



DARLINGTON COUNTY



Getting children ready for school.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2018-2019

## THE NEED

### IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

42%

of people live in a childcare desert, where there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots

53%

of children ages 3 and 4 are not enrolled in nursery school or preschool



### IN DARLINGTON COUNTY:

3,891

children under age 5

61.7%

of young children live in poverty or low-income households

71%

of kindergartners are considered "not ready" for school

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide programs, services, and information to strengthen the families and communities of Darlington County.

## OUR APPROACH



High quality programs and services for children and families



Intensive training, resources and support for childcare providers



Strategic partnerships and community education

## OUR IMPACT

4,846

number of children and adults served by Darlington County First Steps in 2018-2019

## JOIN US

We rely on a community of partners, donors, and volunteers – **people like you** – who believe in a brighter future for children and families in our community.

437 W. Carolina Ave., Bldg. 1, Hartsville, SC 29550 | [www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org](http://www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org)

Data provided by:



**Darnell Byrd McPherson**  
Executive Director  
Darlington County First Steps

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

And, how are the children? This is the question we must ask ourselves every day! Some of the answers can be found in The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2017 Policy Report, [Race for Results](#). This report found that no one racial group has all children meeting all of the identified milestones; however, children of color face some of the biggest obstacles on the pathway to opportunity! The intersection of race and opportunity in our community results in children who are less ready to enter kindergarten. What are the key indicators which negatively impact kindergarten readiness? According to the Race for Results Report, low birthweight of the child along with the age, educational level, and marital status of their parent(s) are the greatest negative contributors! Our Board has embraced the challenges identified in [Race for Results](#) and our most recent community needs assessment! Our programs and services reflect our core values of quality community engagement, uncompromising compassion and empathy, and high levels of transparency and accountability.

*Darnell Byrd McPherson*

## OUR GOALS

Our partnership's work, in collaboration with state and local partners, is focused on advancing Darlington County towards these strategic goals in support of the Profile of the Ready Kindergartner, South Carolina's description of school readiness:

- To establish significant relationships and partnerships which engage our communities and supports building strong families in healthy communities.
- To support parents as the primary educators of their children.
- To offer comprehensive programs and services, in partnership with other key community stakeholders, which improve overall health and educational outcomes for young children, their families, and the community we serve.

Darlington County First Steps positively impacts the community through the myriad of initiatives they undertake. Improved early childhood education, overall family development, and teenage pregnancy prevention are just a few of the endeavors this group pursues. As a board member, I enjoy working with this impressive collective, and as a resident of Darlington County, I appreciate their presence and the results they achieve in the overall community.

**ALLISON BAKER, ACTING BOARD CHAIR**



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PARENTS (CSYP)/PARENTS ARE FIRST (PAF)

CSYP/PAF is funded under the federal Pregnancy Assistance Fund Grant and was awarded to Darlington County First Steps in 2014. CSYP/PAF is a comprehensive program designed to mobilize community partners to enhance the availability and quality of services for young parents, ages 15-24, in Darlington County. The program focuses on both mothers and fathers and provides both direct and in-direct services to program participants. The goals of the program are to:

1. Improve health outcomes of expectant and parenting teens and young adults
2. Improve self-sufficiency of parenting teens and young adults
3. Improve the overall well-being of young families
4. Increase awareness of CSYP/PAF services among expectant and parenting teens and young adults and the organizations that provide them services.

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### CSYP/PAF BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

**63**

parents served

**47**

Dependent  
children served

**15**

extended family  
members served





# COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN



*an evidence-informed program*

Developed by South Carolina First Steps – and identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor’s Association in 2005 – Countdown to Kindergarten (CTK) is a home visitation program pairing the families of rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, establishing strong connections during the summer that facilitate classroom learning throughout the year.

## CTK BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

7

kindergarten teachers  
trained as home visitors

48

children served

288

total home and school  
visits



“CTK is one of the most beneficial programs I have ever been a part of as an educator. The relationships that you build with the child and their parent(s) are so valuable; it makes the school year flow so much easier having that foundation already set. The CTK program is an invaluable asset to a teacher and her upcoming class; the benefits for all involved are indescribable. “

**-Brandy Weaver, CTK Teacher and Lead Facilitator**



Hartsville Kiwanis



of Hartsville



## CHOOSE WELL INITIATIVE

Choose Well is a statewide contraceptive access initiative working to reduce unintended pregnancy across South Carolina. Through its large network of Partners and more than 150 clinical sites, Choose Well is improving consumer knowledge and access to contraceptive care services, increasing provider knowledge and training, and removing the cost barriers to contraceptive care and birth control for women.

As an official Partner in Choose Well, we offer contraceptive care education and referrals to clinical sites throughout our service area. We help connect community members with needed resources to make the best contraceptive care decisions. The goal of the Initiative is to reduce unintended pregnancies by:

1. Increasing access to contraceptive care services for men and women, ages 24-40 in Darlington County.
2. Expanding current contraceptive care services to include cities of Darlington/Lamar.
3. Expanding current work pertaining to contraceptive care on college campuses.
4. Strengthening capacity of key stakeholders, including clinical partners, community reaching organizations and others to ensure buy-in and commitment to the Initiative.

To help us achieve outcomes, we created a Community Work Group, based in Darlington, to help us achieve these goals. During our meetings, we strategize and prepare quarterly workplans with specific activities aligned with our objectives.

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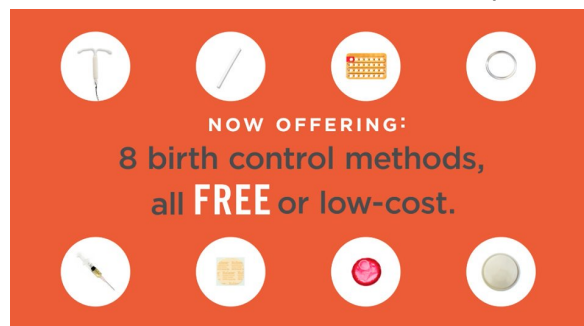
### CHOOSE WELL BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

**389**

Active & Passive  
referrals

**38**

Number of Community  
Work Group Participants



New Morning  
Foundation



## DUKE ENDOWMENT INITIATIVE

In 2014, The Duke Endowment funded a research report, *Accelerating Progress: A roadmap to achieve further reductions in teen pregnancy*, that provides an in-depth look at teen pregnancy rates throughout South Carolina and approaches to solving this issue. The report recognized Darlington County as a high burden, high volume county. Our need to get involved in this work was vital as we began to serve an increasing number of teenage mothers. With support from The Duke Endowment and Fact Forward, we have been able to implement programs to prevent teen pregnancy and provide reproductive health education such as: AC/DC (Access Condoms in Darlington County), Evidenced Based Programs (Seventeen Days, ACT, and Roots & Wings), develop a Community Work Group and Youth Leadership Team, as well as host Parent/Child Communications events.

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*Seventeen Days* is an interactive theory-based film which is designed to educate young women, ages 14-19, about contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The film presents scenarios involving decisions that young women face in romantic relationships. The film identifies choice points and suggests risk-reduction strategies. Viewers are given the opportunity to mentally practice how they would respond in hypothetical situations. The film presents educational content through six vignettes: a condom demonstration, contraception, STIs and anatomy that are varied in their approach.

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ACT modules provide comprehensive tailored assessment and health education directing youth towards the creation of a positive behavior change plan (ex. Condom use with every sexual encounter). The ACT modules offer busy practices and professionals a virtual health educator to support the care provided to youth on specific health topics (e.g. sexual behaviors). The ACT modules facilitate and document a comprehensive assessment based on youth reported behaviors and stage of change with embedded health education tailored to the needs of individual youth. Tailoring and stage-based interventions have been shown to dramatically increase successful retention and completion of interventions, and promotes movement towards positive behavior change. The ACT modules also offer youth text message follow up to continue their engagement in positive healthy behaviors beyond their health care visit.

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THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

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## DUKE ENDOWMENT INITIATIVE *ctd.*

Roots and Wings is a two-hour workshop for parents of adolescents or adults who interact regularly with youth. It is designed to increase adults' confidence to talk with teens about sex and sexuality and to help give them solid foundations of knowledge to make healthy decisions regarding their health and relationships. Research has shown the important role parents play in influencing a teen's decision to engage in risky behavior.

A recent survey of teens and parents by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that teens identified their parents as the most influential forces in their decision-making about sex.

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The Community Work Group (CWG) is comprised of representatives from local healthcare providers, schools, and nonprofit organizations who assist with implementing activities that continue to change social norms around reproductive health and increase adolescent's access to sexual health services in Darlington County.

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The Youth Leadership Team (YLT) was established to educate and develop teens in Darlington County to be advocates for Darlington County First Steps and The Duke Endowment Initiative. Members of the YLT are trained in reproductive health and physiology, methods of contraception and STIs/HIV so their peers receive accurate information. They also inform their peers of access to health care facilities and AC/DC locations in the community.

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Parent/Child Communication (PCC) activities give parents tools and confidence to comfortably talk with their children about tough topics like love, sex and relationships. PCC also increases knowledge of access to resources in the community like healthcare facilities and partnering organizations. Parents receive Roots & Wings training as well as training in hosting Let's Talk Events.

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THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

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## DUKE ENDOWMENT INITIATIVE *ctd.*

AC/DC is a strategic intervention used in barbershops, beauty salons, small businesses, and by individuals in the community. The goals of AC/DC are to promote healthy behaviors by:

- Providing condoms and health literature which supports condom use as a method of teen pregnancy and STD/HIV prevention.
- Providing information on proper application and use of the condoms and its value in prevention of teen pregnancy and HIV/STDs, through the use of condoms.

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### AC/DC BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019



**62**

AC/DC Sites and  
Individuals

**38,120+**

Condoms Distributed



*James B. Duke*

THE DUKE ENDOWMENT



## DUKE ENDOWMENT INITIATIVE BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

2

Seventeen Days  
Parties

18

Participants

6

Roots & Wings  
Sessions

52

Participants

6

Community Work  
Group Meetings

94

Participants

3

Youth Leadership  
Team Meetings

18

Participants

9

Parent/Child  
Communication  
Events

172

Participants

*James B. Duke*

THE DUKE ENDOWMENT





## MEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE

In our work with fathers/males over the years, it has become increasingly clear many fathers/males have both physical and mental health issues and needs that are unaddressed. One of our core strategies to strengthen families is to provide services directly targeting the fathers/males in our families. The goals of the Men's Health Initiative are to:

- Increase awareness of the advantages and value of good health of the individual, their family, and society/the community.
- Provide information, resources, and access to reduce health disparities in men of color.
- Continue to engage community partners and stakeholders and develop strategies/solutions to address health disparities among all men of color.
- Expand the Men's Health Collaborative to identify additional partnerships.

For the past three years, our organization has celebrated Men's Health Month in June by actively promoting men's health during community events, the signing of proclamations in Darlington, Lamar, and Hartsville as well as providing The Myrtle Lodge, a local fraternal organization, with men's health information to share among members. We also collaborate with the South Carolina Cancer Alliance to bring Prostate Cancer Awareness Workshops and other Men's Health Awareness Events to the Pee Dee Region.

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### MEN'S HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

115

Number of Men's Health  
Materials Distributed

8

Number of Men's Health  
Meetings/Events





## MOTHEREAD/FATHEREAD



*an evidence-based program*

Motheread/Fatheread is an evidenced based family literacy program model. Parents are engaged in learning how to select age-appropriate books, to read to their children, to extend the story line of each book, to learn about child development, and to introduce parents to adult literature. Groups are led by a certified Motheread/Fatheread facilitator.

Group meetings with parents are held at local Head Start centers and at Darlington County First Steps' location. The curriculum uses a variety of activities that promote the use of oral and written language to explore every day experiences and encourage vocabulary development. Sessions encourage adults to hold or sit close to children, engaging them in the story-reading process through the use of props, discussion questions and story related activities, songs, and games.

### MOTHEREAD/FATHEREAD BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

# 259

Books  
Distributed

# 20

Number of Adults  
in Program



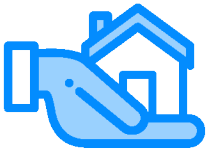


# PARENTS AS TEACHERS



*an evidence-based program*

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a home visiting program designed to build strong communities, thriving families and children who are healthy, safe and ready to succeed. PAT services include:



Personal visits from a parent educator at least twice monthly



Monthly group connections with other PAT families



Screenings and assessments to identify developmental concerns



Connections to outside resources that families may need to succeed



## PAT IN THE NEWS

PAT recently received the highest rating from the federal Prevention Services Clearinghouse. This recognition validates the effectiveness of Parents as Teachers as a strategy for improving parenting practices, promoting early detection of developmental delays and health issues, preventing child abuse and neglect, and enhancing school readiness and success.

## PAT IN DARLINGTON COUNTY 2018-2019

18

Families Served

183

Books Distributed

156

Total Home Visits

"I enjoy getting books each time we get a visit and the bonding time I have with my daughter."

**QUOTE FROM CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY**



Parents as Teachers.  
*Model Affiliate*



## PARENT TRAINING: PARENT CAFES – BE STRONG FAMILIES



*an evidence-informed program*

Be Strong Families developed Parent Cafés, a process that encourages communities to bring parents together and engage in conversation on strengthening their families. Parent Cafés focus on the importance of building protective factors, not only into their relationships with their children, but with fellow parents as well. Protective factors highlighted by Be Strong Families include the following:

- Parental resilience—be strong and flexible
- Social connections—parents need friends
- Concrete support in times of need—we all need help sometimes
- Knowledge of parenting and child development—being a great parent is part natural and part learned
- Social and emotional competence of children—parents need to help their children communicate

Parent Cafés have been proven to result in reduced stress, increased parenting knowledge and skills, and lead to opportunities for parent leadership. We also offer Parent Café in a Box: a learning tool, intended to facilitate conversation among participants, including a set of cards with questions that focus on the protective factor topic areas.

### PARENT CAFES BY THE NUMBERS From March 2019-June 30, 2019

6

Sessions

41

Parents Served





## REACH OUT AND READ



*an evidence-based program*

The Reach Out and Read (ROR) Model prepares young children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. ROR begins at the 6-month checkup and continues through age 5, with a special focus on children growing up in low-income communities. According to Reach Out and Read Carolinas, ROR is part of the nationwide organization.

Families who participate in ROR read together more often and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and are better prepared to achieve their potential.

Darlington County First Steps partners with Eastern Carolina Pediatrics Associates of Darlington. Eastern Carolina Pediatrics Associates is dedicated to the ROR Model and supports early literacy with First Steps. Their facility has a literacy rich waiting room for parents and their children to explore the wonders of books together.

### REACH OUT AND READ BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

**731**

books distributed

**763**

well baby visits



where great stories begin™





# STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROGRAM



*an evidence-based program*

The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) is a program funded by the Children's Trust of South Carolina. SFP serves families with children ages 6 to 11 in settings that include community centers, schools and/or churches. Participants complete a 14-session program. The sessions, which always begins with a family meal, typically last 2 ½ hours and include parents and children meeting separately to work with group leaders before coming together for shared activities to finish. Participants who successfully complete the 14-session program graduate in a celebratory style with a graduation ceremony.

The SFP is a two- generational approach where children, ages 6-11, and their parents work on parallel activities, designed to improve family relationships and break generational cycles of dysfunction. The SFP is an evidenced-based program which is nationally recognized for its success in helping families.

## SFP BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

# 14

Sessions held

# 10

Families successfully  
completing the program





## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- 1. Early Childhood Education/Family Literacy (Child Care)** is provided to parents/students in partnership with the Darlington-Lee County Adult Education Program. Parents involved in any aspect of programming provided by DCFS, to include BabyNet, are eligible for free part-day child care services. Childcare hours are Monday-Thursday from 8:30am-12:30pm and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5:30pm-8:30pm.
- 2. Literacy Kits/Welcome Baby Bags** are delivered to parents of newborns at Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center. These bags, which contain a United Way Born Learning Booklet, board books, child development information and baby supplies, are provided through a partnership with Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center and the Darlington County Library System.
- 3. Infant Formula, Diapers, and Wipes** are donated from the Department of Health and Environmental Control- Darlington and Hartsville sites, United Way of Hartsville, and members of the community. We redistribute these items to families enrolled in our programs and families who come to us with a need.
- 4. Dad Cave and Diva Den** are safe spaces for mothers, fathers and guardians to unwind, share and learn with peers, and receive services. These spaces are also used for community convenings and can be reserved for use, free of charge, by partnering organizations.

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## BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

526

Welcome Baby Bags  
Distributed

202

Number of Children in  
Family Literacy/Childcare

274

Formula, Diapers, and  
Wipes Given to Families

77

Events/Meetings Held in Diva  
Den and Dad Cave





## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Meeting people where they are is how we reach families and community members effectively. “Tabling” is a strategy we have adopted which allows us to locate ourselves within various communities. Tabling is when we collaborate with partners or host community events to set up stations with Darlington County First Steps information and materials. The purpose of this activity is to connect families and individuals to our program services. We’ve hosted Community Health Fairs and tabled at Back to School Events, Community Baby Showers, and Community Festivals such as Lamar’s Annual Egg Scramble and Butler Heritage Week in Hartsville.

Darlington County First Steps’ Teen Pregnancy Prevention program provides support, services, awareness and information to reduce teen pregnancy and other risky behaviors among youth, ages 10-19. We have collaborated with Community Partners to host eight (8) teen events with a total of 102 young people to participate throughout the county.

Virtual communication (Facebook, website, newsletter) is a strategy used to extend our reach to meet our audience and provide education and awareness about our initiatives.

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## COMMUNITY BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

**1,515**

Materials Distributed

**36**

Tabling Events

**16,000+**

Total People Reached  
(including social media reach)





## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Addressing the needs of young children is a shared endeavor. In addition to providing services to families and support for child care providers, Darlington County First Steps mobilizes partners and community members to ensure all children in Darlington County begin school ready to succeed. We

serve as a:

### LOCAL PORTAL

connecting preschool children and  
their families to services

### CONVENER

of community stakeholders to develop an effective  
and comprehensive early childhood system

### CHAMPION

of the importance of school  
readiness to our children's future

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## OUR PARTNERSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS 2018-2019

7

Statewide  
Partners

17

Darlington County  
Partners

Forming and developing strong relationships is paramount to the success of Genesis Health Care, Inc. The team at Darlington County First Steps has opened so many doors for us that I cannot express my appreciation. The programs you have/support are so very important to the communities served and we are happy to be a part of it. Thank you again for allowing us to partner with you and the other great organizations involved.

**HOWARD NETTLES, GENESIS HEALTH CARE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT**



## OUR SUPPORTERS

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Through partnerships and collaborations, as well as financial support from grants and contributions, Darlington County First Steps leverages state dollars to enhance and expand services to children and families.

### FUNDING SUPPORT

Belk Charities: \$185

Children's Trust of South Carolina (CAP): \$500

Children's Trust of South Carolina (PAF): \$65,000

Children's Trust of South Carolina(SFP): \$75,000

Duke Endowment: \$111,550

Kiwanis: \$1,500

Diane McIver: \$100.00

New Morning Foundation (Choosewell): \$72,221

United Way of Hartsville: \$18,000

### IN-KIND SUPPORT

Darlington County School District

Department of Health and Environmental Control

Darlington Recreation Department

Darlington Library System

Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce

T.B. Thomas Sports Center

United Way of Hartsville

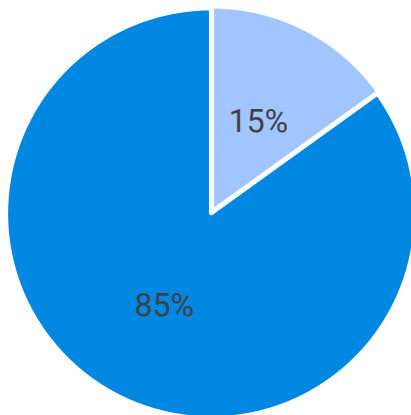
## JOIN US

For more information on partnership opportunities, visit our website at  
**[www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org](http://www.darlingtoncountyfirststeps.org)**



## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### OUR INVESTMENT IN QUALITY Expenditures by Program Type



### ESTIMATION OF COST SAVINGS

Since inception, Darlington County First Steps has leveraged **\$3,386,751** from sources outside of state government.

That's **\$0.67** for every state dollar.

■ Evidence-based ■ Evidence-informed

	State Funding	Federal Funding	Private Funding	In-Kind Contributions	Total
Administrative Functions	\$20,438.23	\$	\$	\$	\$20,438.23
Core Functions	\$25,384.82	\$1,486.12	\$175,022.00	\$	\$201,893.13
Parents As Teachers	\$80,300.39	\$	\$143.50	\$	\$80,443.89
Motheread/Fatheread	\$24,695.59	\$	\$6,425.00	\$	\$31,120.59
Parent Training PAF – Federal Parent Café – Private funding	\$2,439.00	\$70,350.88	\$3,443.57	\$	\$76,233.45
Fatherhood Initiative	\$19,333.13	\$	\$541.82	\$	\$19,874.95
Reach Out and Read	\$29,372.88			\$	\$29,372.88
Strengthening Families	\$	\$	\$34,165.44	\$	\$34,165.44
Early Education (Childcare)	\$39,716.77	\$	\$8,623.11	\$	\$48,339.88
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$5,074.74	\$	\$10,549.92	\$	\$15,624.66
Men's Health	\$7,380.90	\$	\$346.75	\$	\$7,727.65
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$254,136</b>	<b>\$71,837</b>	<b>\$239,261</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$565,235</b>



## LEADERSHIP

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Allison Baker, Secretary

Beth Campbell

Thomasena Davis

Jimmie Epling, Vice-Chair

Alma Harris, Chair

Winifred Herrington

Diane McIver

Sharman Poplava

### STAFF

Darnell Byrd McPherson, Executive Director

Brenda Ayers, Program Director

Linda Bright, Group Facilitator

Jessica Cohen, Program Specialist

Jerline Lowry, Group Facilitator

Patricia Sullivan, Program Coordinator

Kimberly Hendrickson, Childcare Assistant  
/Group Facilitator

Shelagh Hendrickson, Finance Specialist

Whitney Davis, Program Educator

Britney Brisbon, Program Educator

Austistine Sutton, Childcare Supervisor

Amani Rodriguez, Group Facilitator

Gwen Watkins, Finance Assistant

## CONTACT US

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