

# CHALLENGER

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

A Publication of the Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board

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

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## Message from the Executive Director

The Winter Holiday Season is fast approaching and is an opportunity to reflect on the year that is ending and to make plans for the one that is coming. Summer and Fall have now passed and our agency has surpassed many challenges and obstacles. We have successfully filled all bed vacancies, and have adapted to the Fee for Service Billing model. Early Intervention and Case Management are working hard respectively. Both programs are maintaining adequate caseloads and productivity. Residential and Day Services are also maintaining the expectations. The rate of reimbursement for Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs-IID) increased from \$322.60 to \$331.03 per person, per day, retroactive to July 1, 2022. This increase is in response to General Assembly appropriations authorizing a 3% pay increase to healthcare workers, which will apply to our workforce. The rate of reimbursement for Early Intervention Services increased from \$25.54 to \$26.04 per 15-minute unit for Early Intervention billed to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS Upon formal notification of rate adjustments, our agency will implement the 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) retroactive to July 1, 2022.

I attended many trainings to stay abreast of changes within our service delivery system, such as: the Annual Finance Director's Conference in West Columbia, SC. Topics covered were: Cost Reports, Audit Directive, Fee For Service: Processes & Reporting and Developing & Setting Rates.

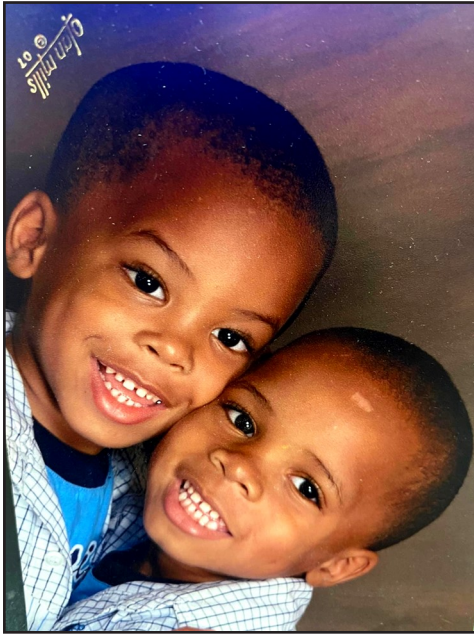
I also attended a Day Program Services training: The training was on the new Day standards that became effective July 1, 2022. Revisions to the Standards represent significant changes including requirements for the use of a specific service assessment; specific document/form for day services planning and specific ISP templates to document service provision.

Alliant Licensing is complete. Our Residential Director, Byron Wilson, retired after 29 years of service. We wish him well in all of his future endeavors. Ms. Ella Timmons is our Interim Residential Director for both ICF and CTH programs.

The first round of retention checks were distributed to part-time and full-time DSPs. We thank them for all of their hard work. We are most appreciative of our staff (especially our Direct Support Professionals) who work tirelessly to provide support to the people that we serve. We look forward to our continued growth and success.

— **Ruth Blocker**

# Early Intervention May 2022



Early Intervention Supervisor Joni Pendergrass is proud of her BabyNet babies who are now all grown up! These young men had a mom who did not let her kids' developmental delays define them. In May, they graduated from Wilson High School and joined the military. A great EI success story!



Bright Beginnings Early Intervention Supervisor Joni Pendergrass and one of the babies she teaches. Teaching through Play!



## 2022 Deborah Newsome Award



Pictured above, left to right: Mr. Frank Jaks, Mrs. Lori Jaks, Joni Pendergrass, Ms. Lucy Brown (of Brown & Coker Realty and sister of Deborah Newsome)

By Joni Pendergrass, EI Supervisor

In this field, we work with many great parents, grandparents, and caretakers. Mrs. Lori Jaks is one of them. In September, Mrs. Jaks was presented with the Deborah Newsome Award. She received a plaque and a check for \$250 that's given by the family of my previous awesome supervisor, Deb Newsome, who lost her battle to Leukemia in 2014. Ms. Jaks was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer but continued to make sure that her grandchildren's services were provided and all are where they should be academically.

Sadly, Mrs. Lori Jaks passed away shortly after receiving the award.

# Byron's Retirement September 2022

*CTH-II Director Byron Wilson retired after serving DCDSNB faithfully for 28 years.*



# October is Down Syndrome Awareness Month!

<https://ndss.org/> In every cell in the human body there is a nucleus, where genetic material is stored in genes. Genes carry the codes responsible for all of our inherited traits and are grouped along rod-like structures called chromosomes. Typically, the nucleus of each cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, half of which are inherited from each parent. Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant to the eyes, and a single deep crease across the center of the palm – although each person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees, or not at all.



## How common is Down syndrome?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in every 772 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome, making Down syndrome the most common chromosomal condition. About 5,100 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year. (De Graaf et al., 2022). There are three different types of Down Syndrome. Trisomy 21 (Nondisjunction), which accounts for 95% of cases, results in an embryo with three copies of chromosome 21 instead of the usual two. Mosaicism (or mosaic Down syndrome) is diagnosed when there is a mixture of two types of cells, some containing the usual 46 chromosomes and some containing 47. Those cells with 47 chromosomes contain an extra chromosome 21. In Translocation, which accounts for about 3% of cases of DS, the total number of chromosomes in the cells remains 46; however, an additional full or partial copy of chromosome 21 attaches to another chromosome, usually chromosome 14 (Facts and Down syndrome, 2021).

## When was Down syndrome discovered?

For centuries, people with Down syndrome have been alluded to in art, literature, and science. It wasn't until the late nineteenth century, however, that John Langdon Down, an English physician, published an accurate description of a person with Down syndrome. It was this scholarly work, published in 1866, that earned Down the recognition as the "father" of the syndrome. Although other people had previously recognized the characteristics of the syndrome, it was Down who described the condition as a distinct and separate entity.

In recent history, advances in medicine and science have enabled researchers to investigate the characteristics of people with Down syndrome. In 1959, the French physician Jérôme Lejeune identified Down syndrome as a chromosomal condition. Instead of the usual 46 chromosomes present in each cell, Lejeune observed 47 in the cells of individuals with Down syndrome. It was later determined that an extra partial or whole copy of chromosome 21 results in the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. In the year 2000, an international team of scientists successfully identified and catalogued each of the approximately 329 genes on chromosome 21. This accomplishment opened the door to great advances in Down syndrome research.

## What causes Down syndrome?

Regardless of the type of Down syndrome a person may have, all people with Down syndrome have an extra, critical portion of chromosome 21 present in all or some of their cells.

The cause of the extra full or partial chromosome is still unknown. Maternal age is the only factor that has been linked to an increased chance of having a baby with Down syndrome resulting from nondisjunction or mosaicism. However, due to higher birth rates in younger women, 51% of children with Down syndrome are born to women under 35 years of age. (De Graaf et al., 2022).

There is no definitive scientific research that indicates that Down syndrome is caused by environmental factors or the parents' activities before or during pregnancy.

The additional partial or full copy of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome can originate from either the father or the mother. Approximately 5% of the cases have been traced to the father.

## What impact does Down syndrome have on society?

Individuals with Down syndrome are becoming increasingly integrated into society and the community. Individuals with Down syndrome possess varying degrees of cognitive delays, from very mild to severe. Most people with Down syndrome have cognitive delays that are mild to moderate.

Due to advances in medical technology, individuals with Down syndrome are living longer than ever before. In 1910, children with Down syndrome were expected to survive to age nine. Now, with recent advancements in clinical treatment, most particularly corrective heart surgeries, as many as 80% of adults with Down syndrome reach age 60, and many live even longer (Down syndrome, 2018). More and more Americans are interacting with individuals with Down syndrome, increasing the need for widespread public education and acceptance.

# Happy Halloween!



***Halloween Costume Contest winners at Bridging the Gap Adult Day Program:  
Left to Right: Lula Sumter (1st Place),  
Larry Jefferson and Tina Hudson (tied for 2nd Place), and Lindsey Bladel (3rd Place)***

## Happy Accounting Day! November 10, 2022



***Accounting Technicians Wanda Cooke  
and Wendy Coward with their gift baskets***

DCDSNB Executive Director Ruth Blocker surprised our Finance staff with gift baskets for Accounting Day.

*National Accounting Day is observed annually on November 10.*

# Happy Thanksgiving! November 2022

Thankful Turkey Contest for the BTG Thanksgiving Day Event at Bridging the Gap Adult Day Program



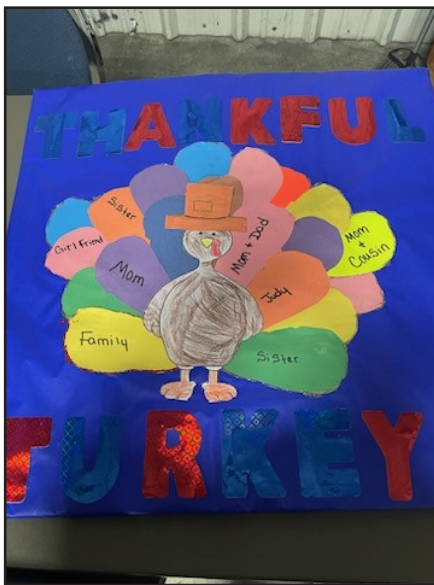
1:1 (Jonathan & Ce'quaya)



Felecia (Janitorial Crew)



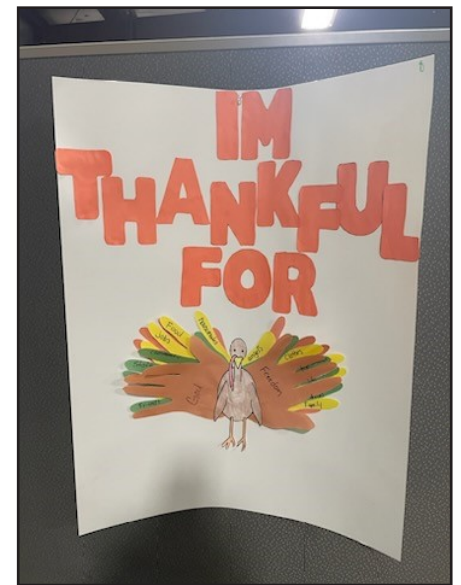
Enhanced Staff (Roosevelt & Lakasaha)



Simone's Class (1st)



Left to Right: PolyQuest (Jennie)  
1:1 (Antonio & Fredrick) (3rd)  
Danika's Class (2nd)  
and Ruby's Class (Work Crew) (3rd)



Shanetta's Class

1st Place: Simone's class

2nd Place: ICF & Danika's Class

3rd Place: Mrs. Ruby's working crew and 1:1's (Fredrick & Antonio)

Judges: Human Rights Committee members along with Medical Transporter Winnie Arnold and LPN Chris Bedenbaugh

## Human Resources Corner

**WELCOME  
TO THE TEAM!**

### June 2022

Valmega McRae    DSP/Yarborough                      Stephanie Porter    HR Assistant

### October 2022

Judy Davis	DSP/Washington	Makayla Durant	DSP/Yarborough
Annie Dawson	Residential Manager / Pauley	Jayla Henry	DSP/Trantham
Rosana Dixon	Residential Manager/ Bowen	Jody Hopkins	Case Manager/Rambo
Kendra James	QIDP/Bowen	Monique James	DSP/King
Clarissa Joe	DSP/BTG	Tylasia Slater	DSP / Pauley
Barbara Smith	DSP/BTG	Tiyonna Evans	DSP/Trantham
Sharonda Wright	DSP/Washington		



# WE'RE HIRING DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

At DCDSNB, we continuously accept applications for Direct Support Professionals who wish to work Part-time or on a PRN basis. This position requires exceptional people with tireless patience. Caregiving is a calling, not just a job. If this is you, we welcome your interest and encourage you to complete an employment application today! Visit us at [www.dcdsnb.org](http://www.dcdsnb.org) or contact us at 843-332-7252 for additional information.



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

*The following Donations (including Angel Tree Donations) were received  
after the last printing of the Challenger.*

**INDIVIDUALS:**

*Dr. & Mrs. Tammie Robinson  
Paul Vincent Cannarella  
Maxie Walters  
Edie Kelley  
Lucy Davis  
Diana Norris*

*Dr. & Mrs. Joe McCullough  
Julius & Carolyn Black  
Lucy Brown  
Marty Price  
Debbie Fink*

*Rev. & Mrs. Troy Shaw  
Hattie Hughes  
Judy Ratley  
Ivan Price  
EJ Arthur*

*Anonymous Donations: \$500*

**BUSINESSES:**

*United Way of Hartsville  
Norton Funeral Home  
Byerly Foundation  
Manheim Darlington  
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Hartsville Lions Club  
Fink Rentals  
Faith Baptist Church*

*Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center  
Brown Pennington Atkins Funeral Home  
Hartsville Kiwanis Club  
Liberty Chapel Missionary Society  
Fairfield Company Two  
Terry Harrelson Auto Sales  
Triplets A/S, Inc.  
AO Smith*



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 72nd birthday in May 2022 and is still performing live.



**Darlington County Disabilities & Special Needs Board**

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

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Rev. Troy Shaw  
Mrs. Mary Alice T. King  
Mrs. Carolyn Black  
Mrs. Hattie E. Hughes  
Mrs. Tammie Robinson



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