



WINTER 2022/SPRING 2023

# THE CHALLENGER

Challenging the community, families, and individuals to make a difference

A Publication of the Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board

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*Our Mission: To enhance the lives, develop the abilities, and promote the independence of people with disabilities.*



### Message from Executive Director,

June marks the start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season, and forecasters advise that this season will bring near-normal levels of storm activity to the region. We, therefore, must all play our part to be as prepared as possible. The National Hurricane Center is forecasting between 12 to 17 named storms with winds of at least 39 miles per hour. Of those storms, five to nine are expected to become hurricanes, including four major hurricanes Category 3 or above. Despite any prediction however, we must make ourselves ready regardless, because it really does only take one! Being prepared is one of the most important things we can do as individuals, families, businesses, and communities to minimize the impacts of severe weather events. If you haven't already done so, stock up on your hurricane supplies now, and make sure you have hurricane plans in place for your homes, businesses, and families. Now is the time to start preparing your business in the event a storm comes our way this summer.

— **Ruth Blocker**

# Christmas at BTG December 2022



# Wendy's Retirement December 30, 2022



# BTG Valentine's Day Social

**Bridging the Gap**  
Presents  
**A VALENTINE'S DAY Party**  
FEBRUARY 14TH  
Food | Games | FUN

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Tuesday,  
February 14

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11 am to 1 pm

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A Valentine's King and Queen  
will be chosen!



Pictured above are 2023 Valentines Social's King and Queen from right to left Janie McPhail and David Lanier



# March is Disability Advocacy Month



*Mayor Hancock proclaimed that March 2023 as “Disabilities Awareness Month in Hartsville, SC”  
 Pictured above from left to right Mayor Casey Hancock and Executive Director Ruth Blocker*

# National Doctor’s Day March 30,2023



Dr. R. Mac Chapmen M.D..

In Dr Chapman’s absence, his wife accepted his gift basket for National Doctor’s Day. Pictured below from left to right Mrs. Chapman and Executive Director Ruth Blocker



# Bonnie Ellison Retirement (Friday, April 21, 2023)



happy retirement

Join us in celebrating the Retirement of

**Bonnie Ellison**

We will honor Bonnie for her contributions in a farewell reception to be held in the Scott Center Training Room at 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. We invite all employees to extend their good wishes to Bonnie in her new endeavors.

Any monetary gifts can be sent to:

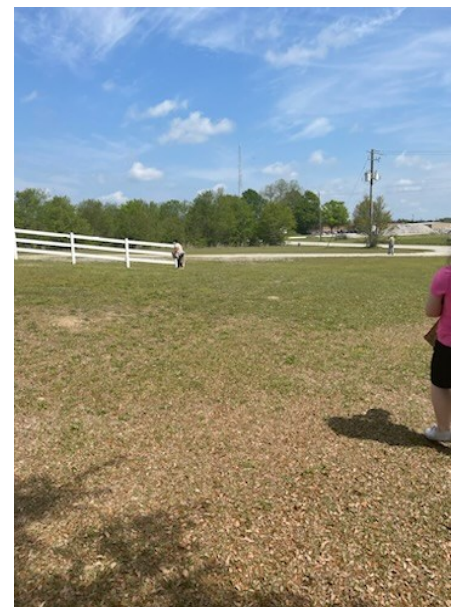
Cash App: smrsanderson525

Venmo: Miriam.Yezmig

PayPal: mmanderson0525



## Happy Easter Bridging the Gap held its Annual Easter Egg Hunt!!



# Celebration of the Young Child Cinco de Mayo (May 5, 2023)



**DARLINGTON COUNTY**  
Disabilities and Special Needs Board  
*Bright Beginnings*  
Early Intervention Services

*Taking Learning Through Play*  
Above and Beyond  
Serving Children between the  
ages of 0-5

*Services Offered:*

- FAMILY TRAINING
- CASE MANAGEMENT
- TRANSITION TO SCHOOL SERVICES WITH REFERRAL LINKAGE TO:
- SPEECH, OCCUPATIONAL AND PHYSICAL THERAPY
- NURSING SERVICES

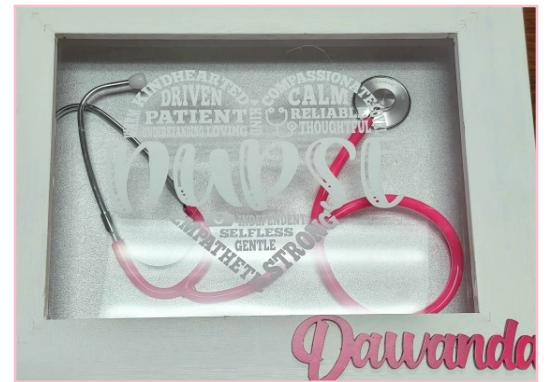
*Mission:*  
TO ENHANCE THE LIVES, DEVELOP THE ABILITIES, AND PROMOTE THE INDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

201 N. Damascus Church Road  
Hartsville, SC 29550  
843-332-7252  
<http://www.dcdsnb.org>

Early Intervention Department attended The Celebration of Young Child Week at Jacquelyn James Slayton Head Start Academy (Baseball Field) Left to Right Cricket Porter, Sheril Strong, and Joni Pendergrass



# National Nurses Week (May 6-12, 2023)



Executive Director Ruth Blocker showed appreciation of our Nurse Dawanda Brown's dedication to the agency with a shadow box filled with the wonderful characteristics of a nurse!!!!

# 2023 Service Award Luncheon

## 5 Year Service Awards

**Winnie Arnold**  
 (not pictured)  
**Chris Bedenbaugh**  
 (not pictured)  
**Vanessa Carroway**  
 (not pictured)  
**Micrin Copeland**  
**Kewanda Hunter**  
**Anastasia Littles**  
**Delora Singletary**  
**Teresa Williams**



Left to Right Operations Consultant Rufus Britt, Maintenance Tech Micrin Copeland, Executive Director Ruth Blocker



Operations Consultant Rufus Britt, Executive Director Ruth Blocker, BTG Lead DSP Kewanda Hunter, Board Member Hattie Hughes



Board Member Hattie Hughes, Residential Consultant Ella Timmons, Jones House DSP Anastasia Littles, Residential Director Timothy Smith, Jones House Manager Nicole Lee, Executive Director Ruth Blocker



Operations Consultant Rufus Britt, Board Member Hattie Hughes, BTG DSP Delora Singletary, Executive Director Ruth Blocker



Board Member Hattie Hughes, Reagan House Manager Verniell Hannibal, Reagan House DSP Teresa Williams, Executive Director Ruth Blocker



# 2023 Service Award Luncheon (continued)

## 10 Year Service Awards

**Vanessa Cabbagestalk  
(not pictured)**

**Wanda Cooke  
Nicole Lee**



Left to Right Board Member Hattie Hughes, Finance Technician Wanda Cooke, Executive Ruth Blocker

Board Member Hattie Hughes, Residential Director Timothy, Smith, Jones House Manager Nicole Lee, Executive Director Ruth Blocker

## 15 Year Service Awards

**Jennie McQueen  
Glynn Willis  
(not pictured)**



Board Member Hattie Hughes, BTG DSP Jennie McQueen, Daughter of Recipient Tameka Short, Executive Director Ruth Blocker

## 25 Year Service Awards

**Dianne Mickens**



Board Member Hattie Hughes, BTG DSP Dianne Mickens, Executive Director Ruth Blocker

# 2023 Service Award Luncheon (continued)



### Vonoka Kind Award

Left to Right: Mrs. Hattie Hughes, Jennie McQueen, Mrs. Ruth Blocker



### Sue Woodham Award

Left to Right: Rufus Britt, Mrs. Hattie Hughes, Kewanda Hunter, Mrs. Ruth Blocker



### Employee of the Year Award

Left to Right: Mrs. Hattie Hughes, Micrin Copeland, Mrs. Ruth



### Lou Scott Award

Left to Right Mrs. Hattie Hughes, Rochelle Moses, Mrs. Ruth Blocker

**The Darlington County Disabilities Foundation  
appreciates all of our generous donors.**

*The following Donations were received after the last printing of the Challenger.*

**INDIVIDUALS:**

*Judy Ratley  
Edie Kelley  
Hattie Hughes  
EJ Arthur*

*Dr. & Mrs. Joe McCullough  
Julius & Carolyn Black  
Rev. and Mrs. Troy Shaw*

*Anonymous Donations: \$500*

**BUSINESSES:**

*Faith Baptist Church  
Norton Funeral Home  
AO Smith  
Hartsville Kiwanis Club  
Maxie's Auto Sales, Inc.  
Triplets Auto Sales  
American Heritage Girls*

*Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center  
Brown Pennington Atkins Funeral Home  
Wesley United Methodist Church Women's Group  
Price's Automotive Investments  
Liberty Chapel Missionary Society  
Terry Harrelson Auto Sales  
West Hartsville Baptist Church*



We appreciate all donations and use them as we strive to provide services to over 500 individuals with Disabilities and/or Special Needs in Darlington County. Thank you for enriching the lives of our individuals. We appreciate your generosity.



***"Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision." — Stevie Wonder***

Blind since shortly after birth, Stevie Wonder is an American music icon and activist. He signed his first record contract at age 11. He celebrated his 73nd birthday in May 2023 and is still performing live.



**Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board**

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Hartsville, SC 29550

Telephone: 843-332-7252 • Fax: 843-309-9965 • Website: [www.dcdsnb.org](http://www.dcdsnb.org)

**Mrs. Ruth Blocker, M.A.**  
Executive Director

**Board Members:**

Mrs. Brenda Ferguson, Chair  
Mrs. Carolyn Black, Vice-Chair  
Mrs. Mary Alice T. King  
Mrs. Hattie E. Hughes  
Mrs. Tammie Robinson  
Rev. Troy Shaw



**Foundation Members:**

Mrs. Penelope Bright  
Mrs. Debbie Fink  
Mrs. Hattie Hughes  
Mrs. Brenda Ferguson  
Mrs. Mary Alice T. King  
Dr. Joe McCullough  
Mrs. Patricia Toney