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SPCC Awarded Grant to Support Training for Jobs for the Future

South Piedmont Community College is one of eight North Carolina community colleges selected to participate in a three-year grant designed to train adults for the jobs of today and the future. Jobs for the Future (JFF) has announced that the NC Community College System has been awarded a \$1.6 million "Accelerating Opportunity" grant to ensure that more workers have marketable job skills along with proof of those skills through industry-accepted credentials.

Accelerating Opportunity initiatives are designed to get North Carolina and other states prepared for 2018, when 59 percent of all jobs in the state will require workers with some form of postsecondary credentials. Employers already report difficulty in finding qualified workers to fill skilled positions. Through Accelerating Opportunity, more adults will have the opportunity to earn college credentials that will allow them to adequately support their families and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

SPCC is expected to receive \$75,000 per year for three years to cover expenses associated with delivering the focused job training services in Anson and Union counties.

As the grant is implemented, SPCC's Basic Skills staff will assess each participant and develop a transition plan for moving from their current skill level into college coursework following one of three proposed pathways: Computer Information Technology, Medical Office Administration or Early Childhood Education. SPCC selected these three pathways because the programs provide certificates that can be earned in one or two semesters with the credits transferring into diploma programs. The certificates will allow students to obtain skilled, entry-level employment. Once students land jobs, they can continue their studies and earn diplomas and associate degrees to increase their earning power. Ideally, they will continue their studies beyond the associate degree level.

Accelerating Opportunity has grown from JFF's Breaking Through Initiative, which has supported 41 community colleges in 22 states, including North Carolina, to improve career pathways and postsecondary education for low skilled adults.

SPCC was selected in 2006 as a Learning College in Project Breaking Through, a JFF and National Council for Workforce Education initiative. The college hired a full-time Breaking Through counselor in 2007 to provide transition services to help Basic Skills students and unemployed and laid off workers move into the workforce with new job skills. The Accelerating Opportunities grant will allow more students to access support services they need to succeed.

Participants will be provided comprehensive academic and social student support services to help remove barriers to their success and promote completion of the program. Successful participants will earn 12 college-level semester credits, with tuition support, and will be prepared to enter additional college level courses.

SPCC President Stan Sidor said the grant will help the college provide an essential transition pathway for students who begin their studies in Basic Skills. "Research has shown that having a direct connection to a desired profession improves student persistency and graduation rates," Sidor said. "This grant supports the college's efforts to provide this opportunity to our students. We're very thankful to the organizations that are funding the Accelerating Opportunity Initiative."

"The way we deliver adult basic education is changing," said Denise Wilson, director of Basic Skills at SPCC. "The ultimate goal is not only for a student to receive the GED or adult high school diploma, but for students to continue on to some form of post-secondary education and be college-ready and ultimately obtain a good job."

Makena Stewart, Breaking Through counselor at SPCC, added, "Students who hold high school diplomas but lack basic skills required to enter developmental courses at SPCC will be able to receive supplemental instruction with an eye toward gaining those skills and enrolling in college courses."

"To be competitive not just with other states, but with other countries, it's imperative that North Carolina's workforce have the skills necessary to meet employers' needs," said NCCCS President Scott Ralls.

"In order to ensure that more workers have the skills they need for today's good jobs, a change is needed in the way adult basic education is structured and delivered at the state and institutional levels in this country," said JFF President and CEO Marlene B. Seltzer.

"Accelerating Opportunity is expanding the professional horizons of Americans across the country—regardless of age or background—by helping them earn credentials and learn skills that have real value to employers," said Maria Flynn, JFF vice president, Building Economic Opportunity.

Accelerating Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative is a multi-state effort managed by Jobs for the Future that promotes improved academic access and economic opportunity for low-skilled adults. This effort seeks to reform adult basic education and postsecondary systems by integrating basic skills with occupational training and adequate institutional support for adult learners, ensuring they receive the postsecondary credentials needed to succeed in high-skilled jobs and break the cycle of poverty in their communities. Accelerating Opportunity is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Open Society Foundations. For program and implementation expertise, Jobs for the Future (JFF) has engaged the National Council on Workforce Education, national College Transition Network and the Washington State Board of Community & Technical colleges as partners.

For more information, visit www.acceleratingopportunity.org.

Barn Blast for Children's Literacy

Tickets for the sixth annual Barn Blast fundraiser for children's literacy are available now at the Anson County Partnership for Children. The Barn Blast will be held on Friday, January 27 from 6 p.m. to midnight in the Ingram Room at SPCC's Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro. This fundraising event features dinner, dancing, drinks, silent auctions, live auction and lots of fun.

Tickets are \$35 each now and \$45 after January 13. For the first time, reserved tables for eight guests are available for \$300 per table. Barn Blast tickets make great Christmas gifts for your friends.

All profits from the Barn Blast are used for children's literacy activities in Anson County including Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Motherhood, Raising a Reader Book Bag Program and Books for Kids book distributions.

For tickets, please call or come by the Anson County Partnership for Children, 117 South Greene Street in Wadesboro or call 704-694-4036.

Twice to The Ansonia Theatre in 48 Hours!



Pictured are, from left, front: Peyton Peters, Emma Beam, Hannah Austin, Katlyn Lisenby and Leah McLaurin. Middle: Ellie Gibbons and Khenniyah Williams. Back: Destiny Pickett, Jordin Little, Ivori Smith, Janiya Little and Janae

Within the past 48 hours I have experienced the grandeur of the Ansonia Theatre with two wonderful holiday spectacles. As many of you, I saw Dickens' A Christmas Carol performed there and am mighty glad I did. But, I also took advantage of the beauty and charm of our local gem, the Ansonia, as a very personal venue.

Having taught many, many girls the art of baton twirling over the past 32 years, it has usually become a difficult task when locating a space for us to perform our shows. This year, however, was a different story. In my quest to perform locally, we quickly booked the Ansonia on Monday, December 19, for our very own Majorettes by Melanie Christmas show, "Christmas Through The Eyes of A Child." The Ansonia lent itself very well to our needs and allowed us to give a gift to the students, their parents and many others who joined us in our celebratory local performance.

Performing to a packed house and receiving such a warm reception was truly wonderful, but having the theatre just min-

utes away from home was the pièce de résistance.

"This was one of the best Christmas shows I have seen," said Mrs. Robbie James, who watched the magic of Christmas unfold through a child's eyes. I really appreciated hearing similar sentiments from many others who were in attendance that night.

The students were amazing and truly enjoyed themselves as they performed some of their favorite holiday classics from their youth. The youngest in the group delighted the audience with their "Angelic" routines and their promises to be true Angels, at least until Christmas is over!

Many thanks to those in attendance, to those who helped with all the details it takes for a successful show, to my assistant teachers and especially to the students. You are the reason our first local Christmas show in years and years was such great fun and an even bigger success.

We look forward to gracing the stage in the beautiful Ansonia Theatre again and again!

Photo and story by Melanie Lyon

Dickens' Christmas Carol, A Rousing Success!

Thursday, December 15 was the night we chose to attend A Christmas Carol, and I would declare it to be a rousing success. This was the first major production I have seen in our new Ansonia Theatre.

Dickens' A Christmas Carol, as you know, has been in the making for months and it paid off tenfold with its beautiful music, wonderful cast and endearing story. Writer and Director Mr. David Ariail can be proud of this sold-out-every-performance gig, his first in Anson County in many years. We can only hope it won't be his last.

The play roused the audience with passion, emotion and enthusiasm, the three words which describe the entire play - and also the very feelings you left with after the play ended. How wonderful to see a production of such magnitude in our, and yes I say, "our," Ansonia Theatre. The renovation process has been a long time coming and we should all be thankful and proud to have her back, especially as she housed this Christmas-time classic with such grandeur, affording the cast to present a first-class, top-notch performance for each night's standing room only crowd.

"I head that the Belk Theatre is going to close its doors now that our Ansonia is back in operation," said one local resident with a grin. Of course that was a slight exaggeration, but after the wonderfully spirited gem most of us witnessed over the past two weeks, who could say anything less? It was brilliant, both in its presentation and the brilliant light it cast through our hearts and minds, leaving us filled with holiday spirit and goodwill. The story lends itself to those emotions, but our local cast made it especially difficult NOT to walk away with a warm and fuzzy feeling inside.

We mustn't forget Mr. Bill Cleveland who portrayed Ebenezer Scrooge with a Broadway cal-

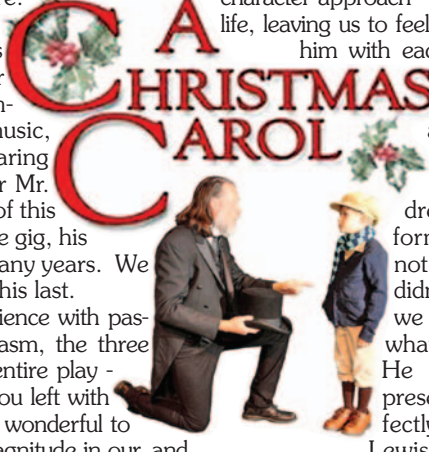
iber performance. He quickly drew us in, while ensuring we believed it truly was Mr. Scrooge. His appearance, his costuming, his voice and above all else, his "finger on the pulse of the character approach" brought the entire play to life, leaving us to feel we were right there with him with each step he took through

time. Bravo to Bill Cleveland. What an absolutely amazing portrayal.

With Gareth Smothers as Tiny Tim, he too drew us in, and as performers do, demanded we not only liked him, but also didn't pity him so much that we lost the true meaning of what his character defined. He was such a believable presence and absolutely perfectly cast. Both Donnie Lewis and Annie Flood were two favorites as they repeatedly received ovations throughout the play. Their vim and vigor were effortless, and you could tell that they were among the favorites of the audience. Well done, well done!

To all of you, the cast, the crew, the stage management, costumers, technicians, the volunteers at the Arts Council, and especially Mr. Ariail, we could throw wonderful adjectives out, enough to consume this entire newspaper, yet I leave you with but one word, ENCORE!

The Anson County Arts Council and everyone who was associated with the Dickens' play can rest now, knowing that you have brought something magical and wonderful to Anson County. And with this first major production now in the books, be content in knowing it was the best Christmas present many of us have ever received. Thank you and Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas to all and, "God bless us everyone." By Melanie Lyon



Anson High HOSA Members Raise Breast Cancer Awareness



Anson High School HOSA members are aware of the importance of educating the public about health issues. Since October was "Breast Cancer Awareness" month, HOSA members created the awareness board beside the office at Anson High School. The purpose was to make all students and visitors aware of this health concern. Each Day Daphne White, HOSA historian, read a cancer fact during morning announcements.

On Thursday October 27th, teachers handed out over 900 pink ribbons made by HOSA members. Students were asked to dress in pink shirts and accessories to remind everyone about breast cancer awareness. The event was a tremendous success and HOSA members will continue to remind everyone about current health care issues throughout the year.

Pictured here are, from left, front: Krystle Brown, Naja Fair, Brittany Spencer, Jasmine Sturdivant, Latiesha Phillips, Anna Beachum, Kamilah Hardin, Daphne White and Mrs. Karen Osborne (Advisor). Second row: Ms. Emily Jarman (Advisor), Tavia Streeter, Kayla Downer, Olivia Parson, Brooklyn Smith, Summer Hyatt, Eric Hamilton, Jolanda Kendall, Whitney Lowery, Azeem Hassan and Ariel Hilliard.

Anson County Government Closings

Anson County Government Offices (including the License Plate Agency) will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 26 and 27 for Christmas.

Town of Wadesboro Holiday Schedule

The Wadesboro Town Hall will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Tuesday, December 27 due to the Christmas Holidays. There will be no garbage pickup on either of those days. All areas will be serviced on Wednesday, December 28.

Wadesboro Town Hall will be closed on Monday, January 2 due to the New Year's Holiday. There will be no garbage pickup on that Monday. Monday's route will be picked up on Thursday, and Tuesday's route will be run on schedule.

Free Movie is Santa Buddies

The Disney movie "Santa Buddies" will be shown on Thursday, December 29 at 10 a.m. in the Little Theatre of the Hampton B. Allen Library. This movie is free and open to the public. Everyone is invited to come and bring a friend.

If you have any questions or need additional information please call the library 704-694-5177.

Anson County Veteran Services Office Hours

Due to limited hours provided to the Anson County Veteran Services officer, the Veteran Services Office is closed until January 4, 2012.

For any special needs that may occur you can call the District Service Office in Charlotte at (704) 563-2037.

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