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Anson Children's Center Prepares To "Eat Smart, Move More"

Two grants will help the center implement new opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity

The Anson Children's Center in Polkton, a five-star, developmental day center for children, including special needs children, recently received two important grants: an "Eat Smart, Move More" Community Grant, and a Shape NC grant. "Eat Smart, Move More" grants provide funding to local communities to implement strategies that reverse the rising tide of obesity and chronic disease among North Carolinians by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.

"Shape NC," a groundbreaking initiative supported by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, tackles childhood obesity by focusing on young children in childcare and community settings. In partnership with the Natural Learning Initiative (NLI), Shape NC helps centers and communities create naturalized outdoor learning environments that support child development, physical activity, and healthy eating. NLI's playground designs also help connect children to nature.

The Anson Children's Center will use the grants to renovate the Center's playground and purchase new equipment.

Why so much focus on childhood obesity. According to a 2011 report by the Trust for American's Health, North Carolina has the 11th highest childhood obesity rate (18.6%) in the nation, and more than 31 percent of NC children ages two to four are considered at risk for becoming overweight.

"Young children's earliest experiences with healthy eating and physical activity will promote a lifetime of healthy behavior," said Sam Hedrick, president of RHA Howell, Inc., which owns and operates the Anson Children's Center. "We are delighted that the Anson Center was chosen to part of this very exciting initiative."

The Anson Center is ranked in the top 25th percent of North Carolina's childcare centers, serving a five star preschool program. Anson is licensed to serve 66 children and is located at 383 Cotton Street, Polkton, NC 29135. Ginny Davis serves as executive director. For more information on RHA Howell's Anson Children Center, call 704-272-7076.

For more information on Shape NC, visit www.smartstart.org. For more information on North Carolina's Eat Smart, Move More initiative, go to www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com.

RHA Howell is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that has been helping people with disabilities and special needs, and their families, make choices to live more independently for nearly 40 years. Integrity, high standards for quality and hard work are at the core of every RHA Howell disability assistance program. Proven leaders in caring for people, RHA Howell, Inc. is a pioneering force in the field of human services, particularly supporting infants and children. For more information, go to www.rhahowell.org.

Mararuth Cox's Granddaughter, Kristi Donaldson, Saves Drowning Man



A young woman with ties to Wadesboro made the news in Wilmington...in a great way. Kristi Donaldson, daughter of Mararuth Capell and granddaughter of Mararuth Cox, rescued a drowning man on September 10th.

The rescue is described here by the swimmer, identified only as Jim: "On September 10th I was in the water at Kure Beach. I am usually hyper-cautious since I am a poor swimmer at best. I got careless in chest high water. I dove under a wave and immediately felt myself being pulled out to deeper water. When I surfaced I was in over my head. I struggled to remain afloat and move towards the shore. The tide was on the way in, but there was just enough outward pull to keep me from making any progress. My wife was nearby, but initially didn't notice that I was in trouble.

My body does not float easily, so I was not making progress toward shore and began to tire. My wife reached me with a boogie board but I couldn't get on top of it. I kept flipping it over on top of myself. My wife is a competent swimmer, but half my size and not strong enough to rescue me. After 8 or 10 attempts to get the boogie board underneath me I was becoming exhausted. I have a history of cardiology issues and wondered if that might make drowning a secondary worry.

I was convinced I was going to drown. I don't believe I would have managed more than another couple of minutes. A young woman with a yellow surfboard saw my trouble and arrived. I was able to hold onto her board as she and my wife managed to pull me to shore. When we reached shallow water I was too weak to stand. A couple of gentlemen shouldered my weight, and a lifeguard arrived.

I believe I thanked the young woman who rescued me when we reached shore, but I'm not sure. It was probably 30 minutes before I had the strength and the thought to look for her. Perhaps she left or we didn't recognize her, but we didn't see her to express my gratitude. I may have thanked her, but I certainly did not thank her enough. I'm convinced I would have drowned but for her help, so again, I thank her for saving my life. I'll try to pass it forward."

Jim sent his story to a newspaper in Wilmington hoping to find out who saved him. Kristi was identified after it was published. She and her husband Mark live in Lahina, Hawaii, and they were visiting with her mother and stepfather, Mararuth and Joe Capell who live at Kure Beach, when the rescue took place. Mararuth's son Todd also helped Jim once he was in the shallow water.

Kristi and Mark had worked as lifeguards in the area when they were growing up. Kristi has also gained notoriety as an award winning surfer in major competitions.

Anson County 4-H Robotic Club to Participate in Regional Competition



In a release from Roshunda Blount: On Saturday, January 7th, the RoboWolves 4-H Club headed to Raleigh, NC for the statewide kick off of NC FIRST Robotics Competition, which was held at the J.S. Dorton Arena on the NC State Fairgrounds. The participants watched a video that describes this year's competition and walked a full-sized "playing field" to get a deeper understanding of the game. Since the group is returning to competition they are now a 2nd year team. The youth, club leaders and mentors of the RoboWolves 4-H Club will be working diligently for the next six weeks, which is the time allotted for them to plan, construct and build their robot. After the robot is built and complete it will be contained until the team return to NC State for the North Carolina Regional Tournament April 5-7.

The primary feature of the 4-H Robotics Program is the development of 4-H Robotics Clubs, designed like a regular community club but with robotics as its primary focus. The RoboWolves 4-H Club hails from Anson New Technology High School and is under the leadership of Ms. Steffany Labree. This is Anson County 4-H's only in-school 4-H club in the county.

The RoboWolves have a lot of work to do in the next few weeks but I know they are up to the challenge and will do a wonderful job. Although it is the youth that are essentially building the robot and competing, the opportunity would not have been possible without the adults, mentors and parents that are willing to assist, get their youth to the meetings, providing food for the group, offer their expertise and knowledge in the area of engineering, fabrications and electrical engineering, giving words of encouragement and optimism and of course those that helped financially.

The robotics competition was created by FIRST (For Inspi-

ration and Recognition of Science and Technology). FIRST was founded in 1989 to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. Based in Manchester, NH, the 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit public charity designs accessible, innovative programs that motivate young people to pursue education and career opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math, while building self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills. JC Penney developed a partnership with FIRST is one of the top sponsors for this event through 4-H. They agreed to cover part of registration fee for each 4-H team in North Carolina. National 4-H Council and North Carolina 4-H partnered with JC Penney to also give funds to help cover cost for registration also and meals. We thank all of these wonderful partners for the opportunity.

Although funding has been received for the event, there are still many expenses like additional parts; transportation and lodging that have to be covered in order to make it to Regional's in April. Whatever you can contribute the group will be grateful for and remember this is a group of high school youth that are creating something wonderful with the specifics in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

For those that may be interested in donating to the group please send them to Anson New Technology High School c/o RoboWolves 4-H Club 113 West Ashe Street, Wadesboro, NC 28170. Be on the look out for more interesting things about this group in weeks to come and wish them luck!

If you would like to find out more information about the Robotics program or other programs 4-H has to offer please feel free to contact Roshunda Blount at 704-694-2915.

Pictured above are the volunteer leaders, 4-H'ers and mentors who make up this year's RoboWolves 4-H Club.

Anson County Schools Are Not Perfect

After reading dialog between several Anson County residents/parents, posted on a public forum, I felt a strong need to write about their words that are now wrenching my gut. The remarks pertained to the Anson County School System, and were, at best, negative, narrow minded, nonconforming and even somewhat nasty.

This, my article, is not a debate with those naysayers but rather an informed point of view concerning Anson County Schools. What makes me informed? The fact that I graduated from Bowman (now Anson) High School, as well as the fact that I spent 30.7 years teaching, ALL at Anson High School until my retirement one and a half years ago. As someone on the inside looking out rather than the opposite, I can perhaps help to shed some light on a much debated topic, education in Anson County, while at the same time realizing the likelihood that whatever I say to those emblazoned negativists, my words will make no difference whatsoever. Those who speak the loudest rarely, if ever, offer any type of solution or suggestions. So if this piece serves only to enlighten a single solitary citizen, then so be it.

Let me begin with this, Anson County Schools are not perfect. Nor are any other schools in the country. The list of adjectives commonly attached to one or all of our schools is enormous, to include such words as bad, terrible, awful, violent, useless, pathetic, stupid, and so on. The Anson County School system does not openly recruit stupid individuals to educate our youth. They do not seek stupid teachers, administrators, principals, advisors, officers or anyone remotely affiliated with our school system, in hopes that schools will fail. If you truly believe that, and that IS what I read, then we should tag one of those adjectives before your name, on the front of your shirt, or on the dunce cap you should be wearing around the county.

The Anson County School System is a team, from Dr. Greg Firm, the Superintendent, all the way down to the principals, teachers, assistants and others who make up our educational network. These people have a job to do and they do that job to the best of their ability. I've witnessed many working on a near 24/7 schedule. Teachers come in early and leave late. Administrators work on Saturday and even Sunday. Tutoring is offered for no pay. Yet in the public school system, workers are subjected to public scrutiny as all eyes are upon them. In no other area of work will you find so many probing eyes on your ability or inability to perform.

If you're a service provider you answer to your supervisor, if you're a skilled worker you answer to the owner of that business. What you do and how you do it is not put up for public discussion, and you are not personally put on display for pock shots, ridicule or negative critique.

If you are providing a service to the children who attend public schools, you answer to EVERYONE. You are held accountable, not only by the school board, your administrators and principals, but also every parent, student and citizen of the system, and so be it. However, quite often you hear only negative remarks, and those who usually bark loudest are the ones who know the least about what actually takes place. School personnel are open targets for mean spirited banter, and rarely receive any praise for a job well done by those already mentioned naysayers who seem to find pleasure in trying to make you or your school system as a whole look idiotic.

Dare I say those are the very people who speak out against the system and its entire population often based on single incidents, which probably involve their own children? Do I dare mention that some parents very often take offense when any type of discipline is assigned their child, while in the same breath blast the schools for not enforcing the rules? Yes, I dare to say that. And those behaviors, my friends, are called hypocrisy.

During my final few years as a teacher the biggest problem I personally faced was lack of support from parents. Those same parents spoke out often in complaint, and yet sat on their couches drinking iced tea rather than offering to volunteer their expertise, and I use that term loosely, to help the system in any way, shape or form. Everyone makes mistakes and that includes every child in every school, from the richest to the poorest. If you are of the belief that your child does no wrong, you need a reality check.

Anson County can be a great school system. Let those in the know do their jobs without having to wade through more and more muck from those of you who insist on speaking out so blindly against them. You know, in education the pay "ain't that great." But 99 percent of those involved aren't in it for the money; they're in it for the children. And that sentence alone should be enough to make you bite your tongue the next time the urge strikes to spread anything put positive about a school system trying to move forward through quick sand, pushed down deeper by every negative comment you make.

In conclusion I must remind you that the schools of Anson County have produced many many excellent role models. There are so many students who have achieved outstanding results, we have trouble getting their accolades into The Express without a bit of a delay. A "good for nothing" system would not graduate Students who go on to do such great things. Let us not forget all those who have achieved brilliance for themselves and their families. Let us not forget the school affiliates who guided them to a point where they could move forward and into the light. There are so many shining examples I could never list them all. But I know in my heart they are there and will continue to be, forever.

Anson County schools are not perfect. But each day there are many people who work towards perfection, hoping one day to achieve it.

By Melanie Lyon

Community Blood Drive January 19

The Community Blood Center of the Carolinas (CBC) is hosting a Community Blood Drive on Thursday, January 19, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Anson High School. There will be free t-shirts for all donors! Please note the Community Blood Center of the Carolinas' minimum weight requirement for blood donors is 120 pounds.

The CBC is hosting its Fourth Annual "Pint for Pounds" campaign to support Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. CBC will donate six pounds of food for every blood donation now through February 29.

More public drives can be found by logging on to the Community Blood Center of the Carolinas website at www.cbcc.us. CBC also has donation centers in Charlotte, Belmont, and Union County. You may call 704-972-4700 to make an appointment at any location.

BRLC Food Commodities Every 4th Tuesday

The Burnsville Recreation and Learning Center holds their USDA food commodities the fourth Tuesday of every month for anyone in Anson County who qualifies. The time is 9 a.m. until all items are distributed.

For more information call Carol Smith at 704-826-8182 or 826-8737. In accordance with Federal Law and US Department of Agriculture policy BRLC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

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Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Anson County Presented

What is the Carolina Thread Trail? What is a Blueway? Find out the answers to these questions and more at upcoming community meetings to be held here in Anson County. There will be discussions of the Anson County Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan. There will be four meetings, and the public is invited to come learn about the Thread Trail project. You input is also being sought by the organizers.

The meetings will be a drop-in format, each held from 6:30 to 8 p.m. A short video about the project will be shown at 6:45 p.m. The project team will be on hand to answer questions. They will collect comments in a short questionnaire.

The Carolina Thread Trail (The Thread) is a 15-county, two state initiative designed to inspire and facilitate the creation and development of a regional network of trails, blueways and conservation corridors that would link more than 2.3 million citizens. For more information, go to www.carolinathreadtrail.org.

- Thursday, January 19th at Holla, 229 E. Main Street, Morven
- Tuesday, January 24th at Lilesville United Methodist Church, 310 West Wall Street in Lilesville
- Thursday, January 26th at Ansonville Fire Department, 9145 highway 52 North in Ansonville

Do You Need a Coat? Do You Have a Coat to Donate?

The Faith-Based Center of Hope has begun their "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" program. They have distributed coats to several of the churches and schools in Anson County. To donate coats or to request a coat, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.

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