



SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON HELD — Piedmont Technical College (PTC) recently held a Scholarship Luncheon to recognize student recipients of dozens of PTC Foundation scholarships for 2019. This year's winners of the La Puerta de Esperanza Scholarship are Diana Contreras Hernandez of Laurens, Jose Juan Santiago of Cross Hill, Martin Martinez-Clavijo of Saluda, Sheyla Martinez-Quiterio of Greenwood, and Gerardo Rodriguez of Spartanburg. La Puerta de Esperanza, "The Door of Hope," is a compassionate ministry of the Greenwood Community Church of the Nazarene. In 2003, the ministry was founded in response to the many needs of the Hispanic population in Greenwood. In 2015, the La Puerta de Esperanza Scholarship was established to help students get a college degree. Pictured are, from left, Sheyla Martinez-Quiterio, Donor Representative Edith Pineda; Diana Contreras Hernandez; Donor Representative Jaime Pineda; and Gerardo Rodriguez.

Loftis kicks off National Future Scholar 529 College Savings Day observance

State Treasurer Curtis Loftis announced that South Carolina's Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan would once again celebrate National 529 College Savings Day (May 29) with its PalmettoBaby Grant Program.

The annual program, which is in its seventh year, promotes the importance of families saving for college and provides a privately-funded \$529 grant to each baby born in South Carolina on May 29 to put toward a Future Scholar account.

"We love reminding new and existing parents about the importance of saving for college," Treasurer Loftis

explained. "Our PalmettoBaby grant program is a fun way to celebrate National 529 Day, and it's really fun to see the excitement of these new parents when they realize they are eligible to receive a \$529 grant for their child's future education."

To receive the PalmettoBaby grant, parents of babies born on May 29 must submit a grant request form and open a Future Scholar account by Aug. 30, 2019.

The Future Scholar 529 College Savings Plan offers families a smart and easy way to save for their children's college education expenses with opportunities for tax-deductible con-

tributions from state income taxes, tax-free growth and tax-free distributions for qualified education expenses.

Visit www.futurescholar.com/news-events/palmettobaby/ to learn more about the PalmettoBaby Grant Program.

About Future Scholar: Future Scholar is South Carolina's 529 College Savings Plan. It is administered through the State Treasurer's Office. For more information, visit FutureScholar.com or follow @SCStateTreasurer on Facebook. No state funds are used to market Future Scholar or fund the PalmettoBaby Grant Program.

Peters featured in documentary

A new documentary recently aired on the TBN Network show Taking Care of Business. The title of the episode was Education at a Crossroads (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN2rhE57Bi0>), and it featured Dr. Stephen G. Peters, Superintendent of Laurens County School District 55 (LCS 55). The documentary challenges views on traditional school systems and standards while raising concerns about mental health issues that are becoming more prevalent in today's educational environments. The film makes a case for a new perspective on teaching and learning for this generation of students. A generation that is very different from the students served when the first public school opened over 200 years ago.

Dr. Peters leads the conversation saying, "The landscape is troubling because we are still operating a public education system that is not aligned with the realities the students and teachers face. We are delivering services to a population of students in a system that's not aligned with what they deal with each and every day."

John Savage, Principal of Academy for Individual Excellence in Louisville, Ky. and Jessica Lahey, author of The Gift of Failure, also weigh in on standardized testing, letter grades and the gift of teaching kids and parents that failing is safe in a school environment. Jessica Lahey says, "I don't want children to fail but what I want is for children to have the opportunity to make mistakes and have a positive adapted response to those mistakes."

The way we have always done things is no longer a good excuse and we must find ways to motivate and elevate student performance more effectively. We must ask ourselves, as administrators, educators, and parents, how we may best serve a generation of students who face evolving challenges including finding their identity in

the success of school grades and extracurricular activities. This documentary mirrors the results of the findings in the recent strategic planning process conducted by LCS 55. The school district is continuing to develop the

specific objectives that are part of its future planning. The timing of the release of this video helps lay the foundation for future changes in the way LCS 55 delivers education to students here in Laurens County.

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Presbyterian College education graduates urged to plant, grow, harvest

Graduates from Presbyterian College's Department of Education took the oath for graduating educators during the annual Teacher Induction Ceremony Friday, May 10.

"In a few minutes you're going to take the oath, and the first sentence and last sentence of that oath are pretty impactful," President Bob Staton '68 told graduates during the program at Kuhne Auditorium in Neville Hall. "In the oath, you commit — this is part of that first sentence — to formally accept your obligation to improve the general condition of humanity."

"That's a pretty big undertaking, and it's a pretty important commitment you're making to do that, but it's critical because you're going to be preparing the future leaders of our country."

"You're going to be out there with them on the front line," Staton added, "and you're making that commitment. You're assuming the responsibility to inspire them to go on to greater things, to impact other lives. So you're impacting the future of not only your students but our country, and I applaud you for accepting that commitment."

Carissa Messer, the 2019 Laurens County School District 56 Teacher of the Year, addressed the education graduates at the program.

Messer provided the address, "Plant. Grow. Harvest. Repeat," which related teaching to growing a garden. Messer, who shared she tends to a small herb garden with her husband and children, noted plants need certain elements to grow: sunlight, water and soil.

"When I began doing research on planting and harvesting, the thought occurred to me that farmers and teachers — we aren't so different," she said. "Children need some things to grow, and as teachers, it's our job to grow them. Provide your students with confidence, character and connection and then watch them bloom."

When talking about sunlight, Messer referenced Dorothy DeLay, American violin instructor, who is quoted saying, "Children become who they are told they are." Messer said instilling confidence, like sunlight, "drives passion and passion spurs growth."

"A little bit of confidence or sunlight goes a long way," she added.

Messer also talked about the element of water in education, comparing water to character and urging graduates to, "Drench your students every day in honesty, integrity and perseverance."

She advised every teacher to have a copy of Maslow's Hierarchy posted on the wall of their classroom. The multi-colored pyramid, she

said, has continued to give her answers to questions about students' needs from food, water, shelter and safety to human contact, conversations with mentors and deeply rooted relationships.

"As teachers, we are seed-planters. We plant seeds of great knowledge," Messer said. "We shine on students strong rays of confidence. We lavishly water them with good character, and we establish roots deep in the soil of connection."

"The task is great, and the burden is not easy, but planting and growing and harvesting never has been. If you weren't ready for hard work, you wouldn't have chosen to be a teacher."

Education Chair Dr. Patricia Jones led the Recitation of Oath. The 2019 education graduates include: Ms. Courtney Berry, Mr. Jake Birdsong, Ms. Cassandra Drezek, Ms. Stephanie Harris, Ms. Madelyn Kocoloski, Ms. Helen Mcelhannon, Ms. Ashlynn Powell, Ms. Cady Roberts, and Mr. Casey Stevenson.

Please visit the Presbyterian College News Feed to read more from Commencement Week.

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Community Baby Shower

Saturday, June 1 • 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Sanders Middle School, 609 Green St., Laurens
Expecting moms-to-be are invited to a Community Baby Shower where partner organizations will offer information and connections to resources that promote a healthy pregnancy. Free food, games and prizes will be available.

Dine & Discuss: Nutrition and Hypertension

Thursday, June 6 • Clinton Community Garden • 6–7:30 p.m.
Come learn and have dinner on us! Join Christina Freeman, Prisma Health's STEMI & Chest Pain program manager, to learn basic information about high blood pressure and how it may affect you. She also will train participants in hands-only CPR. This event is free, but registration is required: Contact Jamie.Adair@PrismaHealth.org or 864-833-9131.

Diabetes 101

Thursday, June 13 • 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 is needed. For more information, call 864-455-4003.

Vision 20/20 Laurens County

Thursday, June 13 • 1–4 p.m. • Laurens County Community Care Center, 22725 U.S. 76, Clinton
Take advantage of free vision and health screenings at this community event. Screenings help identify early signs of eye disease and other conditions, which can lead to better outcomes. Free; no registration required.

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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