

Bridging the Gap Advocacy impacting students, community

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

Bridging the Gap Advocacy requires family members to participate as volunteers and one grandmother, Patricia Shumate, was recently honored as Volunteer of the Month for February.

"We ask parents to help one afternoon a week, and if that's not possible to help at our events," said Calvin Whitmire, Bridging the Gap director.

Instead of the requested one day a week of tutoring, Shumate puts in three and four days with children each week.

This weekend Bridging the Gap Advocacy HYPE teams from Sanders, Laurens, Hickory Tavern and Gray Court middle schools and Laurens District High will be putting in their own volunteer time as the teen members make improvements to the Bridging the Gap campus.

"They are going to clean up trash in the neighborhood and do some painting on campus, and we'll begin to get the garden prepared for planting," Whitmire said. The HYPE team members

are made up of the middle and high school age students who have continued to benefit from Bridging the Gap.

"The HYPE team focuses on academics, health, wellness and nutrition and developing soft skills," Whitmire said. The families encourage children to continue through the program, because it's made a difference in grades and work ethics of those involved.

"This is our fifth year with the program and we track the kids and already have the data that shows it's making an impact on the kids," Whitmire said, adding that the students are also taught to make an impact on their communities.

The non-profit is currently working to finalize plans for its Third Annual Kickball Festival April 27, a fundraiser which brings in revenue to continue work on the former Sanders Ball Field located near the 101 Park Place Bridging the Gap center. It will also use some of the funds for improvements on the building, expanding the garden which provides vegetables for community residents, developing a testing center to help students prepare for standardized testing



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TOP VOLUNTEER — Bridging the Gap Advocacy volunteer Patricia Shumate is the Volunteer of the Month for February and she received a complimentary lunch from Applebee's for her efforts in assisting children of Laurens County. Bridging the Gap Advocacy offers youth development programs on weekday afternoons and at summer enrichment camps for young children through teens. For more information contact Calvin Whitmire at whitmirejc@gmail.com or 864-200-1144.

and for curriculum for its Summer Enrichment Camp, "Our focus is to try and revitalize that community," Whitmire said of the neighborhood around its center. "We're using positive reinforcement with our Hype team's work and service."

Senator Scott accepting applications for S.C. summer internships

U.S. Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) continues to accept congressional internship applications for available positions in his Columbia office for the summer of 2019. The internship program offers undergraduate and graduate students practical experience in constituent services, the legislative process, government policy, and press. The internship provides students with the ability to work with and learn from public service professionals. All internships are unpaid, but students will learn invaluable work experience and skills throughout their internship that will help them gain a better understanding of how their government functions.

In the Columbia office, interns will take an active role in the community, working on state-based projects of importance, while also answering phones, completing research and other projects, and being an integral part of day-to-day office operations. State office interns have the ability to assist with issues that are personally affecting our citizens.

Internship hours are flexible to accommodate students' course schedules, but can generally run 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Interested South Carolina students can apply through our website at <https://www.scott.senate.gov/constituent-services/internships>. For any additional questions, contact the internship coordinator at internships@scott.senate.gov or 202-224-6121.

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Thornwell Charter welcomes first principal

The Thornwell Charter School Board of Directors announced Tuesday that it has hired Dr. Frank "Hugh" Wilson as the first principal of Thornwell Charter School.

Wilson earned his Bachelor of Science in Special Education from the College of Charleston, and his M.Ed. in School Administration from Winthrop University. He furthered his education and received his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from NOVA Southeastern University. Wilson has fourteen years of educational leadership experience and seven years of experience teaching special education.

He comes to Thornwell from The Palmetto School at the Children's Attention Home in Rock Hill, where he has served as a principal/executive director for the past eight years.

"I believe that students are our future, and it is my job to make sure we are developing productive college and career minded citizens for our community," Wilson said. I am very excited about the educational adventures that are going to take place at Thornwell Charter School. Thornwell Charter School will make an educational impact on the lives of children in Laurens County."

Wilson also has experience in Applied Behavior Analysis, grant writing, fundraising, shared decision making, ADEPT teacher evaluations, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support, SACS evaluations and developing a vision for a fine arts program. He has served on the personnel advisory council, the assistive technology team and the strategic planning task force for the Chester County School district. In addition, he has designed a community based instruction program, a social behavior curriculum and created a Life Skills lab in Walterboro.

As a part of his successes, Wilson reduced student discipline rates at his school by 20 percent, created a fine arts curriculum resource room, brought children from below grade level to two grade levels above in math and reading by creating innovative, fun learning methods, and he has written \$800,000 in grants. Fundraising efforts he spearheaded resulted in more than \$400,000.

"We were looking for a school leader who can carry out our vision to create a school with a culture of excellence built around a personalized learning model of instruction," said Norman Dover, project director for Thornwell Charter School. "We firmly believe Dr. Wilson has the knowledge, experience, dedication and personal skills to bring this vision to fruition."



Dr. Frank Wilson

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Thank you, Gray Court Voters, for your strong support on March 5. I ask for your continued support in the **GRAY COURT MAYORAL RACE RUNOFF.**

I sincerely thank Mayor John Carter for his strong leadership for the Town of Gray Court throughout his eight terms and humbly ask all voters in Gray Court for your vote on March 19.

VOTE FOR SCOTT COOK MARCH 19

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Better Health Together

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American Diabetes Alert Day
Tuesday, March 26 • 10 a.m.-1 p.m. • Laurens County Hospital, front lobby
Learn about your risk for developing diabetes at this free event. Diabetes educators and health coaches will offer risk assessments, discuss results and share recommendations and helpful information. No registration required.

Diabetes 101
Thursday, April 11 • 10-11 a.m. • Laurens County Hospital, Women's Life Center
This free class offers practical tips for those with diabetes including meal ideas, lifestyle changes and products that help manage the condition. No registration required. For more information, call 864-885-7654.

Diabetes Support Group
Thursday, April 11 • 5:30-7 p.m. • Laurens County Memorial Hospital, Women's Life Center
Those with diabetes are invited to learn from others with the condition and from monthly featured guest speakers at this support group. Free; no registration required.

13th Annual Prisma Health Community Health Summit
Saturday, April 6 • 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. • Greenville Convention Center
This event brings valuable health information and screenings to the community all in one place. This year's event features Drs. Brandi and Brittani Jackson, twin sisters and medical doctors working to inspire young minorities to pursue health careers. This free event is designed for those age 10 and up. Registration required. Register at ghs.org/summit.

Dr. Buffaloe offers hours in Clinton
Leon Buffaloe Jr., MD, now sees patients Friday morning at Internal Medicine—Laurens, located at 22725 Hwy. 76 E., Suite A (third floor of Laurens County Medical Campus). He will continue to see patients at Internal Medicine—Simpsonville the rest of the week. For an appointment at either site, call 864-522-1170.

Unless noted otherwise, registration is required for each event. To register, learn more or see a schedule of events, visit prismahealth.org/upstateevents.

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