernard McDaniel, Sr. superintendent, followed by special presentations from Lee Central High School juniors and academic award honorees Alexis Wilson and Jamyah Williams. Lee County School District Board vice-chairperson, Mrs. Queenie Boyd, McDaniel, superintendent, and school principals, Ms. LaToya Boyd, Dr. Veronica Bradley, Dr. Shelia Stukes, Dr. John C. Kennedy and Mr. Baron Turner presented the awards to the students.



POSITIONING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS BY CLOSING THE DIGITAL EQUITY GAP



(BPT) - A sense of normalcy can be found again in K-12 classrooms across the country, but change is ever present. Although most students are now able to attend class in person, learning loss from COVID closedowns is apparent, especially for students who lack internet access.

The pandemic accelerated the already problematic digital equity gap - the difference between students who have reliable access to technology and internet and those who don't. Connectivity in today's learning environment is a necessity for students to have equal opportunity to learn and thrive.

Deciphering the digital divide

The digital equity divide was like a volcano bubbling below the surface before the pandemic. Allen Pratt, the executive director for the National Rural Education Association, forecasted in a 2019 op-ed the dangers of inadequate internet access: "Without broadband connectivity, kids living in rural areas are being prepared to compete in a 21st-century economy with 20th-century tools."

When the pandemic hit, that volcano erupted. As classrooms across the country closed down, learning for millions of kids came to a near halt because they didn't have the technology and internet connectivity to continue their school work. That learning loss compounds today as teachers are now tasked with the challenging job of helping students catch up when they are months behind.

In fact, the National Center for Education Statistics released education

progress scores showing just how devastating the last two years of unfinished learning have been for nine-year-old schoolchildren, particularly the most vulnerable. While math and reading scores dipped across the board, Black and Hispanic students lost 13 points and eight points respectively, compared with five points among white students.

Each point lost, according to Andrew Ho, a professor of education at Harvard who was quoted about the scores in a recent New York Times article, is the equivalent of about three weeks of learning. That's 39 weeks of lost learning for Black students alone.

Closing the gap

Closing the digital equity gap is key to recovering learning loss from the pandemic as well as for positioning all students for success in the future. That's why some technology companies are stepping up to lead the way in helping students nationwide, especially those that have in the past been overlooked.

From inception to today, T-Mobile has invested \$3.65 billion in services to connect more than 4.3 million students through collaborations with school districts and student families across the country. This is especially important as hybrid school environments become the new normal, where kids need to tap into the internet to do their homework and studies during afterschool hours.

While we've worked closely with over 1,500 school districts around the U.S. and have options available for consumers to directly participate in the program, we've also seen great results from new approaches. We're partnering with reputable youth networks such as Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, which expands our reach into the nonprofit's 230 agencies across 5,000 communities.

Parents and guardians of eligible K-12 students can enroll in Project 10Million at [T-Mobile.com/project10million](https://www.t-mobile.com/project10million). School administrators and educators can learn more about Project 10Million and apply for their district at [T-Mobile.com/p10m](https://www.t-mobile.com/p10m).



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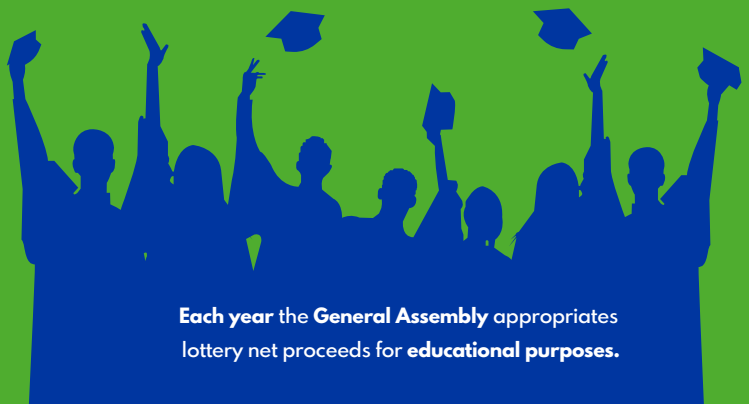
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HGTC RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM HARRIS INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS FOR HVAC

Submitted by HGTC



Left to right: Harris Integrated Solutions staff: Braden Bright – DDC service technician, Tony Holcomb – energy consultant, Stacey Foxworth – professor HVAC, HGTC, Stephen Ford – project manager and Ira Lewis – installation technician

CONWAY– Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) recently received support from Harris Integrated Solutions to enhance the HVAC program. Over \$5,000.00 in materials and labor was donated by the company for the installation of an HVAC Automated Control System.

Tony Holcomb, energy solutions consultant, has

served on the HGTC HVAC Advisory Committee for several years and believes the quality of HGTC graduating technicians is impressive.

“HVAC is the trade which requires the most extensive knowledge and skill base. Not just anyone can install or repair a system. Technicians must understand electrical, plumbing, aerodynamics, thermodynamics and even a splash of computer technology,” said Holcomb. “Today, the most basic air conditioner or heater uses algorithms and calculations to keep homes and offices comfortable. The controls are the ‘brains’ of an HVAC unit and one of the most complex parts. If they are not understood, maintained and repaired properly, it can wreck a system.”

According to Holcomb, HVAC students are taught how to repair a system correctly, interact with customers and perform in a professional manner.

“HGTC students are the service technicians employers need to further fuel their businesses. Harris Integrated Solutions was glad to

assist in donating to that process whether they come to work for us or not. We want to help them be the best technicians they can and give them the proper tools they need to accomplish that goal,” Holcomb continued.

Heating and cooling companies in Horry and Georgetown counties need more trained service technicians. HGTC is working to meet that demand. HGTC offers both day and evening classes for its residential HVAC service technician program on its Conway campus, and this fall it will begin offering evening classes on its Georgetown Campus.

“Every time I go to the annual job fair, I see twice as many HVAC companies as I do graduates. Since there is a severe shortage of HVAC technicians, especially in HVAC controls, Harris Integrated Solutions wants to do its part to fill that gap in whatever way possible.”

Every private residence and small business need the services of skilled technicians trained in the installation, maintenance and repair of air conditioning, refrigeration and heating systems. The Residential HVAC Service Technician certificate opens many doors of opportunity for HGTC graduates. The self-motivated graduate from this program has the technical training to work as an installation specialist, service technician, service manager or sales representative anywhere in the country. This program is approved by the local HVAC industry through a program advisory committee.

To graduate, a student must pass the Core and Type Two sections of the EPA examination. Additionally, all students are required to take the Residential Air Conditioning and Heating Industrial Competency Exam (ICE).

For more information about the HVAC program at HGTC, please contact Terry Smith at terry.smith@hgtc.edu or 843-349-3625.

For more information about applying, enrolling and registering at HGTC, call 843-347-3186 or visit www.hgtc.edu.



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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CULTIVATING EXCELLENCE HAS A NEW DRIVER Submitted by Dr. Kandace Bethea, superintendent



Dr. Kandace Bethea

MARION- Marion County School District has exciting initiatives planned for 2023! Our new 2022-2023 Strategic Plan “Cultivating Excellence,” has a new “driver,” with goals driven to increase access and opportunities in order to provide innovative, effective and relevant educational services to students, staff, and families.

Our Academy for Careers and Technology campus is undergoing a major transformation during the 2022-2023 school year. With a new Director of CTE, Michael Stone, and a new, clear

vision for college and career readiness programs in Marion County, we are excited for the endless possibilities being offered to our high school students. The program pathways offered will change the students’ trajectory, employment opportunities and overall quality of life after high school.

This year has brought an expansion of our partnership with Florence-Darlington Technical College. This expansion is offering additional academic and workforce training opportunities to the students in Marion County School District. This expansion delivered Machine Tooling, an Early Childhood Certificate and a Medical Terminology Program. The Academy for Careers and Technology is also the new home of a state approved Firefighter Certification program. Our programs at the Academy for Careers and Technology have seen student enrollment more than double in number from this time last year.

The Marion County School District is also excited to announce a new partnership with The Continuum, in Lake City, South Carolina.

The Continuum partners with Francis Marion University and Florence-Darlington Technical College to provide dual enrollment, as well as career certification opportunities for students. Our students will be provided transportation and will be able to take full advantage of these opportunities at The Continuum facility during the spring semester of 2023.

Looking forward, the Academy for Careers and Technology will undergo a ‘rebrand,’ where it will serve as the hub for all of the district’s Dual Enrollment programs. The district’s college and career readiness programs will be housed in this one location with a Dual Enrollment/ Early College liaison working and tracking student progress. The summer of 2023 hopes to provide innovative CTE completer opportunities for students, which could include certifications in the areas of OSHA, Blue-Print Reading, and Forklift Driving. The school has plans to add a dual credit welding program for the 2023-2024 school year, and later add a CDL program in the fall of 2024.

Our local economy and businesses desire graduates who are ready to enter the workforce with certifications and real-life experiences to support their success in the workplace.

Students also continue to have access to options such as the Early College Program and Dual Credit offerings and other traditional program offerings at the Academy for Careers and Technology. Our students will have a pathway of their choosing to a four-year college or university, a two-year technical college or certification and job readiness skills if they choose to enter the workforce. Marion County School District is providing every student, every opportunity, and every chance at making their four years of high school a pathway for future success.

You can reach Dr. Kandace Bethea, superintendent of Marion County School District at kbethea@marion.k12.sc.us

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HGTC AND LANDER UNIVERSITY SIGN ARTICULATION AGREEMENT



(Left to right) - HGTC Assistant Vice President/Dean Brandon Haselden, HGTC President Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore and HGTC Academic Chair and Professor Theresa Strong

CONWAY– Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) and Lander University have formed a partnership to enhance the transfer of business students from HGTC to Lander. An articulation agreement was recently signed between the colleges to allow HGTC students in the Associate in Applied Science in Business Administration degree to easily transfer their credits and enter as juniors in Lander’s Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program with an emphasis in Management/Marketing. Students who meet the requirements of the program will be guaranteed admission to Lander University and receive priority acceptance into the major selected.

“HGTC is excited about this new partnership with Lander University for our Business Administration students. Prior to this agreement, only a

few business-related courses were direct transfers to Lander,” said Theresa Strong, academic chair & professor- School of Business Administration at HGTC. “With the completion of HGTC’s Associate in Applied Science degree in Business Administration, students can transfer directly to Lander and begin their Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management/Marketing as juniors.”

Both President at Lander University Dr. Richard Cosentino have officially signed the agreement and President at HGTC Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore.

“Our new partnership with Lander University helps both institutions honor commitments to develop a strong and able workforce through high-quality education,” said Dr. Marilyn Murphy F., president at HGTC. “This latest two plus two degrees with Lander is a wonderful opportunity for our local business students to begin with us and become empowered to lead satisfying and productive lives. The agreement not only benefits our students but also our entire area.”

“Lander University and Horry-Georgetown Technical College share a common vision to help students advance their education and their future careers,” said Dr. Scott Jones, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at Lander. “Our partnership with HGTC will help both institutions honor our commitment to South Carolina by developing a strong workforce through high-quality education and empowering our students to lead satisfying and productive lives.”

To learn more about HGTC’s Associate in Applied Science in Business Administration, visit the program webpage or contact Theresa Strong, HGTC academic chair and professor, at 843-349-7559 or theresa.strong@hgtc.edu.

HGTC OUTBOARD MARINE STUDENT EARNS INLINE CERTIFICATION



Corey Meek at Yamaha Training facility in Kennesaw, GA.

CONWAY– Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is proud to announce that Corey Meek, current HGTC Outboard Marine student, has successfully completed the Inline Systems Certification at the Yamaha Marine University Instructor Led Training in Kennesaw, GA. Meek was sponsored by Mickey Thompson, president of Sportsman’s Choice Marine in Longs, to attend the training.

Earning the certification is a huge accomplishment for students as the training was previously only available for those employed at dealerships. Yamaha Marine recently made the instructor led training available to students in partnering trade schools and technical colleges. Meek was one of the first students to successfully complete the program.

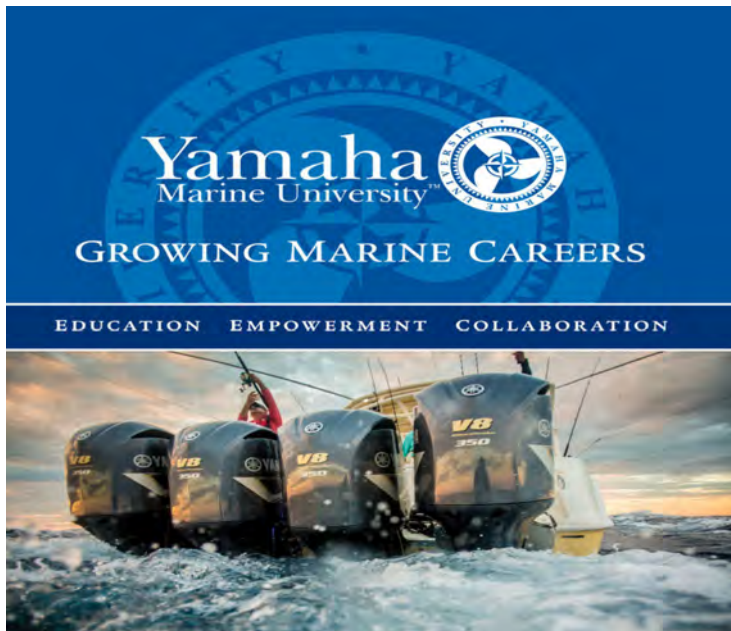
“Yamaha has proven that they are committed to training the next generation of marine technicians. Not only will these select few have Yamaha Maintenance Certification Program (MCP) but will also have advanced credentials along the Yamaha Master Technician pathway. This makes them more desirable to Yamaha dealers for employment,” said Kenyon Ward, Yamaha training coordinator. The certification will make graduates stand-out strongly in the job market.

Yamaha Marine Group has been a dedicated industry partner needed to ensure the success of the program. Yamaha Marine University has consistently praised the success of the HGTC program as a national training model, as well as the exemplary leadership of Professor Matt Springs.

The Outboard Marine Technology program runs for three semesters and provides training that covers all components and functions of an outboard engine including service, diagnostic electrical systems, rigging, propellers, lubrication, lower units and fuel systems. After completion of the program, students will obtain skill sets needed to enter the workforce as an outboard engine technician.

The HGTC Outboard Marine Technology program is the only one in the state of South Carolina and has the highest industry placement rate of Yamaha partner institutions in the nation. The program is full through the fall of 2023.

For more information about the Outboard Marine Technology program, contact Professor Matt Springs at john.springs@hgtc.edu, 843-349-3172, or visit www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic_departments/manufacturing_ind/Outboard_Marine.html.





Savannah Wilkerson, HGTC Medical Laboratory Technology student, is viewing a media plate and will report the colony morphology. This visual skill is practiced during the Medical Microbiology lab along with biochemical testing and gram staining. During the first semester, the MLT students became proficient on the microscope and identified several pathological organisms.

CONWAY– Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is pleased to report that students in the Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT) program are completing their first semester. The MLT program launched this fall after years of planning and approvals, including a local needs assessment to develop the program.

Sandra Wetter, HGTC associate professor and director of the Medical Laboratory Technology

program, has been involved in the developmental stages from the very beginning.

“This program has been on President Fore’s wish list for quite some time. Medical Laboratory Technology is a field for people who are interested in science and working with their hands. Medical laboratory technicians are detail-oriented problem solvers. They want to help patients in a medical setting but prefer to have limited patient contact. Medical lab technicians enjoy working with their hands, technical instruments and communicating with other medical professionals. This medical laboratory role is challenging and requires life-long learning,” said Wetter.

The Associate in Applied Science in Medical Laboratory Technology degree prepares students to be able to perform laboratory tests, automated and manual testing, following detailed instructions; it trains and educates students to analyze human blood and body fluids to detect and diagnose diseases using microscopes, semi-automatic blood analyzers and other scientific equipment. A Medical lab technician is also qualified to analyze data and relay the results to physicians after testing and examining a specimen. This data can be utilized by healthcare providers to diagnosis, treat, and prevent illnesses.

One of the students completing the first semester of the program is Andrew Harris. “I think the MLT program is a great opportunity for anyone looking for a career in the medical field, especially those who are not certain about performing direct patient care. It is a fast-paced career with a multifaceted environment for those who enjoy a more hands-on approach. Technicians are always doing something different depending on the patient scenarios,” said Harris.

Another student completing the first semester of the program is Savannah Wilkerson. “I have thoroughly enjoyed my time thus far in the MLT program. I enjoy going to class, both the lecture and lab classes. Learning about the different biomedical instruments and biochemical tests done in the lab setting has kept me interested throughout the semester. My favorite portion of the program so far are the lab classes. I love focusing in on specimens with the microscope and using different tests to identify what I’m viewing. Overall, I’m more than excited to see what the future holds for me in the program. Anyone who has an interest in the medical laboratory setting should give this program a chance,” said Wilkerson.

HGTC’s MLT program is a limited access program part of the Healthcare Science division. Graduates are eligible to take the American Society for Clinical Pathology – Board of Certification (ASCP-BOC) exam. To be certified as a medical laboratory technician the graduate must pass the ASCP-BOC generalist certification examination. The cost of completing this examination is not included in the cost of tuition for the program. Becoming an MLT (ASCP) will help them procure employment in hospital and private laboratories (clinical or



Andrew Harris, HGTC Medical Laboratory Technology student, is using pipetting skills learned during a first semester lab. MLT students first calculated the dilution, then performed them. This was assessed by Professor Wetter as part of their lab grade. Pipetting skills are essential to testing specimens on semi-automated Chemistry instruments, such as the Pointe 180 chemistry analyzer.

research) or physician office labs.

The program is in the process of becoming accredited by the National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS).

For more information about Healthcare Science Admissions, visit www.hgtc.edu/healthscience.

For information about the Medical Laboratory Technology program, visit [https://www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic-departments/physical-](https://www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic-departments/physical-occupational-therapist/medical-laboratory-technology.html)

[occupational-therapist/medical-laboratory-technology.html](https://www.hgtc.edu/academics/academic-departments/physical-occupational-therapist/medical-laboratory-technology.html) or contact Sandra Wetter, HGTC associate professor and director of the Medical Laboratory Technology program, at sandra.wetter@hgtc.edu or 843.477.2144.



HGTC CELEBRATES EMPLOYEE



Jennifer Parler

CONWAY– Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC) is excited to recognize and celebrate Jennifer Parler for 10 years of service in 2022. Parler is the HGTC student engagement coordinator for the College in the Student Affairs Division. She is responsible for leading a variety of experiences for students on campus, including major- and interest-specific clubs, honor societies, multicultural clubs, recreational activities and international opportunities. All events

and clubs provide opportunities for students to network and create connections within the community.

“I am very proud of the commitment our faculty and staff have made to the College, not only in their tenure, but also in their love and dedication for our students and community. We are truly blessed with the best employees who are well regarded and highly skilled in their fields, and I believe they’re second to none,” said HGTC President Dr. Marilyn Murphy Fore.

For more information about applying, enrolling, and registering at HGTC, call 843-347-3186 or visit www.hgtc.edu.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA PRESTIGIOUS W. ERROL SEWELL AWARD RECIPIENT



Center Neal Zimmerman and George Jebaily with students of the Boys and Girls Club

For more than 50 years, the Jebaily Law Firm has been proud to share a commitment to caring, compassion and service to others in support of community events and activities in the Pee Dee. Continuing to embrace the Jebaily family legacy of service, the firm and its staff have been committed supporters of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee. During the height of the nationwide COVID pandemic, the Jebaily Law Firm assisted the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee in Florence, Hartsville and Lake City with much needed sponsorship to continue services to youth.

The Jebaily Law Firm is proud to sponsor the January 2023 cover story featuring the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee in recognition of Executive Director, Neal Zimmerman, as the recipient of the 2022 W. Errol Sewell Leadership Award.

Zimmerman was presented with the award at BGCA's Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), to a club professional for outstanding achievement in the area of field services. "Neal Zimmerman's leadership of the clubs in the Pee Dee is exemplary, and the Jebaily Law Firm congratulates him on an honor well deserved," said firm principal George Jebaily. The W. Errol Sewell Leadership Award was created in memory of the beloved former 42-year BGCA professional and is presented each year to a club professional who best exemplifies the qualities and character that made Sewell an extraordinary leader during his decades of service to the organization.

"Zimmerman has devoted 50 years to the development and well-being of the children and youth, first in Gainesville, Fla., then West Palm Beach, Fla., and for the last 27 years in Florence, S.C.," says Ricky Hood, 2020 Sewell recipient and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of East Mississippi. "He personifies the excellence we strive for, which is why he is so deserving of this honor."

Board members and club professionals equally revere him.

"Mr. Z is the perfect recipient for this award. His unwavering commitment and leadership have led to the thousands of young people receiving a first-class Boys & Girls Club experience, including me," says Mike Woods, Club professional of 22 years. "The countless hours he spends combined with his care in handling the organization along with the decisions he makes is always done with the children's well-being at the center."

During Zimmerman's tenure as executive director, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area has expanded its emphasis and reach establishing clubs in Hartsville (1999), Pamplico (2006), Hemingway (2009) and Lake City (2013), while maintaining a laser focus on fulfilling the club's mission: "To inspire and enable all youth from throughout the Pee Dee area, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as responsible, productive and caring citizens."

"Neal is the catalyst that has moved our Pee Dee Area organization forward. He successfully steers the organization and is especially gifted at building a great team, reminding us all of the

mission and leading with passion. His over-the-top commitment, institutional knowledge, and infectious love of the Boys & Girls Club kids and their families make him the best in the business," says Richard Skipper, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area.

"Without question, Neal is a rare jewel that gives so much of his time, energy and resources to ensure that Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area is a premier youth organization," says Patricia Singleton Parr, who has volunteered her services for more than six years and serves on the Pee Dee Area Board.

From club kid to club professional, Sewell involvement became full circle. He joined in 1945 and was honored as Boy of the Year in 1950 and club mayor in 1951. Sewell joined BGCA national staff in 1969. His leadership helped create more than 1,000 new clubs. Zimmerman's club experience followed a similar path. He joined a club in Orlando at the age of six and has never left. His first club job was as a summer staff member and has held nearly every position within a club organization. He distinguished himself as one with boundless energy, intelligence and drive. In 1995, he became executive director of an organization that sorely needed his guidance, vigor and experience.

Zimmerman has demonstrated unwavering commitment to quality programming, resource development and management skills. His strategic vision has taken the Pee Dee Area Boys & Girls Club organization from three clubs serving 350 youth in 1995, to today's thriving award-winning organization of six clubs serving more than 4,000 young people annually.

"This type of recognition doesn't happen without dedicated staff and a fantastic board," Zimmerman says, adding that the community's support for the work has been amazing. "I would put the Florence community against any community with how supportive of the Boys & Girls Clubs they are."

The local club marks its beginnings in 1964 when Leo Hawkins, Harold Tisdale and other community leaders established the Boys Club of Florence. In 1975, with the help of the City of Florence, the club moved into a new facility at 310 W. Roughfork Street, home to its current Florence Club. In 1989, the organization transformed into the Boys & Girls Clubs of Florence County, reflecting the inclusion of girls and expansion of services to Timmonsville. In 1994, the organization became the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee to expand throughout the Pee Dee.

Zimmerman holds a BA in Education & History from Birmingham-Southern College and a Master's in Administration from the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Prior to joining the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area he was with Clubs in Palm Beach County and Alachua County, FL. He and his wife Nancy have three children, Matt, Ben and Jason, all entrepreneurs in different fields.



BGCA's VP Southeast Region, Dr. Lisa Hurst, BGCA's Senior VP Organization Development, Misty Miller, Executive Director Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area, Neal Zimmerman and CEO BGC East Mississippi, Ricky Hood

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CHANGING SYSTEMS BY CHANGING MINDSETS By Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Dr. Willena Rembert

should do to make a difference, she's showing them that if she can do it, certainly, they can too, even if they ever face unfair systems.

The oldest of eight, Rembert was born and raised in Mullins, but after she graduated from Palmetto High School, she moved to New York and worked with Verizon Telecommunications for almost 30 years before retiring. She earned her BA from Fordham University in NYC, MBA from Long Island University and doctorate from the University of Phoenix. "I always felt a sense of pride, a joy deep in my soul at each graduation!" she said. "I did it my way. I achieved my educational degrees and personal accomplishments through hard work and dedication. Regardless of life's challenges, which we all face from time to time, no one can ever take away my hard-earned degrees."

Throughout her years, Rembert always wanted to make her parents proud. She retired in 2010 and soon after moved back to South Carolina, but her mom passed away months later. Rembert stayed because her siblings, daughter and grandson are all still here in Mullins. Her close family ties are the wind beneath her wings, and they truly love each other unconditionally. She often says that the bond they have may bend, but it's never been broken because love is their solid foundation.

Rembert wants younger generations to know that whatever you do, do it so great that it would be hard for the next person to fill your shoes. "I'm always challenged, even when I was working in the corporate environment at Verizon, but I was always so driven to be the best that I could be. During my career in Verizon, I watched as they promoted some people because of who they knew, not what they knew. Each promotion I got through the ranks of Verizon was because I earned it. When I came back home, I faced barriers because some folks were already established in different positions, so I did a lot of volunteering, and from there, folks could see my quality of work. I joined several community organizations to give back to those who needed help. Finally, I was hired as a contractor grant writer working for Marion County's executive director of Economic Development to work on a multi-million dollar grant for Marion County's Food Hub. Working in the Economic Development department provided me the opportunity I needed to allow my work to speak for me, and that's what opened the doors for me."

To help cultivate a community mindset to transform unjust systems, Rembert says we must change mindsets. "A person must be committed and willing to put in a lot of their free time volunteering. You spend a lot of time coming together trying to design events or programs giving back to the community and encourage people to participate and be visible so that the organizations are all speaking from the same page. Getting

community involvement is important because people are so discouraged, thinking systems will never change. It goes back to voting too because your vote is your voice. We must educate those who feel they don't have a voice to know that regardless of how long it takes, it's important. People died for us to have that right, and unity in numbers makes a difference. One vote can tip the scale in making things just a little better. We need to keep driving the message of the importance of voting all during the year and not wait until election day. There's a saying that you can't eat the whole elephant at one time, so by sharing the message of the importance of voting all during the year will allow our citizens to become more confident and less fearful about going to the polls to vote. To change systems, and the citizens' mindset, you can't start sharing important information about voting a few months before election time. The importance of voting should be communicated all the time, it is like getting an education in school, we are taught a certain concept/subject during the school year before they tested us to determine if we gained the knowledge that was taught during the year. Well, teaching our citizens during the year, they will be better prepared to decide during elections to make an informed choice that to change the systems that might work for everyone because we must change systems designed to discriminate."

"Diversity and inclusion means everyone should be given a fair chance regardless of what the situation is," Rembert said. "We're still fighting for diversity and inclusion, so we can't wait. Dr. King didn't wait. He died fighting for us to have an education. That was his message, and he talked about it all the time."

Today, Rembert continues the fight to make life a little better for others because giving back to the community and service is her passion. She does so as a member of several organizations that focus on serving the community. Some include Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Mu Kappa Zeta Chapter; the NAACP, Marion SC branch; the DJ Rowell Foundation; the Order of the Eastern Star and the Mullins Chamber of Commerce. She serves on the board of these organizations and gets joy out of making a difference in people's lives and giving back because she says she knows that feeling of not having enough. "Giving back to the community blesses my heart, and that's from my soul. I Don't Want My Living to Be in Vain. I want to leave a mark on somebody's life knowing that I've made a difference. Maya Angelou said, 'People may forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you made them feel.' That's the way I structure my life. Put something out there, and good will come back. It's not for gratification, but knowing I made someone's life just a little bit better," said Rembert.

Although Rembert's greatest accomplishments were her degrees, one of the biggest was the Amazing Grace Park in Mullins that honors the late Senator Clementa Pinckney. There you will find a plaque with her name as one of the committee members because she wrote \$3.5 million in grants for the park. Today, she serves on the park's board of directors as the secretary.

While Dr. Willena Rembert has helped a lot of others through her writing, she is also continuing to write her own life story, her own way. "It has to be written the way I want to write it. It gives me joy, and I'm pleased with how I'm writing this story. The way I'm living my life, I want the little girl inside of me to be very proud with how Dr. Willena is living her life. And I think she's thrilled. When I left Mullins straight out of high school, I knew I'd work hard to carve out a decent life for myself. I don't want anyone to have the power to dictate how far I can go in life, so I'm not letting go of the pen because I have many more chapters to add to my story."

ACHIEVING A BELOVED COMMUNITY STARTS WITH MINDSET By Jennifer Robinson



Rev. William H. Miller

Amos 5: 7 "There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground."

Psalms 133:1 "How good and pleasant it is When God's people live together in unity."

CHARLESTON-The fight for civil rights and the movement led by the Rev., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is not ancient history. People from that era are alive and recall stories of racial injustice and discrimination. Recently the owner of an NFL team was alleged to

have participated in discriminatory protesting of school integration in the late 60s. To keep this occurrence in perspective, Rev. William H. Miller stated, "People who are just at the age of seventy, who are still alive that were a part of the civil rights era." The narrative of the racism being ancient history must be depleted. Social media has been effective in raising awareness to important social issues and effective in presenting negative opinions that influence mindsets. The mindset of the masses has varying ideals. But for leaders such as Coretta Scott King, she believed "The Beloved Community can be achieved through courage, determination, education and training if enough people are willing." Achieving this mindset can be obtained through those attributes, but as Miller shared, the conveying of the message of history has to be authentic and organic." We must learn from history so it will not be repeated.

A native of Charleston, S.C., Miller was educated in the public schools of Charleston County. He has studied at Winston-Salem State University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. A fourth generation itinerant elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Miller currently serves as the pastor of Bethel AME Church in Conway, SC. His studies and ministerial work have taken him abroad to India, Ghana, Egypt, Haiti, Cuba and South Africa, among others. While abroad, Miller shared about racism not being just a construct of American culture. He spoke of an incident in India where a sales clerk was more attentive to his white colleague while they were shopping. The experience encouraged dialogue that address the mindset of people

universally. In the ever-continuing political climate, galvanizing interested parties to vote and effect change has become challenging. Political responses to issues that affect society have been unfavorable in most instances to those who are affecting. Miller believes that during voting season, it is necessary to promote yearly voting versus voting during presidential years.

"Voters must think about the decisions that are made by governors, representatives, and school board. We must field candidates from the community to feel invested in the process." From his perspective, Miller said, King was probably frustrated with the flow of progress. His message had begun to change at the end of his life. He quoted Amos 5:24 which says, "Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream. Rivers are powerful forces and streams are not powerful but steady. Reading is fundamental and essential in learning how important issues such as Brown vs the Board of Education are to communities.

Issues of homelessness, lack of food, need for clothing are social needs that need to be addressed.

Change can come if people would recognize and are intentional about how to assist those in need. Religious leaders are often sought after to either meet the needs or provide information about who can assist in meeting needs. Pastors and other religious leaders are often seen as the conduit to effective planning for addressing political and social agendas. An important lead to a resolution is identifying those who may have the answers to some of the questions about current events. Leaders must attend community meetings and not just during election time. Engagement to receive results is a yearlong commitment and not just during election time. The answer is organizing, galvanizing and energizing. Miller said the radius of communities have changed and the reach has expanded. Because communities have changed, the messages must change. Leaders, especially women leaders of the past, were pivotal in encouraging and meeting the needs of the leaders who were the voices for the people and for those who were presumed voiceless. Ella Baker, Ida B Wells and Fannie Lou Hamer are a just a few of the ones who galvanized through personal provisions for those who fought for the causes of communities.

Seeking justice is not blanketed. New and innovative ways must be created to reach the masses. Each generation has had and will have its turn and its tool to reach the masses. Society should be open to what those tools are and how to use them effectively to create a better world.

CULTIVATING A BELOVED COMMUNITY IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA By Adalia Ellis



Louis and Louisa Gregory National Baha'i Center

HEMMINGWAY-My earliest memories are of riding in my parents' blue station wagon down country roads from Hartsville and Darlington to Hemingway. Anticipation and excitement would build when I saw the sign as we approached the stretch of road that

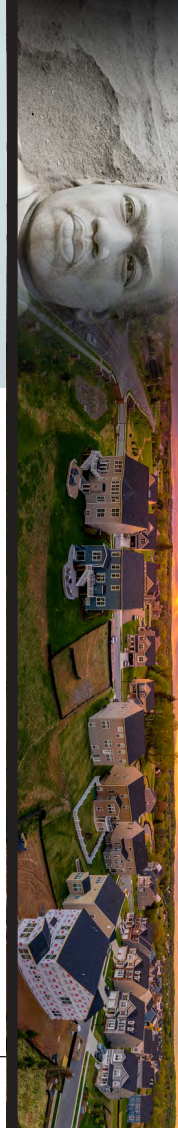
would turn left towards the place that is my spiritual home. The sign for the Louis Gregory Baha'i Institute would change over the years. Sometimes there would be bullet holes in it, other times the sign would be badly bent so that you couldn't see the words. Once, as we approached the turn off, there was a beautiful wooden sign engraved with the name. The next time we made a trip there, the sign was gone because it had been burned down. The different signs

tell a story. They tell the story of a place that has cultivated a beloved community since 1972 and has persevered despite hardships and prejudice.

The Louis Gregory Baha'i Institute came to be in response to large numbers of people choosing to become members of the Baha'i Faith during the late 1960s-early 1970s. It was built as a place to gather in fellowship, plan, organize and worship. The name is significant because it is named after a son of South Carolina, Louis George Gregory. Although he was born a free man in 1873 in Charleston, his mother and grandmother were once enslaved on the Elysian Fields plantation, in Darlington, SC. He was one of the first free Black men to become a lawyer, one of the Talented Tenth, a contemporary of W.E.B. Dubois. He was introduced to the Baha'i Faith by a co-worker while living in Washington, DC where he was working as a clerk. He became a Baha'i in 1909.

His life epitomizes the purpose of the place that continues his legacy. He became a champion of race unity and a staunch believer in the oneness of humanity, both central tenants of the Baha'i Faith. During a time when it was illegal to marry someone who was white, in 1912, he married Louisa A. M. Mathew, a white English woman.

CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
It Starts With Me: Cultivating a Beloved Community
Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems"



CULTIVATING A BELOVED COMMUNITY CONT'D



Louis Gregory Baha'i Institute 50th Anniversary Celebration

They were the first interracial Baha'i couple and through their marriage they defied the idea that skin color decided humanness or nobility.

The Louis G. Gregory Baha'i Institute was one of a few places in South Carolina where people of all races could gather peacefully. Growing up a Baha'i with a white mother and a Black father, it

was the one place I knew that there would be others like me, and I was not alone. When I was 10 years old, I got to meet Dizzy Gillespie, who was also a Baha'i, during a yearly event called Peace Fest. There was something powerful about playing in the shadow of greatness and surrounded by the sounds of jazz and gospel. In the early 1980s, 90.9 WLGI Radio was established and began broadcasting the message of unity in diversity. The airwaves are alive with positive music that is diverse and curated for content and messaging.

The beloved community I grew up in benefitted from the memory and work of Gregory. It was in this place, where I grew from a child to an adult, that I have come to my understanding of what it means to be a part of a beloved community. It was through serving together, learning together and worshiping together that I came to realize the lifelong work that goes into building a community rooted in love, perseverance, justice and resilience. It was there that I got to see Black men and women of great capacity who were doing great things with that capacity. It was there that I came to understand that regardless of skin color, everyone has a purpose to fill for the betterment of the world.

THE BELOVED COMMUNITY: THE LEGACY OF DR. CHARLES JOYNER

By Adalia Ellis



Earl (Tre) Foxworth III

CONWAY-The movement towards race unity requires, at its core, a commitment to building relationships rooted in friendship, trust and love. Cultivating a beloved community is critical to any effort that envisions lasting change. Such communities must be created in institutions of higher learning and one such space exists in the Joyner Institute for Gullah and African Diaspora Studies, at Coastal Carolina University.

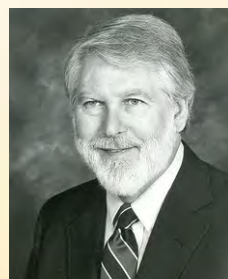
The program is named after Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Southern History and Culture, Dr. Charles Joyner. Joyner taught at Coastal Carolina University for 30 years.

"The Charles Joyner Institute for Gullah and African Diaspora Studies examines the historical migration and scattering of African populations to local geographical areas and the subsequent evolution of blended cultures, specifically Gullah," explains Earl (Tre) Foxworth III.

The university is in a unique position because of its location at the northern tip of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, to cultivate a beloved community through diaspora study and research. A catalyst for community involvement, the institute gives students the opportunity for experiential learning at home and abroad. This learning is centered around the interconnections of local, national and global communities of people and their societies.

There are two important concepts that Foxworth identifies as being vital to cultivating a beloved community, the ability to listen and the ability to understand. "When learning about different communities, we have to first listen to the people within the community to help us try to understand their culture and history. When exploring a new community, it can be easy to ask a hundred questions, but you have to let the communities speak for themselves. You can learn so much from just listening to what is around you. You may even gain more than you were hoping to."

The relevance and impact of the beloved community is best observed by the actions it takes and the transformation a community of people experience as they stay committed to the vision of race unity. The Joyner Institute for Gullah and African Diaspora Studies has, through its commitment to education, connection, learning, revealed traits and themes that have become apparent through action. Traits such as leadership that helps to lead and uplift their communities, while, constantly looking for better opportunities for



Dr. Charles Joyner

the community. Related to this is also a strong sense of connectedness between people who make up the community. Foxworth goes on to elaborate, "Entering a beloved community may look different depending on where you are but most, if not all, beloved communities have been through some type of adversity that they were able to overcome. When going through hard times, communities come together and support one another.

Oftentimes, the communities become stronger after standing together in the face of adversity."

The Joyner Institute for Gullah and African Diaspora Studies helps students understand that the people of the beloved community are the most important. In this way, they learn to listen to the community's needs and problems. Community supporters and advocates are important in that they are committed to collaborating with the community to devise plans of action and strategy that address stated needs and problems. Essential to this collaboration is that the community has access to resources which then empowers them to become protagonists of their own betterment as a community.

Central to cultivating the beloved community is to intentionally define harmful behaviors that have hurt past efforts. When considering what is important for breaking harmful cycles, Foxworth says, "Knowledge and compassion are the most important factors needed to help end harmful cycles. Often, the prejudice and stereotypes of different beloved communities spawn from a lack of knowledge or compassion." He goes on to define the job of advocates and supporters, "to help spread accurate knowledge of these communities to help break down the preconceived notions and stereotypes that some people have about different communities." And he finishes by explaining that, "To create new uplifting cycles, the communities need access to resources that can help them and their supporters and advocates spread all their great achievements to again, help break down the preconceptions of people outside the communities."

Dr. Charles Joyner was a white man who dedicated his professional life to centering the lives and history of the Indigenous and African descended people of the south, specifically of South Carolina. His legacy and his work to uplift the beloved community continue through The Joyner Institute for Gullah and African Diaspora Studies.

THE URGENCY OF NOW: CULTIVATING A MINDSET TO TRANSFORM UNJUST SYSTEMS

Submitted by Dr. Tiffany Hollis, assistant professor Coastal Carolina University



Dr. Tiffany Hollis

CONWAY-There are memories that are impressed upon us that we often do not forget because of the impact that the memory has had on us. Many of those memories are etched in the fabric of our lives and our lived experiences. I recall being born in the North (Connecticut) and being raised in the South (South Carolina) and noticing the staunch differences. Not only was the language different, but the interactions that I had with racism and discrimination were also very noticeable. I remember being told

that I spoke well for a Black girl, that I must have been a charity case since I was on welfare, that I was loud and aggressive, and that I did not deserve to be in certain spaces because I just did not fit in. I remember hearing the comments and seeing the actions of others against me. As a young, gifted and Black girl growing up in the South, I often found myself in a lot of white spaces with very few Black or Brown faces. I encountered a lot more negative interactions in those spaces than positive ones. Because I embraced my Blackness and knew about the struggles that my ancestors endured so I could be in those spaces, I learned how to navigate those spaces no matter how much hurt or harm I experienced while in those spaces.

It was not until I went off to college on a full ride scholarship to Davidson College, an elite predominately white institution (PWI) just 20 miles north of Charlotte, NC where it seemed the more things were moving forward, the more they were moving backwards. Even though this was a space where I continued to experience racism and discrimination as a result of my race, my socioeconomic status as a low-income first-generation Black girl at a PWI that costs close to \$50,000 to attend, I learned a lot of lessons about racial reconciliation, creating a beloved community, forgiving those who were not knowledgeable about being culturally competent and leveraging my differences. I also learned how to show up authentically in spaces and to own those spaces and not try to fit in as someone who was born to stand out.

It was during my undergraduate years at Davidson that I learned to use teachable moments to educate my classmates and to begin to hold my White counterparts accountable for their racist rhetoric and their racist actions. Fast forward to being a Black woman professor with a Ph D at a PWI that is about 8 times larger than that of Davidson. Many of the lessons that I learned there have helped me cultivate a beloved community mindset and helped to transform unjust systems. As a current teacher educator, I embrace a lot of the skills that I learned there as I teach the future generations of students who will go on to be the teachers, change makers and leaders in their schools, in their communities, in society and hopefully in the world.

My beloved community mindset came from me doing some inner work--recognizing and addressing my own biases, leading with love by refining my mind and my heart, and showing people grace and humanity through my words and actions. It is through that grace and humanity that I learned to be patient, to be understanding, to show compassion, and to embody an intentional mindset that centers love, peace and compassion; consequently, resulting in an inner transformation which can create powerful and positive outer changes in our lives and in our relationships with those around us. This includes also stepping out of one's comfort zone and being a little uncomfortable from time to time.

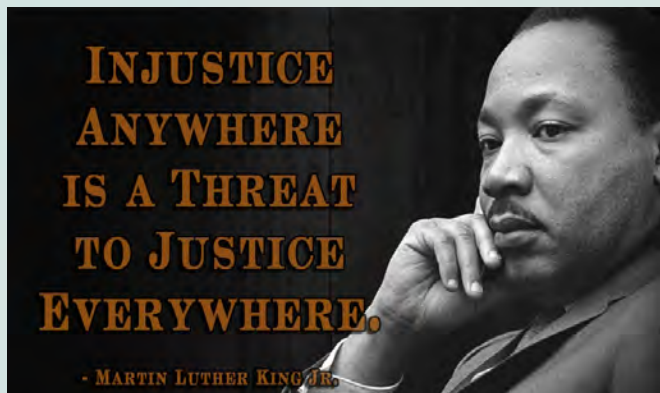
After all, there is no growth in comfort and no comfort in growth. Driven by compassion and love, and free of our own egos and opinions, our work shifts to becoming increasingly strategic, intentional and purposeful. We do what is necessary to heal relationships, build bridges, promote justice and cultivate the beloved community.

Thus, I would like to issue a challenge for you to commit to doing the inner work and outer work necessary to creating a beloved community where everyone will not just survive, but actually thrive. What can you do or are you currently doing to disrupt hate, to dismantle oppressive systems and structures and to take steps to transform cycles of hate, harm, injustice and inequities that exist? How can you transform your mindset to be a part of the solution instead of the problem? We know that it will not happen overnight but making real progress toward sustainable and intentional transformation will take more than just words.

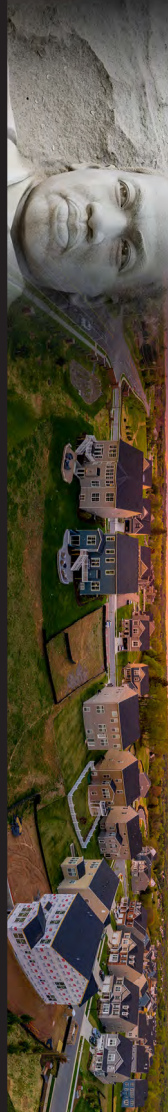
These questions are more pressing now more than ever considering the triple pandemic of racial injustice, economic insecurities and the Covid-19 pandemic. Then, when we add in the political polarization that is dividing these United States of America at the present moment, it makes moving towards the creation of a beloved community that much harder. While the beloved community is often a phrase that is thrown around by many, it is more than an ideology. The steps to cultivate a beloved community are strategic, intentional, and purposeful. Consequently, we must not be complicit or complacent when we see injustices and do nothing about it. Dr. King reminds us that we have a moral obligation to stand up for racial and social justice and to dismantle systems of racism and discrimination.

The late Congressman John Lewis uttered some powerful words when he said: "When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Each of us must do our part to help build the beloved community." These words ring true in all that I do as I continue to be intentional, strategic and purposeful about creating a beloved community while holding space for others and also while holding others accountable for their actions and their words at the same time.

Dr. Tiffany Hollis is currently an assistant professor at Coastal Carolina University in the Educational Studies Department. Hollis has a clear and strong commitment to diversity, equity and social justice with over 18 years in the education setting as a champion of equitable education as a social justice educator and advocate with a special education background, ten of those years were spent working with students with emotional and behavioral disabilities and students with mental health diagnoses and in various teaching and administrative roles. She is currently working on several projects revolving around mentoring, student success and helping youth to thrive in various aspects of their lives.



CELEBRATING MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
It Starts With Me: Cultivating a Beloved Community
Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems"



A PROFESSOR'S PERSPECTIVE: ADDRESSING PAST AND CURRENT WORLDVIEWS

By Jennifer Robinson



Shayna Wrihten, PhD

The political climate of 2022 has had its high and low moments. Political parties and interested citizens had dialogues about the daily social issues that our nation faces. Dr. Shayna Wrihten, professor of Biology and African American Studies Program Coordinator at Francis Marion University in Florence, SC shared her perspective of the past and current political climates.

"I think that today, compared to during the civil rights movement of the 50s/60s, we are desensitized, unmotivated and skeptical that meaningful and lasting change will occur. During the initial civil rights movement, people were so hungry for change that they felt their lives depended on it. Black people had so few rights and equalities that they felt they had no more to lose and only something to gain by fighting and demanding change. I think that now, Black people are in a dangerous [position](#). We have made so much progress on so many fronts since the end of slavery that we feel like in many ways things are good and there isn't as much to fight for. Many Black people have a mindset that reflects a feeling of complacency "because we can be good now," even though we should be striving for great. The social mindset of many white people (and certainly some non-white people too) is that racism and discrimination are dead and that we (Americans) have arrived. When the majority and/or the collective no longer sees something to fight for then the fight dies."

Wrihten believes people who fought and died for the cause of civil rights would be ashamed of the current political climate. When no one is talking or listening to those who think differently than themselves then nothing happens. "When nothing happens, change is impossible, and we need change right now," declares Wrihten.

If society is viewed from an imperfect worldview, what may be needed is for social and political outlook changes. Wrihten says the whole structure of our society needs reforming. "There are many facets of our society that function based on rules, regulations, policies, ideas, etc. that are rooted in our history. Those rules and policies contain racial biases against people of color and financial biases against people of a lower economic earning.

"The criminal justice system also needs major transformation, Wrihten said, and in 2022 our criminal justice system often punishes people for being Black and for being poor. Additionally, our system relies on punishment, which rarely deters crime or addresses the root cause of most non-violent crimes, poverty.

In addressing the educational system, public schools continue to be a largely segregated space where the disparities in outcomes for recent graduates are stark.

Wrihten adds, she believes the healthcare system needs major transformation. In 2022, I, as a Black woman, am still much more likely to die from complications of child delivery than a white woman. Those issues need to be addressed to ensure equal health access and quality healthcare.

The voting system needs major transformation. People, largely those of color and lower socioeconomic status, continue to be disenfranchised by the voting system in this country. It can be hard to convince certain people, whose voices should matter in our society, that their vote counts when the system of the electoral college says otherwise.

Wrihten said the most important things for her students to do to achieve societal and political transformation is to stay informed, stay involved and to use their voices. If we look back in history, so often grassroot changes was initiated by college students. Activism is not as prevalent as it was in the 60s and 70s and its largely because students feel their voices don't matter. She often encourages them to vote, to protest, to call their political representatives, to attend government meetings, to do whatever they need (if it's within the law)

to make their voices heard.

Additionally, Wrihten said, "I think that some people look at our country and its history to determine how far Black people, women, immigrants, LGBTQ+ community members and other marginalized groups have come and think that even though we still have far to go, we have also come from so far. For me, coming a long way doesn't negate or make better how far we must go (and we have far to go). To me, that saying (and similar ones) just allows people to feel okay to not do more or to not come farther or to not push harder. I personally think that until our country recons with the truth of our history and how that history continues to shape policies, disparities and fears today, our society will never make it as far as we should. We will never get to a place where there is true equality among the groups of people who make up our country."

UNWAVERING MISSION TO ADVANCE ECONOMIC & POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES

By Les Echols



Nocola Hemphill

The Beloved Community is an inclusive, achievable society, where problems and conflict exist but are resolved peaceably. The late Coretta Scott King said, "The Beloved Community can be achieved through courage, determination, education and training if enough people are willing." As our nation continues to grapple with a global pandemic, racial injustice and political polarization, the theme, "It Starts with Me: Cultivating a Beloved Community Mindset to Transform Unjust Systems," is a clarion call for all. Nocola Hemphill is transforming mindsets. This mother and second-generation entrepreneur has followed a rigorous journey of self-discovery towards social, economic and political justice. Hemphill is fulfilling a role in servant leadership, becoming the first Black woman to run for mayor of Winnsboro in 2021.

Hemphill is the founder and executive director of Southern Women Philanthropy Conference. The Southern Women Philanthropy Conference is the only allyship coalition for political and economic development for Black women in SC. They are corporate and community partners invested in transforming communities of color through skills training and technical assistance for entrepreneurs and civic leaders. Hemphill has 25 years of foundational knowledge from global leaders including Accenture, Ritz Carlton, Verizon and Shutterfly.

Trusted for her empathetic leadership, selfless acts of service and business sense, Hemphill has invested the last five years strengthening and educating rural communities in SC. Through an unwavering mission to advance economic and political opportunities for the working poor, she cultivates the grassroots infrastructure that mobilizes missing voters statewide and works locally to launch startups and nonprofits. Her work across the Fairfield County NAACP, SCDP Black Caucus, SCDP Rural Caucus and [EndCoronavirus.org](#), has helped Hemphill gain trust and credibility.

Hemphill feels issues of economics must be addressed for practical changes to be made. "In 2023, Black political engagement must begin with political initiatives that target and address Black economics at the root. The brand of politics that encourages the Black vote with no tangible exchange is anti-Black in essence and it must be put to rest. We must enter a new era of Black excellence to erect new legislation and begin electing legislators who will establish a Black political agenda that repairs the generational side effects of America's past," explained Hemphill.

Hemphill is the proud mother of Christian (24), Eden (20) and Lathan (15), she is the first granddaughter and the oldest of seven siblings, an environmental steward and mental health advocate.

EMBRACING THE BRILLIANCE OF OUR PEOPLE *By Adalia Ellis*



LaTisha Vaughn and Audrey Lane

CHARLESTON - During America's relatively short existence as a democratic nation it has had an undeniable impact on the fortunes of generations of people of color. From the genocide of the continent's Indigenous peoples due to European migration and the forced migration of generations of Africans through the trans-Atlantic slave trade, America has yet to right the wrongs of systemic and generational racism. Yet, in every generation, there are few courageous, forward thinking, visionaries who work to address the numerous inequities that exist. The Educate, Empower, Elevate Foundation (E3), founded by Audrey Lane and LaTisha Vaughn, located in Charleston, S.C., is one such organization. Their mission is to ensure those who are most impacted by the inequities that exist in the South are educated, empowered, and elevated to exercise their collective agency.

"At E3, we envision a community that embodies a healthy environment for racial and economic justice for Black and brown people and embraces the brilliance of our people to solve their problems and co-create their future," said Lane, founding partner and executive director of E3 Foundation.

E3 are conveners that provides resources to those organizations that are doing the work in the community. As a result, they have been able to bring fourth activities in four areas: Co-Creation, a collaborative effort with five Black-led community organizations focused on a facilitated process to co-create a vision for education specifically focused on Black and brown children specifically in the state of South Carolina.; Regional Talent Strategy, a pipeline for educators (K-12 thru professional) of community-centered, entrepreneurially-focused teachers and leaders with a strong bias for teachers and leaders of color that will advocate and change the academic trajectory of students of color in Charleston; Pro-Truth, which addresses legislation based on the those untruths of critical race theory in educations, starting with elementary through college, and the Good Jobs Challenge (ARA), which aims to bridge the historical gaps within workforce development and ignite inclusive and equitable growth that is equally beneficial to industry, the economy and workers.

The Good Jobs Challenge grant explains Lane, is an unlikely but intentional partnership between E3, an advocacy organization led by Black women, the major convener of businesses that is the Charleston Metro Chamber, and Roper St. Francis Healthcare, a key employer in our local economy. This initiative seeks to create 1000 livable wage jobs for people who are from historically marginalized communities in Charleston. Overall, it will develop an equity-centric, employer-led approach that will utilize the existing regional training system with the \$8.4 million federal grant.

Lane said, "Empowering underserved populations to seek opportunities in promising sectors; collaborating across sectors to address skill gaps identified by employers; addressing workforce barriers that have prevented inclusive and equitable growth; improving access to training for communities of color that will enhance pathways to high-earning potential jobs in healthcare, simultaneously boosting representative health care options and delivering thoughtful wraparound services for recipients to ensure their success through the program and on the job are what we are looking to put into place to yield the dividend that are impactful not only to the community, but life changing the populations we seek to empower."

For those who would question the necessity of such initiatives,

they need only to understand the current state of Black America. Lane continues, "From our perspective, and in our work, focused primarily on economic justice through education, it often feels like Black America is in the fight of our lives."

To illustrate this point, one needs only to observe how the pandemic brought to light existing inequities that have been a daily reality for Black communities and how it has impacted these same communities more harshly because of the inequities. Historical and enduring inequities exacerbated by the pandemic are lack of access to affordable and comprehensive healthcare; that students and families were often placed in inequitable educational models; internet access was hit or miss throughout communities of color and often non-existent in rural communities; a high percentage of Black Americans were trapped in non-livable wage jobs and therefore were working in low paying frontline jobs with greater exposure to COVID says Lane.

She goes on to state that not only was Covid ravaging the Black community, but the social unrest also that came with the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and many others left the Black community distressed, triggered and having to be the voice of Blackness in white spaces, constantly being asked by white counterparts, "What can I do?" In the middle of the pandemic, E3 worked with a researcher to release their first report, *What About the Children? LISTENING TO AND LEARNING FROM FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS DURING A PANDEMIC*. This report helps people understand the impact of the pandemic and social unrest on Black and brown families in the Charleston community.

"As we have begun transitioning to a new normal, Black America is faced with continued resistance. In our schools we face heated debates about mask mandates, and now we see the elimination of our historical existence, exclusion of students who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community, elimination of social-emotional learning and anything else that individuals do not understand, all under the false umbrella of CRT (critical-race-theory)." Lane continues, "And all while, as a community, we have continued to fight through the political process, voting rights and redistricting are leading to a shift in our representation in the political process to be a voice for the issues that were exacerbated by the pandemic."

Against this backdrop of overwhelming odds and challenges that face them, the founders of the E3 are doing what their ancestors have been doing for centuries, standing in their nobility, reminding others of their nobility, and endeavoring to push the long arc of history ever closer to justice.

"As Black daughters of parents who can trace our roots back to multiple generations in the rural south, we represent more than our ancestors could have likely ever imagined. We are honored and humbled each day to have had the amazing opportunity to see a need, write a vision and work to see that vision come to life before our eyes every day. And at the same time, we are parents of beautiful, brilliant, Black children who have survived a pandemic that we likely will not know the impact of for years to come, have experienced very few or no teachers of color in their K-12 experience and who are growing up in a time when gun violence is the leading cause of death in young children according to the American Pediatric Association. And still these beautiful brilliant Black children inspire us to work to create the world we want them to inherit! We are far from the economic justice that we seek for every Black and Brown person in our community.

Yet if we pause, listen and act on their brilliance, we'll be closer than we were yesterday."

For more information about the Educate, Empower, Elevate Foundation (E3), visit their website at <https://www.thee3group.com/>.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH
"BLACK RESISTANCE"

WRITING OUR HISTORY OURSELVES *By Dawn “D.A.” Goodwin*



Dr. Walter Curry

COLUMBIA - For Dr. Walter Curry, Black History Month means celebrating Black culture and contributors to the African American community from all walks of life. In fact, he says Black history is American history. His ancestral history teaches him about Black history through ancestral stories rooted in a historical context, and he uses his talents as an author and entrepreneur to document and share those

stories.

An Orangeburg native, Curry considers himself a creative entrepreneur. “I own two companies. My first company, Renaissance Publications, LLC, self-publishes books that focus on ancestral stories through the lenses of historical context. My second company, Ancestral Art & Cultural Series, LLC, is a company that curates exhibitions that focus on ancestral stories through art and culture.”

Curry’s first book, “The Thompson Family: Untold Stories from The Past (1830-1960),” chronicles the rich history of a prominent African American family from the Wagener and Salley communities of Aiken County that features stories of individuals who were enslaved, served in the Civil War, achieved entrepreneurial success during the Jim Crow era and much more. The book includes an appendix section that consists of individual pictures, documented history of places and events and primary sources. The greatest accomplishment in Curry’s life is winning a book award in 2019 from the African American Historical & Genealogical Society. He has won several awards since then but says the first one will always be remembered because he received it during a very low point in his life.

His second book, “The Awakening: The Seawright-Ellison Family Saga, Vol. 1, A Narrative History,” is the first volume in a narrative history about the descendants of two families that share a common ancestor, Martha Kitchings Seawright Ellison, born into slavery in 1849 in Aiken County. The book documents the beginnings of the family saga through Ellison’s life during slavery, The Civil War, The Reconstruction Era and family life in Aiken County and beyond. The book documents the saga with contextualized resurrected stories of relatives forgotten over the years who were contributory figures of African American history in Aiken County and beyond.

Curry’s work includes book-signing events, presentations, workshops and hosting exhibitions. He is also the author-in-residence at the Aiken Center for the Arts. “As an author-in-residence, I provide learning engagements through exhibits to Aiken County Public Schools that brings the stories of my books to life through exhibitions and readings.”

In the professional world as an author, Curry recognizes the importance of building relationships with key individuals and stakeholders in the arts and humanities world. A major barrier he faced early on was identifying key individuals and stakeholders who were interested and supportive of his work. He was able to overcome this by getting involved in the arts and humanities community by joining professional organizations and networking within the organizations. As a result, “I can generate business opportunities which have led to significant increase in revenue streams and other business opportunities.”

A former middle school social studies teacher, Curry taught

four and a half years in both urban and rural schools in South Carolina. In 2018, his family received a legislative resolution from the SC State Senate honoring his enslaved ancestor, Lavinia C. Thompson, who served as a cook in the Confederate Army, in her master Samuel G. Webb’s, military regiment. In 2019, his family, their ancestral church—Smyrna Missionary Baptist Church—local historical groups and the Aiken County community honored Thompson’s life with full military honors. In 2020, Curry received two legislative resolutions from the SC General Assembly for work and service in African American history in South Carolina. In 2021, he helped lobby passage of a legislative resolution commemorating the 160 anniversary of Ft. Sumter.

In February 2020, Curry curated his first exhibition, “Salley and The Thompson Family,” that focused on the history of Salley, South Carolina, and stories of his enslaved ancestors and free relatives who lived during the Antebellum period, The Civil War and the post-Reconstruction era. The exhibition included historical relics, primary source documents, food items and images about the Thompson family, Aiken County history and South Carolina history.

In 2022, he collaborated with the South Carolina State Library to launch the African American Genealogy Webinar Series. “The purpose of the series is to share information about knowledge and resources available to aid and assist individuals who have an interest in African American genealogy. I am blessed to be the webinar’s first instructor. I have presented on two topics that focus on helping people to write their own family history,” he said.

This is important, especially in a society where Curry believes African Americans are fighting repression on two fronts: systemic racism and community repression. “For African Americans to progress today, we must continue to address systemic racism, but we must acknowledge that community repression propelled by colorism, the ‘crab in the barrel’ mentality, socioeconomic disparities and oppressors within our community must be confronted. I believe that the community must invigorate a spirit of willingness to bring about positive change. The spirit of willingness must be cultivated with a vision that focuses on (1) identifying community problems through research and community engagement (2) identifying resources to address community problems through research and community engagement (3) developing action plans to address community problems through research and community engagement and (4) evaluating to determine the action plan’s effectiveness through research and community engagement.”

“For me, I conform to Plato’s explanation of diversity in his famous work, “The Republic,” with the quote, ‘I am myself reminded that we are not all alike; there are diversities of natures among us which are adapted to different occupations.’ We have diversities of nature with unique strengths and talents that can be cultivated and used for the greater good. My definition of inclusion is (1) including each other diversities of nature for the greater good, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, gender or religion and (2) equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.”

The greatest motivation for Curry is looking within to seek answers to deal with life’s struggles. “I believe we should be motivated to self-reflect to discover who we are and where we are going in life. There is the adage which says that experience is our best teacher, but I have discovered that failure is one of our best teachers. We must be willing to face our failures and learn from them, so we don’t repeat them. We must also learn from the failures of others as well. Struggles in life are not necessarily bad but struggles in life strengthen our growth for

WRITING OUR HISTORY CONT'D

positive change. Positive change never happens without struggle. Finally, you must have a resolved mind. You must strengthen your resolve to overcome your struggle.”

Curry received a bachelor's degree in political science from South Carolina State University and has earned graduate degrees in education, which include a doctorate degree in Curriculum & Instruction from Argosy University, Sarasota. Curry has received numerous accolades for his work and service, including two African American Historical and Genealogy Society book awards, legislative resolutions from the South Carolina General Assembly for his significant work in service to African American History and Heritage in South Carolina and Literary Titan Gold Awards. He is a recipient of the Martha Schofield “Work the Legacy” Award, a member of the Inaugural South Carolina State University 40 Under 40 and was selected as a 2022 Richland Two School District Black History Month honoree. He also serves as member of the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room & Military Museum Commission, is on the board of advisors of the Friends of Charleston National Parks and the South Carolina Arts Directory.

Curry currently lives in Columbia with his wife, Takiyah S. Curry, who is a registered nurse and graduate of the University of South Carolina. They have two sons: Braxton and Braylon. For information about Curry's company, Renaissance Publications, LLC, visit www.renaissancepublic.com or call 803-404-2117.

REBUILDING POLITICAL POWER WITHIN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES *By Les Echols*



Brandon Upson

TEGA CAY - Brandon Upson is the chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Party Black Caucus, chairman of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Southern Region Political Action Committee, former chief strategy officer of the South Carolina House of Representatives Minority Caucus, and the founder of Amplify Action, an organization focused on rebuilding political power within marginalized

communities across the South through the voter registration and civic mobilization of Black men. In 2020, his organization registered 39,080 Black men and mobilized 450,000+ Black voters to vote. His work has been featured nationally on CNN, MSNBC, Al Jazeera, BuzzFeed, and the New York Times.

Upson is a U.S. Army Combat Veteran and a notable political strategist. He served in Iraq as a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear specialist and combat engineer for a trailblazing task force during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He also volunteered on more than 100 combat missions in Iraq and was honored with an Army Commendation Medal and as his company's Soldier of the Year in 2006 and NCO of the Year in 2008.

Along with his military experience, Upson has an extensive history of community service that he elaborates on in detail. “I've been blessed to have my community service touch every region of South Carolina and across several states. Since 2012, I've served on the board of the Liberty Hill after School Literacy Program in North Charleston, SC, where we've increased the literacy rates of hundreds of students in a school district where



Brandon with wife Monica

that improve the lives of Black and African American citizens,” Upson continued.

Upson touched on the power of inclusion when it comes to voting. “In the democracy that governs our society, our strength is our vote; and our vote is our voice,” stated Upson. “Too often, we give up our power and deny ourselves the inclusion that we deserve by not voting. My organization, Amplify Action, works to restore Black political power within our communities by ensuring that we are registered to vote and flexing our power at the polls and in the halls of government. Our fellowship takes newly registered voters and trains them on how to advocate for their communities, occupy space and ensure that they have a voice in the decision-making process that governs their respective communities. Our power to control the destiny of our communities is limited to our willingness to amplify our voices and work together on one accord,” Upson



Brandon pictured with wife Monica and children Cossette (standing), Sophie and Patrick

nearly half of high school seniors had below average reading levels. Since 2020, my wife and I have conducted annual grocery give-a-ways in Aiken, Columbia and Rock Hill, SC, providing food to more than 2,000 families. As the Southern Regional Political Action chairman of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., we organized annual Alpha Day at the State House events across the South to advocate policy initiatives

that improve the lives of Black and African American citizens,” Upson concluded. According to Upson, since 2020, Amplify Action has helped more than 1,000,000 Black men and women flex the power of their vote and their voice. Adding that they have been able to stop harmful policies, unseat career politicians and elect leaders who unapologetically advocate for Black issues.

Upson is a native of Aiken, SC, husband to Monica Upson, and father of three children: Cossette, Sophie and Patrick.



HELPING FAMILIES HAVE BETTER OUTCOMES IN MARION COUNTY By Les Echols



Davon Hughes

Under the SC Department of Agriculture's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA), with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Pick 42 Foundation will participate in promoting economic opportunities for Black farmers and producers to increase access of locally grown food. A \$3.1M grant was awarded to LFPA to set up a program to purchase crops from local Black farmers. Once purchased from Black farmers, the goods will be delivered to local churches for distribution throughout the community for a period of 18 months. Ideally, because of this program, farmers will no longer struggle to sell their produce. They will also be offered classes on food safety and other training to improve the productivity of their farm. The goal is to have all farmers Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certified, by the end of the 18 months. GAP certification is a voluntary certification which verifies proper food safety practices, to meet all of the qualifications to sell to major food chains.

Hughes is no stranger to public service. "Years ago, I started a nonprofit for children in Ghana. The purpose was to supply the families with clothes and money to be more self-sufficient. Yet, this has been the most rewarding job I have had," said

MARION - Diversity Works had an opportunity to catch up with Davon Hughes, farm ambassador for Pick 42 Foundation, Inc. Pick 42 Foundation's primary mission is to help children and community members in Marion County have better outcomes. Pick 42 believes impacting the lives of children will ultimately aid the entire family, community and nation overall.

Hughes. "As a farm ambassador, I get to meet some great people in the community, along with these very special Black farmers. When having a conversation with them, you will get a lot of backstories on the struggles they had to face just because of being Black, since the Homestead Act of 1862, when they offered settlers 160 acres of free land, but white Americans made them feel unwanted. A sentiment which still lingers today," Hughes continued.

"Black farmers have a bad history working with the USDA/FSA. The farmers do not trust these agencies at all, because they feel in many instances, they weren't given a fair shot. My job is to be a liaison and follow-up on all farmer applications made with USDA/FSA. If the farmers have questions about certain programs, I research it for them to make sure they are getting accurate and comprehensive information."

Hughes is married to her husband, Jeffery Hughes. The couple has two sons and one daughter. Hughes has an associate degree in medical assistant. She was a firefighter for 10 years in North Charleston and Augusta, GA. Hughes is also a professional photographer. Before she became an employee with Pick 42 Foundation, Hughes would go out to their events and capture special moments for the organization. "I love giving back to the community," Hughes concluded.



“Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories.”

This year along with The National’s Women’s History Alliance, we too will encourage the recognition of women, past and present, which have been active in all forms of media and storytelling including print, radio, TV, stage, screen, blogs, podcasts, news and social media.



*Diana M. Murphy-Eaddy
CEO/Publisher/Visionary*

Diana M. Murphy-Eaddy is a high-performing executive who consistently utilizes her 25-plus years of experience in advertising and marketing to bring about success. Murphy-Eaddy is the chief executive officer of DMM Advertising & Marketing. Her innovation and creativity drew her to start a business which specializes in ensuring client success by marketing, consulting, advertising and promoting through unique tools that are the mechanism for success.

Murphy-Eaddy is the visionary, owner and publisher for over a decade of “Diversity Works© magazine,” a quarterly magazine, which she established in October 2011. The magazine promotes diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) that focuses on the importance of diversifying communities by appreciating each other and recognizing our differences while understanding our similarities, qualities she believes leads to an organization’s strength. Murphy-Eaddy is passionate about stimulating an environment where differences are valued and integrated into every part of an organization to improve performance.

“Diversity Works© magazine,” is produced in the Pee Dee region of South Carolina, and is distributed in Chesterfield, Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter and Williamsburg counties. Copies of the magazine can be viewed online at www.diversityworkssc.com. “I am truly grateful to our Diversity Works Team, to all of our partners, supporters and the community. We appreciate you and are going on thirteen years strong because of you,” said Murphy-Eaddy.

Murphy-Eaddy is immersed in community outreach and engagement in the Pee Dee and has a myriad of interests including networking, advocating for positive change, helping the disadvantaged and most of all, spending time with family. She is a passionate, persistent and spontaneous leader who stands squarely, is straight forward and is able to measure ideals, which can be woven into patterns for progress and development. She is married to Gregory Eaddy who is the co-owner.



Dawn D.A. Goodwin

I’ve always been shy about a spotlight being on me. I have found that I absolutely love being a storyteller and placing the spotlight on someone else who deserves it. But with this opportunity to be highlighted for Women’s History Month as a woman in media, I’m beyond honored to step to the front for a moment.

I’ve been storytelling in some form since 2006, but I officially began working as an entrepreneur, writing and editing for others professionally, in 2013. As the former “Diversity Works Magazine©”

editor, I’ve had the pleasure of being a part of this amazing platform that gives voice to so many noteworthy members of our community. Today I am the Pee Dee Region’s communications liaison for the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), a self-published author, entrepreneur and online adjunct instructor. I love being in these positions where I write stories



Tammy Clark

Tammy Clark is the owner of, “The Savvy Mag” and “VIP.” Born and raised in Florence County, SC, Clark attended Savannah Grove, Moore Middle & West Florence High school. Clark is a graduate of Francis Marion University (FMU) with a business management degree and a minor in marketing. Clark put herself through school waiting tables. While at FMU, Clark was an ADPI and served as president during her last year.

Upon graduating FMU, Clark worked for the City of Florence and served as an administration assistant for Mr. Tommy Edwards and the late Mayor Frank Willis. Of her time spent during those years, Clark says, “I met some wonderful people there that helped shape my future.” After gaining some experience and establishing wonderful relationships, Clark landed her first job in advertising sales with the Florence and Greater Pee Dee Business Journal. “That job led me down the path of eventually running my own advertising publication,” said Clark.

In sales for over 25 years, with the majority in advertising, Clark has worked in TV, radio, yellow pages, direct mail and uniform rental sales. A decade ago, Clark decided to try it on her own and started, “The Savvy Mag,” at her dining room table, ultimately adding, “VIP,” three years later. “This community has been a blessing to us all and we are grateful for the continued support and relationships. We love giving back to our community as well. I thank God for blessing me with this opportunity that I have the pleasure of doing every day,” shares Clark.

Clark is happily married to Chad Clark, and they have two amazing children. Walker is 12 and attends All Saints Episcopal Day School and Emma is 15 and attends Trinity Collegiate School.



Taylor Ford

Taylor Ford is a Florence native and an alumna of North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, NC. Ford received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science. She is a reporter with the Morning Newspaper covering Darlington, Hartsville and the Lake City local government, education and community endeavors. She is a storyteller by heart and enjoys telling the stories of the community. A quote she lives by is, “Listen to yourself and in that quietude, you might hear the voice of God.” As a woman in the media, Ford says, “It is very important to never cower down or be afraid. You must unapologetically go down the path God has set for you.”

internally and externally for different purposes. I just find my work to be so fulfilling, especially when I reflect upon other women’s powerful, inspiring stories, whether these women are public health professionals or individuals I’ve ghostwritten for who have survived difficulties and lived on to tell about their experiences to help others.

I’m thankful for the support I’ve received in my endeavors, and I look forward to continuing to narrate for women making waves in a positive way. Their honor is needed. Women in society have historically been through the worst, but we are all so deserving of the best. Therefore, us storytellers must continue to share women’s stories, never forgetting that if one succeeds, we all succeed.

Goodwin was born and raised in Dillon but now lives in Florence. She is working on her PhD in Education and is the proud mom of Kevin B. Goodwin II (19) and Bryant L. Goodwin (15). Her memoir, “The Offender I Once Defended,” and novel, “Chants in the Darkness,” can be found on amazon.com under her penname D.A. Goodwin.





Karinne Phyllis Bodden

are mother, caregiver to her mom, 'Grammy,' and caring friend to many!

In her spare time, she likes to travel model, act and write. A native of NYC & Baltimore, Kween's first broadcasting position brought her to Columbia, SC after graduating from the Broadcasting Institute of Maryland in 1998. She has worked every major area of SC including Charleston, Greenville/Spartanburg Myrtle Beach and Augusta.

Kween's books on relationships, "The Relationship Trilogy" are available on Amazon. Children of ALL ages need to be empowered so check out, "The Art of a Rose" to help stimulate positive self-awareness, self-esteem and healthy boundaries.

Every night Kween reminds her audience, "It is the Kompany you Keep! Thanks for keeping Kompany with me." Her faith beliefs have kept her on a positive trajectory despite experiencing some of life's worse tragic moments and loss of key friends and loved ones.

Contact kweennkompany@gmail.com for hosting and speaking engagements! If you need words of encouragement, Kween can write poetry for any and EVERY occasion. "Have Words! Will Travel!"

Kween is a multi-media professional and former producer, director and host of "Carolina Moms TV!" Talk Show in Columbia, SC. Currently she works as an account executive at Cumulus Media Florence/Myrtle Beach and is the evening host on Magic 94.3's "The Kween Vibe Show" 7-10 p.m. Monday-FriYAY! The most important positions she holds

Here's a Message to the Queen in Every Woman:
 "Queens don't get discouraged!
 We are encouraged.
 Can't Get a raise at the job
 Raise yourself UP and Take it to God
 Can't find a gig, you on your last wig?
 Get up and make yourself useful
 Stay focused & Use every tool
 Your kin folk and S/O can take you there
 Your always on the Go and they expect you to be EVERYWHERE
 They say the Covid isn't going anywhere
 Kids need help with homework
 And the one you need to depend on can act like a jerk!
 Superwoman never had it this bad
 Inflation has you paying twice for yesterday's old rags!
 Queen! We watch in amazement as your feet hit the pavement
 You're doing overtime to make bill payments!
 You make lemonade outta lemons
 You turn water into Kool aide and hamburger into helper
 A fairy Godmother helped Cinderella
 Sometimes you don't have nobody not even a fella!
 A soulmate, Significant Other?
 Thank God if you have a supportive mother!
 Queens can get tired but don't give up or give out
 Take your rest, rejuvenate and never doubt
 Stay in prayer and service
 Be about the Fathers Business
 Prepare to prosper in the Perfect Will
 Keep the Faith and Rebuild
 I won't just watch you fail
 I encourage you to yell and yell
 To the top of your lungs
 I'm not done, I'm NOT done
 I didn't come here to play. I wear this crown
 Tricks are for kids and clowns!
 So, remember whose you are and the short time you're here
 Go get 'em Queens... And I will stand up and Cheer!



Josiellia McWhite-Williams

98.3FM—and Orangeburg: 94.5FM) and marketing representative for the company.

She is a product of the public schools of Florence District One. She has obtained a Master of Arts degree with a concentration on New Media from Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH; Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in Broadcast Journalism from Benedict College, Columbia, SC; Post Graduate studies in vocal music, Howard University, Washington, DC and Music Technology, Converse College, Spartanburg, SC

Williams was previously employed with Francis Marion University as choral director of the Young Gifted and Black Chorus, Florence School District One as a choral teacher & electronic keyboard instructor; minister of music of Connor's Temple Baptist Church, Savannah, GA; minister of fine arts/marketing/and office services, Metropolitan African American Baptist Church, Richmond, VA; radio personality, WYNN Glory

Josiellia McWhite-Williams is a native of Florence, SC, born to the late Joseph and Germiellia Wardy Robinson. She is a member of Savannah Grove Baptist Church where she serves as minister of fine arts. She is also employed at Community Broadcasters where she is an on-air personality, programmer for the Almighty Network (Florence: 105.1FM – Sumter:

54, Florence, SC and Morning News director/shift supervisor, WPDE TV15, Florence/Myrtle Beach.

Williams, along with the Savannah Grove Baptist Church was awarded an initiative to study the metered hymn by the Arts Commission of SC. This is a state supported effort to preserve the metered hymn in churches. She has also been named a "community scholar" for the South Carolina Arts Commission. Williams is CEO of the J Williams Group and the non-profit arm, "Moms on a Mission." Williams is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and has served as president of the Music Auxiliary of the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina. Most recently, she was appointed to serve on the City of Florence Parks and Beautification Commission.

She is married to James Williams, and they are the proud parents of five children, Barris (Christy), Mia (Nick), Adagia (Brandon), Erica (deceased) and Roderick (Cindy); two foster children, Octavious and Ti 'Jene (TJ) and nine grandchildren.

When it comes to living, Williams believes that on this road of life, we must be certain that we are rooted and grounded in Christ and in His word in order to grow strong branches and bear good fruit in whatever we do and wherever we go.





Alexis Aguiluz

I have been in radio for a short time, but in that time, I have learned to love and appreciate everything that goes into being a radio personality. I grew up in Boston, Massachusetts and moved to Charlotte, North Carolina in 2002. I was in middle school when we moved and every morning while getting ready for school my mom would put on the radio and we would listen to the syndicated radio show called, "The Ace & TJ Show."

Now, fast forward almost 20 years and a whole restaurant career later and I am the female personality on that same show. It's crazy how life works out!

The best part of being on the radio is definitely the listeners. It is such an honor that people make us part of their daily routine and invite us into their homes and on their work commutes. When I think about the fact that we have the ability to make someone laugh or smile during the everyday hustle and bustle of life, it fuels the desire to put even more love and good vibes into the world!

I have had so much support from all the listeners since my very first day. I love being able to share different parts of my Hispanic American culture and for it to be so accepted and appreciated. It warms my heart! I want to continue growing in this industry and my goal is to eventually have my own radio show down the road. I want to be able to give a platform to everyday people and share their stories. I'd love to share their lessons and blessings that have gotten them to where they are in life and be able to inspire others who are trying to do the same.



Pam Jordan

I began my broadcast career in 1995, as an on-air radio personality at WYNN 106.3 (overnights) in Florence, South Carolina. After only four short weeks, I was asked to co-host the morning show which was locally known as "The Morning Jam with Charles, Fred and Big Pam." Throughout this incredible journey in radio, I've had the opportunity to participate in countless community and

social events while maintaining and captivating my radio audiences. This has afforded me the continuous honor of remaining number one in scheduled day part (midday's 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.). It is such a gratifying experience to do what I love and love what I do. Touching the lives of so many people whether on-air, social media or in person, community events bring such a deep commitment and passion to continue to inspire and bring hope to everyone who hears my voice.

You can listen to Pam Jordan (Big P) on WYNN 106.3 Mondays through Saturdays from 10-3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays you can listen in from 3-7p.m. on WMGU 106.9. Also Mondays-Fridays from 10-3 p.m. on WSYN 103.1 and 98.5 KISS FM.

Stay up to date with Big P on Instagram and Facebook @bigpontheradio and online at www.bigpontheradio.com.



Florie Cavanaugh

Florie Cavanaugh is an outgoing and superb professional in her craft. She has a passion for exceeding her goals and is considered a results-oriented professional. Cavanaugh is a 20 plus year media sales professional and has established herself quite well. She interned at ESPN as well as WIS TV when she was younger which influenced her start in media. She is presently a Senior Regional Marketing Executive for Community Broadcasters, Florence where she serves the

three regions of South Carolina.

She is a graduate of Cheraw High School and successfully obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina with a concentration in criminal justice and a media arts.

Over the years Cavanaugh has worked as a national sales rep for Nielsen Television - Oldsmar, Fl.; senior account representative, Cumulus Broadcasting, Florence/Myrtle Beach; and as a realtor with ReltBrkr.com, Darlington.

She is the mother of three amazing children: Aspen 25, Marlee, 21 and Braden 14. She has one beautiful granddaughter, Mia who is four years old.

WOMEN WHO ROCK OUR WORLD

2023 CALENDAR
Portraits by Julie Johnson Olson

ONE MILLION TREES PLANTED

Ella Baker
Jane Addams
Stacey Abrams
Rachel Carson
Amanda Gorman
Shawna Kimbrell
Kathrine Switzer
Emma Lazarus
Deb Haaland
Zitkála-Šá
Eleanor Smeal
Toni Morrison



Veronica Samuel

Veronica Samuel, better known as Tara J, was raised in the small town of Darlington, South Carolina. Samuel's career in radio began in 1998 as the receptionist at Cumulus Broadcasting. It didn't take long for Tara to become part of the on-air side of things (Radio Personality). Being in radio for over 20 years now, Tara J has been a part of many departments including the

traffic and business office as the assistant business manager. Now being apart of the Glory 98.5 family after many other music genres, she feels that this is where she belongs. Tara J stated that God is so good and that she is forever grateful for the opportunity to be a voice in the community.

Samuel loves talking, spending time with family and friends, shopping, traveling, love meeting new people and helping others. She owns her own Podcast called, "Tangy Tea of Life," and outside of radio, Samuel's other passion is fitness. As a certified fitness instructor in her community and at McLeod Health and Fitness, Samuel feels that health is very important and want to help others become successful on their health journeys. Never give up on your dreams and never let someone tell you what you can't accomplish on this journey called Life. As Samuel says every day before signing off her radio show, "Do not let anyone steal your JOY"! Laugh and smile as often as possible! We only get one life to live. Live it to the fullest! You can hear Samuel aka Tara J, weekdays inside your midday 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Glory 98.5FM & 540AM!



Vernessa Pendergrass

Vernessa Pendergrass is a native of Kingstree, SC. She is the eldest of nine siblings. A graduate of the University of South Carolina, Pendergrass earned a bachelor's degree in Journalism. She was the first college graduate in her immediate family. As a young girl, she was inspired by a Black female TV reporter that worked for channel five in Charleston. That was the

beginning of the idea to be in TV. Watching this young Black female on the local news gave her the spark for journalism.

As time moved on, Pendergrass' first radio job was in her hometown of Kingstree at WWKT. It was part time and her main duty consisted of overseeing the Braves Baseball Game. Hours of boredom! But the program director gave her the opportunity to be live on the air a few hours a week. Oh, that was pure love and at that moment, Pendergrass decided to major in TV and Radio Broadcasting. Her career included WOIC in Columbia, WWWZ (Z93) in Charleston and WWDM (THE BIG DM) in Columbia. Pendergrass has been blessed to work mornings, midday, afternoons and nights as a radio personality. She has held various positions in her career as program director, music director, public service director and network traffic director. Pendergrass invites jazz fans to listen every Sunday from noon til 3 p.m. as she delivers the only jazz show in Columbia, The Sunday Jazz Brunch! It's a great relaxing way to wind down the weekend listening to the best smooth jazz and classic R&B. Pendergrass has enjoyed an awesome and long career in the radio industry. She enjoys sharing her stories with the younger generation of what radio used to be. There have been major changes in radio, but Pendergrass has been truly blessed to continue to be on the air doing what she truly loves!!





Annette Peagler

Annette Peagler is an evening anchor for WBTW News 13 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. She anchors the 5:30 p.m. and 11p.m. newscasts. She also anchors WFXB's Fox News at 10 p.m. and produces the newscast occasionally.

Peagler takes great pride in her storytelling and is a true leader. She is a well-balanced journalist with 14 years of experience. She has worked as a producer, reporter and

anchor in markets ranging from Cincinnati, Ohio to Jackson, MS. Her most recent role prior to Myrtle Beach was a weekend anchor for Local 24 News in Memphis, TN.

Peagler is a great storyteller and has scored major interviews throughout her career. She interviewed the late Congressman John Lewis in 2011, as a reporter in Jackson, MS and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young during the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She also interviewed Civil Rights Icon Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr and Alice Marie Johnson who was granted clemency by President Trump in 2018.

When she is not at the anchor desk or reporting, Peagler loves to volunteer in her community. She is a member the National Association of Black Journalists and the Conway Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated. Peagler also serves as a host and emcee.



Meghan Miller

Meghan Miller has spent more than a decade telling stories across the Grand Strand and Pee Dee. She joined the WBTW News13 team in February 2014 and currently anchors News13 First Edition and News13 at 5, 5:30 and 6 each weeknight.

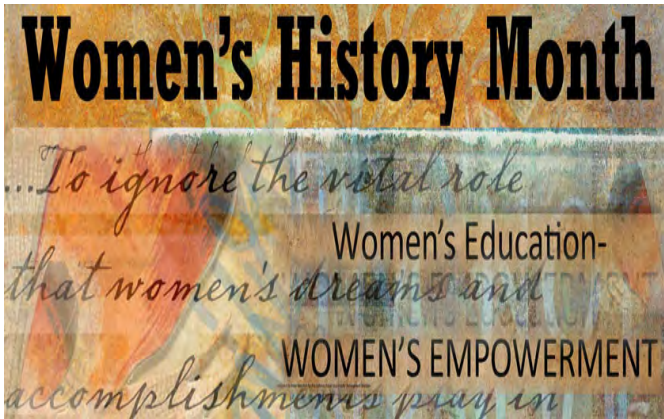
A native of York, Pennsylvania, Miller has called the Myrtle Beach area home since 2005. She graduated from Coastal

Carolina University in 2008 with honors, where she received her Bachelor of Arts in Communication with a minor in journalism. While at Coastal Carolina University, she freelanced for FOX News, CNN and HGTV.

Miller has a depth of experience in the Myrtle Beach/Florence TV market, including as a weekend morning anchor, reporter, producer and online journalist. She has covered many memorable stories over the past decade — from major hurricanes and wildfires to the Brittane Drexel and Heather Elvis cases.

What drives her the most, though: telling stories that matter to you and your community. Miller is passionate about every element of the storytelling process -- from developing story ideas to shooting video, interviewing and editing. She feels the most rewarding part of her job is giving her neighbors a platform and forming relationships through storytelling.

Miller, her husband and newborn daughter are proud to call our area home. Outside of news, Miller is passionate about volunteering for local organizations like, Keep Carolina Forest Beautiful and First Book Horry County, wildlife photography, exercising and playing with her golden retriever.



Keianna Benson

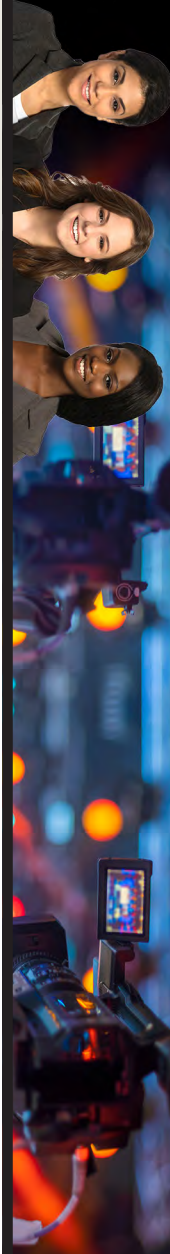
Keianna Benson joined the News13 team in August 2022, as a Florence Bureau multimedia journalist.

The Columbia, South Carolina native graduated from Coastal Carolina University in May 2022, with a bachelor's degree in communication and a minor in sport studies.

During her time as a Chanticleer, she served as an orientation leader, peer leader

and teal trailblazer (tour guide) for the Office of Admissions. She also served as a digital team student worker for the Chanticleer Sports Network and an intern for the Coastal Carolina football recruiting team.

Benson is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. When she isn't at work, Benson enjoys binge-watching TV shows, trying new local restaurants and traveling.





Tonya Brown

Tonya Brown is a General Assignment Reporter at WPDE NewsChannel 15.

She attended Morris College and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications.

Brown is a native of Bennettsville and grew up watching NewsChannel 15; she remembers almost all the past reporters and anchors. She became inspired to become a

journalist, after a television reporter spoke to her seventh-grade class.

When Brown isn't meeting deadlines, she's speaking to community groups and churches. She enjoys talking to youth and helping them when needed.

She has been reporting stories out of the Pee Dee for nearly 27 years. Brown has covered hurricanes, tornados and a major ice storm.

Brown says she loves the Pee Dee and helping people find solutions to their problems.

Her most memorable story or series of stories took place in the early days of the pandemic.

Brown says, someday she felt overwhelmed and saddened by all of the deaths but took comfort in knowing that the information she was sharing helped the community navigate through a tough time.

Brown lives in the Pee Dee with her husband, Charlie Brown. She looks forward to continuing to tell the stories of the Pee Dee.



Von Gaskin

Von Gaskin joined WIS TV in April of 2010, and is a proud native of Lake City, South Carolina.

She has been a meteorologist from the Lowcountry of SC to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Gaskin is an avid hurricane and severe weather forecaster. "I could spend all day studying the formation of tropical systems and the steering currents that guide

them."

Since 1989 when Hurricane Hugo slammed into the state of South Carolina, Gaskin knew she had to be a part of the forecasting process. In order to achieve that goal, she received a Bachelor of Science in Journalism and Mass Communications from the University of South Carolina and then moved to Starkville, Mississippi to attend Mississippi State University, where she received a Master of Science in Geosciences/Broadcast Meteorology.

Gaskin is proud to say she was a meteorologist during the record breaking 2005 hurricane season.

When she is not checking and rechecking her forecast, you can find her enjoying the great outdoors, mainly along the Carolina beaches with her husband Anthony and three sons Emmanuel, Shamar and Marsalis.

Gaskin takes pride in working in her community and volunteering for local organizations and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



Sulondia Hammond

Her incomparable talent landed her roles in both David E. Talbert's "Almost Christmas" and Queen Brooklyn Tankard's Health and Beauty Expo, which was featured on the show "Thicker Than Water," on Bravo TV. Having served as a guest panelist on, not one, but two episodes of The Steve Harvey Talk Show. Sulondia Hammond doesn't just enjoy entertainment, speaking and

theatre—she was born for this! As a highly sought-after motivational speaker, playwright, actress and author, Hammond, affectionately known to many as Sue-Ham, is most fulfilled by using her innovative imagination to craft stories that stimulate the hearts and minds of men and women alike.

Leaving audience members on the edge of their seats long after the final curtain call, her theatrical productions offer inspiration and hope, with a hint of comedy and dramatic twists. As the writer, director and producer of several productions, Hammond was the first playwright to have two scripts accepted into the Readers Theatre for the 2016 Atlanta Black Theatre Festival.

In addition, her production, "The Gift," was produced at the Meta Theatre in Los Angeles and was a finalist for the 2018 screenplay competition at the Twister Alley Film Festival in Oklahoma. Out of 500 scripts submitted to Absurd Hero Production in California, her screenplay, "Coffee House," made the top 100 list. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. After her beatboxing video appeared on BET, she gained local and national attention of media outlets large and small. What started out as a childhood pastime soon blossomed into a full-blown career in media and

entertainment.

And while many claim to have the gift of gab, she's been fortunate to speak on the same stage as Les Brown, and has also interviewed Dr. Dennis Kimbro, Lisa Nichols and Eric Thomas, affectionately known by millions as ET, The Hip Hop Preacher. Hammond also created and produced her own TV show entitled, "The Sue-Ham Show," which aired in several cities. Named the next great talent by Hollywood director and writer, Talbert, Hammond also won best casting director for a production at the Urban Playwrights United (UPU) Fest in 2017.

In addition to her books, "It Takes More than Motivation to Succeed," and "Don't Quit: Follow Your Dreams," Hammond offers words of motivation and inspiration through her audiobooks, "25 Simple Habits of Successful People," "32 Years Old" and "45 Podcast Episodes," with Hammond and Friends.

In her nonprofit, The Sue-Ham Community Development Corporation/Center, Hammond continues to engage, inspire, entertain and challenge audiences with theatrical productions that range from the classics to new works developed by the community it serves. Whether she's sharing content on the stage or by audiobook, in paperback form or in the form of a stage production, Hammond always shares her story of the pursuit of dream fulfillment, offering people hope and a blueprint on how to find their purpose and pursue it wholeheartedly.

Hammond is also quite the real estate investor. Within her portfolio are duplexes, single family homes and land. She's invested in two real estate funds, Cardone Capital and Buy Back the Block with Jullien Gordon. Realizing how important financial literacy, credit and investing are, Hammond offers several classes to assist others in being successful in these areas.

Her theatrical website is sueham.com and her real estate website is moneywithrealestate.com



Tonya Morman

Mother, author, poet and content creator affectionally known as “MsTONYA,” has found her purpose in serving as an arts and youth activist in her community who provides mentorship through poetry and media arts. Her brand is very simple, it is arts and community. A host of local open mics, art festivals and cultural events, Morman also promotes and spotlights good community stories,

local businesses and artists of vast mediums.

Under Morman’s instruction, media arts programs have been offered to local teens and at-risk youth through unique partnerships with community-based centers, summer camps and after-school programs in the Pee Dee region. There are several young people who have passed through one of her media programs and many artists have crossed stages of her hosted events.

She has worked with several agencies, to include, The Boys & Girls Club of the Pee Dee Area, Gear Up, Williams Middle School Summer Enrichment and Choices Charter School to name a few. Morman, has been nationally recognized and awarded by Maybelline New York as a Woman Who Inspires Confidence Through Education and appeared in “Essence Magazine” for her work with youth media camps. She states that her bigger reward is personally hearing results from students who speak of mentoring that has made a difference in their lives. In the world of poetry, Morman believes poetry holds an interesting way of communicating and opens an opportunity to curate difficult subjects and conversations. Morman believes conversation is an art through which we can make many changes

in our world. Through her poetry and artistic works, Tonya shares many parts of her story, our story, our culture and provides an up-close view of what these lives look like. She believes we have a lot in common, more than we admit, maybe, maybe not, but she’s got nothing but respect for freedoms of speech, thought and the freedom to love.

“The Little Black Book of Poetry,” is Morman’s first published book of poems that is currently available on Amazon. The book unfolds as an impassioned collection of poems speaking to the heartbeat of several issues on lifestyle, family and identity within the Black community. Tonya delivers in a tone that is conversational and that allows the reader to become wise to the sensitivities of why Black lives matter. Each poem embraces a matter at hand and delivers a point of view that is strong and gentle, it is Black, and it matters because it is human. Morman continues to host, speak and read poetry both virtually and at live venue events.

“Family is everything to me and I love working together creatively with them. On The Brown South Girls podcast, I am a part of a mother/daughter duo where I co-host along with my daughter, KayJ and my son Ishmael, is behind the scenes as an editor on the production team. The Brown South Girls is a podcast where we have conversation and discussions on everyday topics of black and brown women and girls. We talk about things that we should be talking about and sharing as women. We talk from lighthearted to difficult conversation on all things, including family and our culture. It’s our voices speaking on our lives. It’s fun and we get serious... we discuss business, we have interesting guests and we love doing it because conversations matter. It’s our podcast and it’s YOUR podcast. We just might hit a topic that becomes an icebreaker for you to have a conversation in your life, with your girls, your mother, and in your relationships and you can talk it out to work it out. We Stream Live on YouTube and Facebook. You can find us on all platforms @BrownSouthGirls and @mstonyatypoet.



Jaicelyn Jai Jai Spann

“All you want to do is have a good time!” These words Jaicelyn “Jai Jai” Spann heard most of her youth. From an early age she loved music, TV, radio, performing arts and exciting events as well as partying, talking, mixing and mingling. That love led to a career in communications and entertainment!

A native of South Carolina, Spann’s career blossomed in Atlanta, GA. She did promotions, marketing and public affairs for radio powerhouse, “99X;” was a VJ on AIB TV’s “Praise Central” music show; worked in marketing, production and administration for Turner Broadcasting including the “Trumpet Awards,” and was an emcee and entertainer for the Atlanta Braves “Bleacher Brigade” for Sports Magic. She worked outside of Nashville at “WAY-FM” radio then returned to Atlanta, eventually working in programming, event marketing and production for Gospel Music Channel (now UPTv), a then multi-genre music TV network with a spiritual twist!

Spann returned home to SC to work at WBTW News, The Morning News and SCNow.com doing marketing, then advertising for the latter two. She later did radio promotions for Community Broadcasters in various formats. She also was the emcee/host for the Pee Dee Vipers. Spann handled media,

marketing and communications for nonprofits like Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault, The Williamsburg County Public School Foundation, Ground Zero (Myrtle Beach) and Helping Florence Flourish. She was marketing manager for the Florence Center before returning to radio on “The Z” (www.thez.com) Saturdays 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Spann formed her company, eXcelerator Entertainment & Communications LLC, to provide an avenue for eXcellent entertainment including radio, TV and events, and to foster effective communications. There are two sides: the communications arm including promotion, marketing, event coordination, etc. and the talent arm where she’s a host/emcee, DJ, dancer, etc. eXcelerator E&C cultivates outstanding entertainment, events and projects as well as promotes great businesses, organizations and causes.

Spann comments, “Thank God I found a way to transfer my love for partying and talking into a career I enjoy. Whether highs or lows, it’s great to have fun with excellence and on purpose!” Explore www.eXceleratorEntertainment.com.



HONORING THE GREAT PROFESSION OF SOCIAL WORK By Susan Carter



Susan Carter

Social work matters to all of us as these professionals touch the lives of millions of people and will likely help you, a family member or a friend at some point. Social workers help others overcome many obstacles, including trauma, abuse, addiction, poverty, divorce, illness and disease. They also advocate on a societal level for those experiencing racism, economic uncertainty and the effects of natural disasters caused by global warming. From the beginning, this

profession has impacted all of us by improving living and working conditions and advocating for human rights for all.

Historically, social workers have made many positive contributions. The accomplishments of early social work pioneers laid the foundation for today's caring, effective and diverse professionals. Jane Addams (1860-1935) is considered the mother of Social Work (<https://onlinemsw.fsu.edu/blog/famous-social-workers-in-history>). In 1889, she founded Hull House in Chicago with the help of her friend Ellen Gates Starr. Immigrants came to Hull House to learn skills and trades and were given access to services like child care, public baths and kitchen facilities. Addams found other ways to improve the lives of the poor, such as lobbying for legislation to develop a juvenile justice court system and to improve sanitation and factory conditions. She advocated for labor laws to protect women and for greater access to child care so that mothers could work to support their families. Addams protested against American involvement in World War I and led several organizations advocating for peace. She was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

Another accomplished historical social worker, Jeannette Rankin (1880-1973), also advocated for peace. She became the first woman to be elected to the House of Representatives. While serving in the House, she cast the only opposing vote opposing a motion to declare war against Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor. She advocated for women's suffrage for many years and introduced the Nineteenth Amendment in Congress, advocating for women's right to vote.

Although sometimes perceived as a female profession, from the beginning, the social work field has had outstanding male representatives. Whitney M. Young (1921-1971) advocated for access to employment, education and housing for all. In his role as executive secretary of the Urban League in Nebraska, Young assisted Black workers in finding secure jobs they had previously been denied. As executive director of the National Urban League, he expanded the organization's role and influence so that it became a key part of the American Civil Rights Movement. In his role as president of the National Association of Social Workers, Young encouraged social workers to prioritize their efforts on reducing poverty, facilitating improved race relations and advocating against the Vietnam War.

These historical figures and many more paved the way for modern social work's influence and political stance of social justice, support for the underserved and nonviolence. Many activities we take for granted today such as casting a vote in a political election, finding affordable and safe housing or receiving help with family or work problems, are possible due to the persistence and effectiveness of these early social workers. Media depictions of contemporary social workers are often negative stereotypes or too-good-to-be-true saints. As an extreme example, think of the insulting depiction of a welfare department caseworker who doesn't know the name of her client. Or the controlling, out of touch bureaucrat who insists on removing children from their parents. At best, the few social workers we see on screen are likely to be portrayed as well-meaning but interfering and inept. For example, on medical dramas such as

Chicago Med, the doctors and nurses tackle serious problems including behavioral health assessments, care coordination, and end of life issues that would be handled by social workers in real life. As Harold Pollack points out in, "The Incidental Economist" (Sept. 17, 2021), social workers' primary mission and training is to address and improve the social determinants of health of all. (<https://theincidentaleconomist.com/wordpress/where-are-the-social-workers-on-network-tv-dramas/>)

Although largely unnoted, during the COVID pandemic, many social workers were involved in securing food and housing for COVID patient so that they could physically distance from others, including their families. Social workers lead and manage homeless shelters, food pantries and other social services. They serve individuals at-risk of behavioral crises who might otherwise have violent encounters with first responders.

Social workers in outreach and nonprofit management serve people who live with serious mental illness and substance use disorders. They also assist individuals and families with serious physical, mental and developmental disabilities. They work in healthcare partner organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Hospital social workers coordinate care for patients facing medical challenges from cancer to eating disorders and intellectual disabilities. These conditions often co-occur with psychosocial obstacles including poverty and lack of family support. In addition to providing care and comfort to patients, these social workers spend considerable time coordinating complex educational and medical services, securing medical equipment and dealing with Medicaid and other public assistance programs.

Given the large need for these professionals in a variety of settings, it is not surprising that the field is growing. In 2021, there were 708,100 active social workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Social Workers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>). The largest segment was employed as child, family and school social workers (349,800). Other employers included healthcare (179,500), mental health and substance abuse facilities (119,800) and all other social workers (59,000). This last category includes criminal justice social workers, adult protective social workers and forensic social workers. This type of social work is associated with one of the highest rates of injuries and illnesses of all occupations.

As our world changes due to demographics and social attitudes, the demand for social workers is projected to grow nine percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than average for all occupations. About 74,000 openings for social workers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of these openings will likely result from the need to replace workers, who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force in retirement. As more people seek treatment for mental illness and substance abuse, the need for more social workers who specialize in addictions will increase. With the rise of drug courts, drug offenders are increasingly being directed to treatment programs, which are staffed by social workers, rather than being sent to jail. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Social Workers, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/social-workers.htm>).

Social work requires empathy, altruism, stress tolerance and dedication to patients. Increasingly, it also demands detailed knowledge of medical and social service systems, cultural competence, resourcefulness, training, perseverance and passion. Traditional human services traits such as compassion, interpersonal skills, organizational skills and problem-solving skills remain essential to function successfully in this field. Take some time this month to thank a social worker for all they do to improve the lives of so many!

PROUD TO BE IN THE POSITION TO HELP OTHERS By Susan Carter



Gail Blue

Gail Blue is a seasoned social worker with 52 years of experience in social services; she has been a social worker since 1977 following graduation from Rutgers University's Master of Social Work program. Prior to that accomplishment, Blue's original goal was to become a registered nurse. However, she was too young to start the program and would have had to wait a semester before beginning her training. Since her father wanted her to begin college immediately, she entered Clafin University in 1964 and was immediately drawn to the social sciences as she was impacted by the civil rights movement advancing through the deep South. Blue is happy she made the choice to follow this path rather than becoming a nurse. Following graduation from Clafin University, she accepted a position with a county government agency and was able to attend Rutgers with tuition assistance from her agency employer. Blue is a life-long learner and earned an advanced credential from Rutgers through her participation in the Family Institute of New Jersey, a three-year intensive program in Family Therapy (1993-1996).

Graduate school often provides the inspiring environment where social work students develop their style and theory of practice under the guidance of nurturing mentors. Blue credits the late Charles Vickers, a professor at Rutgers, with influencing the areas of social work she chose to study. Another mentor, Monica McGoldrich, "had a big influence on how I developed my approach with patients." Among social work theorists, Blue cited the work of family therapist Murray Bowen, MD (1913-90), as a major influence. Bowen developed systems theory which includes the key concept of "differentiation of self," referring to differing levels of maturity in relationships. Research is increasingly supporting this concept, as researchers have shown that self-differentiation is, "related to important areas of well-being, including marital satisfaction and the capacity to handle stress make decisions and manage social anxiety." (What is Bowen Theory?

Who is Dr Murray Bowen? - The Family Systems Institute (thefsi.com.au)).

Blue has practiced social work in several environments with increasing leadership responsibilities, including serving as "a children's services worker, school social worker, clinical social worker, director of Children's Services, program coordinator of an Adult Day Program, program coordinator of an Adult Community Living Program, cultural competency coordinator, and emergency preparation coordinator. Blue's current social work role is serving as a Mental Health Professional working in Quality Assurance. She audits patients' charts to confirm quality of services, assists with staff development trainings, to assure all Pee Dee Mental Health clinicians are following the protocols and documentation requirements for good patient care. In this role, Blue serves clinicians primarily rather than patients and enjoys "seeing staff put in action the procedures taught."

Previous clinical positions allowed Blue to serve different populations including children and their families, vulnerable adults, and communities in emergency situations due to hazardous conditions. All of them allowed her to "be in a position to help others," which is one of her favorite things about being a social worker. Obstacles she faced as a social worker and manager include, "resistance to change by patients and their families and disciplining staff." Social work emphasizes the importance of empowering others while supervising involves monitoring and redirecting people we are emotionally connected to so it is often difficult to do both roles well; even if done well, the tasks of supervision can be draining to a social worker.

On the other hand, social workers are buoyed by rewarding experiences helping clients and families. Blue describes an experience working with an adolescent at a community clinic who had a history of

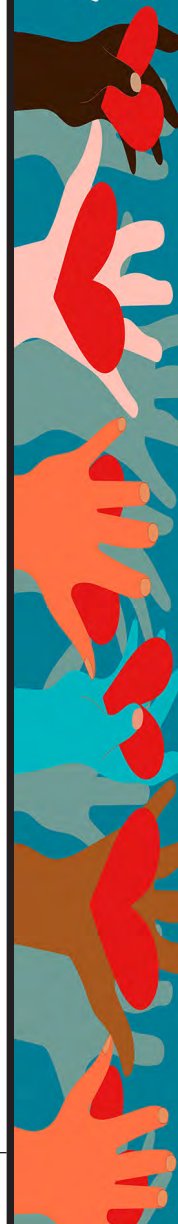
suicidal thoughts and low esteem who recovered and is now a fellow social worker. When asked about a difficult experience working with a family, Blue recounted a situation in which she worked with a family through a Family Court Program. "The father was emotionally abusive to the mother and children. He also opened up various credit card accounts in the wife's name and refused to make payments. The wife was afraid to dispute her husband's actions." Blue made a home visit and found that the house was unkept and there were signs of hoarding. She was able to "help the wife join a domestic violence group, clean up the house and make life-changing decisions relating to her children and husband."

The social work profession affords a front-row seat to observing human nature and interactions between family members. Blue reports that one of the biggest lessons she has learned from her work is that "people change when they see the need to change and want to change. As a social worker, my task is to be supportive and let the change take place at the patient's pace." In addition, her years of dedicated social work have given her insights into herself as well: "I learned to appreciate me, my family, parents and my culture and ancestors. I have learned patience. I have learned how to work through my own personal issues and to love myself unselfishly." Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of a social work career is the opportunity to gain insight into and appreciation for oneself and others. Blue's long and continuing social work career is a testament to the value of choosing a career based on personal values. As Blue says, "Social work is not a high-profile money career. You can make a decent salary and be happy with yourself as you make yourself available to help others. When making career choices, it is important to be happy in your work."



Jane Addams, Whitney M. Young and Jeannette Rankin

Appreciating Our Social Workers



ADVOCATE EDUCATING AND PROMOTING THE QUALITY OF LIFE By Anna Bowman



Debra M. Jackson

Debra M. Jackson, BSW, M.A., has worked as a professional social worker for 17 years. For the past nine years she has worked as an investigative social worker. In her current position, as the regional ombudsman for the entire Pee Dee Region, she investigates complaints made by residents of licensed nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

As our loved ones age, finding a licensed nursing home or assisted living facility for them to reside during their golden years is imperative. South Carolina, like other states, is no stranger to elder abuse. When things go awry, residents and their families can entrust social workers as a liaison.

As the regional long term care ombudsman, Jackson serves as an advocate for the residents and their family to navigate the long-term care maze, by educating the residents of their rights and promote the quality of life. “I assist residents with concerns about quality of care or quality of life,” she stated. “Additionally, I assist residents and their legal representative/power of attorney with appeals and grievance process.” Educating residents, caregivers, stockholders and the community members about long term care and issues they may face is also a part of her job description.

Social workers are often introduced into the lives of people at some of the most vulnerable periods in their lives, for this reason, it’s important to have someone who is not only professionally trained but a person who’s compassionate, caring, respectful and dedicated to working with individuals, families to offer positive guidance to assist in changing the life of the person(s) involved.

“Being a social worker can bring with it many challenges,” Jackson stated. “Having the trust of others to resolve pertinent issues in their lives, while living your own life, takes a stronger foundation,” she added. “I’m a servant at heart,” she acknowledged, “I’m a people person; I absolutely love what I do!” Her belief in prayer is a part of her resilient foundation. “I always pray – I firmly believe that prayer changes things and the work atmosphere so that the work can be conducive,” said

Jackson.

As a social worker for the past 17 years, Jackson has witnessed her share of “ebb and flow” moments in her career but wouldn’t change her life experiences as a social worker for any other profession. As a former lead adult protective services specialist and current regional ombudsman for the entire Pee Dee Region, Jackson has been able to canvas and assess from different perspectives and recently founded the following entities:

- The Delores Byrd-Nickelson Emergency Protection Center for South Carolina Vulnerable Adults
- The South Carolina Aging Matters Consultancy & Podcast
- The South Carolina Aging Matters Conference
- #Save our Sons/Youth, #Your Soul Matters, #Aging Matters
- The-At-Promise Youth Academy (K12) for Math, Science, Art, Literacy & Leadership
- R.O.M (1:5) & Support (Community Counseling, Traumatology (Mental Health) Art-Physical Therapy Logistics & Aftermath) Services, and Collaboration2gether, Inc., which provides community resources, referrals, networking, trainings, workshops, grant writing classes, homeowner opportunities, business start-up seminars, etc., to break generational barriers and boundaries, which is open for young, old and kinship care.

Jackson looks forward to partnering with other organizations who share the same love and compassion for helping people.

She is married to Fredrick Jackson, a maintenance specialist with Ruiz Foods in Florence, SC. The couples are the owners of Buckshot’s Auto Lawn and Aftermath Services, LLC. They are the parents of Gregory and Takemia Frazier, and grandparents to Carson, Hayla and Tristan Isaiah. Jackson is the daughter of beloved prophetess Delores Byrd-Nickelson, founder of Fervent Prayer Street Outreach Ministries.

Jackson received her associate degree from Florence-Darlington Technical College (2003); Bachelor of Social Work with minors in psychology and business administration from Limestone College (2005); and a master’s degree in gerontology from Webster University (2017). She is currently working on a doctoral degree in community counseling and traumatology.

In her spare time, she likes to network, empower others, as well as volunteering her time and education in efforts of saving young boys and girls by destroying generational barriers: spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially. Her motto is, “Come hit the streets with us, we are about that LIFE. Your soul matters!”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES By Dawn “D.A.” Goodwin



Leah Howell

Leah Howell is a licensed masters prepared social worker who has worked with McLeod Health for 20 years, the last 12 of which have been with McLeod Hospice. As a hospice social worker, she works with patients and their families as they navigate through the end of life, linking families to outside resources and providing emotional support and help to patients and families so they know what to expect during this difficult time.

Howell said she always knew she wanted to work in a “helping” profession, “I took classes in education and nursing, but neither were a good fit for me. My college advisor encouraged me to consider social work. He informed me that there were many branches of social work such

as mental health, medical, addiction services and community organization. Knowing my personality, he thought that I would find the right fit. I completed internships and worked in several different areas of social work before I found ‘my calling.’ In my experience, social work is a female-driven profession. I have been fortunate to have been given the opportunity to work alongside a few great male social workers. Men and women approach social work in different ways that complement each other.”

Technology has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. McLeod recently moved to a new electronic medical record called EPIC that allows every department to interface with each other. EPIC is also a more transparent documentation system that allows the patient to have easy access to their medical information. Howell said that learning a new system such as EPIC can be challenging and bring a lot of anxiety, but the outcome will be amazing, “It will allow us to work smarter rather than harder.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE CONT'D

Having patience is what Howell finds to be the most challenging part of being a social worker. “We are all traveling this life together. We take different paths. We have different experiences. Ultimately, we end up at the same place, and we all must go through it. Hospice is spiritual. The end of life can be scary. It can also be beautiful. No matter your race, religion, gender, my hope is that you feel God’s love for you. I pray that I can be the vessel that He uses. There have been a few times in my hospice career where I have felt at a loss of where to start to make the situation better. No family. No funding. Limited or slow community resources. During those times, I have watched miracles happen. God works it out. It may not happen as you originally intended, but it works out,” she said.

If Howell could give a new social worker a tip that could help him or her to succeed, it would be to never stop learning. “I am 48 years old, and I am continuing my education. The

world is changing every day, and it is our responsibility to keep up. Elevate the profession. Find your community of social workers. We are very fortunate at McLeod to have a very large workforce of social workers. We all have different areas of expertise. We depend on each other. Together, we can make a difference.”

Howell is proud of the way she lives her career inside and outside of normal working hours. “It is who I am. I love it when friends and family call me from two houses away or two states away to ask me questions or get guidance. That means that they trust my judgement. It means that I must be doing something right. I love to see a family member that I worked with many years before call my name with a big smile or embrace me with a hug. I know that I made a difference during a very difficult time.”

OPPORTUNITY TO HELP By Susan Carter



Cathy Timmons, MSW

Cathy Lance-Timmons has been employed by Pee Dee Mental Health (PDMHC) for the past 30 years, serving multiple roles from being on the front line to a series of supervisory positions and today, as a member of the Center’s Executive Leadership team. Initially hired as a mental health counselor in the Housing Program, Lance-Timmons then became the Center’s hospital liaison and in 2000, started the innovative

Alzheimer’s Program (now known as Silver Years). This evidence-based program is dedicated to providing the elderly population with effective care while treating them with dignity and respect.

She became director of PDMHC’s Community Support program in 2008. For the past ten years Lance-Timmons has served as manager of the Community Integration Program, a large division of PDMHC serving seriously and/or chronically mentally ill patients with their mental health, housing and employment needs. In this role, Lance-Timmons interacts daily with her large team of staff including four supervisors, and at least weekly with the Center’s Executive Director, Patrick Bresnan, community leaders and politicians in order to bring awareness and healing to the 261 patients Community Integrations serves.

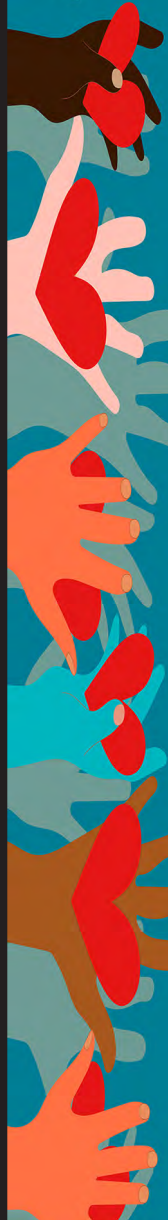
Lance-Timmons notes that, “these individuals face not only serious psychiatric symptoms and medication side effects but also often are also experiencing social and economic challenges. Homelessness, lack of transportation and poverty result from limited financial resources. Emotional pain and isolation are common in this population also as a result of lack of family involvement, medical trauma, physical abuse, stigma, discrimination, unequal treatment and stereotyping, shame, guilt and social exclusion.” Despite the many challenges involved in helping this population, Lance-Timmons finds it rewarding “to help those who are in need of assistance.” She notes that the increasing economic and social challenges our society is undergoing make it harder than ever to bring about positive change, “The most significant challenge to me is being able to do more with less.” Yet, she is more determined than ever to lead her team and the community in “ending homelessness, stopping family violence, ensuring healthy development for all

youth and educating others about the need to provide resources for individuals who need assistance.”

Lance-Timmons’ decision to become a social worker was influenced by her childhood experiences shadowing her mother as she assisted the community. Pearl Lance started the Helping Hands of Dunbar community in Georgetown County. Lance-Timmons admired her drive to help others. This led her to obtain bachelor and master’s degrees from Morris College (1990, sociology) and Clark Atlanta University (1992, Social Work), respectively. Lance-Timmons says that she would make the same career choice today as it affords the opportunity to help others.

When asked about her most rewarding experience as a social worker, Lance-Timmons described helping someone upon their release from incarceration: “One of the most rewarding experiences of my career was finding resources to house a homeless patient who just got released from a correctional center. I was able to refer him to our employment program where he found employment and went on to purchase his own vehicle. Today, with resources given to him, he has purchased his own home. He continues to call me for support and guidance.” Social workers like Lance-Timmons are able to help others effectively because they possess the skills needed to bring about positive change. The traits that Lance-Timmons describes as important for effective social workers perfectly describe her, “Caring, good communication skills, organized, critical thinker, patient and practices self-care. Lance-Timmons is a highly skilled, compassionate, empathetic and solutions-oriented mental health professional dedicated to providing exceptional care and inspiring others to do so. This desire to help carries over into her personal life as well, as Lance-Timmons is an active member of her church serving as the president of the Deaconess Ministry and the head of Children’s Ministry.

SOCIAL WORKERS
generations
STRONG



GIVING PATIENTS A SENSE OF HOPE

By Dawn "D.A." Goodwin



Lynne Klaus

Lynne Klaus is a licensed independent social worker and master addiction counselor who works at McLeod Family Medicine Center as its integrated behavioral health care manager. In her role, she sees Family Medicine Center patients who have been referred by their primary care providers for mental health therapy, treating patients who present with anxiety, depression, grief and other mental health challenges.

An advocate for change, Klaus began her career as a paralegal, and while working in the legal field in California in the early 1980s, she also volunteered in a federal prison. "I loved my volunteer work and found it deeply meaningful. When my mother passed away from brain cancer and following a divorce, I decided it was time for me to return to college and complete my degree. I was especially interested in working in the addiction field, so I majored in psychology and went on to finish my master's in Social Work in 2000. Following graduation I worked in a large metropolitan hospital in Denver, Colorado, in both their locked adult psychiatric unit and the detox unit. There, I was able to meet patients from all walks of life with all manner of mental health challenges. After working there for four years, I spent the next 12 years as a case manager and then as the Director of Clinical Services for Colorado Physician Health Program. Working with physician clients who presented with mental health and addictions was very rewarding. As one might imagine, physicians are challenging 'patients.' Seeing them recover and go on to impact patients in positive ways was extraordinary."

Klaus chose to become a social worker because she finds meaning in giving back to others and considers herself to be a "wounded healer." She said, "By the time I earned my master's degree, I was 40 years old and had been through many of life's ups and downs. I felt I had something to offer my patients not only as a result of my training but also because of my life experiences. I believe there is no better way to find meaning in life's tragedies than to walk beside others going through similar experiences."

As a social worker, Klaus hopes to have achieved, and to continue to achieve, a sense of hope in her patients—a hope that they are not alone in their journey through problems. The most difficult cases for her are when she sees hope and potential in a person and they are unable to find this for themselves.

Klaus's proudest accomplishments occurred while she worked with physicians struggling with addiction. "I was able to support each of them over the course of five years while they were being monitored by our agency. These cases were challenging because while I worked with the physician, I was also overseeing their treatment, facilitating their connections with attorneys and assisting them with licensing board/legal challenges. I felt I was helping to make a difference on a community level because as a physician was healed, their patients also benefitted."

The advice Klaus would offer a new social worker is to do your best but realize people are at different stages of change. "Change can be a long process. Align your goals with that of the patient. Work hard, but do not overwork. Find life balance. Do not take things too personally. Celebrate the small wins along the way," she said.

ADVOCACY FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS

By Susan Carter



Victoria D. Deas, MSW

An important avenue for social workers wanting to make a difference for individual, families and communities is through advocating for the rights of vulnerable children and adults. Victoria D. Deas, MSW, is one such advocate, working to protect vulnerable adults as an employee of the South Carolina Department of Aging. The program that she works with is the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem Program

(VAGAL). She serves as the Pee Dee Regional Coordinator and Upstate regional supervisor. VAGAL is the only program in the state of South Carolina that provides trained volunteers to serve as Guardian ad Litem (GALs) and represents vulnerable adults in Family Court. This program covers all forty-six counties throughout South Carolina.

Deas reports that she finds her work fulfilling and she would choose this profession again if she were to go back in time: "I truly love helping others and social work has opened up so many different avenues in which I can give back and pour into others." Deas began her social work journey in 2013, after graduating from Limestone College with a bachelor's degree in social work. Participating in an undergraduate internship program working with the South Carolina Youth Challenge Academy, a military program for at-risk youth, increased her awareness of the need for advanced professionals to help vulnerable populations and led her to pursue a master's degree in social work at Winthrop University. Again, an internship affected her career goals as her work with the South Carolina Vulnerable Adult Guardian Ad Litem program as a graduate student led to a permanent position with the program following her 2017 graduation.

VAGAL serves adults eighteen and older who have entered into a legal case with Adult Protective Services. "The majority of the vulnerable adults we serve enter into protective services largely due to self-neglect which can occur with life-altering events. These events could be the death of a loved one or caregiver, depression, health conditions that have gotten worse, finances, among others. Obstacles faced when assisting vulnerable adults is the lack of resources and the lack of appropriate placement (long-term, temporary, mental health or DDSN).

Social workers juggle multiple roles as they attempt to improve the lives of individuals who often lack skills needed for daily functioning and have minimal or no family support. As a manager, Deas interacts with other care providers, supervises staff and travels to meetings: "As the Pee Dee regional coordinator, I start my day going through emails, voice mails



ADVOCACY CONT'D

and work text messages. I look for new cases as well as review any old cases that are actively open. I answer any correspondents, attend meetings and begin my case assessments. I plan my week by putting tasks on the work calendar such as visits to other counties/courts/facilities. As the upstate supervisor, I supervise employees that cover the twelve counties in that region. I assist them if they should need some input with their cases or volunteers that assist them in their area/counties. I host meetings with my employees. We attend trainings and provide training and workshops for volunteers.”

Fulfillment for social workers often comes from seeing individual improve their functioning. For Deas, helping someone obtain the services and equipment that will allow them to live at home is satisfying: “I really like when an adult can return home and receive services in the home. Services can range from home health, Meals on Wheels, a certified nursing aide and therapy. Those services may assist with pest control, building a wheelchair ramp, modifications to a bathroom, or receiving a hospital bed.” Challenges in working with vulnerable adults occur when critical services are not immediately available as the delay can lead to further declines in functioning. Social workers are also called upon when emergency medical decisions need to be made and there is no family available and if two physicians are not willing to make the decision on behalf of the client. At these times, social workers need to have access to a temporary guardian through Probate Court to make these decisions on behalf of the client. These challenging situations are stressful to social workers as they want the best for the client but are faced with limited resources.

Despite difficulties, rewarding and successful interactions with clients make their jobs deeply satisfying. Deas was able to assist a vulnerable but healthy older adult return home even though family members wanted him to remain in a long-term care facility. “Upon working the case, I found that the adult was no longer vulnerable, cognition was intact, there were no physical limitations, and their home was in safe, livable condition. I presented my findings along with a physician’s statement to the judge and the adult was able to return home without services in his/her home.” Deas sometimes has to have a difficult conversation with a client and tell them that they have to move into a residential facility because their home has been condemned. Another challenge is helping families understand that vulnerable adults do have the right to self-determination: “If an adult’s cognition is intact and they understand the consequences to their own actions rather good or bad, they have the right to make their own decisions.”

As a social worker who advocates for those who are unable to do so for themselves, Deas sometimes finds that clients do not fully understand or appreciate her efforts, but she continues to serve them because she knows it is helpful to them: “I have come to understand that some people appreciate having someone to advocate on their behalf and some people may not. Some people may be grateful for your service and sacrifice but cannot express their gratitude because of medical limitations such as an intellectual disability, or dementia. You do your best to serve others no matter the circumstances or what people believe.”

Learning to balance her compassion for others with self-care is a struggle for many social workers. For Deas, she knows that in the past she has “poured into my work and neglected to take time for self-care. I learned that it is okay to take time away to deflect and relax my mind, do something that does not involve work. You must find balance. Take time for self-care and practice time management. Social workers like Deas deserve our appreciation and recognition of the large and small acts they do every day to make others’ lives better.

THE CHALLENGES ENSURING QUALITY CARE FOR PATIENTS By Susan Carter



Melissa (“Leesa”) Campbell

DARLINGTON-Melissa (“Leesa”) Campbell has been a social worker at Pee Dee Mental Health’s Darlington location for 33 years, serving as clinic director for the past 12 years. Campbell oversees the Darlington Clinic which has a staff of 23 and 600 active patients. She supervises the staff that serves the children, adolescents and adult patients of Darlington County. In this role, Campbell provides ongoing training to the mental health clinicians to ensure they

provide quality care for the patients. She works closely with her staff to resolve any issues/obstacles that might interfere with patient care. In addition to supervising staff and managing the clinic, she provides assessments, individual therapy and crisis intervention for adult patients as needed. This averages about 65 hours a month with a caseload of over 50 patients.

When asked about her interactions with patients, Campbell replied that she has “learned that life can be hard and life circumstances can change in an instant. Patients often just need someone to understand and care about what they are going through.” Being a social worker has also led Campbell to some insights about herself: “I have learned that I tend to overextend myself when others ask me for help.”

Campbell’s path to becoming a social worker began at Francis Marion University where she majored in psychology and sociology. Campbell then attended the University of South Carolina (USC) where she obtained a master’s degree in Social Work. Toward the end of her undergraduate program, she discussed her desire to help children and families with an advisor who introduced her to the USC Social Work Program which Campbell described as an instant “perfect fit” for her interests and career goals.

Social work is still interesting and fulfilling to Campbell as she replied with an emphatic “Yes!” when asked if social work would still be her career choice if she could go back in time. “I have enjoyed my journey as a social worker. The patients/families I have served have been amazing and I felt privileged that they allowed me to be a part of their lives.”

Asked about what she would advise college students considering entering the profession, Campbell is encouraging while also reminding prospective newcomers to the field about the importance of caring for themselves as well as their patients. “It is an awesome field. It can be hard at times but very rewarding. It is important that you set good limits and take care of yourself.” Social work is done in many different settings and with diverse populations. A key component of success in this field, Campbell says, is “Choosing a population that you are passionate about.” As a 33-year employee of Pee Dee Mental Health who has served the adult patients of Darlington County for her entire career, Campbell is a role model for caring and consistent social work service.



Appreciating Our Social Workers

HAVING THE HEART OF A SERVANT IS REWARDING By Anna Bowman



Angelica Burgess

CHARLOTTE, NC – So often today, souls are crying out for someone to just listen to the heartache of the burdens they are carrying; in search of a sympathetic ear, a voice of clarity and resources that they can truly use for the betterment of their dire situation. The role of social workers has changed throughout the years, but one thing has been steadfast is the compassion that they offer.

Angelica Burgess is a trained social work professional, who obtained her undergraduate degree from Winthrop University in Family and Consumer Sciences, and her master’s degree in Social Work from the University of South Carolina. Burgess, who once hoped to be a teacher, realized her true calling after taking a social work class and saw how impactful the field was upon the lives of individuals and families. As a social worker, she has worked in early intervention, case coordination and child protective services.

In her current position as case coordinator, she works directly with clients to discuss resources available to assist them through hardships. “I also advocate for the needs of the clients by discussing the importance and necessities for them to have various services,” she stated. “I love working with people,” she readily admits, “however, being a social worker can be a mentally taxing job at times, but I couldn’t imagine working in another field,” Burgess graciously acknowledged. People are not always

aware of the pivotal role social workers play in the lives of so many people as change agents.

The goal, of work together with clients, is to bring about positive change, often; the road can be paved with unforeseen challenges. “Acknowledging that individuals I’m working with need me to be emotionally competent, I’m able to put my needs aside to ensure their needs are met,” she said. Burgess strongly advises anyone thinking of becoming a social worker, to be selfless and have a “Heart of a servant,” which are true keys to being a good social worker she emphasized; followed by being committed and organized.

Additionally, she recommends anyone interested in becoming a social worker to, “Do their research and determine what capacity they would like to serve, as well as to ensure they are selfless individuals with a willingness to assist regardless of how difficult the task or person they encounter.” She also recommends that future candidates seek balance in their personal life, as well. “I love my role as a social worker,” she stated, “But I have established a life outside of being a social worker. I believe in self-care: traveling, spending time with friends and family, and even something as simple as having an occasional pedicure.” You can’t help others if you’re not prioritizing yourself first!

The Florence native, who currently resides in Charlotte, NC, is a case coordinator with a non-profit veteran serving organization. She is a member of New Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. She enjoys serving others and mentoring young ladies in the Florence community. Additionally, she is the assistant director of The Inner Me Mentoring Group of Florence, SC. And like so many millennials, she enjoys shopping and spending time with family and friends.

A CALLING FOR SOCIAL WORK By Jennifer Robinson



Daisy Paul

“The Time is Right for Social Work,” is the theme for Social Work Month 2023. “World Social Work Day is observed every year on the third Tuesday in March. The day recognizes the hard work and diligence of social workers. On this day, a global organization of social workers, advocates for social justice, human rights and social development while promoting the best practices in social work. Social workers serve many roles in our communities. They assess their

client’s and community’s needs and challenges. As advocates, they speak for their clients, get them access to the resources they need to improve their lives and educate people about what to do in a crisis. Social workers also respond to crises (nationaltoday.com).”

Daisy Paul is a social worker who is available at the right time and the right place. People and families experience various traumas that make their lives difficult. Her passion and love for people has kept her career as a master level social worker for twenty-five plus years. Currently she is employed at Veterans Village State Veterans Home and has found that people from all walks of life, may at some point, need resources for life improvement. Paul’s career includes being certified in AIDS/HIV care, gerontology, guardian ad litem, and case management. Those certifications helped her provide resources for people professionally and socially. Because of her extensive experience, it has prepared her for the present position as director of Social

Services. Paul stated, “my passion is people,” and her career shows that passion. Paul was employed with Palmetto Faith Nursing Home and founded Trinity Family Consulting in 2020. Because of her extensive experience, she was sought after for her current position at Veterans Village. Her service to provide resources to help people with their continuum of care has been recognized throughout Florence County. She stated her mission is to engage, educate and empower people, to help them be the best version of themselves. Because Daisy has worked in different agencies with various facets of people, she recognizes that services are fluid. “There is no one size fit all approach to assist people because people’s needs vary. You must meet people where they are. Paul loves being the voice for her clients.

She also states that being a social worker means knowing your purpose, operating in it and sticking to it. “You cannot go into social work for the money. You must go into it for the reward of helping people,” Paul stated. Most people who are social workers are caregivers by nature. They are most effective when they expect positive results. Unfortunately, working as a social worker comes with some stigma. People believe that social workers don’t help people or that their service to their community is not authentic. The narrative of over worked under paid disgruntled employees leaves gaps in care for people who need assistance.

She said the work she does at Veterans Village is more structured which is unlike previous places she has worked. Veterans care is tailored to their military experiences and the goal is to ensure their mental as well as their physical health needs are met. Without care for people and the issues they may be coping with, it is challenging to meet their needs. Paul is not only a champion social worker but a champion human being.

ANDERSON BROTHERS BANK WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBERS



Cindy Gleason

DILLON—Anderson Brothers Bank is pleased to announce the recent promotion of Cindy Gleason to branch operations coordinator of the bank's Dillon office.

In her new role, Gleason 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.

Gleason has 25 years of banking experience, with the last four years of her career being a teller/CSR at Anderson Brothers Bank. She is a member of Marion/Dillon County Habitat for Humanity, Palmetto Leadership of Dillon County and Firefall Bible Church in Nichols. When Gleason is not working, she loves spending her free time with her family, traveling and living farm life.

"We are very excited to have Cindy in her new role as branch operations coordinator," said Jackie McKenzie, branch manager 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 Dillon."



Emily Green

MYRTLE BEACH—Anderson Brothers Bank announces the addition of Emily Green as its newest lender. Emily will be based in the bank's Myrtle Beach office located at 1136 44th Ave N., Myrtle Beach.

In her role as a mortgage loan officer, Green will work with realtors and meet with loan applicants to identify their mortgage lending needs. She will help guide the process to create a positive and productive experience for each client.

"We feel fortunate to be able to add a professional like Emily Green to our mortgage division. Emily's leadership skills and involvement and commitment to her community make her a great fit for Anderson Brothers Bank" said Tim McCoy, Vice President of Mortgage Lending. "We have no doubt that Emily will be another valuable representative of ABB and our Mortgage Division for years to come."



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WOMEN ARE TAKING CONTROL OF THEIR FINANCES



(BPT) - Facing an uncertain economy, rising inflation and a potential recession on the horizon, many are stressed about their own finances, and women are especially feeling financial pressure. According to a new study by Fidelity Investments, nearly half (47 percent) of women say their outlook on money and economic issues has worsened over the past year.

With primary stressors including inflation (71 percent), the rising cost of essentials (65 percent), and not having enough saved for emergencies (58 percent), women are demanding more from their money and taking control of their finances to improve their immediate future, in three key areas: spending, saving and learning.

1. Continue evaluating spending

One of the first places to look when evaluating short-term finances is your spending. Many women are already scaling back on spending to make their money stretch further. Fidelity's study found 53 percent of women cut back on nonessential activities and entertainment, while 39 percent cut back on travel and vacation expenses in the past 12 months. There's never a better time than the present to evaluate your budget, income, and goals to see what changes you can make to make the most of your financial priorities. One quick way to cut back on costs is to review streaming services, monthly subscriptions and memberships and pause the ones you didn't use much this year or didn't enjoy using.

2. Saving for a rainy-day fund

Because most women are concerned about not having enough saved for emergencies, it's a great idea to start or add to an emergency fund. In fact, 30 percent of women are already planning to start or add to their emergency funds in the next 12 months. But it can be challenging to set aside money for emergencies, especially when money is already tight. When your budget doesn't allow much wiggle room for emergency savings, you can focus on adding extra funds into an emergency fund. For example, take any money from cash gifts, cash back from credit cards or cashback services, and your tax refund and immediately deposit them into your emergency savings account. This will help you grow your fund while maintaining your current budget.

3. Boosting financial knowledge

Financial education can be a powerful tool to help you get the most out of your money and women are eager to learn how they can make their money work harder for them. More than a quarter of women surveyed want to learn more about managing debt and credit, 25 percent want to learn how to create and stick to a budget and 24 percent want to learn about savings.

Many women also want to change their financial habits and mindsets to get more out of their money, especially younger women. One in four Gen Z women are interested in learning how to improve their money mindset, such as learning how to overcome spending guilt, break bad habits or improve their overall relationship with money.

Developing a strong financial foundation and practicing good financial hygiene are all ways to help make your money work harder for you. Even though women want to learn, there hasn't always been resources for women to learn about money. Women want financial

basics, but they also want to learn about them in an open and honest environment, and they want to learn about the unique money challenges facing women.

A learning community for women, by women

Reinforcing their ongoing commitment to helping women achieve financial success, Fidelity created Women Talk Money, a community made for women, by women, to help normalize money talk in an honest and open environment. Through the community, Fidelity offers live events, workshops, newsletters and educational content on everything from financial basics like learning how to save and invest, to more in-depth concepts like the financial benefits of life insurance, to career guidance, such as negotiating a pay increase. Women Talk Money also covers women-specific topics like gender pay gaps and career breaks to help women navigate the unique financial challenges facing them. And the community recently launched on both Instagram and LinkedIn, to help reach more women and meet them where they are.

To start demanding more from your money and controlling your financial future, visit Fidelity's Women Talk Money hub.



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WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

(BPT) - Sometimes, it can be challenging to have fun while on a budget. With the rising cost of food, gas, rent and other goods, you may not always have the cash to enjoy leisurely activities or shopping. However, you don't have to take on a second job or break the bank to have fun. Check out these tips to enjoy your life while spending wisely.

1. Travel by car

Travel can be expensive, but you can make your trip affordable by traveling by car. Road trips can be cheaper than paying for flights and you'll build memories along the way.

When looking for hotels to stop at along your road trip or stay at when you reach your destination, use a travel booking platform that can find you affordable prices and deals for your vacation. If you book with SuperTravel, for example, you can save up to 50 percent on more than 500,000 hotels worldwide. The company can access specially negotiated rates that are better than anything you typically find online, so you can make memories while getting the most bang for your buck.

2. Look for deals on local events and attractions

Affordable fun may be just outside your door. Do some research and find out if local museums, theaters or amusement parks have deals or discounts. For example, many museums, zoos, aquariums and other fun and educational institutions offer monthly or seasonal free admission days. Once you know when these free days are, mark your calendar and start making plans to visit!

If you're a fan of live theater or enjoy going to see the latest movie, find matinee deals. Many movie theaters offer matinee prices for showtimes in the morning or early afternoon. Your local theater or arts center may have reduced afternoon and weekend performance prices. No matter where you choose to go, you can enjoy the arts at an affordable price and support your community.

3. Earn rewards just by buying groceries

Some expenses in life are unavoidable, like buying groceries and

gas. For these expected, routine expenses, consider using a rewards credit card. By using a rewards credit card when you shop, you can earn cashback, travel and other rewards, depending on the type of card you choose. Just by shopping for necessities, you can earn rewards to fund trips, shopping and entertainment.

4. Get outdoors

If you're a fan of the outdoors or want to give it a go, you'll find that most nature activities are free or cheap. Find a regional, state or national park near you and see what events, attractions and activities they offer. Some may even have year-round permits that allow you to save on parking, reservations and more. Whether you go for a weekend hike, Saturday lake barbecue or a weeklong camping trip, you can enjoy adventure for little to no money.

Having a good time doesn't have to hurt your pocketbook. Use these four tips to have fun on a budget and inspire you to get the most out of life on the cheap.



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Our company is founded on the principles Jordan modeled the day that mill worker's dress was torn -- integrity, character and the principle of treating people right and doing the right thing. This foundation has endured over the years, and while we've grown from helping customers and small businesses across three different centuries to financing modern corporate

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FIVE TIPS FROM A FINANCIAL THERAPIST TO REIN IN FINANCIAL ANXIETY



(BPT) - The leading concern for almost half (46 percent) of working Americans when considering their top drivers of lower mental health is financial concerns, according to MetLife's 2022 Employee Benefit Trends Refresh Study. This is even higher for working women (51 percent) and Gen Xers (52 percent). On the flip side, 85 percent who say they are financially

well, report feeling mentally healthy. Consider these expert tips.

1. Understand the emotional connection to money

Emotions like guilt, anxiety and impulsivity majorly influence how we manage and confront monthly expenses. Getting to the root of your feelings about money now (e.g., anxious, avoidant, stressed) is key to understanding how you want to feel about money in the future (e.g., calm, relaxed, confident).

2. Make gifting intentional by planning for it

Creating a "gift account" where you can allocate funds over time is an easy but extremely effective way to isolate and stick to a spending amount that fits your budget. To take this a step further, using Upwise's "Spend Control" feature allows individuals to pick a category (e.g., retail/shopping) or even a specific merchant to track and set spending limits.

3. Eliminate redundant expenses with ease

There are small decisions you can make in the present to get closer to reaching your long-term financial goals. Consider cutting out smaller, unnecessary costs such as monthly subscription services you don't really use. If you need an extra push to get you started, try leveraging digital tools that allow you to consolidate subscriptions.

4. Celebrate the "small wins"

While it's great to be ambitious and have lofty aspirations for your financial future, set yourself up for success by establishing reachable goals and celebrating each small win to help create a foundation for a more positive relationship with money. For example, if you struggle with spending too much on dining out or food delivery, try challenging yourself with Upwise's "dining out challenge," which will allow you to select from a list of cost-saving actions, commit to those and then track your progress. And when you do succeed at spending less, pat yourself on the back, text a friend or open up that kombucha to celebrate.

5. Reflect and recover

If you go beyond your budget, give yourself some compassion (it happens!) and then dig into what led you to overspend. Was it the excitement of seeing loved ones for the first time in years? Feeling you needed to spend the same on everyone? Once you determine why you overspent, you can create a plan for potential spending triggers in the future.

Upwise is a product of MetLife Consumer Services, Inc. Upwise is available at no cost to all individuals and regardless of any MetLife relationship or product. Upwise is for educational purposes. Each individual is advised to consult with their own attorney, accountant and financial professional regarding their specific circumstances. MetLife does not provide legal, tax or investment recommendations or advice.

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 [Caring.com](https://www.caring.com), only 33% 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 (JTWROS), 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 317.289.3010 or jacord@ft.newyorklife.com.

Neither New York Life nor its agents provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. Please consult your own tax, legal, or accounting professional before making any decisions.

¹Daniel Cobb, "[Caring.com](https://www.caring.com)'s 2022 Wills Survey Finds That 1 out of 3 Americans Without Estate Plans Think They Have Too Few Assets To Leave Behind," [Caring.com](https://www.caring.com/caregivers/estate-planning/wills-survey), <https://www.caring.com/caregivers/estate-planning/wills-survey> -

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MUSC HEALTH FLORENCE MEDICAL CENTER NAMED BEST HOSPITAL FOR MATERNITY CARE

Submitted by John Russell, MUSC Health Florence Division, Marketing Manager



U.S. News & World Report, the global authority in hospital rankings and consumer advice, has named MUSC Health Florence Medical Center as a 2022-2023 High Performing hospital for Maternity Care (Uncomplicated Pregnancy). This is the highest award a hospital can earn for U.S. News' Best Hospitals for Maternity Care.

The annual evaluation is designed to assist expectant parents and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive maternity care.

MUSC Health Florence Medical Center is the only hospital in South Carolina to earn a high performing designation in recognition of maternity care. The criterion for the award is measured by factors such as newborn complication rates.

"We are thrilled to receive this designation as a top hospital for maternity care," said MUSC Health Florence Division Chief Executive Officer Jay Hinesley. "Providing the highest quality maternity care is crucial. This award confirms that our efforts to provide great patient outcomes are working."

U.S. News evaluated nearly 650 hospitals that provide high-quality labor & delivery services for uncomplicated pregnancies for its 2022-2023 Best Hospitals for Maternity Care. Fewer than half of all hospitals that offer maternity care and participated in the survey received a High Performing designation.

"When expectant parents are considering their options for welcoming a baby to the world, the Best Hospitals for Maternity Care are designed to help them identify hospitals that excel in delivering babies for uncomplicated pregnancies," said Ben Harder, chief of health analysis and managing editor at U.S. News. "A

hospital that has earned a High Performing designation may be a good option for parents, in consultation with their medical provider, to consider."

The U.S. News Best Hospitals for Maternity Care methodology is based entirely on objective measures of quality, such as C-section rates in lower-risk pregnancies, newborn complication rates, exclusive breast milk feeding rates, early elective delivery rates and vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) rates, among other measures.

For more information, visit Best Hospitals for Maternity Care and use #BestMaternityHospitals on Facebook and Twitter.

About MUSC

Founded in 1824 in Charleston, 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, with connectivity to patients' homes; and nearly 750 care locations situated in all regions of South Carolina. In 2022, for the eighth 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 totaling \$4.4 billion. The nearly 25,000 MUSC team members include a world-class faculty, physicians, specialty providers, scientists, students, affiliates and care team members who deliver and support groundbreaking education, research and patient care.

About U.S. News & World Report

U.S. News & World Report is the global leader in quality rankings that empower consumers, business leaders and policy officials to make better, more informed decisions about important issues affecting their lives and communities. A multifaceted digital media company with Education, Health, Money, Travel, Cars, News, Real Estate and 360 Reviews platforms, U.S. News provides rankings, independent reporting, data journalism, consumer advice and U.S. News Live events. More than 40 million people visit USNews.com each month for research and guidance. Founded in 1933, U.S. News is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

U.S. News & World Report has named MUSC Health Florence Medical Center as a 2022-2023 Best Hospital for Maternity Care. The designation was decided based on data submitted for expectant mothers following an uncomplicated pregnancy. This is the highest award a hospital can earn for maternity care, and MUSC Health Florence is the only one in South Carolina to receive it.

Hospitals are evaluated in eight areas, including C-section, early elective delivery rates, overall unexpected newborn complication rates, exclusive breast milk feeding rates, and episiotomy rates among other criteria. The annual evaluation is designed to assist expectant parents and their doctors in making informed decisions about where to receive maternity care.

THE HIDDEN BURDEN OF EATING DISORDERS Submitted by Kitty Finklea, RDN, AFAA-CPT



Kitty Finklea

One in ten Americans will struggle with an eating disorder during their lifetime. Eating disorders are a serious mental health condition involving complex and damaging relationships with food, eating, exercise and body image. This disorder can negatively affect physical health and has the second highest mortality rate of all mental health conditions.

Eating disorders cross all social boundaries, impacting people of all ages, sexes, genders and races within all socioeconomic statuses and cultural backgrounds. An eating disorder

is not a choice; it is a biological brain-based condition with complex psychological and social factors and is diagnosed and best treated by medical professionals.

There are five types of eating disorders: Binge-eating disorder (BED), Bulimia Nervosa, Anorexia Nervosa, Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) and Other Specified Feeding and Eating Disorders (OSFED). The causes can vary from person to person and include genetics, changes in diet, gut health, puberty/menopause, stress, trauma, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, self-image, weight/appearance pressure, comments about appearance or weight and media influence. The incidence of eating disorders rose throughout the U.S. during the COVID pandemic due to increased stress and isolation.

While there are specific warning signs related to each type of eating disorder, general warning signs include a change in attitude or behaviors related to food, body size and weight as well as increased control over food or extreme dieting. Other signs to watch out for include withdrawing from friends and social activities, changes in personality (mood swings, irritability, depression or lack of emotion), gastrointestinal issues (acid reflux, bloating

or constipation), body checking in the mirror several times a day, hoarding or hiding food, disappearing to the bathroom after eating or over-exercising. Eating disorders thrive in secrecy and isolation and can be a challenge to uncover but paying attention to warning signs is the first step.

If you feel you may have an eating disorder, opening up to someone you trust and talking to your medical provider are the first steps. Finding a counselor and dietitian is also an important part of the recovery process.

If you are worried about a friend or child, talking to them is important, even if they reject the conversation. Focus on your concerns about health, symptoms or changes in behavior you notice and be open to listening. Be aware of the timing and place so they do not feel threatened or embarrassed. Do your research and be kind, objective and non-judgmental during the conversation. Ask meaningful and respectful questions and show the person you care. Offer resources or schedule your child for a medical appointment to start the process. Early detection and effective treatment can help move a person into recovery more quickly and prevent the disorder from progressing to a more severe or chronic state.

Treatment for an eating disorder can be inpatient or outpatient and includes a team of medical, psychological and nutrition professionals. Family and social support is also crucial for treatment and recovery.

National Eating Disorder Awareness week sponsored by The National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) is observed annually during the last week of February - this year on February 20-27. This initiative helps educate people and provide resources to help those in need. They offer a hotline to call, chat or text, along with referral sources, screening tools and an abundance of information and resources for all ages. Find them online at: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

There is always hope for those suffering with an eating disorder, and the quicker they receive help, the quicker they can recover from this devastating illness.



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The newest practice Genesis Health Care Florence (Formerly named Dr. Brent Baroody) now includes OB/GYN, Urology, and Case Management.

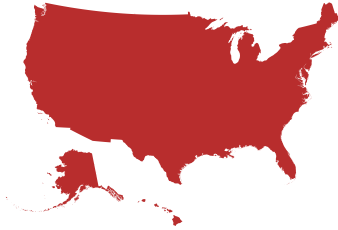
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Approximately

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MUSC HEALTH FLORENCE MEDICAL CENTER OPENS ON-CAMPUS PHARMACY

Submitted by John Russell, MUSC Health Florence Division marketing manager

MUSC Health Florence Medical Center has taken another step forward in providing excellent patient care with the opening of MUSC Health Pharmacy at Florence Medical Center. The new pharmacy is conveniently located in the main lobby of MUSC Health Florence Medical Center.

“We are proud to open MUSC Health Pharmacy at Florence Medical Center! The pharmacy offers patients, care team members and family members a streamlined, integrated pharmacy experience,” said MUSC Health Florence Division Chief Operating Officer Jason Cox. “Our pharmacy staff use our electronic medical records system to receive prescriptions and talk to patients’ health care providers across the full spectrum of care.” The new pharmacy is another step forward in improving patient safety, satisfaction and outcomes.

While you focus on getting better, our pharmacy care team members will focus on providing you with top-quality care. MUSC Health Pharmacy at Florence Medical Center offers a patient-focused experience, including the delivery of your medications right to your bedside before discharge. The pharmacy also offers COVID, and flu shot vaccines by appointment. Patients of MUSC Health can use the MyChart App to easily get prescriptions and request refills.

It is open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at 805 Pamplico Hwy., Medical Pavilion B, Suite 130. For more information or to speak with a pharmacist, please call 843-674-5180.

About MUSC

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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.

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JAQUETTA GRAHAM NAMED COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER OF THE YEAR

Submitted by Submitted by Denise L. Jones, communication specialist



Jaquetta Graham

HARTSVILLE-CareSouth Carolina Family Support Service (FSS) Program Coordinator Jaquetta Graham has been named the Community Health Worker of the Year by the South Carolina Community Health Worker Association.

“This award is given to the Community Health Worker (CHW) for their outstanding service and excellence in the CHW profession and the work they do within the community and within their organizations,” said CareSouth Carolina Community Services

Director Marek Calhoun.

Graham, who began her career with CareSouth Carolina six years ago as a patient advocate before becoming a community outreach specialist, a CHW, then technical advisor and eventually moving into her current position, said she is extremely passionate about helping the people in her community.

“I have a strong passion for people to be successful,” Graham said. “Especially being out in the community and helping people to be their healthiest. I have worked closely with George General (CSC Bishopville site administrator) and Dr. (Jeniqua) Duncan as well as other providers at CareSouth Carolina to come up with ways we can close those gaps that exist.”

Two areas of healthcare Graham is particularly focused on improving are diabetes and mammograms.

“We see a lot of people that are pre-diabetic, and we want to educate

them about their A1C, make sure they’re getting their annual screenings and managing their diabetes,” Graham said. “Also, I have been able to help with mammograms. I actually have a close friend who I encouraged to get a screening and they found cancer.”

Graham was presented with the award at the December 14 ceremony in Columbia hosted by the South Carolina Community Health Worker Association (SCCHWA), which is made up of CHWs and supporters who are building a healthier South Carolina through the promotion of education, networking and advocacy for the community health worker profession.

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 veteran’s choice provider.



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843.759.2189 |
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A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION WORTH YOUR TIME

Submitted by Erica Buffkin, prevention specialist II Circle Park Behavioral Health Services



Erica Buffkin

Hopefully 2023 will be an exciting and prosperous time with the Covid pandemic becoming less of a concern. With life returning to a sense of normalcy, many people are setting New Year's resolutions to focus on organizing and improving their lives. While many resolutions focus on a new diet or workout plan, that's not the only way to improve your health and wellbeing.

Reducing alcohol consumption or abstaining completely for a period of time was one of the top ten New Year's resolutions of 2022. The benefits of this resolution go far beyond endangering yourself

or others or not waking up with a dreaded hangover. Drinking less may actually make you happier as alcohol impacts your ability to cope with life's challenges. By cutting back the number of drinks consumed, a person can save money, sleep better, have more energy and maybe even lose a few of those stubborn holiday pounds. Reduced intake will also reduce the risk for liver and heart disease and several types of cancer.

We all know that making New Year's Resolutions is the easy part. Sticking to those goals long-term is where many people become overwhelmed and give up. There are a few tips to help increase the chance of keeping those goals, specifically when it comes to alcohol.

If your goal is to reduce consumption, you need to consider the size and type of drink and its alcoholic content. According to the CDC, a standard drink size is 12 ounces of five percent abv beer, eight ounces of seven percent abv malt liquor, five ounces of 12 percent abv wine or 1.5 ounces of 40 percent abv (80 proof) liquor. For women, drinking more than eight alcoholic beverages a week is considered heavy drinking and having more than four drinks in a three-hour period is categorized as binge drinking. For men, heavy drinking is defined as having more than 15 servings of alcohol in a week and five or more drinks

in three hours is considered binge drinking.

The first step in reaching your goal, whether it be reduction or abstinence, is to sit down, make a plan and set goals. Set a schedule for reducing your consumption or a date to stop drinking and share it with someone who can help you stick to your goals. If you have been a long-term or heavy user, make an appointment with your physician to decide the safest way to reach your goals. Find alcohol-free activities to replace social times that usually revolve around/include alcohol. By doing this, you've replaced the activity rather than feeling like you're missing out. Understand ahead of time the triggers and reasons that lead you to want a drink and think about how you plan to get through those moments.

Don't give up no matter what! If you do slip and have a few too many drinks, wake up the next morning and start fresh with your goals in mind. No one is perfect and there are bound to be some bumps in the road. When those bumps occur, take some time to reflect on the reasons or events that led you to that point, and make a plan to keep it from happening again. After all, success doesn't mean never failing. Success means continuing to work towards a goal even if you've failed before.

Having support through the process also increases the chance for success. Whether it's an accountability partner, a group with similar goals, a counselor or treatment program, there are many different options to help you achieve your goals. If you feel like you need some structure to aid in reaching your goals, Circle Park Behavioral Health offers a number of services from peer support and group therapy to individual counseling and Medically Assisted Treatment.

We remain committed to supporting the citizens of Florence County through treatment, prevention services, and education. For information on treatment options and services, contact Circle Park at 843-665-9349 or visit our office located at 238 S. Coit Street in Florence or our website at www.circlepark.com.



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HOPEHEALTH WELCOMES NEW PROVIDERS

Submitted by HopeHealth



Emily McConnell, PNP-PC

Emily McConnell, PNP-PC

Emily McConnell is a pediatric nurse practitioner providing care at HopeHealth Pediatrics in Manning. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences from Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, and received a Master of Science in Nursing, Pediatric Primary Care Nurse Practitioner from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a member of the National

Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners and is involved with numerous volunteer organizations. Her clinical interests are child development, adolescence/puberty and newborn education.



Annelise Evans, PA

Annelise Evans, PA

Annelise Evans is a physician assistant providing primary care at HopeHealth in Lake City. She graduated from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology and Psychology and from the Medical University of South Carolina with a Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. Evans is a 2020 Army Women's Legacy Scholar awardee

and a 2021 National Health Service Corps Scholar awardee. She is a member of the Alpha Eta Society (Allied Health Honor Society) and has clinical interests in women's health, wound care, preventive medicine and dermatology.



Jennifer Woods, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

Jennifer Wood, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

Jennifer Wood is a family nurse practitioner providing care to patients of Access Hope in Manning. She graduated from Florence-Darlington Technical College with an associate degree in nursing, and from Chamberlain University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Science in Nursing/Family Nurse Practitioner. She is a member of the American Association of

Nurse Practitioners. Her clinical interests are diabetes and hypertension, due to their high prevalence in the South and the causative effect they have on other medical conditions. She hopes that with providing proper education on prevention, regular screening, treatment and monitoring she can curtail the development or worsening of those conditions in the patient population.



Jamie McAlister, APRN, FNP

Jamie McAlister, APRN, FNP

Jamie McAlister is a family nurse practitioner serving patients at HopeHealth at Francis Marion University. She earned an associate degree of science in nursing from Central Carolina Technical College and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a Master of Science in Nursing from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. She is passionate about the integrative, holistic approach to care and bettering the health care of the community.

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.

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HOPEHEALTH HOSTED ANNUAL AIDSWALK Submitted by Sheridan K. Murray, BS BA publication coordinator



AIDSWalk 2022

HopeHealth hosted its annual AIDSWalk in December, on the grounds of the HopeHealth Medical Plaza at 360 North Irby Street in Florence.

Registration began at 9 a.m. in the Meditation Garden, where participants received a free AIDSWalk 2022 T-shirt to wear

during the event. The event's program included an invocation from Reverend Calvin Robinson, opening words from HopeHealth CEO Carl M. Humphries and a moving patient story from Fredrick Williams, infectious disease practice administrator. The non-competitive awareness walk around the Medical Plaza kicked off at 10 a.m.

In addition to T-shirts, balloon animals and door prizes, attendees enjoyed music by DJ Stylz. HopeHealth staff also provided free health

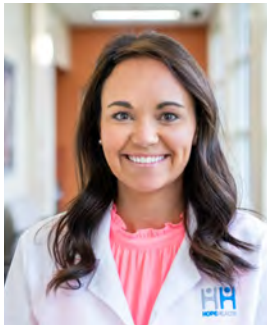
screenings and information on programs and services available at HopeHealth. Participants were treated to a boxed lunch to conclude the day's activities.

On the importance of the event, Nicole Echols, director of external affairs, shared, "HopeHealth got its start in 1991 as a grassroots HIV/AIDS support organization, and it's important that supporting this community stays at the forefront of our mission."

AIDSWalk has been hosted by HopeHealth since 1993 and serves to bring awareness about the importance of prevention, treatment, and breaking the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

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DANGEROUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS FOR CHILDREN Submitted by Haley Jackson, PNP



Haley Jackson, PNP

National Poison Prevention Week is observed during the third week of March every year and exists to shed light on the risk of being poisoned by household products. As a pediatric nurse practitioner and a mother, I am constantly mindful of risks associated with household products with some listed below that may be surprising to parents. Keep reading for information on household toxicity risks for your children and helpful tips to help them stay safe and healthy.

Medications

Medications are the leading cause of child poisoning. Keep harmful medications away from your children by doing the following:

- Keep gummy medications like melatonin gummies out of reach and ensure children know these are not candy.
- Make sure purses are put away if they contain pills or medication bottles. Remind guests to keep purses and jackets out of sight if they contain medication.
- Find a place to keep your medications that is high enough where children cannot reach. If using a pill organizer, make sure it is kept out of reach as these are usually not child-proof.
- Never leave loose pills on counters or tables. Children are naturally curious, and these may look intriguing to them.
- Keep medications in their original bottle and always listen for the "click" to ensure they are properly closed. Twist until you cannot twist any more.
- Teach your children about medication safety and never tell them medicine is candy.

Batteries

Lithium coin and button batteries are other toxic household items which may come as a surprise. These can cause esophageal burns and erosion within two hours, and these harmful impacts can become life-threatening fast. Batteries can even get lodged into the nasal cavity or ear canal and cause damage quickly, leading to infections as well as impacting breathing, smell and hearing due to erosion. Batteries of this type may be found in TV remotes, key fobs, calculators, children's toys, watches, thermometers, bathroom scales and more. To keep your children safe from the dangers of these batteries, ensure you follow these guidelines:

- Look for batteries in child-resistant packaging, especially in any new toys.
- Make sure battery compartments are secure and consider taping them for extra security.
- Be aware of the specific items in your house that have these types of batteries. Store them out of reach of younger children. Do this by hanging

keys up high, keeping thermometers in a high cabinet, reminding older siblings to put away games and toys when not using them and supervising playtime.

- Dispose of old batteries immediately in an outside garbage can. Even "dead" batteries are dangerous.
- Talk with your children about battery safety! Explain that these are for adults to handle and discuss the dangers of improper battery use.

Alcohol

Alcohol is another household item that can cause serious harm to children. Ensure alcoholic drinks are not left sitting out where children can easily access and ingest them. Be mindful of other household items containing alcohol, like mouthwash, food extracts (vanilla and almond for example), hand sanitizer, perfume and cologne.

Lead Paint

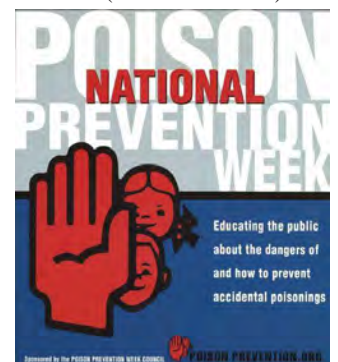
Make sure to monitor children around lead paint to avoid interactions with toxic compounds. Monitor walls, baseboards and furniture for chipped paint if the items were made prior to 1978. There is no safe level of lead for children. Closely watch and discourage eating or picking paint chips from walls.

Other Household Items

Be mindful of other toxic household items like hair spray, nail polish and remover, household cleaning products, aerosol sprays, pesticides and laundry/dishwasher pods. Use liquid or powder detergent if you have children under age six. Keep cleaning products in original bottles, and make sure to avoid using old soda bottles or other containers that could easily be mistaken for other items. Never place pesticides on the floor of your home or garage, do not use insect sprays on mattresses or furniture, and use a locked area in the garage for supplies like antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, fertilizer and bug repellent.

Ultimately, prevention is the key, but in case of an emergency, be proactive by leaving numbers for Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) and your child's provider nearby, as well as your work and cell phone numbers, and the number of an emergency contact. In the same way we teach our children to hold hands when they cross the street and be aware of other dangers, we must also instill mindfulness around toxic household items.

To learn more about pediatric and adolescent services at HopeHealth, visit our website at hope-health.org or call (843) 667-9414.





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- **Elevate a culture of “One MUSC”**



HOPEHEALTH IN MANNING CELEBRATES GROUNDBREAKING

Submitted by Sheridan K. Murray, BS, BA, publications coordinator



Employees at HopeHealth in Manning pose for a photo at the groundbreaking ceremony.

MANNING—In October, HopeHealth hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the expansion of HopeHealth in Manning at 12 W. South Street, Manning, SC 29102.

The groundbreaking signified the start of a 12,566-square-foot addition to the HopeHealth in Manning building, connecting the facility's two existing on-site buildings. The addition provides a new main entrance facing S. Mill Street, housing a large lobby with security, restrooms, a new lab and a large reception and information center.

On the importance of the expansion, Carl Humphries, CEO, shared, "This project in Manning will be our most significant building project ever outside of Florence. I'm excited for what it will mean for our patients and the community. Our team has worked hard for years to get to this point, and I'm really glad to see everything coming together."

"It has truly been a long time coming," stated Falecia Miller, associate vice president of clinical operations for the south region.

The expansion provides additional parking, exam rooms, waiting rooms and offices for several services provided at HopeHealth in Manning, including behavioral health, rheumatology, women's health, physical therapy and dental services.

The event included remarks from a variety of speakers, including Manning mayor Julia Nelson. "We are ecstatic that HopeHealth is growing again and especially in Manning. The quality of health care that HopeHealth provides to our citizens is second to none. It's wonderful to know that regardless of insurance status or ability to pay, all HopeHealth patients receive the best care. HopeHealth also has a significant role in economic development for Clarendon County, helping to ensure that potential businesses coming to the area are able to secure quality health care for their employees."

Nelson also has a personal connection to HopeHealth and its beginnings. She shared, "Upon graduating from South Carolina State University, I began employment with the Manning Health Clinic, which was under the management of the Black River Consortium. At that time, we had three staff members, and we struggled with many long days trying to provide medical care. Years later, Black River Healthcare absorbed the Manning Health Clinic, and HopeHealth eventually acquired Black River. It warms my heart to see the major progress HopeHealth has made from the Manning Health Clinic's humble beginnings."

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Shyam Tantry, MD

HopeHealth Endocrinology

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A BETTER VERSION OF YOURSELF IN 2023! Submitted by Kendrea Robinson, FNP-C



Kendrea Robinson, FNP-C

As this New Year has approached many individuals have made health goals. We want to encourage you to focus on sustaining the goals that you have made. Make 2023 one of your best years yet when it comes to your health. Set goals, accomplish them. Be intentional about everything that goes in your body and what you do with your body. To prevent chronic conditions, tap into the knowledge that is provided.

Remember that there are many ways to sustain a healthier you. It is important to understand who you are and why you want to achieve the

goal you have in mind. It is essential to make short term goals to reach long term goals in the end. Coming into this New Year you need to have your goals in mind such as to lose 50 lbs. in four to six months but your short-term goals would be to lose 10 lbs. in four to six weeks.

As you focus on becoming a better version of yourself is to tap into mastering CONSISTENCY. You must continue the journey of self-love by focusing on being consistent with putting in work in relation to your health. Consistency allows you to create habits that with time become challenging to break.

Do not allow 2023 to be another year where you focus on something for a few days to weeks but do not sustain the habits. Remember as

you make healthy living a lifestyle choice consistently this helps to prevent chronic illnesses such as heart disease, hypertension and more. Most importantly remember that doing something is much better than doing nothing.

Remember to HYDRATE, HYDRATE and HYDRATE. Hydration is the key factor to a healthier body. Hydration helps the body to get rid of toxins and helps organs regulate properly. Many times, when a person is severely dehydrated, so many complications can occur such as dizziness, headaches, palpitations, nausea, diarrhea and more. In addition, severe dehydration can affect organ functionality as well. This is the reason it is essential to make use of services such as IV Hydration Therapy (Vitamin Infusions).

Another common issue that will help individuals stay balanced in 2023 is finding ways to deal with stress. Stress will never be able to go away and never come back. Yet, it is essential to know stress triggers especially in work environments or when under pressure. Finding activities that will help individuals RESET to REFOCUS such as exercising. If you are a stress eater, find healthy foods to keep in the office or in reach. This may require proper "snack planning" ahead of time. Being around loved ones who are positive, getting 6-8 hours of rest nightly as much as possible and if necessary, such as limiting your time on social media all help to minimize the severity of response to stress. As always, seeking a mental health therapist is always beneficial.

In conclusion, we encourage you to enter this year strong and do not let up. Go in head strong and give it all you have. When health goals become challenging you should focus on doing something versus nothing. Do not focus on what did not go right in your past but what your goals are for the future. This is your year to be consistent about RESETTING and REFOCUSING!

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\$10,000 SPECTRUM DIGITAL EDUCATION GRANT AWARDED



Congratulations to Mrs. Mae Sabb our Chromebook winner for the Spectrum Digital Literacy Program. Thanks to everyone from Spectrum for helping our Senior Technology Program (STP).

Leah Brown - Spectrum (FL), Joyce Black - SCA, Mae Sabb and Linda Mitchell Johnson- SCA executive director

COLUMBIA— Spectrum today announced the Senior Citizens Association (SCA) in Florence County has received a \$10,000 Spectrum Digital Education Grant for the Senior Technology Program. The grant is part of the broadband connectivity provider's six-year, \$8 million commitment to promote digital education and broadband technology in communities across the country.

The SCA will use the funding for the Senior Technology Program which educates seniors on basic computer training and how to navigate the internet efficiently and safely.

"In our online world, digital skills are critical to navigating everything from finding a job to going to school, to buying groceries – yet too many families still have not adopted internet at home," said Rahman Kahn, vice president of Community Impact for Charter Communications, Inc., which operates the Spectrum brand of Internet, Mobile, TV, and Voice services. "As one of the largest internet providers in the U.S., Spectrum is committed to supporting local initiatives like SCA that promote digital literacy and inclusion and help educate community members in Florence County about the value of adopting broadband in their lives so they can succeed in today's connected society."

A graduation event for the SCA program participants and check presentation was held on Thursday, Dec. 8 at 11:30 a.m. at the Hugh Leatherman Senior Center located at 600 Senior Way, Florence.

"I applaud Spectrum for recognizing the need to promote digital literacy skills for seniors," said Florence County Council member Waymon Mumford. "We are thrilled Spectrum chose the Senior Citizens Association in Florence County for the first senior center funded by the Spectrum Digital Education grant in South Carolina. This donation is a great step in helping citizens in our Florence County communities and beyond."

"The Senior Citizens Association in Florence County is extremely pleased to have Spectrum as a partner for our Senior Technology Program (STP)," added Linda Mitchell Johnson, executive director, Senior Citizens Association. "We are delighted that we will be able to help seniors throughout Florence County. Our seniors will learn how to implement technology, overcome their technology fears, enhance their skills and learn how to navigate the internet safely."

SCA is one of 47 nonprofit organizations that Spectrum is supporting through its 2022 Spectrum Digital Education grant program. In all, the company will invest \$1.1 million this year to support digital literacy in underserved rural and urban communities within Spectrum's 41-state service area, including South Carolina. Spectrum launched the program in 2017, recognizing that education and digital literacy are as important as affordability relative to a household's lack of broadband services. Excluding this year's awards, Charter has funded 99 nonprofit organizations and more than 95,000 people in 22 states and Washington, D.C., through Spectrum Digital Education.

More information about Spectrum Digital Education and Charter's philanthropic initiatives to support communities is available here.

About Spectrum

Spectrum is a suite of advanced communications services offered by Charter Communications, Inc. (NASDAQ:CHTR), a leading broadband connectivity company and cable operator serving more than 32 million customers in 41 states. Over an advanced communications network, the company offers a full range of state-of-the-art residential and business services including Spectrum Internet®, TV, Mobile and Voice.

For small and medium-sized companies, Spectrum Business® delivers the same suite of broadband products and services coupled with special features and applications to enhance productivity, while for larger businesses and government entities, Spectrum Enterprise provides highly customized, fiber-based solutions. Spectrum Reach® delivers tailored advertising and production for the modern media landscape. The company also distributes award-winning news coverage and sports programming to its customers through Spectrum Networks. More information about Charter can be found at corporate.charter.com.

From the Senior Citizens Association

Congratulations to Mrs. Mae Sabb our Chromebook winner for the Spectrum Digital Literacy Program. During the graduation program, Spectrum presented our seniors with two Chromebooks. Mrs. Mae Sabb, 82-year-old winner cried upon receiving her Chromebook. Linda Mitchell Johnson, exec director said, "I couldn't think of a better person to receive this laptop. Ms. Mae is the perfect example of people we're trying to help."

Thanks to everyone from Spectrum for helping our Senior Technology Program (STP) and updating our senior center's internet infrastructure. The recent pandemic exposed our seniors were truly isolated due to the lack of access to the internet and understanding of technology. SCA and Florence's leaders are determined to fix this problem. Special thanks to Councilmen Chaquez McCall, Councilwoman LaShonda NeSmith Jackson,

and deputy city manager, Scottie Davis for supporting our graduates during the ceremony.

For additional information on events, the Senior Technology Program, and SCA services such as Meals on Wheels Florence please visit our website at www.scaflorence.org



FIVE TIPS FOR REMOTE CAREGIVING



(BPT) - If you're one of the millions of caregivers in the United States, you know that caregiving can be difficult. The last few years may have brought unexpected new challenges, such as the need for social distancing and isolation during COVID-19. But even now, it's important to remember that you can continue to make a positive impact on your loved one's life, even if you can't be there face-to-face.

While you may be unable to physically be with your loved one, remind yourself that what you're doing from a distance does matter. Careful, thoughtful planning and clear communication may help make remote caregiving easier on you and the person you're caring for. Here are some tips to help you navigate remote caregiving.

*** Stay connected.** Communicate through video chats whenever possible to help them feel engaged. Encourage family and friends to call often or write letters and notes. You may also be able to set up a medical alert system that can help you track and monitor the person in your care. Look for a system that's designed with caregivers in mind.

*** Get smart with prescriptions.** If the person in your care regularly takes medication, talk to his or her pharmacist to see if they

offer a mail-order option. You may even be able to order early refills or get 30- or 90-day supplies.

*** Explore remote options for food.** Visiting the grocery store is not always possible. The good news is, there are many options for food delivery. Whether it's groceries, meal kits or Meals on Wheels, there are ways to help make sure your loved one is taken care of with nutritious meals.

*** Consider telehealth for medical needs.** If a medical appointment is necessary, connecting virtually through a phone or video app may be a good option for non-emergent needs. Call your loved one's doctor's office to see what options are available.

*** Have a plan of action.** With so much uncertainty the past few years, it's important to regain a sense of control and confidence. Some steps may include:

*** Collect contact information.** Build a list of contacts, including family members, care providers, pharmacies, care managers, senior service agencies and anyone else that you may need to get a hold of.

*** Gather health documents.** Because care recipients often have complicated medical situations, keeping all paperwork in one place can be invaluable. This could also include important financial and legal records.

*** Become an authorized representative.** As an authorized representative, you're able to help with payments, the choice of doctor and other care decisions. To add an authorized representative, your loved one can visit his or her health plan website or call the customer service number on the back of the ID card.

Caring for loved ones at a distance may be unfamiliar territory, but knowing what tools and programs are available to help you can help ease uncertainty - both for you and those in your care.

For more resources and information that may help you with caregiving, visit <https://www.uhc.com/caregiving>.

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GEARING UP FOR 2023? START BY HELPING PROTECT YOURSELF



(BPT) - Stop for a moment and think about your top five New Year's resolutions. If you said them aloud right now, how many would be about your health? Did they include?

- * Exercising more
- * Eating more healthily
- * Stopping smoking
- * Meditating
- * Getting more quality sleep

Is getting vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia on your health list?

Some people are at increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia - a potentially serious bacterial lung disease - like those 19 or older with certain underlying medical conditions such as:

- * Asthma
- * Diabetes
- * COPD
- * Chronic heart disease

Those aged 65 or older are also at increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia, so it's important to stay up to date on pneumococcal vaccination.

Pneumococcal pneumonia can strike any time of year, and pneumococcal vaccination is available year-round. Even if you've already had a previous pneumonia vaccine, your healthcare provider may recommend another vaccine for additional protection.

Actress, comedian, author and television personality Sherri Shepherd is working with Pfizer to help educate adults aged 19-64 with certain underlying medical conditions about their increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia and the importance of getting vaccinated to help prevent it. "I've been on a public journey with my health for several years now, and I try to prioritize the things that help keep my health goals in line, like long walks. Because I have diabetes, I am at increased risk for pneumococcal pneumonia," said Shepherd, who has taken her shot at

many things this year, including moving across the country and starting exciting new projects.

How to start your health journey

Shepherd credits the success of her health journey to focusing on mindfulness and prioritizing peace. She says the biggest things she can recommend to others starting their health journey include:

- * Getting consistent sleep
- * Drinking more water
- * Finding a way to move your body that works for you
- * Expressing gratitude
- * Trying meditation
- * Making sure you talk to a doctor or pharmacist about pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination

Shepherd continued, "I know that vaccination is one of the best ways to help prevent pneumococcal pneumonia from getting in the way of taking my shot at living my best life."

A new approach to your New Year's resolutions

One way to keep on track is to prioritize your resolutions. Some will be about consistency, but some you can check off your list quickly - like getting vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia.

If you said your top five New Year's resolutions aloud again now, think about why your list should include getting vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia if you're at increased risk. Because, as you head into the New Year, it's important to let nothing stand in the way of taking your shot at what you want to do in 2023.

Pneumococcal pneumonia can strike any time of year, and pneumococcal vaccination is available year-round. Even if you've been vaccinated against flu this season, don't wait to ask your doctor or pharmacist about pneumococcal pneumonia vaccination.

To learn more about the disease, risks, symptoms and more, visit KnowPneumonia.com.

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Stay Connected:



SUCCESS: SMALL, SWEET STEPS SPRINKLED WITH GRATITUDE Submitted by Coach Temple Robinson



Temple Robinson

Welcome to the New Year! How will 2023 be your year? Which wonderful ideas do you want to bring into fruition? How will your life look after they are achieved?

There is much excitement when the New Year begins. It is an opportunity to re-engage with life from a refreshed perspective. New goals are created while current goals are refined. We embark upon this self-discovery because we want a successful life. So, what is success?

Take a moment and answer the following questions. How do I define success? What does success look like to me? Sometimes, it is associated with accolades, wealth and possessions. However, some people achieve that and still feel empty.

Success is an internal desire that is met when you are living out your purpose. It is defined as doing what you said you would do, consistently, with clarity, focus, ease and grace. Doing what you said you would do is fulfilling a promise. And goals are promises. When promises are made, an energy gap is created, which yields an internal tension. It is alleviated when the promise is met. Now, your energy can move freely to attract new possibilities for you.

Clarity is seeing what is important to you in life. Focus requires you to direct your energy towards what is important to avoid distractions. Ease involves taking small steps towards your goal so that you are steadily moving forward. Grace is an unexpected blessing. The gateway to grace is being grateful, regardless of how you perceive the situation.

Here are a few suggestions as you create your goals for this year:

1. Confirm that your goals are related to your purpose. For example, if your goals are to lose weight and travel, dig deeper to discover why this is good for you. How do they give your life meaning? How is this fulfilling to your life?

2. Focus on your goal. There will be times when your goal seems impossible. This is normal. You can train your mind to focus on what is important. At those moments, say aloud: "I am more interested in focusing on this goal." Say this to yourself as many times as needed and move forward.

3. Ease means taking small, sweet steps towards your goal. In order to climb any mountain, you must take steps. Though the steps vary, they all contribute towards getting to the top of the mountain. Breaking your goal into small steps creates a reasonable approach.

4. Grace means being grateful. Acknowledge your current blessings. A powerful way to nourish your spirit is to begin a gratitude journal by finding three things each day for which you are grateful.

The essence and joy of life is in the journey of pursuing your goals. By following these simple, yet impactful steps, you are assuring a path toward victory. Remember to give compassion to yourself because the path forward is a wavy line. If you really believe that this year is your year, say with full authority, aloud: "2023 is the year for me!"

If you would like a complimentary worksheet to support you with 30-day goal setting, please visit my website www.templerobinson.com.

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LOCAL DONATIONS MADE IN LAKE CITY DURING DECEMBER

Submitted by Donna Tracy, public information officer/Photos by Jonathan Laster

LAKE CITY DONATES TO TURBEVILLE CHILDREN'S HOME



From left, Amy Pringle, Fire Department Chief Randy Driggers, Turbeville Children's Home Executive Director Tim Moore and Drew Godwin unloaded presents that will be given to children from the Turbeville Children's Home. The donation from the City of Lake City staff will benefit 15 children.

LAKE CITY-The Turbeville Children's Home received a donation of presents from a white and red vehicle in December, but it wasn't Santa's sleigh! The delivery came from City of Lake City staff to help put smiles on the faces of many children this Christmas.

Through the city's annual angel tree initiative, staff members collected gifts, including clothing, toys and other items, to benefit 15 kids from the Turbeville Children's Home.

"I am so proud of our staff for the generosity they have given during this project," said City Administrator William A. Hall.

"It is a privilege to deliver these gifts and I hope these kids have the best Christmas yet," said Lake City Fire Chief Randy Driggers.

Division Captain Drew Godwin, Administrative Assistant Amy Pringle, Public Information Officer Jonathan Laster and Driggers delivered the presents.

LAKE CITY SENIOR CENTER DONATES TO NURSING FACILITY



Lake City Senior Center employees Priscilla Cooper, Rochella Jackson, Cora Speights, and volunteer Mary Epps deliver presents for residents of Dr. Ronald E. McNair Nursing & Rehabilitation Center December 14. The project benefits 65 residents of the facility.



Cora Speights of the Lake City Senior Center carries gifts to be distributed to residents. Speights led the three-month project to collect donations for the nursing facility.

The Lake City Senior Center visited the Dr. Ronald E. McNair Nursing & Rehabilitation Center on Wed., Dec. 14, with holiday gift bags. The project is part of the senior center's year-long project to give back to those in the community. Cora Speights led the project with help from senior center employees Priscilla Cooper, Rochella Jackson, Juanita Brown, Minnie Brown and senior center Volunteers Mary Washington and Mary Epps.


"Miss Cora led this project and has put a lot of hard work into making sure the residents will have a Christmas to remember," said Interim Senior Center Coordinator Rochella Jackson. "We are so glad to have been a part of this project and want to thank everyone who donated to this initiative."


The gifts included donated blankets, socks and hats, and will be distributed on Christmas morning to the 65 residents.

"It is a blessing to each of our residents," said Patsy Pearson, activities director for Dr. Ronald E. McNair Nursing & Rehabilitation Center.

For more information about the Lake City Senior Center, contact Jackson at (843) 394-2432 ext. 702.

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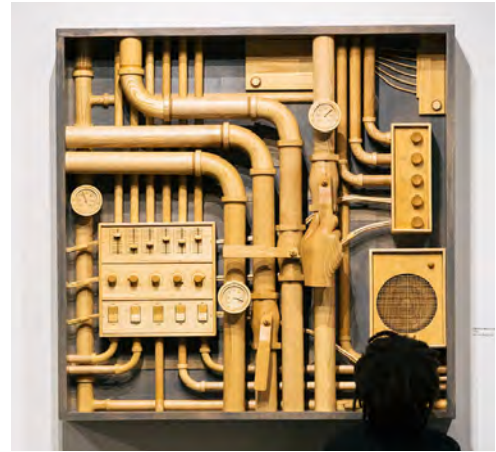
ON DISPLAY IN LAKE CITY:



TIME TRAVEL
Ann Harwell

TRAX Visual Art Center
122 Sauls Street

"My work is to communicate ideas, express feelings and tell stories. I especially want to unite and enhance diverse fabric designs and colors with intricate, precision piecing and exorbitant quilting and all the while weave a subtle sermon on the things that delight and confound me."



mind...body
Jere Williams

Jones-Carter Gallery
105 Henry Street

"These artworks span roughly 20 years in my artmaking career, and for the most part, I consider my process to be an inquiry into the desire to know and thereby control."



Visit Tuesday - Saturday from 11AM to 5PM. Learn more at jonescartergallery.com and traxvisualartcenter.com!

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On Behalf of
Diversity Works
Magazine Staff

2023
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Winter Wonderland *Margarita*

1 Serving | 5 Minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 oz. Silver Tequila
- 2 oz. White Cranberry Juice
- 1 oz. Triple Sec
- 1 oz. Lime Juice
- Garnish - Fresh Cranberries & Rosemary Sprigs

Directions:

1. Add ice and all ingredients to your shaker.
2. Shake vigorously for 10 - 15 seconds.
3. Pour shaker contents into your rocks glass.
4. Garnish with Cranberries and Rosemary.
5. Enjoy!



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*"We are caring,
loving people. We want
the best for everyone."*

Odellia Brown, Emergency Room Registrar
BLACK RIVER MEDICAL CENTER



MUSC Health Black River means a new home away from home, new atmosphere, and new **opportunities to grow**. It's wonderful for the old, and the new family members joining together as one. MUSC Black River is awesome! I truly believe that MUSC is committed and dedicated to our community. I am looking forward to great things happening.

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I HAVE *a* DREAM

- Martin Luther King Jr.

FOOD  LION

Honoring
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

