



THE CHALLENGER

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

Winter 2008

December 2008-January 2009-February 2009

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

2009: Our Time to Shine!

As usual, our holiday season was very busy! Our annual Thanksgiving Dinner was held on Thursday, November 20, 2008 at the Lakeview Baptist Church Family Life Center. The meal was catered by Mr. B's and the Employee Advisory Committee decorated and set up for the event. The Sonoco Men's Club provided the entertainment. The food was good and everyone had a very good time.

Our annual Consumer Christmas Party was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2008 at the Hartsville National Guard Armory. Santa came to visit and a photographer was available for photos. Our very own Adult Day Supports Director Tanya Palumbo provided the DJ entertainment and rocked the house. The meal was catered by Mr. B's except for the desserts which were provided by volunteers.

The annual Employee Christmas Party was held on Friday, December 12, 2008 at the Lakeview Baptist Church Family Life Center. The Employee of the Year Award and the Lou Scott Award were given out. The Employee of the Year was chosen from the Employees of the Month that were selected throughout the year. They were Bridget McClendon, Deborah Bacote, Kathy McClendon, Crystal Blakney, Diane Person, Brandy McRae, Peggy Bristow, and Michelle Ratliff. Michelle Ratliff was selected as the Employee of the Year. This year, the Lou Scott Award was awarded to two employees. They were Vonoka Kind, Work Activity Supervisor at Bridging the Gap, and Carrie Chennard, Executive Assistant at the Scott Center. (Photos on pages two and three.)



Ms. Ruth Thomas, DCDSNB Executive Director; Ms. Lou Scott, DCDSNB Founder; Ms. Jean Lee, DCDSNB Board of Directors member; Rev. Troy Shaw, DCDSNB Board Chair



DCDSNB Staff served the meal at the Consumer Christmas Party. Catherine Robinson, Finance Manager; Gloria McPhail, Employment Specialist; Bridget McClendon, HR Administrator; Joyce Bayne, BTG Quality Assurance; Vonoka Kind, BTG Work Activity Supervisor



Tanya Palumbo, Day Program Director & DJ Extraordinaire

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 27	Board of Directors Meeting
January 27	FAC Quilt Raffle begins
February 2	Foundation Meeting
February 13	After Hours Valentine Social
February 24	Board of Directors Meeting
February 24	FAC Quilt Raffle drawing
March 4	Disability Advocacy Day
March 12-13	DCDSNB Annual Training (Offices Closed)
March 31	Board of Directors Meeting
April 20	Family Advisory Council Meeting
April 28	Board of Directors Meeting

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A Message from the Director

by Ruth Thomas, Executive Director

2009 is Our Time to Shine

“Shine: Pronunciation: \`shîn\

Function: intransitive verb 1: to emit rays of light; 2: to be bright by reflection of light;

3 a: to be eminent, conspicuous, or distinguished; b: to perform extremely well.”Definition from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2009.

Typical resolutions in January are to lose weight, exercise more, spend less time at work and more time with family. However, during these tough economic times of budget cuts and more budget cuts, it is going to be a year of changes and challenges. At DCDSNB, we are striving to *shine* this year in spite of the many challenges we are facing. Unprecedented budget cuts at the state level have called for critical budget reductions at local levels. The budget cuts forced five (5) child development centers for children with special needs (such as our own Bright Beginnings) to close on



December 31. While the closing was mandatory, we can control how we react and respond. DCDSNB staff will work together as a team to continue to provide excellent services to the consumers and families that we serve. The budget cuts are not only a hardship but an opportunity for us to succeed in showing our dedication and ability to overcome adversity. With your understanding and cooperation during these difficult times, we will succeed and be better than ever. While things may not look so good on the economy side, here at DCDSNB, we will continue to work together to weather this economic storm so that we can continue to provide our consumers with the best possible services. We will work hard and pray harder to achieve our best so that we can, indeed, *shine* in 2009.

Employee Advisory Committee News

by Carrie Chenard, 2009 EAC Chair

The EAC held its Annual Employee Christmas Party at 6:30 pm on Friday, December 12 at the Lakeview Baptist Church Family Life Center in Hartsville. Ms. Scott came to the event and spoke a few words after Ms. Thomas's welcome. Some Board of Directors and Foundation members attended with their spouses. Many employees attended and were entertained by the DSN Ensemble before dinner. Carolyn Sifford, our QMRP Director, and her husband, Jeff, also entertained us with a couple of songs. The 2008 Employees of the Month were honored and the Employee of the Year award was given. The 2008 Employees of the Month were Bridget McClendon, Deborah Bacote, Kathy McClendon, Crystal Blakney, Diane Person, Brandy McRae, Peggy Bristow, and Michelle Ratliff. Michelle received the Employee of the Year Award. The top honor of the evening was the Lou Scott Award. Usually, this award is given to one employee who a profound impact on the lives of the people we serve in some significant way. This year, two employees were honored with this award; Vonoka Kind, Work Activity Supervisor at BTG, and Carrie Chenard, Executive Assistant at the Scott Center.

Michelle Ratliff,
2008 Employee
of the YearMs. Thomas, Ms. Scott, &
Vonoka Kind, 2008 Lou
Scott Award recipientMs. Thomas, Ms. Scott, &
Carrie Chenard, 2008 Lou
Scott Award co-recipient**Welcome New Employees!**

Rebecca Alford, LPN Healthcare Coordinator
Catherine Robinson, Finance Manager

Congratulations, Employees!

Kelvin Graham, DSP, transferred from PT to FT at BTG
Teresa Johnson, DSP, transferred from PT to FT at Reagan
Bridget McClendon transferred from Finance to HR Administrator

Employee Anniversaries**16 Years of Service**

Ann Lighty
Julie Johnson

15 Years of Service

Byron Wilson

12 Years of Service

Priscilla Soney

11 Years of Service

Dianne Mickens
Amelia Capers

9 Years of Service

Wilton Griffith

7 Years of Service

Tammy Johnson
Diane Person

2 Years of Service

Alice Catoe
Bernice Howle
Margaret Jeffery
Woodrow Moses

1 Year of Service

Michelle Moses
Ivan Shay Price
Joy Collins
Leroy Perkins



FAC Corner by *Carrie Chenard, Challenger Editor / Executive Administrative Assistant*

The Family Advisory Council is sponsoring a Quilt Raffle to raise funds to support After Hours events. The quilt is completely handmade and has a beautiful Double Wedding Ring pattern with hearts stitched in the center of each ring. The measurements are 92 1/2 inches by 86 inches. It is a beautiful work of art made by Ms. Barbara Wainwright who resides in Rockingham, NC. Ms. Wainwright is retired but devotes her time to making beautiful quilts completely by hand without using a machine or even a quilt frame. Her quilts vary in price depending on complexity but start at \$ 150 for the simplest type. Our quilt is of medium complexity; however, she gave us an incredible discount and the cost was covered by a donation from a FAC member. Tickets are \$ 1.00 and the drawing will be held on Tuesday, February 24 at 5:30 pm at the beginning of the Board of Directors meeting. Participants need NOT be present to win. The winner will be called after the Board of Directors meeting is finished. The winner will be photographed receiving the quilt and sent out in press releases to local media.

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. These events will include the quilt raffle, selling barbecue plates, participating in charity sales at local department stores, and the annual gasoline raffle. Other events may be added or removed from the list as determined by the FAC. As always, FAC funds are used to sponsor events for DCDSNB consumers throughout the year. The annual events are the Valentine Social, a spring picnic, the (summer) day at the movies, the Fall Harvest Dance, the Thanksgiving Dinner and the Christmas Party.

The next FAC meeting will be held on Monday, April 20 at 6:00 pm at the Scott Center located at 201 North Damascus Church Road in Hartsville. A local attorney will attend to present information on Living Wills and Guardianship issues as it relates to parents / guardians of consumers. 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.



Vonoka Kind and her family look over the Christmas Party Program.

2008 Employees of the Month: Michelle Ratliff, Crystal Blakney, & Deborah Bacote. (Not pictured: Bridget McClendon, Kathy McClendon, Diane Person, & Peggy Bristow.)



Thanks to the DSN Ensemble for entertaining us at the Christmas Party. Tiffany Austin, JJ Dawkins, Star Rogers, and Yvonne Rouse. (Not pictured: Cornelius Dials.)



Quality Corner

by *Carrie Chenard, Challenger Editor / Executive Assistant*

Angela Gee is our Quality Assurance Director who came on board in March of 2008. Angela does a great job in making sure that we stay in compliance with federal and state guidelines so we can continue to take great care of our consumers and keep our licenses. Angela works with every department within our agency by reviewing charts and conducting visits to our facilities. During compliance reviews, the reviewers may be extremely critical of charts and our facilities. Angela reviews the charts to help us find our own errors before the reviewers get here. Some indicators / requirements must be adhered to so strictly that if we are not considered to be in compliance, we could lose funding or have to pay a recoupment. She is constantly researching directives, policies, and guidelines to ensure our compliance. This is indeed a full time job all on its own.

Angela's motto is "Quality happens when you care enough to do your best!"

Child Program News

by *Deb Newsome, Early Interventionist Supervisor*

Despite the economy, all EIs received Angel Tree gifts for families in need and distributed them before Christmas. Our families participated in Orlando Hudson's first annual Home Run Holiday (a Christmas event for families coping with Autism). It was a good turn out and we are looking forward to next year!

The mandatory closing of Bright Beginnings has saddened us all. Most of the children have returned home to stay with family members; however, some children have not been placed. EI services will continue in the home and we will continue to search for appropriate placement.



Joni, Jeremiah Cannon & his little brother stop to pose for the camera at the DCDSNB Annual Christmas Party. Shown Left to Right: Jeremiah's brother; Joni Pendergrass, DCDSNB Early Interventionist; Jeremiah Cannon

Adult Program News

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

Our Halloween Extravaganza on October 31 was a great success. Our consumers and some staff as well, wore costumes and participated in a contest. Anyah Aiken won best overall costume!

We had a great turnout for the Family Advisory Council sponsored FALL DANCE in November, and consumers from Day Program attended the Thanksgiving Dinner at Lakeview Baptist Church.

Everyone had lots of fun over the Holiday Season! While our work crews and consumers continued with their jobs, we did take time out to attend the Christmas



Dinner at the Hartsville Armory, and Santa Claus paid a visit to the Day Program on December 23.

Our mobile work crews continue to provide janitorial, vehicle washing, recycling and lawn care services to the DCDSNB and to the community as a whole.

ICF News

by *Carolyn Sifford, QMRP / ICF Unit Director*

The holiday season brought much excitement to the consumers at Reagan and Bowen Houses. They enjoyed holiday fun and food. Many were able to go home for the holidays to spend time with their families. The DCDSNB Thanksgiving and Christmas parties are always a highlight for these men and women and they all had a great time.

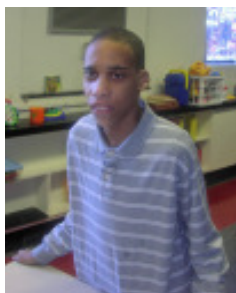
Our consumers always enjoy parties and both houses had birthday celebrations. Consumer birthdays are always celebrated in style.

Profile of Service

by *Tammy Johnson, Assistant Service Coordinator Supervisor*

Christmas is about giving. This year, two special patrons of our 2008 Angel Tree Project gave very generously. The patrons adopted not one of our special Angels, but their entire families.

By *Bonnie Sanders, Service Coordinator*



Antonio Cuffie is a sweet young man. He and his family were adopted for Christmas. Antonio is diagnosed with Mental Retardation. He has been with our board since 2001. Antonio enjoys attending Hartsville High School. He is 15 years old and lives at home with his mother, Ms. Keesha Cuffie, and 18-year-old sister, Anissa Cuffie.

Thanks to the generous patron of the 2008 DCDSNB Angel Tree Project for sharing and adopting this family.

By *Nacacha Stephens, Service Coordinator*



Destiny and her family were adopted as well. She is five years old. Destiny has a younger brother and an older sister. Her diagnosis is Mental Retardation and possibly Autism. Destiny and her family received a

memory game, puzzles, and clothes. She and her family expressed how appreciative they felt. Mrs. Kirk said, "If they had not gotten this, the children would not have had Christmas." Thanks to the generous patron of the 2008 DCDSNB Angel Tree Project for helping and adopting this family.

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.

Viola & Troy Shaw
Dave & Denny Nielson

Stanton & Jones
Hartsville Drug Co
Wilson Senior Care
Carolina Construction
Norton Funeral Home
The Byerly Foundation
The Sonoco Foundation
United Way of Darlington
United Way of Hartsville

Lucas, Auman, Warr, & White
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Darlington Chamber of Commerce

The Knights of Columbus Council 8123

Central Carolina Community Foundation

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Patsy Auman
Alison Evans
Sidney Josey
J.L. Caldwell
Wade Morrell

A Gift was received In Honor of :

A.T. & Anne Register from Mr. & Mrs. D. Allen Register

Dr. Richard Cuyler from Merle Bayley

**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 give 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.

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.

Bi-Lo Boostersplus

Don't forget the Bi-Lo Boostersplus program! It is not too late to enroll! Please take the barcode below to your local Bi-Lo along with your Bi-Lo Bonus card to enroll. This onetime scan will allow Bi-Lo to donate 1 % of your purchases to DCDSNB through May 31, 2009! It's free for you and helps us raise much needed funds. Please pass your barcode on to friends and family so they can help us, too.

DARLINGTON CTY DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEED



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
EAC - Employee Advisory Committee
EI - Early Interventionists
FAC - Family Advisory Council
DSP - Direct Support Professional

Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board
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United Way

Darlington County Disabilities and Special Needs Board

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Executive Director

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