

Darlington County Community Action Agency



Annual Report

“Looking Back on 2020: Successes and Challenges”



MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote sustainable economic self-sufficiency by eliminating the causes of poverty through partnerships and programs to improve the standard of living of low income individuals and families.

VISION STATEMENT

To be the premiere agency in delivering exceptional services to low income children and families through effective program implementation and innovative partner collaboration.

Letter from the Board Chair

As Chairperson of Darlington County Community Action Agency (DCCAA) Board of Directors and on behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to share the DCCAA Annual Report. The Annual Report highlights the many programs and services the DCCAA provides and the impact these programs have on Darlington County. The DCCAA is committed to accomplishing its mission “to promote sustainable economic self-sufficiency by eliminating the causes of poverty through partnerships and programs to improve the standard of living of low-income individuals and families.”

The board and staff continue to place an emphasis on professional development and maintaining a level of integrity that is expected. The board is proud of the many accomplishments of the agency this year. We have an exceptional CEO who ensures that Board members understand the importance of their roles and responsibilities and work closely with the Board to ensure they have the knowledge needed to make informed decisions.

The growth of the agency has significantly increased our capacity. The board, as the legal and fiscal entity, takes their oversight and responsibility very seriously. Highlights of our growth in 2020 are:

- Relocation of all of the Hartsville Head Start Centers and the Agency’s Headquarters into the former Washington Street School. The facility has been renovated and is an asset in the Washington Street Community
- Sale of the old Thornwell Building
- Attendance at Virtual Board Training
- Application for an Early Head Start Grant
- Installed LED signage at all DCCAA facilities
- Installed new phones that cut phone cost by more than one half
- Installed a camera and security system
- Converted all light fixtures to LED lighting creating a utility cost savings.
- Acquired 5 new school buses
- Installed new playground equipment
- Installed key card entry system

We appreciate the hard work of the CEO, staff, local government, community partners, and citizens. However, our work is not done. We have many more challenges ahead. On behalf of the board of directors, we will continue to support the agency’s work and the spirit of what community action means to the citizens in Darlington County.

Jeronell Bradley, DCCAA Board Chairperson

Board of Commissioners

Ms. Jeronell Bradley, Board Chair

Mr. Clarence Ings, Vice Chair

Mr. Troy Abraham (Private)

Mr. Donnell Camp (Private)

Ms. Pheobe Clark (Attorney)

Ms. Adlena Graham (Emeritus)

Ms. Angela Grooms (Elected-Poor)

Mr. Mal Hyman (Public)

Mrs. Yolanda Jackson (Elected-Poor)

Mr. Albert Johnson (Private)

Ms. Jannie Lathan (Public)

Ms. Shari McFadden (Private)

Ms. Sheila Squire (Elected-Poor)

Mrs. Maureen Thomas (Public)

Head Start Policy Council

Mrs. Priscilla Mayfield, Chair (Hartsville HS)

Ms. Keyona Brayley (MG Burno)

Mr. Thomas Heatley (Community Representative)

Ms. Eloise Jackson (Community Representative)

Ms. Sheila Squire (Board Liaison)



Message from the Executive Director

While 2019 ended quietly, most will remember 2020 as a year for the record books! As we enter a new year and a new decade, echoes of hope for a better tomorrow can be heard both locally and across the nation. That hope is fueled by our earnest desire to see conditions improved for everyone in our lives including our families, co-workers and of course, the clients that we serve. As Team Darlington County Community Action Agency (DCCAA), we cherish the memories of our past, are thankful for our accomplishments and strive to grow in strength and wisdom as we navigate (and sometimes stumble) along our path.

Such a record-breaking year as 2020 befits chronicling the happenings and highlights. Topping the list was the sale of the Old Thornwell property bringing in non-federal dollars in excess of 300,000.00 and acquiring the Washington Street Elementary School for the purchase price of \$1 from the Darlington County School District. Following closely behind that was the Board authorizing our use of a significant part of the Thornwell proceeds to prepare the WSE site for our occupancy. Another high point of 2020 was the merger of the St. Joseph and Butler Head Start centers into Hartsville Head Start and the relocation of the central office, which includes Community Services, Fiscal, Human Resources, the Head Start Director, and myself. With considerable pride, I am happy to report that as of December 18, 2020, we had all moved in to our new digs! Significantly, we continued to operate during our transition period to ensure there was no break in service to the many clients who needed help. While the Coronavirus Pandemic has brought about changes in every aspect of our lives, it allowed us to see how formidable and creative we are. For the first time ever, our Head Start program went *VIRTUAL* after equipping our children with the required technology to provide them the same educational opportunities as every other child. Community Services staff continuously provided services to clients on a virtual basis with staff working a combination of in office and from home, all the while keeping the community's needs at the forefront.

As 2020 has ended, the Board of Commissioners and I want to recognize every member of Team DCCAA for their dedication to the mission and vision of our agency during this challenging year. In spite of all of the roadblocks, we have set a course and are steadily moving forward, using our past experiences to guide us to higher heights and an ever-increasing capacity to meet the needs of the low-income citizens of Darlington County. Thank you all for your steadfast support in helping us to achieve greater levels of success. I hope you too are excited about the prospects that 2021 will bring!

Respectfully,

Jacquelyn J. Stayton

Executive Director

Who We Are...

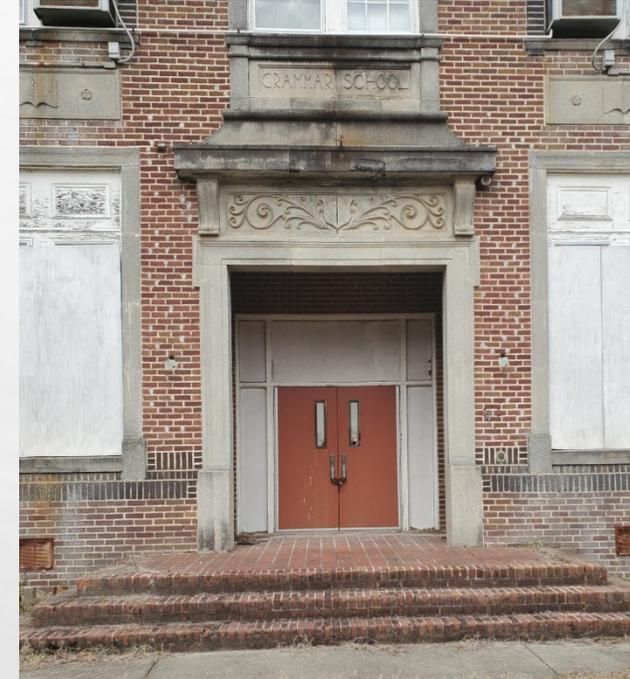
The Darlington County Community Action Agency (DCCAA) is a public, non-profit agency that was established in 1965 by the County Delegation under the authority granted by the General Assembly of South Carolina in Act #314 as part of the Great Society programs under President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. DCCAA is the only single-county program in the state of South Carolina. We continue to work towards rooting out the causes of poverty through our Community Services and Head Start programs.



Old Thornwell Property

Thornwell Elementary school was built in 1926 and remained in operation until 2007. It was donated to Darlington County Community Action Agency in 2010 by the Darlington County School Board.

The property was sold in 2020 for \$350,000.00 non-federal dollars; under the Executive Director, Jacquelyn J. Slayton's leadership.



St. Joseph Head Start



St. Joseph Catholic School was home to the first Head Start program under Darlington County Community Action Agency. This partnership began in April 1967 until May 2020



Butler Head Start



The eight-classroom building at the old Butler High School had been severely damaged by fire during the period it served as a warehouse, required extensive and costly renovation. The Butler Heritage partnered with the Darlington County Community Action Agency in 2004 to complete the upgrades. The building then opened as the Butler Head Start Center, where five classes of three- and four-year-olds attended until May 2020.



Darlington County Community Action Agency



Darlington County Community Action Agency's central office has called quite a few places home during its 56 years of service. 904 S. 4th St. is where we took up residency for the last 20 years.



Our New Home

DCCAA proudly takes ownership of Washington Street Elementary School. Darlington County School Board voted to sell the property in March of 2020 to DCCAA for \$1.00.

The Hartsville sites have are all together with the purchase of Washington Street. We were able to combine Butler and St. Joseph Head Start Centers into “one” and it is now called Hartsville Head Start. The central office which housed the Community Services Program, the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Fiscal Department, and Human Resources have all moved in as of December 2020 completing the transition.

Darlington County Community Action Agency
325 W. Washington St.



DCCAA HEAD START IS LOOKING GOOD

Having obtained non-federal dollars, DCCAA is stepping up its game with the purchase of two beautiful electronic display boards for the Hartsville and Darlington sites



Edna Pettigrew
MG Burno Center Manager



Monica Davis (left) and Frenchrist Jackson
Hartsville Head Start Center Managers



Head Start purchased cargo containers for sound and secure storage of equipment and supplies at MG Burno and Hartsville Head Start.

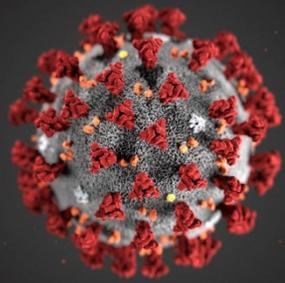


New playground equipment was installed at both locations for outdoor learning.



James "Don" Hall Programs Operations/Transportation Manager (left) and Todd Manuel of Interstate Transportation Equipment.

"The wheels on the bus go round and round" The Head Start program purchased five new 2020 Thomas Built buses with funds from a one-time supplement grant offered by the Office of Head Start. Don Hall, Transportation Manager says he is "ecstatic" this will definitely make our transportation department run a lot smoother without the issues of constant breakdowns and repairs. The children will be riding in style when they return.



The Coronavirus (COVID19)

On March 16, 2020, Darlington County Community Action Agency (DCCAA) officially closed its doors in the wake of the worldwide pandemic known formally as the Coronavirus. The Board of Commissioners and the Executive Director did not hesitate to take every precaution necessary to protect the staff and 300 hundred Head Start children. The virus was fast spreading everywhere. A new day had come where we could no longer do things in what we called the “normal” way. Working from home became the new normal for those that could. Zoom and free conference calls became the nucleus for our new way of life, keeping communication lines open. Schools and churches quickly got on board. “Virtual Learning” kept schools open and brought families closer together as parents played a big part in making sure the work was done.

Before reopening our doors, there were new policies and protocols put in place. This was serious business; questionnaires on the comfort level of returning to work were sent out to the staff before setting a return date. The agency spared no expense in purchasing supplies and materials needed to provide the safest environment possible. COVID19 screening checklists and thermometers were placed at every entrance with gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant spray. The Hartsville Central Office would be the only community services site to open, serving clients from all outlying areas. The Darlington, Lamar, and Society Hill offices would remain closed until further notice. A drop box was added at each location to continue to serve clients with minimal contact. A new alternating work schedule of two days per week in the office while the other three would remain work from home days to limit the number of persons in the office at one time. What about the children? The overall consensus of the Board, Executive Director, Head Start Director, and the Head Start Management Team was that our Head Start children would remain at home, and the teachers would continue with virtual learning.

The Coronavirus (COVID19) (continued)

We Take Safety Seriously



Drop boxes were placed at all our locations, Hartsville, Darlington, Lamar, and Society Hill, to provide contactless service.



Merv hepa filters were placed in all HVAC units to purify the air



Over 10,000 mask were ordered to provide protection for staff, clients, children and families.



Air purifiers were purchased for individual offices.



The ZONO machine has revolutionized the way we sanitize. We can now sanitize any items our children use without liquid chemicals. MG Burno and Hartsville Head Start both received one.



An abundant supply of gloves was ordered for protection during document handling and other situations that called for direct contact.



Hand Sanitizer, Disinfectant Spray, Disinfectant Wipes, and Bleach were all stocked in large quantities.



Infrared Thermometers were purchased for temperature checks upon entering the buildings.



Oximeters were placed at each entryway. Low pulse reading may be a cause for concern.

Darlington County Community Action Agency, Inc.

Board of Commissioner's



Financial Summary

As of December 31, 2020

- **Staff Received 2.00% Increase in Wages**
 - Cost of Living of Adjustment approved for 2% made effective in December 1, 2019
- **Increased Program Revenue due to Supplemental Grants \$1,250,508**
 - COLA \$54,158
 - CSBG/LIHEAP Supplemental \$42,141
 - Quality Improvement \$79,800
 - Carry-forward \$208,354
 - CARES \$866,055
- **School District Transferred Ownership of Washington Elementary School to DCCAA**
 - 15.91 acres
 - Appraisal Value \$1,120,000
 - Services between 300 to 400 Children
 - Merged 3 Locations (Central Office, St. Joseph, and Butler)
- **Facility Renovations and Equipment Upgrades \$263,149**
 - Purchased and Upgraded Phone, Security Cameras, Network System, and Entry Control Points \$28,951
 - Digital Signage Equipment \$48,023
 - Fire Suppression and Security System \$4,519
 - Security Doors \$18,834
 - Fencing \$10,349
 - Restrooms to Accommodate 3- and 4-year-Old Children \$10,300
 - Installed New Outdoor Playground Equipment at New Location \$35,143
 - Paint and Flooring \$94,272
 - Energy Saving Program \$12,759

- **Technology Equipment Upgrades \$112,003**
 - Signed IT Contract with TREE, LLC
 - Upgraded HATCH Tablets for teachers \$19,683
 - Provided HATCH tablets to all children for remote learning \$92,320
- **Purchased PPE Equipment \$299,902**
 - Purchased ZONO Door Sanitizing Cabinet \$52,330
 - 32" Facial Recognition and Thermal KIOSK \$16,090
 - Purchased Commercial Grade Air Purifiers \$23,128
 - Purchased last two buses in 2020 \$208,354
- **Compliance and Monitoring Accomplishments**
 - Unqualified Audit Opinion in 2020 for Fiscal Year 2019 Financial Statements
 - OEO Fiscal Monitoring Report Issued in 2020 with not findings or issues
- **Major Grant Applications**
 - Early Head Start Expansion Grant
 - 5 Year Funding
 - Base Amount \$1,640,000
 - Funded Enrollment 80 EHS
 - Head Start Re-Competition Grant
 - 5 Year Funding
 - Base Amount \$2,881,150
 - Funded Enrollment 260 HS/16 EHS

Closing Inspiration

The only care
That I shall share
Shall be the care of others,
And on the road
I'll halve the load
Of overburdened brothers.
I rather guess
It's selfishness
That drives me to such actions,
For in this plan
I find I can
Forget my own distractions.

~John Kendrick Bangs (1862-1922), "A Useful Whim" (October Eighteenth), *The Cheery Way: A Bit of Verse For Every Day*, 1920