



# THE CHALLENGER

Challenging the community, families, and individuals to make a difference  
A Publication of the **Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board**

Summer 2009

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

## It's Summertime!

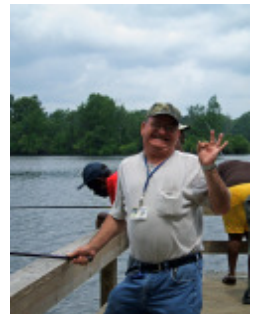
Spring has blown by and summer is upon us. This spring brought us both happiness and sadness. We were all very saddened by the deaths of two beloved former employees, Vonoka Kind and Amanda Richardson. Vonoka passed away on April 9 and Amanda on May 5. (See page 3.)

We were fortunate to have good times, too. Some representatives from our Self Advocacy group spent the day in Columbia for Disability Advocacy Day on March 4. This is an annual trip and a chance to meet our state legislators and participate in a rally.

Our Annual Training was held on March 12 and 13. Training is required each year for us to comply with DDSN regulations. Most topics are mandated by DDSN and must last for the required length of time. For example, the Rights & Due Process presentation must last at least 1.5 hours. During breaks each day, tickets were drawn for door prizes. Most prizes were purchased by the EAC. The highlight of the two days was the Service Award Luncheon. Employees were given awards based on length of service. (See page 4.) Lunch was catered by Caroline Johnson of Columbia and was delicious.

BTG began seedlings for a garden project in April and it has bloomed beautifully. (See page 4.)

The annual FAC Spring Picnic was held on June 4 at Lawton Park. The Hartsville Recreational Department was kind enough to loan us the beautiful property for the day. CTH Residential Director Wilton Griffith and Maintenance Technician Woody Moses did a great job on the grill for us again this year. Everyone enjoyed the park facilities. Some consumers fished from the docks. Others enjoyed being a kid again on the swings. Day Program Director Tanya Palumbo rocked the house as DJ and staff assisted in serving lunch. The FAC is already planning to request the facilities next year.



DSP Appreciation Day, an annual event sponsored by the EAC, was held on June 5. The EAC gifted 77 DSPs with \$ 5 gift cards from Wal-Mart and a personalized print on the meaning of Direct Support Professional. Day Program Director Tanya Palumbo held a Staff Appreciation Luau the same day and provided lunch and gift bags.



Enjoy your summer and stay safe!



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### Calendar of Upcoming Events

July 3 .....	FAC Gas Raffle drawing
July 28 .....	Board of Directors Meeting
TBA .....	Family Advisory Council Meeting
August 25 .....	Board of Directors Meeting

## *A Message from the Director*

by Ruth Thomas, Executive Director

Summer is here! While it is a wonderful time for fun and usually packed with activities, it is also a time to be wary of preventable tragedies. This year, there have already been 22 vehicle related hyperthermia deaths. Never leave your child / vulnerable person or pet in your car unattended. Hyperthermia is an acute condition which occurs when the body produces or absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. A core body temperature of 107 degrees is considered lethal; cells are damaged and internal organs shut down. Children's bodies are not as efficient as adults and their body temperatures warm 3 to 5 times faster than adults. This means that children can suffer hyperthermia very quickly. Even on a relatively cool summer day at 80 degrees, temperatures inside a car (even with the window cracked) can increase to 99 degrees in just 10 minutes. On days with higher temperatures, vehicle interiors heat up even faster and can easily reach 150 degrees. Leaving a child in a vehicle unattended for any length of time is illegal and punishable by fines and imprisonment in many states. In some states, leaving a pet unattended in a vehicle is illegal also.



There have been 434 child vehicle related hyperthermia deaths since 1998. To prevent this tragedy from happening to your family, heed the following safety recommendations: NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED IN A VEHICLE. NOT EVEN FOR A MINUTE. Be sure that all occupants leave the vehicle when unloading. Don't overlook sleeping babies. 222 of these deaths were caused when the child was "forgotten" by the caregiver. Always lock your car and ensure children do not have access to keys or remote entry devices. 129 of these deaths resulted from child playing in unattended vehicle. If a child is missing, check the car first, including the trunk. Teach your children that vehicles are never to be used as a play area. Place your purse or briefcase in the back seat as a reminder that you have your child in the car. Make "look before you leave" a routine whenever you get out of the car. Have a plan that your childcare provider will call you if your child does not show up for school / daycare. Inform anyone who may transport your child in a vehicle of these recommendations.

If you suspect a child is suffering from heat exhaustion, call 911 immediately. While waiting for medical authorities, it's important to quickly lower the body temperature of the child. Move the victim to a cool area (indoors or shaded area). Remove clothing to promote heat loss. Cold compresses to the head, neck, torso, and groin will aid in cooling. Do NOT wrap the victim in wet towels; this can act as a heat insulator. Immersion in ice or cold water is dangerous and should be avoided. (*Jan Null, CCM Adjunct Professor of Meteorology, SFSU. Fact Sheet - Hyperthermia Deaths of Children in Vehicles. <http://ggweather.com/heat/> .*)

## *Employee Advisory Committee News*

by Carrie Chenard, 2009 EAC Chair

The mission and purpose of the EAC is to provide a direct link between the employees and administration of DCDSNB and to provide morale boosting activities for employees.

This year, the EAC has been working on trying to determine where we can improve services to staff. We have distributed surveys in paychecks to employees requesting comments and suggestions on where to focus our attention. Unfortunately, few responses have been returned. The EAC is anxious to serve employees as well as possible. Please return your surveys so your voice can be heard!

### **Welcome New Employees!**

Shoshonna Boseman	Crystal Brunson
Violet Cain	Shelly Gainey
Melissa Gillis	Brenda Hickson
Joyce Jackson	Mary Jones
Rhonda Logan	Gwendolyn Nivens
Margie Pearson	Sherrell Venzen
Jessie Williams	

### **21 Years of Service**

Violet Johnson

### **19 Years of Service**

Peggy Bristow

### **18 Years of Service**

James Jackson

### **17 Years of Service**

Mary Durant

### **16 Years of Service**

Mary Brown  
Carmen Brown

### **15 Years of Service**

Felicia Bracey

### **14 Years of Service**

Gwen Sansbury

### **13 Years of Service**

Shelia Hicks

## *Employee Anniversaries*

(March - June)

### **10 Years of Service**

Diana Thomas  
Shirley Blakney  
Winnie Arnold  
Marie Goodson  
Yvonne Rouse

### **9 Years of Service**

Rose Brown  
Michelle Ratliff

### **8 Years of Service**

Jacquay Archer

### **6 Years of Service**

Lora Harrell Knotts

### **5 Years of Service**

Deedrick Woods  
Anita Manago

### **3 Years of Service**

Kathy McClendon

### **2 Years of Service**

Evelyn Harkless  
Leigh Tedder  
Tracey Jenkins  
Jennie McQueen

### **1 Year of Service**

Angela Gee  
Carrie Chenard  
Janice Dickson  
Reponisa Gattison  
Annette Parker  
Bonnie Sanders



*Beloved & Missed*

Vonoka, age 48, was a devoted servant of God and is survived by a loving family and many friends. DCDSNB was blessed with her as an employee for 14 years. She earned the Lou Scott Award at the annual employee Christmas Party in 2008 and the Employee of the Year award in 2007. The Lou Scott Award, named for our beloved founder, is awarded to one employee who a profound impact on the lives of the people we serve in some significant way. Vonoka truly defined the spirit of the award with her love for the consumers and tireless efforts on their behalf. In spite of her battle with cancer, she worked through her illness and rarely missed work unless she was hospitalized. Vonoka was an amazing woman and an unsurpassed asset to DCDSNB. She is greatly missed by all who knew her.



Amanda, age 26, is survived by loving parents, siblings and her 8 year old daughter. She was an employee for 3 years. Day Program Director Tanya Palumbo described Amanda as “a kind and caring young woman whose dedication to the individuals she served is evidenced by the love and affection they had for her.” She is also greatly missed.

Though both of these wonderful women have gone to Glory, their spirit lives on in our memories and hearts.

*Employees of the Month*

The EAC selected the following employees as Employee of the Month (EOM). Employees are selected from nominations of fellow employees.

Assistant SC Supervisor Tammy Johnson is the March EOM. She was nominated by Finance Manager Catherine Robinson.



Ann Lighty is the April EOM and was nominated by Work Activity Supervisor Rose Brown.



Yarborough House Manager Gwen Sansbury is the May EOM. She was nominated by DSP Amelia Capers.



DSP Evelyn Harkless is the June EOM and she was nominated by Jones & Register House Manager Joy Collins.



Congratulations, Ladies!

*FAC Corner*

by Carrie Chenard, Challenger Editor

The Family Advisory Council sponsored a Quilt Raffle in February and raised \$ 700. The drawing for the beautiful quilt was held on Tuesday, February 24 at 5:30 pm at the Scott Center. Chris Clark of Clark, Brady & Associates in Columbia drew the winning ticket in the company of FAC members Miranda Loyd and Janice Fields. The winner was Ms. Jean Lee of Hartsville. Ms. Lee was very excited to win the quilt.



Normally, the FAC sponsors only one fundraising event (the Gas Raffle) each year. This is due in large part to donations to the FAC from charitable foundations in previous years. Unfortunately, the FAC did not receive those donations this past year and is short on funds.



After some discussion the FAC decided on a few fundraising ideas that will be spaced out over the year. As always, FAC funds are used to sponsor events for DCDSNB consumers throughout the year.

The last FAC meeting was held on Monday, April 20 at 6:00 pm at the Scott Center. Rick Jones, a local attorney, presented information on Living Wills and Guardianship issues as it relates to parents / guardians of consumers. A copy of the notes from the meeting can be obtained by contacting your Service Coordinator.

The Annual Gas Raffle was held in June. West Oil Company donated \$ 100 in gift certificates for the event. The FAC bought an additional \$ 100 in certificates to provide the \$ 200 prize. The drawing was held at the Hartsville Family Fireworks Festival on July 3 at Emmanuel Baptist Church. The drawing was directed by Senator Gerald Malloy, an emcee for the event. The winning ticket was drawn by a five year old volunteer. The winner is Kayla Thomas of Florence. Kayla was happy to win the certificates. She will attend Coker as a freshman this fall and will use the certificates for gas and convenience items..

The Family Advisory Council (FAC) is an organization of supporters of DCDSNB that is comprised of interested consumers, family members and advocates. The FAC promotes understanding between families and the board by providing a forum for the exchange of information, ideas and concerns, as well as a chance to meet and fellowship with other family members. The public is invited to attend all meetings.

## Adult Program News

by Tanya O. Palumbo, M.Ed.,  
Director, Adult Day Supports

Our Garden Project has really taken off! We are already picking vegetables and the flowers are gorgeous! Our consumers planted



vegetables from seeds and Shawn Vann, Direct Support Staff and Tanya Palumbo, Day Program Director, donated flowering plants to complete the garden. We have

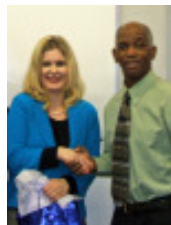
tomatoes, squash, bell pepper, cucumber and watermelon. Our Bradley Pear Tree should yield fruit next year. The roses, lantana and marigolds give the garden some added color. This has been a team effort from start to finish. Special thanks for extra effort and donations go to Shawn Vann, Tiffany Austin and Ruth Thomas. Matt & Mike Palumbo, Tanya's family, also spent an entire day helping prep the plot before we planted. The consumers love to go out every day to visit the garden. The therapeutic benefits of gardening have been recognized by experts for some time.



Our garden is a sensory garden that allows individuals with a wide variety of needs experience being outside and enjoying a natural environment. We have moved our rarely used picnic tables from the back of the NUCOR building out to the garden area and they are now used every day. One of the needs we do still have is for a new covered swing, or even 2 of them. A couple of benches would be a nice addition as well. These provide needed seating and the covering provides sun protection. Please spread the word to any civic groups you know of who might be willing to lend a helping hand to making our garden more accessible.

In other news, Bridging The Gap held their very own Michael Jackson Tribute on Friday, June 26th, 2009. The consumers had a great time! Benji Risinger treated everyone to his spectacular interpretation of 'Thriller', and everyone danced and sang to the King of Pop's songs.

**Service Awards** were given to employees at the Annual Training luncheon on March 13. Recipients were photographed with Board Chairperson Rev. Troy Shaw and / or their supervisors: Violet Johnson, 20 years; Geraldine Brown and Byron Wilson, 15 years; Julie Johnson and Yvonne Rouse, 10 years; Deedrick Woods (not pictured), Lora Harrell Knotts, Karen Gainey (not pictured), Deb Newsome, and Cynthia Graham (not pictured), 5 years.



## Profile of Service by Bonnie Sanders, Service Coordinator

Glynn Furman Willis Jr. is a fine example of a person who refuses to let a disability stand in his way. Glynn is a 37-year-old man with moderate mental retardation. Glynn was born to Glynn and Beverly Willis on January 2, 1973. Glynn has never let his disability stand in his way of doing things. He graduated from Hartsville High School in 1993 with a certificate. Glynn studied a two-year home course through Educational Direct and received his diploma. At the Darlington County Adult Education Program, Glynn worked to obtain his Certified Nursing Assistance Certification. Glynn has also worked hard to get his Physical Therapy Assistance Certification and Medical Office Nursing Assistance Certification.



Glynn is a large part of his church family. Glynn attends the United Methodist Church here in Hartsville, SC. Glynn helps do the church bulletin each week and he does the church website. Glynn is a lay reader in the church and he is in Evangelism in his church. Glynn loves his church and the lord.

Glynn is a hard working man. For many years, he has worked at the movie theater in downtown Hartsville. Glynn worked as a CNA at Morrell Nursing Home for 3 years. Currently Glynn works part time at two of the Darlington County DSN Board CTH II houses. Glynn loves his work. He hopes one day to get a full time position.

Glynn is a very independent man. He moved into his own apartment just this passed March. He loves having his own place. Glynn is close enough to his job that he usually walks to work. He has a driver's license and he has his own vehicle. In the future Glynn wants to go back to school. One day Glynn would like to become a preacher.

***The Darlington County Disabilities Foundation would like to thank all of our generous donors. The following Donations were received since the last printing of the Challenger.***

Ms. Jackie Jones            Mr. John Reagan  
 Dr. Robert Defee         Dr. Joe McCullough  
 Ms. Janice Fields        Ms. Tanya Palumbo  
                                  Mr. & Mrs. James Fink  
                                  Claude & Beatrice Siner  
                                  Ms. Barbara Wainwright  
                                  Hartsville Drug Co  
                                  West Oil Company  
                                  Norton Funeral Home  
                                  The Sonoco Foundation  
                                  Hartsville Kiwanis Club  
                                  United Way of Hartsville  
                                  United Way of Darlington  
                                  Palmetto Rx Solutions, Inc.  
                                  McInville System Solutions  
                                  The Pilot Club of Darlington  
                                  Young & Young Funeral Home  
                                  Hartsville Chamber of Commerce  
                                  Darlington Chamber of Commerce

A Memorial Gift was received  
 In Memory of Freddie Windham from:

Ms. Desby Smith            Ms. Jeanne Tolson  
 Mr. William Jones        Ms. Doris Windham  
 Ms. Helen Sherill         Ms. Martha Slaughter  
 Dr. S.T. Griffin            Ms. Christine Knotts  
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                                  Mr. & Mrs. Eldon Bell  
                                  Mr. & Mrs. Dillon Wilkes  
                                  Mr. & Mrs. David Plummer  
                                  Mr. & Mrs. J.M. Fincher, Jr.

*\*Donations are appreciated; envelopes are included for your convenience.*

### ***DCDSNB Wish List***

Our Wish List is a program that we started in 2008. Some donors prefer to donate items rather than or in addition to monetary donations. The items listed below detail the item and where it is needed. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Chenard at 332-7252 ext. 101.

**DCDSNB Office:** *General office supplies* such as 8 1/2 x 11 white copy paper, color copy paper, small and large paperclips, post it notes, Avery 5160 inkjet / laser printer mailing labels (or equivalent), etc.

**Bridging the Gap:** *Tables & chairs* for the canteen area.

**Senior Program:** Simple *Puzzles* (less than 50 pieces); simple *Games*; *Gardening tools* for our seniors to use in their garden. *Magazines* (used are welcome!) for the Seniors to create craft projects.

**Children's Program:** Early Intervention - *Play-Doh* in multiple colors in individual cans (five ounces or less) for educational play - consider the Play-Doh Classic Colors four pack or the Favorite Colors four pack; *Texture books* and *Puzzles* for children aged 0-4 years to help them learn about textures and spatial orientation skills.

**Residential Office:** *A locking storage cabinet* for organizing and storing training supplies and equipment. *A flat panel TV* (27 inch or larger) for training purposes.

***Welcome*** to our new pharmaceutical partner, Palmetto Rx Solutions, Inc! Palmetto Rx Solutions is a service oriented, long-term care pharmacy located in the Columbia area. They specialize in assisted living facilities and group homes and offers full pharmacy service for our residents. DCDSNB began utilizing Palmetto Rx Solutions on July 1.

The president of Palmetto Rx Solutions is Tom Mitchell, a licensed pharmacist, who has worked in the pharmaceutical industry for nearly thirty years. Mr. Mitchell recognized the gaps in pharmaceutical services for disability patients and established Palmetto Rx Solutions in 2006. His company serves many DSN boards and disability organizations in South Carolina. DCDSNB nursing staff has been very pleased with the company's professional demeanor and commitment to service. Lead LPN Health Coordinator Dawanda Brown praised the staff, especially Pharmacy Tech Brandon Snipes, for going the extra mile to ensure prompt and accurate service.

### ***Abbreviation/Acronyms***

DCDSNB - Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board  
 DCDF - Darlington County Disabilities Foundation  
 DDSN - (SC) Department of Disabilities and Special Needs  
 ICF - Intermediate Care Facility  
 CTH - Community Training Home  
 BTG - Bridging the Gap Enterprises  
 SC - Service Coordinator            EI - Early Interventionists  
 EAC - Employee Advisory Committee  
 FAC - Family Advisory Council  
 DSP - Direct Support Professional

Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board  
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## Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board

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**Ruth Thomas, M.A.**  
Executive Director

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### Board Members:

Rev. Troy Shaw, Chair  
Jerry A. Cheatham, Vice-Chair  
Amanda A. King, Secretary  
Belinda G. Valle  
Margaret Lanier  
Dr. Jeffery Eric Long  
Hattie E. Hughes

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Gregory Alexander, Chairman Elect  
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