



Spring  
2017

# Giving

*A BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Publication*

## Creating HYPE for Health

Eat Smart Move More South Carolina has found that young people are a powerful partner.

## Home Away from Home

Ronald McDonald House Charities provide the comforts of home for families during a child's hospital stay.

COVER STORY:

## From Seed to Plate

Earth Heart Growers gives students hands-on experiences with the food cycle.

Spring 2017

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“The measure of a society, or even a civilization, can be determined by how it treats its children.” This profound statement, or one of its several variations, has been uttered by many wise people. In this issue of **Giving**, you’ll learn about some of the many programs BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina and our employees support in the area of youth development. These organizations, and others like them, make a positive impact on our state’s most vulnerable citizens, and I am proud that our company and our employees play a role in helping them achieve their missions.

David Pankau  
President and CEO



The articles in this issue of “Giving” are focused on charities that support youth who are facing difficult challenges. The highlighted programs not only provide needed resources to immediately address these circumstances, but also help prepare the affected children to succeed in the long term.

Providing our youth with an understanding of how their behaviors and beliefs can affect their health and well-being over the course of their lives is something in which all of us can play a role. We are in a crisis in our community, state and country now regarding childhood health. Due to a variety of factors, our youth are facing issues with obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and other conditions at rates that, in some cases, were previously seen only in adults.

Lack of physical activity and poor eating habits are major contributors. Additionally, many of our children have not received regular medical checkups. As a result, they and their families are often unaware of early medical conditions. In some cases, they have not received needed vaccinations and other preventive care.

How can you make a difference?

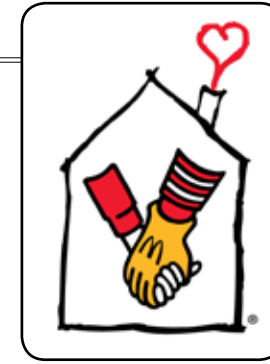
First, start by being a good role model for the kids in your life. Demonstrate the importance of healthy behaviors by including them in a regular exercise routine. Take walks and play fun (active) games with them. Show them that eating nutritious foods can be very enjoyable.

Second, support these easy and healthy behaviors with education about why they are important. Talk with them about the consequences of inactivity and unhealthy foods. We need to keep in mind that they are faced daily with advertisements and other influences that portray sugary cereals and drinks in a very positive light.

Third, let them know that good health requires a lifelong commitment to healthy behaviors and regular checkups with their health care provider. If you are behind in these, be sure to catch yourself up!

Remember that you can make a difference through your giving and your example. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Sincerely,  
Shawn Stinson, M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer



# Home Away from Home

In 1971, the 5-year-old daughter of Fred Hill, a Philadelphia Eagles player, was diagnosed with leukemia. The Hills spent their days and nights in the hospital with their daughter. They slept in chairs and ate their meals out of vending machines. They noticed other parents at the hospital in the same situation. The Hills learned that many families traveled great distances for specialized medical care and could not afford hotel rooms.

Hill's teammates, general manager and owner rallied around the family and in 1972 initiated the "Eagles Fly for Leukemia" philanthropic program. From this, the first Ronald McDonald House was born in the City of Brotherly Love. Today, there are 336 Ronald McDonald Houses worldwide, with 176 houses in the United States.

Each house is operated by an independent board of directors and staff. Local McDonald's restaurants provide a portion of the monetary support needed, but the houses rely on corporate and community donations.

BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina supports Ronald McDonald Houses in Columbia, Greenville and Charleston, as well as a "Care Mobile" that serves Beaufort, Jasper and Hampton counties. This unit provides free dental exams and preventive treatment to underserved children ages 3-11.

The houses accommodate families of children ages birth to 21 and are located near hospitals. Referrals are made by hospital staff. There's no income or length of stay requirement, and the houses will host families from anywhere. "No matter how they get here, our house is open to them," said Kate Venuto, director of administration and development at the Greenville house.

At the Columbia and Greenville houses, the average family stay is 10-11 days. However, some families have stayed more than 200 nights. "It is for anyone and everyone," Venuto said. "It touches so many people."

Each house has a kitchen and pantry. Breakfast and lunch foods are provided that families can prepare and serve themselves. Volunteers cook a nightly dinner for all the guests. There are toys and games for children, as well as a media center and computer access, so parents can keep up with work, research or paying bills.

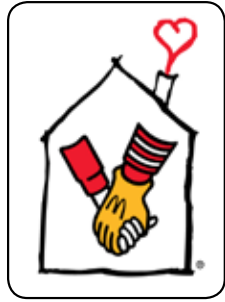
"We provide all the comforts of home. It's not just a hotel," said Jessica Albert, marketing and communications manager for the Columbia Ronald McDonald House.

One of the biggest benefits of the homes is that families can share experiences and lean on each other for support. For example, 55 percent of the families at the Columbia house have a child at the neonatal intensive care unit across the street at Palmetto Health Children's Hospital. "It's not just about the patient. It's about the family," said Liz Atkinson, operations director at the Columbia house. The house, on Colonial Drive, opened in August and, so far, has not had to turn away any families. It has 16 bedrooms and hosted 199 families last year.

The Greenville house, built in 1989, has 12 bedrooms and hosts 400 families a year. Last year, 250 families had to be turned away due to lack of space. A 17,000-square-foot addition is under construction that will double the number of bedrooms. The project will be complete in September.

The comfort of Ronald McDonald Houses extends to hospitals through Ronald McDonald Family Rooms. These rooms provide a quiet place to read or work, and families are provided with complimentary refreshments, computer access and reading materials. ■

*"Families being together keeps the child stronger during treatment. We are creating a community for these families to come together and make it through hard times together." ~ Kate Venuto*



# Lend a Hand

There are many ways to get involved with Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC).

**Donate:**

Make a monetary contribution online or by mail.

**Volunteer:**

Help is always needed organizing the pantry, preparing/cleaning rooms for incoming guest families, completing household tasks and much more. Individuals and groups are welcome.

**Make-A-Meal:**

Prepare a hot meal for guests. Dinner is served each night, as well as a hot breakfast on weekends.

**Collect Beverage Pop Tabs:**

Collect the aluminum tabs from beverage cans and donate them to RMHC for recycling.

**Special Events:**

RMHC holds several fundraising events throughout the year, such as the "Red Shoe Run."

For more information, check your local Ronald McDonald House website.

**Columbia:**  
[www.rmhc-columbia.org](http://www.rmhc-columbia.org)

**Greenville:**  
[www.rmhc-carolinas.org](http://www.rmhc-carolinas.org)

**Charleston:**  
[www.rmhcharleston.org](http://www.rmhcharleston.org)



Ronald McDonald House across from Greenville Memorial Hospital.



Artist's rendering of Ronald McDonald House expansion in Greenville.



Columbia's Ronald McDonald House on Colonial Drive.

“  
IN MY OWN WORDS  
”



**If you could become a full-time philanthropist or volunteer, which organization would you support and why?**

We asked several BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina employees this question. See a video of their answers by visiting the Community Relations section of Communiqué on My e-Work.

# Creating HYPE for Health

FEATURE

You've probably heard the discouraging statistics about obesity in South Carolina. The state has the 10th-highest adult obesity rate and the second-highest childhood obesity rate in the United States. But have you heard of Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMMSC) and what it's doing to change the trend?

ESMMSC works with partners across the state to coordinate obesity prevention efforts. The organization aims to make the healthy choice the easy choice. For some communities, the healthy choice isn't an easy choice, especially in rural areas. A scarcity of grocery stores and farmers markets can pose a challenge to eating healthy. A lack of safe and accessible places for physical activity limits opportunities to be active. ESMMSC is tackling these issues.

The organization serves as a convener and collaborator, connecting communities across the state with resources needed to enact changes at a local level. It has 2,400 partners, including 26 Eat Smart Move More chapters that represent 29 of the state's 46 counties. "The strategies and the work are really driven by those partners, because they know their communities," said Executive Director Beth Franco.

One partner that ESMMSC has found to be incredibly powerful is youth. Youth engagement is one of the organization's three strategic

focuses. ESMMSC empowers middle school and high school youth to become advocates for positive change through its Healthy Young People Empowerment (HYPE) Project. The program aims to engage youth in policy, systems and environmental obesity change efforts.

Since 2012, ESMMSC has worked with more than 550 young people across the state. The youth participate in groups through various settings, such as church, school or after-school programs. ESMMSC currently has 10 HYPE teams.

The BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation funds several HYPE teams through ESMMSC's Let's Go! SC initiative. That initiative focuses on six counties in South Carolina – Anderson, Kershaw, Barnwell, Laurens, Hampton and York.

Focusing on healthy eating and active living, each HYPE team identifies a need or problem in its community and implements a project to address it. Recently, a team in Kershaw worked with its local Parks and Recreation

*(continued on page 10)*

Small things can create changes that have big impact.

~ Beth Franco



In addition to increasing youth engagement through several HYPE projects, Let's Go! SC provides a resource about healthy options in your community.

**Visit [www.LetsGoSC.org](http://www.LetsGoSC.org).**

**Enter your town, city or ZIP code in the search bar.**

Find out about farmers markets, trails, recreational facilities, parks, school grounds and community-supported agriculture (CSA) offerings near you!

# How to be an Advocate

The HYPE project teaches youth how to be advocates to create positive change in their communities. Here are some tips from ESMMSA on how you can be an advocate for issues that are important to you.

- Advocacy is more than just lobbying. There are other ways to advocate for your cause, such as speaking at a school board meeting, contacting your local council member, serving on a community board, writing a letter to the newspaper or sending an email to a legislator.
- Build relationships with others in your community who care about the same issue. Creating a coalition of like-minded individuals makes your voice louder.
- Consider attending local meetings of your school board and city and county council to be better informed and potentially have an opportunity to speak directly with these policymakers.
- Use social media to connect with others who support your cause and to reach decision-makers.
- Advocacy takes time. It requires sustained effort and patience. Sustained effort can bring about change.

department to provide healthy food options at concession stands. A group in Anderson helped organize a cleanup day to revitalize a local park in a low-income neighborhood. More than 100 volunteers painted playground equipment, installed benches and provided trash cleanup, mulching and yard work.

Another HYPE team is particularly memorable for Franco. In Allendale, JROTC students teamed up with a group of special education students. For their project, they decided they wanted to have more fruits and vegetables in their high school cafeteria. They presented their proposal to the food services director and were able to set up a successful kiosk with fresh fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria. The students were so passionate about making positive change in their community that they

wanted to take on a second project. They extended their HYPE project and are now advocating for a dirt walking track around the school's baseball field that will be open for people who live in the area to use.

The youth involved in HYPE are doing more than increasing access to healthy foods and physical activity; they are learning how they can have a positive impact on their community. "The community begins to understand and appreciate the importance of youth voice," said Franco. "And then the young people involved in these projects begin to understand what's involved in creating change. Small things can create changes that have big impact." ESMMSA hopes the small changes that these youth set in motion can help their communities make healthier choices and change the prevalence of obesity in South Carolina. ■



The Anderson HYPE team during its park cleanup day.



The HYPE Project builds skills to give youth a greater voice in their communities.



# Where Healing Begins

COMMUNITY



Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse in the Pee Dee have a place to go for help. The Pee Dee Coalition serves seven counties: Florence, Darlington, Marion, Chesterfield, Marlboro, Dillon and Williamsburg.

Satellite centers are located in each county where services are available 24 hours a day, including a telephone crisis line, walk-in service and emergency shelter. The organization's Victim Assistance Program provides medical and legal advocacy, counseling and other support services.

Ellen C. Hamilton is the founding executive director of the coalition, which was organized in 1986. "We offer clothes and someplace to stay," Hamilton said. "There are two critical components: information and emotional support. Victims need someone to hear them." In addition to providing assistance to victims, the coalition has numerous education and prevention programs.

The Alternatives to Violence program aims to help domestic abusers identify different ways to deal with emotions without violence. Participants may volunteer, but most are referred through the judicial system. The program helps abusers identify the reason for the abusive behavior and find alternatives.

Reducing Our Assault Risk (ROAR) is a program to prevent sexual assault. ROAR presentations are offered to middle, high school and college students, as well as faith-based and civic organizations. Training is also offered to school staff, parents and law enforcement. "This education is based on developing healthy relationships," Hamilton said. "It's not only the young people in the classroom — it's reaching the adults."

Sexual assault prevention programs are also relevant in the workplace, Hamilton said. "It's a health issue. It's good business to intervene and intervene early."

Rape Aggression Defense, or RAD, is a self-defense class for women ages 12 and up. Training includes safety and physical education.

While it's not as common, men can also be victims of abuse. "We are working on engaging men and boys. It's not just a women's issue. Our culture doesn't always encourage men to come forward," said Hamilton.

The coalition has a 100 Man Campaign in which men pledge to stand

against sexual assault and to lead by example. This includes speaking out against the use of sexist and abusive language.

The Pee Dee Coalition also operates the Durant Children's Center, a comprehensive program for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of child and adolescent physical and sexual abuse. The center serves as a centralized facility where all agency representatives can interact with the victim, reducing the number of individuals and settings the child must encounter. RadKIDS is a prevention program run by the coalition for children ages 3½ through 12. It includes eight to 10 hours of group

#### Durant Children's Center

The center serves children who are victims of physical or sexual abuse. Services include:

- 24-hour crisis intervention
- Medical examinations, diagnosis and treatment
- Individual and group counseling
- Legal assistance
- Community education and training

presentations and activities that encourage children to use knowledge, skills and power to protect themselves from violence and harm.

The coalition receives some of its funding from the Victims of Crime Act fund. This fund is financed through fines paid by convicted federal offenders, not tax dollars. BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina and PG&A have supported the

Pee Dee Coalition since the 1990s. "We have to raise between 15 and 22 percent of our budget each year," said Hamilton. "Fundraising is relentless for us."

To keep all of the services running, the coalition has 52 full-time employees and more than 200 volunteers. Volunteers range from victim advocates with extensive training to those who donate their time reading to children. "We try to figure out in what way can you best help," Hamilton said. For those who may not be able to volunteer, the coalition also accepts in-kind gifts, such as food, personal products and first-aid supplies. ■

**To find out how you can help, call the Pee Dee Coalition at 800-273-1820.**





# An Advocate for Others

After leaving the performance of a play that raises awareness about violence against women and girls, Marty Pressley-Turner walked directly to a table set up by Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands (STSM).

“I knew that I was meant to be a volunteer for STSM,” said Pressley-Turner. “I was a candy-striper at 16 years old and became a registered nurse. Serving in the military, my experience as an obstetrics nurse and familiarity with trauma of all kinds has been my training as a survivor advocate for STSM.”

Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands advocates for and supports survivors of sexual assault and educates the community about sexual violence prevention. Counselors also provide age-appropriate violence prevention education for school-age children.

STSM can respond to survivors with specifically trained counselors based on the survivors’ cultural background, ethnicity and gender. And counseling services are free of charge.

“I am on call for two 12-hour shifts a month,” said Pressley-Turner. “I either answer calls on the crisis hotline or meet a survivor, and sometimes family members, at the hospital. I tell them what to expect at the emergency room. I explain the forensics, the medical exam, law enforcement’s role and services that are available to anyone from STSM. Sometimes, I play with the kids who are brought along, too. We play games as a distraction from the serious and heartbreaking events that brought their family to the emergency room in the first place.”

Pressley-Turner would not reveal any details from cases where she provided support because of her oath to always keep survivors’ stories confidential. “I always tell a survivor that I believe her, I will never reveal any details of her story and that it’s not her fault,” she said.

STSM’s website, [www.stsm.org](http://www.stsm.org), states that sexual violence against others is about power and control. After five years of volunteering for STSM, Pressley-Turner contends that assaults can be reduced if respect and equality for all is taught starting at birth.

Pressley-Turner is an RN case manager in FEP and has worked at BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina for 24 years. She advocates for patients by assessing needs and educating patients while coordinating with their medical team.

“I plan to retire from my job at BlueCross by the end of this year,” she said. “I want to increase my hours as a survivor advocate. Now, I’m the person at the table, just like the day I signed up to volunteer. I’ve volunteered at USC’s Law School, the Fireflies stadium, Soda City market and the Mardi Gras festival. Look for me at even more health fairs and events.” ■



# Books for a Bright Future

Five years ago, My First Books SC was created when Palmetto Project became an affiliate of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library.

Many South Carolinians recognize Palmetto Project for the nonprofit’s voter project ensuring that voting is fair and accessible. Palmetto Project supplies the round “I Voted” stickers that many of us apply to our jackets after casting a vote. Palmetto Project also provided assistance to eligible citizens to enroll in health care after the Affordable Care Act became law.

“Community engagement and civic participation naturally blends in with family and education. Finding a solution to support vulnerable families with kids who may not have the advantages to start kindergarten with literacy skills led us to partnering with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library,” explained Nell Killoy, Palmetto Project’s deputy director of the Midlands and Upstate.

Five years ago, My First Books SC was created when Palmetto Project became an affiliate of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Entertainer

Dolly Parton launched the library in her home state of Tennessee by providing kids with a specially selected book each month, regardless of the family’s income.

“Our goal is for all South Carolina kids to receive the books from birth to five years. Moms and dads are enrolling their children for My First Books at daycare, through the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness program and at school. Families who are part of our Families Helping Families Christmas program are encouraged to enroll their babies and young children, too,” said Killoy.

In South Carolina, one-third of children don’t have the literacy skills to be successful in kindergarten, and books in the home are key to a child’s success. Children who fall behind in reading are more likely to drop out of school and live in poverty.

*(continued on page 16)*

"I was shocked when I learned how many families don't have any books in their home. If a child doesn't know what a book is, you cannot expect him or her to open it and to understand that the words on the page correspond to the pictures. Before you learn to read, rudimentary skills have to be taught, down to the mechanics of how to lift the cover of a book and turn its pages," Killoy said.

Currently, there are 36,000 children who receive age-appropriate books every month in South Carolina. Titles like "Meet Me at the Moon" and "Llama Llama and the Billy Goat" are selections for 3-year-olds to foster language and imagination skills.

"With adequate funding, My First Books could provide books to all S.C. kids until their fifth birthday," said Killoy. "We have a waiting list of children who want to enroll. Thanks to the Richland County government, the Lipscomb Foundation, International Paper and BlueCross BlueShield

of South Carolina, we are able to furnish more books to kids. I am proud to say that South Carolina is the only state, other than Tennessee, where we offer books to kids statewide. Although kids are still waiting for their first book, I'm confident we will get there."

Dolly Parton must be confident, too. When she was in Greenville last year performing at the Peace Center, she provided two tickets to Killoy and Palmetto Project Executive Director Steve Skardon. Killoy and Skardon were invited backstage to meet the superstar.

"Dolly was as gracious and down-to-earth as I always imagined. She is a consummate entertainer," added Killoy. ■

**For more information about My First Books SC and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, go to [www.myfirstbooks.palmettoproject.org](http://www.myfirstbooks.palmettoproject.org).**



## Poolside Mentoring

Pamela Alford, a data analyst in Healthcare Services, never thought much about learning to swim. She was in her early 50s and didn't have access to a pool. There was also the problem of what to do with her hair. And, she was afraid of water. Even looking at a pool of water made her dizzy. She didn't put her face up to the showerhead and wouldn't go outside in the rain unless she had a sturdy umbrella.

Her thoughts changed one day while she was at her hair stylist's shop. The conversation turned to swimming, and everyone admitted they had never learned. When Alford spoke up and said she would like to learn, a young woman she didn't know said, "I'll teach you."

Within days, Alford joined the YMCA in Irmo, changed her hair style and committed to meeting her new coach three days a week for a lesson. Alford's three-day-a-week commitment turned into going to the pool every single day for 333 consecutive days.

She introduced herself to the lifeguard on duty, telling him she was practicing her techniques and not to dive in for her unless she let him know she was truly in trouble. She often had to maneuver around diving teams, school swim teams and even a kayak team. Sometimes, she and a lifeguard were the only ones there.

"After 7 p.m. on weeknights, the pool would clear out, and I'd stay until the staff closed the facility at 9. I wanted to perfect the proper strokes and practice my breathing. The hardest thing was learning to float. Everyone would tell me to just relax and let go. I was able to totally submerge my head on the first day because my feet were planted on the bottom of the pool. Floating was something I had to ease into. I had to trust myself first," Alford said.

Her coach instructed her for four months at no charge, until other obligations came up. Alford decided to join Drew Wellness Center, along with eight other BlueCross employees who wanted to take swim lessons.

"When I joined Drew, I introduced myself to everyone. The Greenview Dolphins Swim Team practiced there, and I found myself interacting with the kids on the team. I would see the lack of confidence or focus, and I'd tell them that they can be the best if they practice and believe in themselves. Coach Stanley McIntosh invited me to a swim meet in my hometown of Greenville. I was so excited that I found myself on the pool platform yelling words of encouragement as the kids were competing. I say that Drew is my 'Cheers.' Everyone knows my name," said Alford.

Alford now serves on Greenview Dolphins' board of directors. "We promote excellence in academics and in the community. Swimming and teamwork are a great way to teach that hard work and dedication are necessary to be successful in life. Learning to swim is freeing. Anything is possible when you are determined," she said.

A year after beginning her first lesson, Alford threw a swim party and invited 40 women. She stipulated that all guests had to wear a swimsuit and had to get in the pool. Twelve women came, and Alford was the only swimmer in the group. ■

**"These 12 women got in the pool, and we played liked kids," she said. "I catered lunch, hired a DJ and a photographer. It was a celebration of finding my joy in a pool." ~ Pam Alford**



Steve Skardon, Dolly Parton and Nell Killoy



❧

# From Seed to Plate



Every two weeks, a group of middle school students visits Joseph Fields Farm, an organic farm on Johns Island. Some of them tend to several rows of crops. Some weigh and package produce. One group works on building garden beds, birdhouses and benches. Another group prepares a meal for everyone, using fresh produce from the farm.

This is a program of Earth Heart Growers (EHG), an organization that provides garden and agricultural education in two public Montessori schools in Charleston. EHG gives students hands-on experiences with the food cycle – from seed to plate – and teaches them the value of sustainability.

Liz Ramirez, a Montessori primary school teacher from Colombia, started EHG because she noticed something about the children she was teaching at Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary School in North Charleston. “We are in an area where 70 percent of our children are living below the poverty level,” said Ramirez. “Around the school, there are no grocery stores. Pretty much everything they eat is from a gas station or convenience

store. They are not getting the nutrition they need. You have children that come to school, and they are not nourished. We are expecting them to pay attention, but these kids are hungry.”

Hursey Elementary already had a school garden, but Ramirez had ideas to expand the school’s use of it. So, she created a proposal for EHG. She aligned EHG’s programs with Montessori education standards, so it could become a formal part of the curriculum at the schools. Support from BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina helps provide this learning experience for the students.

It starts with planting seeds at Joseph Fields Farm and in school gardens. The children are in charge of the maintenance of the garden, including weeding, composting and watering the plants. They also harvest the produce. During the last year, the children grew and harvested onions, garlic, parsley, beets, collards, kale, lettuce, spinach, potatoes, watermelon, tomatoes, carrots, celery, strawberries, peas, green beans, cabbage, squash, zucchini, cucumbers and cilantro.

*(continued on page 20)*



This produce then finds its way to the students' classrooms and homes through EHG's other programs. Students run the Little Market, an in-school farmers market that sets up during carpool, at PTA meetings and other school activities. They also coordinate the Healthy Basket, an in-school community-supported agriculture (CSA) initiative. Families at the schools can register to receive a bag of fresh produce biweekly or monthly.

In the Fun Pan program, students learn how to cook the food they grew and harvested. A chef who runs the culinary program at an area high school creates a recipe using ingredients the students will harvest that week. "We ask that they create recipes that will be more interesting for children. They mix the flavors so that the children will start loving [the vegetables]," said Ramirez. "If the children learn how to cook, they will actually go home and teach their parents, or be the ones to take the initiative to cook their own meals at home." The students create the dish in the classroom and take the recipe home with them.



The EHG students aren't just getting their hands dirty on the farm and in the garden. Through science instruction, they learn about sustainability, agriculture, biology, botany and astronomy. They also develop math, marketing and sales skills through the Little Market.

"Everything we do is to cultivate a scientist in the children," said Ramirez. "To help them develop a curiosity for life and science. We want to give them the opportunity to develop themselves and their personalities." ■

**"Everything we do is to cultivate a scientist in the children. To help them develop a curiosity for life and science." -Liz Ramirez**

## GIY: *Grow It Yourself*

Here are some tips for planting your own home garden:

- Plan your garden on paper first to map out available space. Make your garden as small as possible, with just enough room for everything you want to plant.
- Plant vegetables you and your family like to eat.
- In South Carolina, gardens should receive at least six hours of direct sunlight each day.
- Keep your garden free of weeds to encourage growth.
- No space for a garden? No problem! You can grow vegetables in containers that can be placed on balconies, porches, patios, sidewalks or in window boxes.

For more tips on planting a garden, visit Clemson Cooperative Extension's Home & Garden Information Center online at [www.Clemson.edu/extension/hgic](http://www.Clemson.edu/extension/hgic).



Here's a recipe the students tried. Try it at home!

### Thai Kale Fried Rice

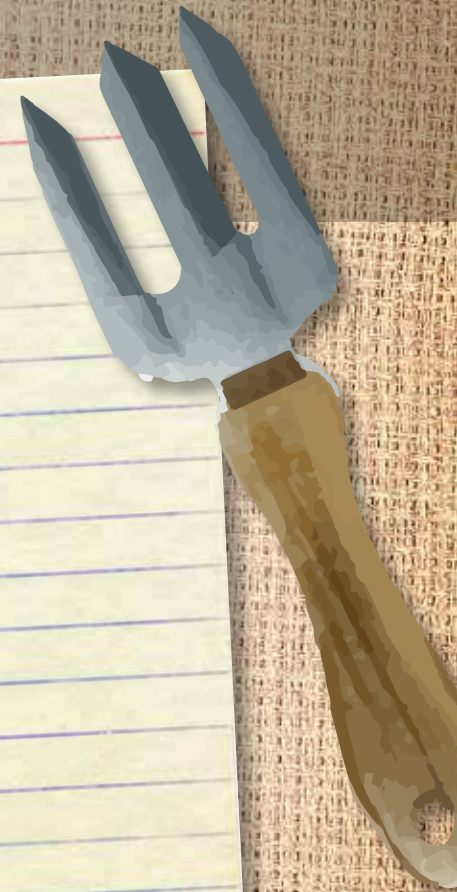
Recipe created by: Chef Jason Wheless

#### Ingredients:

- |                                   |                           |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 tablespoons vegetable oil       | 1 cup shredded coconut    |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced           | 4 cups cooked rice        |
| 1 cup green onions, thinly sliced | 1 cup coconut milk        |
| 2 cups shredded or grated carrots | 2 limes                   |
| 2 bunches kale, thinly sliced     | 1 bunch cilantro, chopped |
| ½ teaspoon salt                   | Fish sauce, to taste      |
|                                   | Sriracha, to taste        |

#### Directions:

1. Heat oil in a pan and stir-fry garlic and green onion.
2. Add the carrots and kale and continue frying until wilted.
3. Season with salt and remove to a bowl.
4. Heat the remaining oil in the pan and stir-fry the coconut and rice.
5. Add the kale, coconut milk, lime juice and cilantro, and season with fish sauce and sriracha.



# WHY I GIVE



**Jennifer Berryman**  
Senior Administrative Associate, Client Management

Living in Columbia for the past year and a half, I wanted to learn more about nonprofits in the Midlands. Many women who work at BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina suggested Women in Philanthropy (WIP). Working under the leadership of the United Way of the Midlands, WIP is a diverse group of influential, dedicated and passionate women who are creating positive, measured change in the lives of women and children of the Midlands. Recently, I joined the executive committee as WIP communication chair, overseeing social media and correspondence. Giving my time to help nonprofits is not only enjoyable, but very fulfilling. You may see me around the Atrium selling jeans day badges, working community events, serving as a United Way captain or forming a team to walk on behalf of BlueCross.

**Johnathan Kirkwood**  
Billing Manager, Major Group and National Alliance

I believe that it is important to give back to the community and to share your time, talent and treasure with others. Additionally, giving back can be contagious. Not only do you impact the lives of other people, but you never know who you might influence, such that your actions might inspire someone else to volunteer.



# VOLUNTEERS

Alex Dillard  
Alice Snyder  
Amy Dillon  
Amy Jo Tyson  
Andy Folsom  
Angie Cason Young  
Ann Berry  
Arica Carter  
Avis Void  
Avonda Boone  
Barbara Driggers  
Becky Robinson  
Betty Void  
Beverly Flory  
Biff Bailey  
Bonny Randle  
Brenda W. Jones  
Bruce Hughes  
Candice Elliott  
Carlissa Brown  
Cassandra Boone  
Charmaine Black  
Chelsea Roberson  
Cherita Milligan  
Christina Shannon  
Cindy Cooper  
Cleo Webster  
Cynthia Lagatore  
Dan Traufler  
Darryl Cooper  
David Gwin  
Dawn Carnell  
Debbie Padgett  
Deborah Hayes  
DeDee Rowe  
Denise Medders  
Denisealynn Albert  
Emily Hinely-Clelland  
Erica James  
Etoya Cade

Ginny Reed  
Jacquanda Caldwell  
Jay Holloway  
Jennifer Berryman  
Jennifer Mashura  
Jennifer Moemen  
Jenny Morales  
Joan Graddick  
Joe Johnson  
Johnathan Kirkwood  
Julie Larsen  
Karen Addy  
Karen Peebles  
Kathy Brennan  
Kathy Norton  
Keisha Bass  
Kim Wellman  
Kimberly Richardson  
Kimberly Shaw  
Lee McElveen  
Lisa Henry  
Lisa Hutchinson  
Lisa Jones  
Loretta Lesesne  
Lucy Grey Mclver  
Manny Licata  
Marty Pressley-Turner  
Mary Mazzola-Spivey  
Mclver Williamson  
Mee Jean Sasine  
Melanie Nanney  
Mike E. Harris  
Mike E. Smith  
Mike Gurrera  
Monica McCray-Wilson  
Naasira Taylor  
Natasha Geer  
Neal Burkhead  
Nella Bishop  
Nicole Belin

Nicole Nichols  
Pamela Hammond Bing  
Pam Megill  
Patcenia Anderson  
Patti Embry-Tautenhan  
Paul Povey  
Penny Smalls  
Perla Johnston  
Rebecca May  
Rita Anderson  
Ron Darby  
Rosie Washington  
Ryal Curtis  
Sabrina Hayworth  
Sam Smith  
Sedacia Cook  
Shauna Rabon  
Shaunda Profit  
Sheena Dantzler  
Sheila Dukes  
Sheri Mertins  
Stacy Brown-Keller  
Stephanie Dinkins  
Stephanie Musto  
Steve Johnson  
Susan Forrest  
Susan L. Dunn  
Suzanne Fuller  
Suzanne Owczarczak  
Theresa Spatheros  
Tina Houser  
Tina Mack  
Todd Hudak  
Tom Tanner  
Tracie Hewett  
Tracy O'Briant  
Vernetha Gillam  
Vinnie Livoti



## Do Your Kids Volunteer?

Volunteering at a young age can have benefits later in life. According to ChildTrends, a nonprofit research organization, volunteering as a teen can have a positive effect on academic, psychological and occupational well-being. Participating in community service can help young people develop leadership skills, respect for others and an understanding of how to be a good citizen.

Do your children volunteer? Tell us how your kids are serving in their communities.

Send us an email at [Community.Relations@bcbssc.com](mailto:Community.Relations@bcbssc.com). We want to hear from you!

**THANK**

**YOU**

— VERY MUCH! —

Thank you to all those who completed the survey questionnaire in the fall 2016 issue of Giving.

**We appreciate your feedback!**

And congratulations to the winner of our participation prize drawing,

**Rafayele Bostick.**

She won a BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina YETI® tumbler.

THANK-YOU LETTERS

LETTERS

Hi, Sherie Johnson  
 Would like to thank the kind hearted people who adopted my four children, and myself after all the bad things that happen in the world today. There are still some good kind people left and these people are you all. With out people like you, it would be tough to have a good Christmas. I thank God for you and your family. Smiles was on my children's face, that would have been impossible with out you. Special thanks goes out from my heart to the my sponsor, I hope you and your family have a good year. Shadia, Jaaliso, Tykeia, Brianna and myself, thank you all and we love you.

Thanks so much  
 Sherie Johnson

This letter is for:  
 Kelma  
 Rose  
 Yolanda  
 Marvelda  
 Joan  
 Kim  
 Renee  
 Tammy  
 Darla

THANK ALL OF YOU!!!

I want to Thank all of you for making our Christmas a joyous one. I apologize for the late note but I was trying to find something special to say in the form of a Thank you card. But I found nothing that could describe the joy you gup part in my heart. The children was so excited and when we finished opening our gifts my jaws was sore from smiling with happiness. "May God Bless you all Real Good."

From: Sharon, Tyone, Shilon and Dilitiana

Thank you for your generous donation to Curing Kids Cancer. Your kindness is helping make a real difference in the lives of children battling cancer.

Grainne Owen  
 President/Founder

Marcus Hall  
 Tia POK

Antoni Hall Anthony Hall  
 Tamar  
 Tamarus  
 Marion

Sending you warm winter wishes for a beautiful holiday season... and beyond.

We are thankful that we will be enjoying our gifts of needs and wants. The thought and act of kindness is even a greater gift. Thank You!  
 Tarah + Family

The Board of Directors for the Spring Valley Education Foundation express their deepest appreciation for your donation to our 31st Auction.

Dusty Broadway-Amick  
 Executive Director

THANK-YOU LETTERS

Dear Sponsor,  
 I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the joy that you are bringing to our home this Christmas season. I hope you know that our smiles and our bright eyes are gonna give alot to do with you. Thank you so much for blessing our family.

We hope that you and your family are blessed with joy and happiness as well. May God be with you!  
 Merry Christmas  
 From the Behlings!

Dear Families Helping Families:  
 I am very appreciative for all that you have done. To see the smiles on my kids face after opening their gifts were priceless. They said Santa put me exactly what I wanted. I don't know how you knew I needed clothes, but thanks so much. My family and I are so grateful for your family. Thanks AGAIN.

From  
 Latifhia Kintland  
 Kasey Kintland  
 LaBregia Ellison  
 Jordan Ellison

Thank your for your support in helping the Columbia World Affairs Council carry on its mission in 2017.

Dickson Monk  
 Director of Communications

To our wonderful Christmas Sponsors,  
 I want to thank you for wonderful Christmas gifts. My twins and I were and are so thankful. You made this a wonderful Christmas. We were not expecting anything, then got a notice in the mail advising of the surprise gift pick-up. I was not expecting so many wonderful things. My twin boys were super excited about everything, especially the remote control airplanes they wanted for 2 years now. The clothes and sneakers were the exact size and style they wear. I am so grateful. I was very shocked to see gifts for myself as well, I appreciate it. I don't usually get gifts.

These last two Christmases have been a challenge due to having lost my oldest son to a car accident summer 2015. The holidays have been a really sad time for us. He is dearly missed. I try to make these times especially happy for them because they still struggle with his death. You helped to make their day. I will be forever grateful for all you've done. I wish had taken pictures but my phone decided it didn't have enough memory, so I couldn't take any.

You went above and beyond any and all expectations I could have. Thank you again for your kindness. God bless you and keep you always.

Jaqueline Ferraro and twins (Jamir Ferraro and Zayir Ferraro)

Thank you to BCBS of SC's contribution to the Ray Tanner Foundation to support a Back to School Bash for three innercity elementary schools!

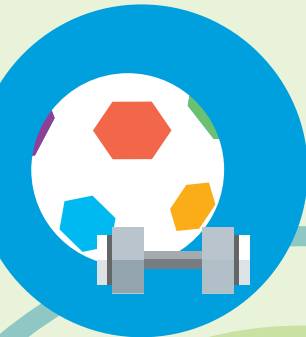
Ray Tanner  
 Chairman

Dear Family,  
 Justin and I would like to say along with our deepest gratitude, and a sincere thanks; it was so nice to be remembered in such a thoughtful way on a very special day. Special people like you make the world a better place. Our faces were lighted up with joy as we opened all our beautiful gifts and the beautiful card. Thanks again for making our Christmas Day a blessed one. May God continue to bless each one of you for what you have done for us and will do for others.

Evan and Justin Capers  
 December 27, 2016

With Our Deepest Love  
 Evan and Justin

# Raising Healthy Kids



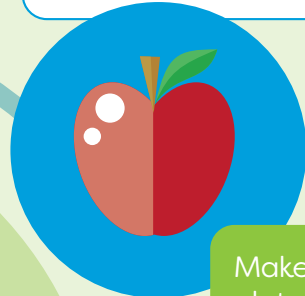
Kids need 60 minutes of **exercise** each day. You can make it a family affair by taking a walk or playing active games together.

Type 2 diabetes usually happens in adults, but the number of children and teens being diagnosed is growing: more than 5,000 youths are newly diagnosed each year.

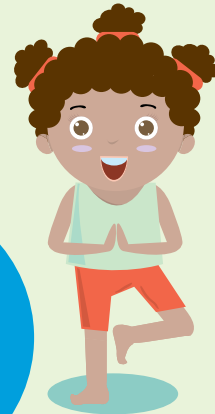
“A child’s body needs nutrition, not just food.”

~ Julie Webb Kelley

Eating a **good diet** can improve your health now and in the future.



Make half your plate veggies and fruits.



Swap sugary drinks – such as soda, sports drinks and fruit juice – for water.



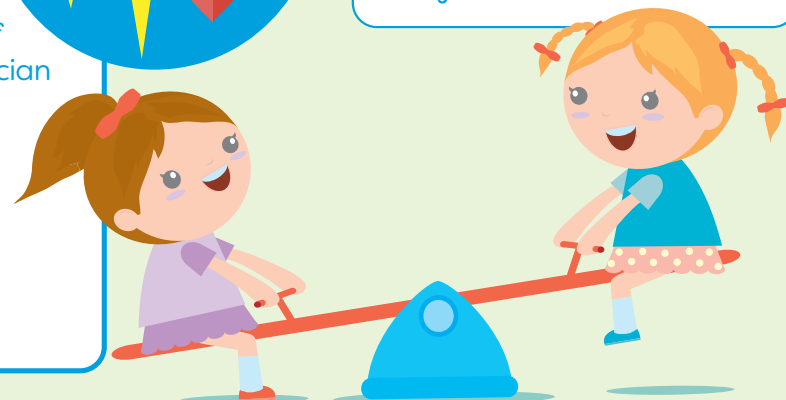
Children should get **regular medical checkups**, even when they are healthy. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children visit their pediatrician for a well-child checkup on the following schedule:

**3- to 5-days-old**

**By 1 month**

**At 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 24 and 30 months**

**Once a year between the ages of 3 and 21 years**



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Get Involved!

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity? Take a look at these nonprofit organizations in your area. You’ll find that some need volunteers for special events, while others require more long-term commitments.

Can’t find what you’re looking for?

Contact [Community.Relations](#) and specify your area of interest.

#### Midlands

**Community Medical Center of Kershaw County**  
<http://www.cmcofkc.org/howtovolunteer>

#### Home Works of America

Columbia  
<http://www.homeworksofamerica.org/volunteer-faqs>

#### JDRF Palmetto Chapter | One Walk

Oct. 22, 2017, at River Bluff High School  
<http://www.jdrf.org/get-involved/volunteer>

#### Leukemia & Lymphoma Society | Light the Night

Nov. 2, 2017, in Columbia  
<http://www.lighthenight.org/events/columbia>

#### Palmetto Project | Families Helping Families

<http://palmettoproject.org/programs/family-youth-school-programs/>

#### Senior Resources

Columbia  
<https://www.seniorresourcesinc.org/volunteer>

#### Sexual Trauma Services of the Midlands

<https://www.stsm.org/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities>

#### Lowcountry

##### City of Myrtle Beach, Military Appreciation Days

May 1 – May 31, 2017, in Myrtle Beach  
<http://www.militaryappreciationdays.com>

##### Girls on the Run Charleston

<http://www.gotrcharleston.org/get-involved/volunteer>

##### Grand Strand Humane Society

<http://www.grandstrandhumanesociety.com/how-to-help/volunteer>

##### Salute from the Shore

July 4, 2017 | Flyover along the coast of South Carolina  
[www.salutefromtheshore.org](http://www.salutefromtheshore.org)

#### Upstate

**Bon Secours St. Francis Health | 2017 Festival of Trees**  
December 2017

<http://www.stfrancisfoundation.com/event/2017-festival-of-trees>

#### NAMI Upstate Walk

June 3, 2017, at Furman University in Greenville  
<https://namigreenvillesc.org>

#### Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Carolinas

<http://rmhc-carolinas.org/lend-a-hand/volunteer>

#### Ten at the Top

<http://tenatthetop.org/participate-2>

#### The Urban League of the Upstate

<http://urbanleagueupstate.org/get-involved/volunteer>

#### Pee Dee

**Harvest Hope Food Bank of the Pee Dee**

<http://www.harvesthope.org/get-involved>

#### Lighthouse Ministries

<http://www.lighthouseflorence.org/volunteer>





South Carolina

This printed piece was produced by a certified "green" printing company using only the highest quality vegetable-based inks, helping to prevent air and water pollution.

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