

Medical student succeeds in military match

By J. RYNE DANIELSON

daniejer@musc.edu

Graduation is just the first step on the path to becoming a physician. After medical school, new doctors must spend anywhere from three to seven years training under the supervision of experienced clinicians before they can be licensed to practice medicine on their own. And getting into a good residency program is just as competitive and nerve-racking as getting into medical school in the first place. Only this time, graduates are subject to the discretion of an algorithm devised by the National Resident Matching Program that weighs applicants' preferences against the needs of various residencies to determine the best matches for both.

For students like Jameaka Hamilton, a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, the process can be even more complicated. "Military match starts earlier," she said. "Our season starts in July and our Match Day is in December. So, we do our away rotations earlier than other students."

That means balancing studying for board exams, which usually take place around the same time, with applications and interviews for residency programs. "I also had to apply to the civilian match, just in case I got a deferment," Hamilton said. "As soon as I completed my military applications, I started going on civilian interviews. There was a lot going on."

The process was nerve-racking at times, she said. "I was encouraged to have a Plan A, B, C and D – you never know what's going to happen. There were definitely some frantic calls with my parents, but luckily it worked out."

She matched with her first choice, Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. "I'm super excited to be going there," she said. "Their program reminds me a lot of MUSC. I really felt comfortable there."



Photo by J. Ryne Danielson

Fourth-year medical student Jameaka Hamilton is headed to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas after completing a military early match. She will specialize in obstetrics and gynecology.

Hamilton's specialty will be obstetrics and gynecology. "OB-GYN has the balance I was looking for between clinic-based primary care and also being a surgeon and developing my surgical skill," she explained.

She knew she wanted to be a doctor at the age of 14 when a medical scare sent her into the hospital, and she saw the work doctors do firsthand. "I got better, and it made me want to do that for someone else," she said. "I was really inspired by the grace with which my doctor led her team and how much time and energy she invested in my treatment."

Her parents, both in the military themselves, encouraged her to pursue her dreams. "I told my

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SACSCOC reaffirms MUSC accreditation for 10 years

Staff Report

MUSC has received reaffirmation of its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SACSCOC is the university's regional accrediting body, which determines, among other things, whether MUSC is authorized to offer federal financial aid to students. Reaffirmation of MUSC's accreditation by SACSCOC occurs every 10 years.

The SACSCOC reviewers visited the MUSC campus over the past two days for two key reasons: First, to determine whether the university meets each of SACSCOC's 103 standards through interviews with MUSC leaders, faculty, staff and students. The reviewers had previously received substantial written documentation of MUSC's compliance with these standards. The on-site visit rounded out this information with personal interactions.

By the end of their visit, the reviewers determined that MUSC is in compliance with all standards. Furthermore, the group noted they had no recommendations concerning compliance, a noteworthy achievement in the accreditation process.

"The reaffirmation of accreditation with no recommendations translates to a clean bill of health for the university," said MUSC President David J. Cole, M.D., FACS. "The reviewers told us they were especially impressed with how MUSC's faculty, staff and students reflected our

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AROUND CAMPUS

PEOPLE

Patricia Blanton



Patricia L. Blanton, DDS, interim dean, James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine, was named among six women as part of the American Dental Association's Lucy Hobbs Project. The award honors

dentists who set new benchmarks in dentistry. Blanton was a former vice president of the ADA and is a recipient of the Industry Icon Award. She was previously the first female president of the Texas Dental Association and served as president of the American College of Dentists.

Connie Guille



Connie Guille, M.D., assistant professor, in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, was recently inducted into the American College of Psychiatrists.

The ACP is comprised of more than 750 psychiatrists who have demonstrated excellence in the field of psychiatry and achieved national recognition in clinical practice, research, academic leadership or teaching.



photo by J. Ryne Danielson

Construction continues on the MUSC Apple Store. Slated to open on the first floor of the Colbert Library in the spring, the campus tech store will offer Apple and Dell products and feature a health care innovation space modeled after Apple's "Genius Bar."

Chanita Hughes-Halbert



Chanita Hughes-Halbert, Ph.D., SmartState Endowed Chair in Cancer Disparities and professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, was elected to the board of directors

for the South Carolina Institute of Medicine & Public Health. Halbert is a nationally recognized expert in cancer prevention and control among diverse populations.

Ed Wilson



M. Edward Wilson M.D., professor in the Department of Ophthalmology, was presented with the Life Achievement Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Wilson, who was the former director of the Storm Eye Institute, has worked closely with the AAO for more than 30 years. The academy is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons.

EVENTS

Law Day 5K Race

The Charleston School of Law will host the second annual Law Day 5K race at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 18 at Hampton Park. The event will benefit the American Cancer Society and Share Our Suzy Lowcountry at the request of a beloved law professor the school lost recently to breast cancer. Registration is \$20 and begins at 9 a.m.

Donations for Prom Boutique

Every year Palmetto Goodwill locations accept donations of gently used prom dresses for their Prom Boutique, a pop-up shop created to make prom dresses more affordable to area students. The Boutique will open March 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Goodwill Community Service Center in North Charleston. Cocktail dresses will be sold for \$14.99 and ball gowns for \$19.99. Proceeds will benefit Palmetto Goodwill. Donate formal dresses, shoes, handbags and accessories to any Palmetto Goodwill location until March 18. Visit Palmetto Goodwill's website to schedule a pickup.

Faculty Senate Town Hall

Join the MUSC Faculty Senate for a Town Hall from 12 to 1 p.m., Thursday, March 23, eighth floor, Storm Eye Auditorium. The WestEdge project and MUSC's involvement in this exciting vision for downtown Charleston will be the topics of discussion.

THE CATALYST

Editorial Office

MUSC Office of Public Affairs & Media Relations, 135 Cannon Street, Suite 403C, Charleston, SC 29425.

843-792-4107

Fax: 843-792-6723

Editor: Cindy Abole
catalyst@muscedu

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RECYCLEMANIA TRIVIA - WEEK 7

"Which 3 categories of recycling material did MUSC win "#1 in the state" for in RecycleMania 2016"



Respond to recycle@muscedu for a chance to win a prize

Last Week's Answer: Scott, Robert, Michael, Wesley, David, Martin, and Jason are all part of the recycling crew.
muscedu/gogreen



Interns promote March as National Nutrition Month

BY **MARISSA URDA**

petitpa@musc.edu

March is National Nutrition Month, and each year the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics promotes healthy lifestyle changes using an engaging theme to emphasize its focus. This year, the MUSC dietetic interns are challenging the staff and students to “Put Your Best Fork Forward” and encouraging them to take a stab at new eating habits.

Most people eat the same foods day in and day out and can easily fall into a food rut. And despite the prevalence of diet – related diseases, three-quarters of Americans eat too few fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low fat dairy, as well as too much oil, sodium and processed foods. National Nutrition Month encourages using the fork as a tool to make healthy, simple and sustainable food choices while adding variety to the diet. This may involve trying some alternatives such as a low-calorie beverage, ethnic food, new recipe or a different cooking method.

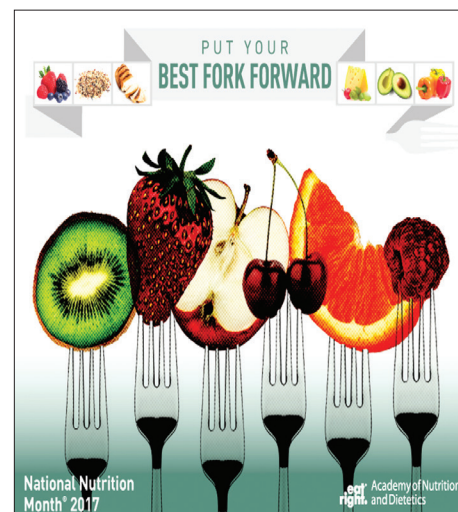
To better gauge whether there is room in a person’s diet for improvement, the interns are employing an online, interactive challenge that lets participants assess if they are eating the recommended servings from each food group, track progress during the month and get ideas on how to add more of the better choices. Participants can join the challenge by signing up at www.SuperTracker.USDA.gov and joining the group NNMatMUSC or by entering access code GUK8-WS96.

The challenge is simple. Each day, log in to track foods and earn points throughout the week. Each week focuses on a different food group. Unlike other food trackers, only the foods that are encouraged from each food group, like whole wheat bread, low-fat yogurt, apples or salad, are entered. Prizes are given just for participating, and the person with the most points at the end of each week will get a gift card for Clean EatZ restaurant. One lucky winner will be

selected at the end of the month to win the grand prize.

To provide ideas, encouragement and fun with the challenge, the interns, along with Sodexo executive chef Tim Wickey, will host cooking demonstrations each week outside each cafeteria. These demonstrations will feature simple, easy-to-prepare recipes focusing on one of the five food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, protein and dairy. Demonstrations will be held on Wednesdays outside the ART cafeteria and Thursdays in the Children’s Hospital lobby at 11:30 a.m., noon and 12:30 p.m. There will be food samples, recipe cards and a featured low-calorie beverage available to encourage the switch from sweet drinks to less sugary ones. The interns will also be at the Urban Farm on March 16 from 12:15 p.m. to 12:45 for the third Thursday Lunch and Learn, discussing new ways to try whole grains and incorporate fiber.

Check out Yammer and Facebook (www.facebook.com/MUSCFoodandNutrition) for daily tips along with video clips of the interns and MUSC’s registered dietitians to see what they like to eat most. To link to those videos, recipes, calendar of events and the complete details on the challenge, including step-by-step instructions, visit <http://www.muschealth.org/nutrition/mindful/best-fork-forward.html>.



Dental students team up to show faculty the ‘evidence’

By THERESA S. GONZALES, M.D.

gonzales@musc.edu

The James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine held its second annual Evidence-Based Dentistry – Stand Down Day and Senior Competition on Feb. 9 at the Baruch Auditorium. This capstone event included lectures by participating faculty from the College of Dental Medicine and College of Pharmacy with direct support from Library Services.

Interim Dean Patricia Blanton opened the event with a discussion of how evidence informs contemporary health care across health care delivery portals. She praised the students’ participation and opined that the primary goal of evidence-based dentistry is the assurance, through reference to high-quality evidence, that care provided is optimal for the patient and treatment options are presented in a manner that allows for fully informed consent.

“As we transition toward broad-based use of evidence-based dentistry approaches in clinical practice, we stand to benefit from a better understanding of how it can improve patient outcomes,” she said. “What we want is to provide students with lifelong learning skills that will enable them to keep up to date during their expected 30 to 40 years of practice.”

The day-long program provided instruction in the evidence acquisition process and scope of materials that are readily available for our developing clinicians. At lunch, a spirited “eminence versus evidence” tug of war took place between participating faculty and members of the CODM Class of 2017. Not surprisingly, evidence

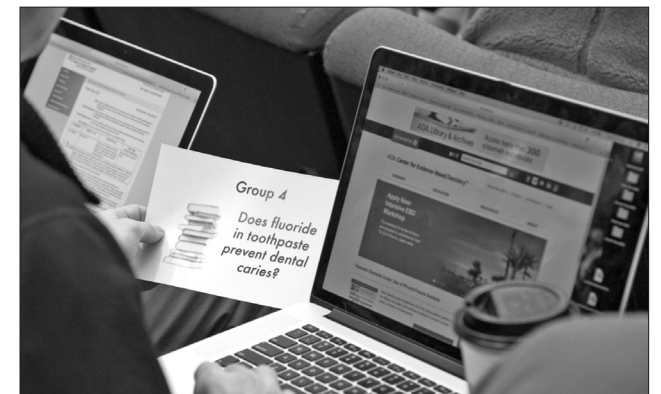


Left photo: Dental students, armed with pre-appraised evidence, take on faculty eminence at Cannon Park in downtown Charleston. Bottom photo: Students search for evidence to answer questions from patients.

Photos by Anne Thompson

triumphed over eminence – as it usually does.

The final event of the day was the coveted Dean’s Cup Competition, which consisted of team play with five standardized patient experiences. The objective was to arrive at the correct diagnosis and deploy the evidence-based treatment for the patient. A total of 250 points were in play – 50 points per case – for the competition round. Twelve teams were randomized, and the competition began. The completion was fierce and deliberate. The results were tabulated, and two teams tied for the lead: Team Hotel and Team India – each scoring 237 out of a possible 250 points.



Team H team members

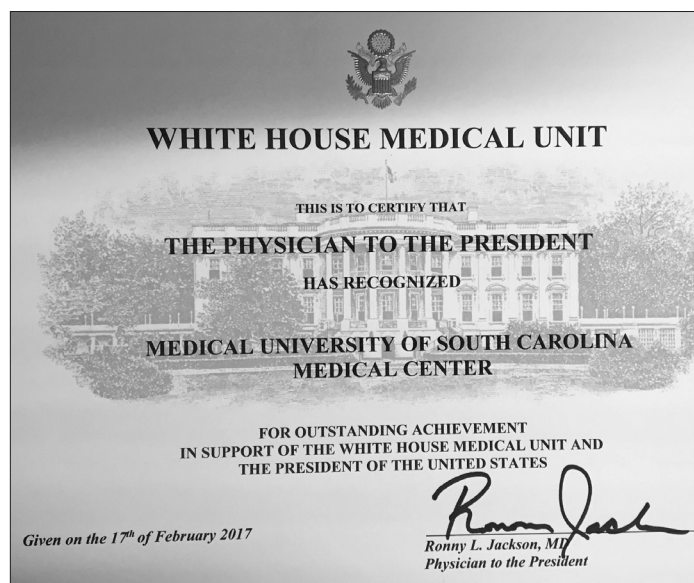
Melinda Lee, Maggie Livingston, Heather Wright, Mary Machowski and Brantlee Tinsley

Team I team members

Aaron Gavri, Laura Koberda, Casey Bennett, Jill Eaves and Jon Chay

Blanton was ecstatic with the results. “The fact that the 12 teams provided 80 percent (200 out of 250) of the correct diagnoses and deployed the highest levels of evidence to support the requisite clinical management strategy was impressive. The routine integration of evidence-based dentistry principles with patient care is a cornerstone of the ongoing curriculum review process at the College of Dental Medicine. Events like this are designed to enhance our ability to care for our patients by developing clear and efficient strategies to sift, digest, and act on new research with the potential to benefit those entrusted to our care. I am so very proud of these young professionals and their commitment to excellence.”

RECOGNITION FROM THE WHITE HOUSE MEDICAL UNIT



MUSC was recently recognized for outstanding achievement in support of the White House Medical Unit and The President of the United States. MUSC was notified by Dr. Ronny L. Jackson, Physician to the President and Chief White House Physician since 2013. The White House Medical Unit is responsible for the medical needs of White House staff and visitors. The unit provides medical care to the President, Vice President, their families and international dignitaries visiting the White House. MUSC Health has worked and coordinated with the White House Medical Unit for years.

Photo provided

MEET SAVANNAH



Savannah Galloway

Department; How long at MUSC

Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics; 4.5 years

How you are changing what's possible at MUSC

My amazing medical director, Dr. Angela LaRosa, includes me in a variety of quality improvement and research projects which improve the care we provide to our patients.

Pets and their names

I have two pugs, Penny, 9, and Olive, 3. I also foster puppies every week so there's usually one more running around the house.

Person at MUSC who has inspired me

Dr. Angela LaRosa, M.D.

Last book read

"Calling Me Home" by Julie Kibler

Food that's a must have in the pantry

Texas Pete Hot Sauce and Sriracha

Words of advice

*"Here I am, rock you like a hurricane."
— Scorpions*

Peggy Schachte Research, Developing Scholars awards due April 1

Nominations for the Peggy Schachte Research Award and the MUSC Foundation Developing Scholars Award both of these awards are due by April 1. Nomination guidelines for the Schachte Research Award are at <http://tinyurl.com/jqsc3p6> and Developing Scholars Award at <http://tinyurl.com/hr7wpbw>.

Tri-county Health Landscape plants seeds

BY MIKIE HAYES

hayesmi@musc.edu

“I’m afraid I’m going to die before I grow up,” shared one teen, her voice quivering. Others followed suit, uneasily admitting they too had similar fears about being killed or physically harmed.

That was really hard to hear, said Anton Gunn, referring to what he learned from a group of Tri-county teenagers who shared their personal feelings about crime in the Charleston area for a community health needs assessment (CHNA).

Gunn, MUSC Health’s chief diversity officer and executive director of community health innovation, served as MUSC’s lead representative on the CHNA advisory workgroup. He said that experience with the community youth really affected him.

“One of the stark realizations I walked away with after this initial assessment process was how prevalent violence and injury prevention were on the radar screen. We always knew that it was an issue, but to hear young adults in a focus group basically say they were afraid they wouldn’t even get a chance to grow up – that hit me hard,” he said.

He attributed it to a recent uptick in murders and violence in Charleston’s Tri-county area that has taken a toll on the mental and emotional well-being of people throughout these communities, fueling fear and frustration. High-profile crimes like the tragic murder of nine people at Mother Emanuel AME Church and the police shooting of unarmed citizen Walter Scott, not to mention 77 murders and a spate of random violent crimes that took place in 2016, have many on edge.

When you think of social determinants of health, violence might not be the first thing that springs to mind. Yet research concludes that health encompasses so much more than simply the state of one’s physical condition – it also takes into consideration a number of factors such as the personal, social, economic

and environmental issues that affect a person’s life. For instance, being exposed to crime, violence or social disorder, or even the perception that safety at home or in one’s neighborhood is at risk, can affect the physical, mental and emotional health of a person or even an entire community.

According to the 2016 Tri-county Community Health Needs Assessment, a joint publication recently released by MUSC Health, Roper St. Francis and the Trident United Way, violence and bodily injury ranked fifth on the list of CHNA health priorities.

While it was shocking to have that subject be so present on their minds, Gunn said, it was those types of honest and revealing comments from members of the community that were critical to putting together an accurate depiction of the Tri-county health landscape. Gunn, who has 20 years of experience conducting community health assessments, was adamant that a large swath of community members needed to be integral to the process. When the previous Charleston assessment had been conducted three years earlier, part of the strategy was to interview people who deliver health care in the community – which amounted to predominantly physicians. For Gunn, that didn’t represent a true needs assessment.

“When I came to MUSC in 2015, the first thing I asked for was our community health needs assessment. What I was shown was not a CHNA. The only people interviewed were physicians and a few school-based nurses – they didn’t speak to any grassroots community members. I thought it was woefully inaccurate to say these are the health needs of the community when you don’t ask anybody in the community what they’re concerned about in terms of their health and well-being.”

This time, the committee took the process out into the community, and the results of what they learned are, according to Gunn, a much truer reflection of health needs and realities



Photoss provided

Representatives of MUSC, Roper/St. Francis, TUW, city and county officials, and local organizations attended the launch of Healthy Tri-county at a networking breakfast Jan. 31 at the Arthur W. Christopher Community Center. They discussed the findings of the report and discussed next steps.

in the Lowcountry. Since that building healthy communities is a pillar of MUSC’s Imagine 2020 strategy for the future, he believes this is one such way to get the process and discussion moving in the right direction.

MUSC Health, Roper St. Francis and the Trident United Way led the effort, and representatives began to meet last spring to devise a strategy to take a realistic snapshot of the health situation in the Tri-county region. They initiated focus groups, held community forums and conducted surveys and interviews.

What resulted was they had five times the number of people participating in the process than they did three years ago and are building what they believe will be productive partnerships. “We spent a significant amount of time talking to community members – low-income, people of color who receive health care services,” Gunn said. “We also talked to people who work in community-based settings and looked for intersections. For instance, let’s say this group runs a housing agency, and their program is focused on people who have just been evicted from their homes and need to find transitional housing. When they meet with a family, they learn nobody in the family has health insurance coverage, that their child is autistic and the father had a double bypass. They see all these

health challenges, even though they’re not a health agency. That’s valuable information.”

Leveraging those insights was important to Gunn. “So we interviewed them and asked from their vantage points what was the sum of the challenges related to health of the people coming through their doors. They gave us a tremendous amount of feedback. And when you looked at both groups – service providers and community residents – the answers they identified as their top health issues were very similar. In fact, it was very surprising to see how similar they were.”

FINDINGS

At the first forum they conducted, 120 people representing 40 organizations attended. The participants spent three hours discussing health challenges, services and how they would work together. Rather than simply collecting information and concluding the process by submitting a report of their findings, they decided to treat the information they would collect as a starting point, so collectively, they could have a significant impact on the health of the community.

Right off the bat, people knew something different was afoot – they were encouraged. “When we finished

See **LANDSCAPE** on page 13

Hunger and obesity – two sides of the same coin

BY MIKIE HAYES

hayesmi@musc.edu

Head to Whole Foods on the way home from work, and the store is buzzing with activity: buggies filled with fresh kale and cut-to-order meats, people loading up on artisan breads and containers of Mediterranean olives and busy moms grabbing healthy pre-made organic meals for dinner. But while that may be the reality for some people in the Charleston area, that is far from the case for families on tight budgets who instead of gourmet fare grab packs of hot dogs, cups of noodles and giant boxes of sugary cereals, all of which are cheap and go a long way toward filling a child's growling belly.

According to the 2016 Tri-county Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), a joint publication recently released by MUSC Health, Roper St. Francis and the Trident United Way, food insecurity is a growing problem in this state. In fact, 17 percent of South Carolinians worry where their next meal will come from. And according to Janet Carter, registered dietitian and MUSC Heart Health's program manager, sometimes even when food is available, the quality is poor with little nutritional value, which can lead to a host of issues down the road.

One CHNA focus group participant voiced her frustrations, summing up sentiments shared by many. "I try to buy fresh produce and avoid prepackaged foods," she said, "but the cost is prohibitive, and I am forced to purchase low-quality food when the money is getting low."

The Harvard School of Public Health published a study that reported a diet rich in healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts and fish costs about \$1.50 more per day per person than a diet filled with lower-quality processed foods and refined grains. While that may sound negligible, for a family of four, it amounts to just shy of an additional \$2,200 a year – a serious burden for many – especially in areas like Charleston County, where 26 percent of children live in poverty.

In addition to the financial costs are the health costs – serious chronic conditions that result from a bad diet. Research shows that poor nutrition can lead to many diseases in children, among them pre-diabetes, high blood pressure and unhealthy cholesterol levels – even in kids as young as 2.

But Carter doesn't need studies to tell her that; she sees these statistics up close and personal.

At the Heart Health Program, which serves as the pediatric weight management program of MUSC Children's Health and preventive cardiology service of the Children's Heart Center, she and fellow registered dietitian Keely Flynn help the kids suffering with weight issues and obesity and the subsequent negative effects



Photo provided

Kids in the MUSC Children's Hospital's Heart Health Program take time to play during a fitness session on MUSC's campus.

on overall health. And in the Lowcountry, that's no small problem. Right now, the two of them work with about 300 kids and their families, most of whom deal with difficult decisions about food on a daily basis.

Carter said the issues run the gamut from families not having enough money to purchase healthy foods to moms who don't have experience preparing nutritious meals to kids who just flat refuse to eat fruits and vegetables. The dietitians counsel them on whatever issues are obstacles to healthy eating.

"We have a lot of different families," she said. "Many of the families we see are part of the minority community and underserved. Many times, they are just trying to get some food in, and they aren't the healthiest choices. There is both the perception and reality that healthy foods are more expensive to buy. That makes it difficult for them and difficult to come up with ideas. It's also easier to buy the convenience foods and junk foods, and oftentimes, that's more acceptable to the kids. We work with them on how to access community resources and on nutrition, shopping, food preparation; how to make good choices with the limitations they may have."

Anton Gunn, MUSC Health chief diversity officer and executive director of community health innovation, who also serves as MUSC's lead representative on the

CHNA advisory workgroup, applauds that approach. "What we know is good nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight are critical to a child's overall health and well-being and reducing their risk of developing diabetes and other diseases no child should be dealing with," he said. "With 17 percent of our nation's children considered obese, we have a lot of work to do to help these kids. Our Heart Health Program is making real strides in reaching a vulnerable population and building a healthier community. MUSC is committed to helping community members gain better access the resources they need to live healthier lives and reducing barriers to doing so."

According to the CHNA, 32 percent of South Carolinians are obese. Charleston and Dorchester counties fared a tad bit better at 25 and 31 percent, respectively, but Berkeley County came in at a whopping 37 percent. It's no wonder children are struggling.

Sometimes, Carter finds, the child is the only one in the family struggling with weight, but other times, it's pervasive throughout the household. Either way, it takes the entire family being on board to make long-term substantive changes. Parents are the biggest influencers in children's lives, especially related to dietary habits and modeling physical fitness, and family members can often make or derail success. Carter and Flynn take a tailored approach, individualizing the program for each child and family, based on the family's unique challenges. They are all part of the journey.

For numerous reasons – many of which can be painful and private – by the time these families arrive at the program, they are usually ready for change. Offering kind words and understanding rather than judgment is critical, Carter said. In the nearly 11 years she has been running the program, she's seen a lot of emotion.

"We've had many tears – both from the kids and the parents. Obesity, of course, is tied to many personal issues. What we try to do is take the focus off the weight itself and turn it to health and wellness. At the first visit, we always say, 'This is the only body you have – right? We want to help you learn to take the best care of it as possible.' That's the message we want to send."

To accomplish that, education geared to the entire family is key. "I call it 'educating the room,'" said Carter. "Although we are focusing on the child, it's usually up to the caregivers to enact the changes, especially with younger children. It's not just the behavior part – it's the education part that makes the program successful."

After a full assessment, where Carter and Flynn gauge the family's lifestyle habits and concerns, as well as their diet, activity levels and potential challenges, they work

See **OBESITY** on page 14

Women's History Month at MUSC

Honoring trailblazing women in labor and business

Right photo: Phlebotomy coordinator Vera Brown is among four women being honored by MUSC for women's history month. Brown has served the Medical University for almost four decades, having started as a unit secretary in 1978, and now supervises more than 20 employees. But interacting with patients is still her favorite part of the job.

Photo by J. Ryne Danielson



By J. RYNE DANIELSON

daniejer@musc.edu

Since coming to work at MUSC almost four decades ago, phlebotomy coordinator Vera Brown has seen doctors and administrators come and go; she's seen buildings torn down, built up and torn down again; she's seen patients get better and take turns for the worse.

Those who know her say that through it all she's demonstrated poise and compassion, leading by example and always taking time to get to know the patients who come through her lab.

March is Women's History Month. This year's theme, chosen by the National Women's History Project, is "Honoring Trailblazing Women in Labor and Business."

Since the NWHP successfully lobbied Congress and President Ronald Reagan to recognize a month-long celebration of women's contributions to American science, art and culture in 1987, many pioneering women have received this distinction: Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, Sally Ride, Sandra Day O'Connor. Many more – women like Brown – go without such recognition, quietly and competently ensuring the gears of modern life keep turning.

"I started as a unit secretary at Charleston Memorial Hospital in 1978," Brown said. MUSC would eventually buy Charleston Memorial in the early 2000s, but for decades, the county of Charleston paid MUSC to manage the facility, and MUSC medical students and residents gained valuable experience there.

She was transferred to MUSC proper in 1996. "Back then, you went where they sent you," she said.

Though apprehensive about moving to a larger hospital, Brown said she quickly felt comfortable at MUSC. "The pay wasn't good at all, but it was more than I was making before. I tried to look at the glass as half full. Before I worked as a secretary, I worked in fast food, so it was a plus just getting into the hospital."

Only 24 years old when she started, she never thought she'd stay this long. After almost 40 years at MUSC, she's learned to be philosophical about a lot of things.

"People complain about change," she said. "But you stay long enough, and it'll change back. Nothing ever stays the same."

After working for a while as a unit secretary, Brown eventually became a clerk typist in Charleston Memorial's hematology lab, where she had to learn

to draw blood as part of her duties. "From typing to drawing blood, it was different," she said. "But it was a good experience. I must have liked it. I eventually dropped typing and went to phlebotomy altogether."

When Brown started, she wasn't in charge of anyone else. Or, as she puts it, "I was in charge of me." Nowadays, she's responsible for supervising and scheduling around 20 employees, in addition to interacting with patients and drawing blood.

Her work ethic quickly ensured more responsibility. "I used to be the outpatient phlebotomy coordinator, but since the inpatient coordinator left, I've been helping with inpatients as well.

"I just can't stand to see things not get done," she continued. "So, when I see something's not getting done, I get up and do it or try to do it together with someone else. I don't like to be seen giving orders, because who am I to tell you what to do? So, I say, 'Let's do it together.'"

Brown believes respect is earned and tells her employees, "If we're busy, you aren't going home tired alone. We're going to go home tired together. It's a group effort."

It's a leadership philosophy she learned from the best managers – she's

known – managers like Jim Cook who worked with Brown at Charleston Memorial.

"He always had my back," she explained. "Whenever I went to him with a problem, I also tried to have the solution to that problem. And we would work it out and present the solution together."

Brown said the most rewarding part of her job is the interaction she has with patients. "You see the same patients day after day and get to know them by name," she said. "I put myself in their position. You never know what your life is going to come to, so you have to treat people the way you would want to be treated."

That might mean holding a patient's hand if he or she is afraid of needles or finding something to talk about to distract them from their anxiety. "I'll ask them, 'How many kids do you have? Where are you from? Do you have any pets?' Just something to keep their mind off what we're doing."

"It makes you feel good when a patient remembers your name," she said.

The flipside of that – and the hardest part of her job – is occasionally watching patients' conditions worsen. "You get to know your patients, and when you see

See CARE on page 14

When an EVS employee gets the call, she answers



Photos provided

EVS employee Gail Mungen, right, gets a hug from MICU nurse Melanie Scianna.

By MIKIE HAYES

hayesmi@musc.edu

“Gail, I need you to feed the people.” Gail Mungen, an employee in Environmental Services, heard God instructing her to do this during prayer.

“People? Now God, I don’t know about that,” she debated, worried about how she’d take on the task of feeding nearly 70 people. “I’ve never done anything like that before.”

He reiterated, she said. “Bring the food to the people,” Mungen recounted, pounding her hand on the table in rhythm.

“And I did,” she said, “and we had a hilarious time. We had the sweets to the meats to the starches,” she said, clapping her hands with a boisterous laugh.

In fact, she ended up creating quite the smorgasbord for her EVS colleagues and has continued to cook people’s homemade favorites at another seven events. “I cook peas and rice, chicken and rice, candied yams, fried tilapia. Ooh, people love my tilapia. Turkey, wings, mac and cheese, butter beans, corn on the cob.”

She’s cooked for Christmas, Thanksgiving, Housekeeping Week, even Super bowl 51. Once she had a going-away party for one of the managers who moved to another shift. “The Lord said, ‘Anybody who works like that needs to be appreciated.’”

When things need to be done, the “man upstairs” doesn’t hesitate to call on Gail Mungen. While that may involve cooking, checking on a grieving neighbor, shopping for the less fortunate or praying with family

members of patients in the Medical Intensive Care Unit, where the Holy Spirit leads her, she goes.

A motherly figure who punctuates every sentence with contagious laughter, Ms. Gail, or Mama as many call her, has joy in large supply and shares it like a loving grandma with hard candy in her pocket. The mere fact her heart is so open and she is so generous has made her stand out in the eyes of her managers, colleagues and patients.

Mungen is one of four MUSC women making a difference and being honored this year for Women’s History Month. The theme, “Honoring Trailblazing Women in Labor and Business” includes women who make a profound mark at their workplace in often unrecognized ways. This year’s honorees represent many diverse backgrounds, and like Mungen, each stands out for her special contributions to MUSC.

Rebecca Priester, director of Environmental Services for the main hospital, said she is so very honored to have her on the team. “Ms. Gail has the ability to make you feel important in her presence. She is one who would give her last penny if you needed it and a hug to make you smile. She is truly one of the strongest, honest and most compassionate women I’ve known.”

Mungen is said to arrive every day with a smile on her face, joy in her heart and an unwavering faith that inspires those around her. Melanie Scianna, RN, relief staff leader in the MICU, is a big fan of Mungen. She nominated her for employee of the month last year, which Mungen won.

“What sticks out about Gail is that she is hardworking, gives more than she expects in return, always has a cheerful heart, and has a kind word for everyone she comes in contact with. She is truly a blessing to our institution,” Scianna said when she learned of this recent honor.

In about a month, Mungen will reach the 29-year mark at MUSC, and it’s clear to see how much she loves her job, said John Lawyer, first shift assistant director of EVS in the main hospital. “Gail is a one-of-a-kind. She loves to do special things for people.”

Ulysses Jones, second and third shift assistant director of EVS in the main hospital, agreed. “Ms. Gail is a winner,” he said emphatically. “A quitter never wins the game and a winner never quits the game. Ms. Gail always wants to display excellence in what she does as an EVS team member. I am proud to have her on our team,” he said.

Mungen, Lawyer explained, is the evening freshener for patient rooms on the fourth, sixth and seventh floors in MUSC’s main hospital. “She is our meet-and-greet person – our second shift personality.”

Every afternoon, he said, she looks in on the patients,



Gail Mungen takes a break from cooking and serving with Trenee Brisbane during the Super Bowl LI party that she hosted for EVS coworkers.

See MAMA on page 14

MATCH *Continued from Page One*

parents I wanted to be a doctor, and they rolled with it. There was no looking back after that.”

To get exposure to medicine, Hamilton volunteered at a Red Cross clinic at the Fort Jackson Army Base, near where she grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. She was also accepted to a magnet high school program at Spring Valley High School that emphasized science and technology.

After high school, Hamilton majored in biology at Wofford College in the upstate, where she was a member of the Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students, a pipeline program for the Student National Medical Association.

Though being in the military has added to the already hectic pace of medical school, Hamilton believes the leadership skills she developed in the military have made her a better doctor. She also appreciates the way the military encourages interprofessionalism. “Being in the military has been a great benefit to

me,” she said. “They paid for the cost of my education and gave me a stipend. So the financial stress of how I was going to pay back my loans wasn’t on my mind at all. I really could just focus on my studies.”

Angela Choi, M.D., one of Hamilton’s mentors at MUSC, praised Hamilton’s commitment to medicine as well as serving her country, and said she expects to see big things from her in the future. “I can’t say enough about her dedication, passion and perseverance,” Choi said. “She is one of the few medical students I can think of who asked to come to work with me during her vacation and time off. She is organized and prepared, and she is not afraid to accept a challenge. She touches all those she meets. The women under her care will be lucky to have her as their physician.”

Hamilton is looking forward to celebrating Match Day with her fellow students March 17. She’s glad the anxiety of actually matching is behind her.

“I still get the envelope,” she said, “I just already know what it says.”

SACSCOC *Continued from Page One*

commitment to innovation and collaboration, two of MUSC’s core values.”

The second role of the onsite reviewers was as consultants to MUSC regarding its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled “Team Up for Better Health.” The QEP is a required element of SACSCOC accreditation.

“Even without this requirement for accreditation, we would embrace the QEP initiative since it aligns perfectly with the goals of Imagine MUSC 2020, our institution’s strategy for the future,” Cole said. “Team Up for Better Health is a set of activities and initiatives that will improve students’ practical, applied teamwork skills, and, thereby, help our graduates be even more marketable to employers and more competitive for prestigious residencies and fellowships. Team Up for Better Health will also help improve the practice of effective teamwork across the clinical and research missions,” he noted.

SACSCOC standards reflect a broad range of expectations for institutions of higher education including effective governance, appropriate stewardship of financial and physical resources, adequate faculty and staff (all with appropriate qualifications), protection of academic freedom, sufficient faculty development opportunities, progress in the research mission, evaluation of all employees, effective student support services, sufficient library resources, and indices that the institution engages in continuous quality improvement through systematic evaluation of performance against its mission.

“Preparing for our reaffirmation of accreditation, which is critical to our mission as an institution of higher education, was indeed a collaborative effort across the enterprise,” Cole said. “Special thanks and recognition go to Dr. Suzanne Thomas for leading MUSC through the process and to Dr. Jeff Borckardt for leading Team Up for Better Health.

“We should all be proud of this accomplishment and what it means for us in terms of the ability to carry out our vision to lead health innovation for the lives we touch in the areas of education, research and patient care.”

Employee's can-do spirit inspires others to give best

BY CINDY ABOLE

aboleca@musc.edu

For many customers, it's the pleasant voice of Wanda Connor Blake who answers when they call University Transportation Services. Or if they're lucky, they will meet the woman behind the desk with the great smile and sparkling eyes ready to help them process a maintenance check for their fleet truck or pick up a rental vehicle.

Blake is one of the faces that represents a hard working team at University Transportation Services. This 30-member group is comprised of shuttle bus drivers, couriers, dispatchers, vehicle maintenance personnel and administrative staff whose facility is located at 1786 Anthony Street in downtown Charleston.

She is proud to have worked within the same department throughout her 24-year career, albeit in different jobs. Weaving her way up through the ranks, Blake began as a shuttle bus driver and later became a courier. Next she moved to the position of back up dispatcher, which led to her present day job as an administrative specialist in vehicle maintenance.

Ask anyone who knows her and they'll attest to how Blake is dedicated to her job, enjoys what she does and is committed to helping others. But her can-do spirit and dedication go beyond

the rapport she has with customers and coworkers – it extends to others, even strangers, around the Tri-county community.

A native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, Blake grew up the middle child of six children. Among her first jobs as a teen, Blake worked as a weekend back-up dispatcher for a local cab company. The job was a good fit for her, Blake remembers, as she already possessed some important job skills like being a good talker, quick thinker and organized multi-tasker. After getting married, she and her husband relocated to Charleston where she worked in various jobs. She learned to drive and navigate around Charleston's streets, and later, she got a job as a school bus driver with Charleston County Schools.

Never one to rest on her laurels, she was always on the lookout for new opportunities and responded to an opening for a shuttle bus driver at MUSC. After several tries, she got the job and in 1993, she started work on her birthday – Feb. 15. She worked the day shift, with her schedule starting as early as 4 a.m. Then she drove her route until noon.

The schedule was tough for a mom raising her three children – Sharon, Patrick and Christopher. She had help from her friends Vanessa Rickenbacker



Photo by Cindy Abole

Wanda Connor Blake, fourth from right, is joined by Leroy Smalls, from left, Ron Horry, Glenda Behrens, Alva Alston, Vanessa Hosey, Shanell Nole, Toni Jackson and Sonta Holmes – some of the shuttle bus drivers, couriers, administrative staff and vehicle maintenance personnel of MUSC University Transportation.

See SPIRIT on page 15

A woman in a man's world

By ALYSSA FRANCHAK

franchak@musc.edu

According to the FBI, in 2013, 88.4 percent of full-time law enforcement officers nationwide were male.

Rachel Miller is one officer who has not let that statistic slow her down.

Growing up in a military family, Miller always knew she wanted to give back to her country but wasn't sure how. "My dad was a submarine captain in the Navy. I think because my family moved around so much, I didn't like the idea of being in the military," she recalled.

It wasn't until she enrolled in Trident Technical College that Miller decided criminal justice was her path. "Law enforcement gave me a way to give back to my country and my community but still have control of my personal life," she said.

The decision to enter a field that was, and still is predominantly male, was something that Miller took into account

but did not let deter her.

Since graduating with her associate's degree, Miller has had an extensive career with a variety of experiences. After graduating, she went to work at the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center in North Charleston. Being in the booking department, Miller was reaffirmed by seeing all the female officers that came in.

Following her time at the detention center, Miller moved to the Mount Pleasant Police Department, where she became certified as a police officer in 2000. While at Mount Pleasant PD, Miller worked patrol, crime scene, and as a field training officer.

After nine years, Miller was looking for a change. With Mount Pleasant PD, she was mostly in a patrol car waiting for calls to come in, but she wanted to be immersed in the community population.

In 2009, Miller was presented with an opportunity to work in MUSC's Department of Public Safety and



Public Safety's Cpl. Rachel Miller, far right, shares a light moment with fellow Public Safety Officer Sgt. Ernest Brown, from left, Officer Roosevelt McCargo and Officer Lee Holbrook.

Photo provided

accepted.

"When I got here, they explained that it's smaller and different, but I love that I'm with the people all day long," said Miller.

Miller has since moved up from a public safety officer to corporal, which entails being a shift supervisor. Miller currently works the midnight shift, supervising six officers and a security officer who works at Harborview Office Tower.

"Midnights are quieter, but that doesn't mean we aren't out there being active. During the day, you're reacting to calls, whereas at night, you have to be patrolling and visible because we act as a deterrent for crime," said Miller.

She and her team also have to help any time a potential safety issue brings a patient to the Trauma Center. When a victim of a gunshot, stabbing or other

See WOMAN on page 15

LANDSCAPE *Continued from Page Six*

that meeting, I had several people come up to me and say things like, ‘I’ve worked in the Tri-county region for 20 years, and I’ve been working on health issues that entire time, and never have I seen all these people and groups in one room at the same time to talk about the health needs in the Tri-county.’ There was a lot of excitement.”

It also came to light that very few partnerships focused on health existed in the community. There seemed to be a great deal of duplication of services, Gunn said, and the left and right hand not knowing what the other was doing. This, he added, resulted in organizations not helping other organizations achieve their goals. That, he hopes, would soon be changing.

The health issues that emerged as priorities were not a surprise at all, Gunn said. “It doesn’t take five minutes working in health care to know that mental health issues are going to be a top concern for people in the community. It’s also not going to be hard to identify that access to health services is a challenge in this community – no matter who you are.”

Access, in fact, took No. 1 on the list of priorities that need to be addressed. The CHNA highlighted that people in the community suffer with several common access points when it comes to receiving health care services. Gunn explained, “There are the uninsured – the ‘I can’t afford to go get treatment because I don’t have coverage. Or, maybe I have coverage, but I can’t afford the copays and deductible, so I might as well not have insurance because I can’t afford to go to the doctor.’ Then there are the people who are afraid – afraid because they have immigration issues or don’t want to hear bad news. And then there are those who don’t have transportation or a doctor in their community. Access is clearly a challenge.”

Mental health issues, which landed the No.2 spot on the list, are among the most common of all diseases and the No. 1 cause of disability in the United States, according to Healthy People 2020.

Anxiety, depression, eating disorders and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder are common among children 13 to 18 years old. Just over 20 percent – or 1 in 5 children – according to the National Institute of Mental Health, currently has or have had a debilitating disorder. In adults, 18 percent suffer from a range of mental health issues, a statistic that does not include substance abuse disorders. The CHNA noted that alcohol or drug abuse, violent or self-destructive behavior and suicide are also considered measurable indicators of a community’s mental health.

Gunn said that MUSC Health and the other area hospitals are establishing a crisis stabilization unit for mental health as a way to provide more standardized treatment for mental health issues and keep people out of emergency rooms. It’s scheduled to open at the

end of February in a temporary location near the old Charleston Memorial Hospital, and they are working collaboratively to build a facility in North Charleston.

The other roadblock Gunn said community members face is an inability to obtain preventive services for preventable diseases – No. 3 on the CHNA list. “They can’t get routine disease screenings, and they can’t get scheduled immunizations,” Gunn explained. “We can’t detect or prevent disease when people don’t have access to screenings. It can be as simple as a flu shot or as complex as an oral, cervical or prostate cancer screening.”

END GAME

Gunn said because the report was basically just the beginning – the real work starts now: developing a plan to improve the health and well-being of people in the Tri-county by 2025.

MUSC Health, Roper St. Francis and Trident United Way held a meeting on Jan. 31 to kick off “Healthy Tri-county” – the new multi-sector initiative to improve health outcomes in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties – and release the CHNA report to the public. They had 127 people representing 78 organizations attend the launch, including MUSC President David Cole, M.D., FACS, and MUSC Health CEO Patrick Cawley, M.D.

Gunn said Healthy Tri-county will be an ongoing process. “We are still effectively building the plane – for where we take off and what we do. We are going to collaborate, and we are going to work for collective impact – that’s the key word. We want to be part of a collective strategy, if you will, on how we can leverage our power, our resources and what we already do to have a collective impact on health in the Tri-county region.

“The goal is,” he continued, “that by the time the committee does the next CHNA, one of the top issues is no longer on the list – but we can talk about the impact we had on it.”

“The main thing is,” he continued, “now we know where our community is and what our health challenges are: Access; mental health; clinical preventive services; maternal, infant, and child health; injury and violence; and oral health make up the Top 6 list. The question is how can MUSC as an organization band together and be more integrated and collaborative to address these broad-based needs? Because again, there is a role that we all can play, if we’re really here to deliver health. How effective can we be if we don’t have a way to deliver health to the broader community – not just inside the four walls but outside of the four walls.”

Gunn shared those thoughts at a recent Charleston Regional Business Journal Power Breakfast. In his remarks, he explained how diabetes and other health conditions are costing Lowcountry employers millions of dollars in lost productivity – predominantly because of limited access to health care and a lack of preventive

programs. He told them they could be part of the solution.

“If employers participate, a better job can be done to ensure these people have better access to health and do a better job. I explained that screenings, primary care, insurance coverage – all can help lower the cost. More specifically, nutrition and physical activity can reverse diabetes. I told the employers that if they build a culture of health in their organizations, talk about health, encourage their people to be physically active and make it easy for them to exercise or be more active at work, they can create more productive employees and improve their health, which in the end, contributes to building a healthy community.”

MUSC Women Scholars Initiative’s
2017 Eminent Scholar Award Recipient

Nancy Hopkins, PhD

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY



THURSDAY, MARCH 23RD

11:00AM - 12:00PM

HOLLINGS CANCER CENTER, ROOM 120

Dr. Hopkins has focused her career on cancer research for 40 years, identifying tumor heterogeneity associated with treatment resistance, developing methods of insertional mutagenesis in zebrafish, and isolating >550 developmental mutations with human analogs. She is a member of the National Academy of Science Health and Medicine Division (previously the Institute of Medicine), a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and previous winner of the MD Anderson Cancer Center Margaret L. Kripke Award.

In addition, she has been extensively involved in equalizing the status of women faculty and is credited with launching a national re-examination of gender bias in academia, making her an ideal recipient of this award celebrating exceptional women scholars.

ALL faculty, staff and students are welcome to attend
Please email Rachel Corbett at wsinfo@musc.edu for questions



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OBESITY *Continued from Page Seven*

on small, incremental steps toward improvement.

“We let them control how fast things move along. If they take too big of a step, nine times out of 10, they are going to fail or just quit. We have to take into account the motivation and ability of families to make changes based on their barriers. We work with them on an individual level to help them fix as much as they possibly can at a pace they’re comfortable with. These are small but steady steps toward better health.”

The stakes for these kids are high; Carter has seen many children come through the doors with Type 2 diabetes. South Carolina ranks an alarming 10th highest in the nation in the percentage of people with diabetes and approximately 1 in 8 black South Carolinians has diabetes. It’s a vicious cycle that begins early. The goal of the program is to get the kids to a healthy body mass index (BMI) and help them improve their overall health – reducing risks for diabetes and other health complications.

Carter is proud of the results they achieve. Every year, more than 50 percent of the kids improve their relative BMI score and get closer to the “healthy zone” (under the 85th percentile BMI for age), she said. Part of that success comes from their push for physical activity. The CHNA noted that 4 out of 5 adolescents don’t get the recommended amount of

physical activity. The same holds true for adults. Heart Health offers a total of 12 exercise sessions per week, Monday through Saturday, and Carter also encourages the kids to play team sports, get outside and play and go for walks.

For some families in the Tri-county region, however, that is easier said than done. One of the participants in the CHNA said her neighborhood is not safe to walk – a common complaint in parts of the Lowcountry where sidewalks, lights or crosswalks are in short supply. Some of the busier areas are considered downright dangerous for pedestrians. Carter further pointed out that a number of families in her program don’t feel safe walking on their neighborhood streets due to crime, another issue that surfaced during the CHNA interviews.

Challenging circumstances require Carter and Flynn to come up with functional alternatives so kids have the opportunity to be more active. Sometimes, they encourage them to play interactive video games like Just Dance if they are unable to get outside or to the Heart Health classes. There are also many online videos and apps that can be very helpful when exercise needs to be indoors.

“You often hear that video games are bad for kids, and if they are just sitting in one place for hours on end, they are. But there are some really great active video games out there that offer a terrific way to increase physical activity – even get them huffing and puffing.”

Brown said family is her greatest source of pride, and at the end of the day, it helps put everything else in perspective.

In his 1989 Women’s History Month proclamation, President George H.W. Bush spoke of service as the definition of success.

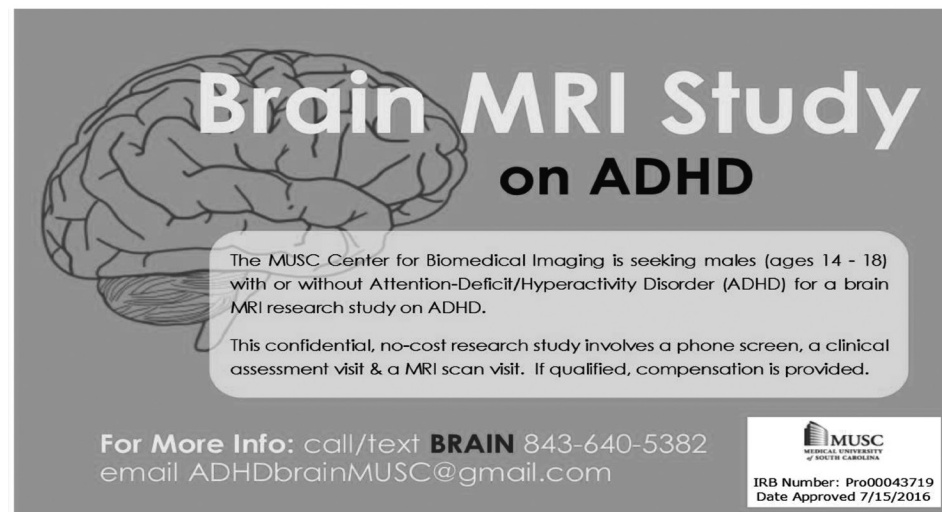
“Women have demonstrated their great love for this country and have made that love real by their engagement in the lives of others,” he said. “If any definition of a successful life must include service to others, countless women live successful lives.”

With her decades of service to MUSC, her church and her family, he might have been speaking about Brown.

The Heart Health Program also created a fitness video of local children exercising at local landmarks, like the South Carolina Aquarium and the USS Yorktown, and Carter hopes to be able to make copies for all program participants to provide yet another option for exercise.

“Obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol

and Type 2 diabetes are serious diseases these kids could be facing – if they aren’t already – if they don’t make changes. We are serious about putting our patients first and helping to build healthy families. Every time one of the kids is successful with the goals he or she set or shaves points of his or her BMI is a win.”



Brain MRI Study on ADHD

The MUSC Center for Biomedical Imaging is seeking males (ages 14 - 18) with or without Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) for a brain MRI research study on ADHD.

This confidential, no-cost research study involves a phone screen, a clinical assessment visit & a MRI scan visit. If qualified, compensation is provided.

For More Info: call/text **BRAIN** 843-640-5382
email ADHDbrainMUSC@gmail.com

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IRB Number: Pro00043719
Date Approved 7/15/2016

CARE *Continued from Page Eight*

them getting sicker, as opposed to getting better, that’s the hardest part about it.”

She tries not to dwell on it. “It’s just a part of life,” she said.

Brown takes comfort from her faith. She is a member of St. Matthews AME church in Ravenel where she grew up. She’s involved with church leadership, serving on the missionary and steward boards, and looks forward to church book club, which meets every second Wednesday.

Married for 36 1/2 years, Brown and her husband John have three children, all grown, and seven grandchildren. She drives her youngest granddaughter to church choir once a month.

MAMA *Continued from Page Nine*

removes any trash from the room and sees if they need anything. And while technically, those might be the duties of the job, what makes her special are the extras.

“I interact with the patients a whole lot. I sure do,” Mungin said. “The families, nurses – everybody in there.”

She enjoys all the floors on which she works, but she has a soft spot for the MICU. “It’s a lot sick people,” she said. “I love going into the room and talking with the patients – especially if they’re in need of prayer. The family will ask me to say a prayer, and I encourage the family to hold on – to hold tight and God will do his work. They get inspired.”

Lawyer said she has a very warm spirit. “The patients love her. The families love her. The nurses love her. Environmental Services loves her. And she will pray in a minute!” he said with an affectionate laugh.

Last year, she felt led to cook Thanksgiving dinner for a family whose loved one had been on the floor a long time. Members of the family had hardly left the hospital. “I said to myself, ‘These people won’t even get to go home for Thanksgiving,’ because they’re so worried. So the Lord had me to feed the group of them.”

She prepared a full Thanksgiving feast for all 12. They were understandably moved by her gesture of kindness. “You are just so special,” they kept telling her.

It’s no wonder patients look forward to her visits. “Sometimes they know my name, sometimes they’ll ask the nurses, ‘Where’s the lady from the second shift?’ or tell them to get a message to me, ‘Tell her we thank God for her. She gave us prayer last night.’”

At times, when she sees a patient in pain, she said God will tell her to pray. “The Lord will drop people in my spirit, and I’ll check on them. I’ll spend time with them. I’ll pray with them. Just whatever he tells me to do. I get worried when I don’t see patients I’ve gotten to know, and they’re not in their beds. When patients get better and go to the floor and see me, they’re excited, and I’m excited. That’s what excites me.”

SPiRiT *Continued from Page Eleven*

and Lula Mae Ward, who helped her with the children. And as her children grew older, she wanted to be home, especially during the evenings. In 1995, she took a job within her department as a courier. Although the job was more laborious than her previous job, she worked days only and no weekends, which was perfect for her family life as she managed as a single mother.

At the same time, she realized that several of her coworkers, Lynn Bogan, Tracy Fleming, Michelle Lawton, Denise Lee Robinson, Harriett Robinson and Sonta Holmes shared something in common: They were all single working parents with similar-aged children.

And like the old Nigerian proverb asserts, “It takes a village to raise a child,” that same solution resonated with this small core group of working moms. The group of devoted coworkers committed themselves to serve as a support system for each other. They took turns watching and caring for the children. “It was hard, but we worked it out so that someone could check on the children as the other parents worked. We had each other’s back,” Blake said with a smile.

In 1998, Blake applied for another work opportunity — moving to administrative



Photo by Cindy Abole

Transportation’s Wanda Connor Blake shows off a “sew-as-you-go” quilt that she just completed. The quilt will be a gift to her dear friend Ethel Robinson, 65, for giving Blake her first sewing machine following her graduation from Orangeburg–Wilkinson High School in 1981.

specialist in vehicle maintenance, working with John Pigott and Doug Littlefield. There, she interacts with employees and departments and is responsible for maintaining preventive and maintenance records for MUSC’s fleet of vehicles that includes shuttle buses, vans, cars, pickup trucks, transport trucks, recycling and shredder trucks. She also coordinates rental vehicles, works with insurance companies regarding accident claims for fleet vehicles, processes repair work orders with area vendors, and oversees building maintenance, among a whole host of responsibilities.

“I’m satisfied when a customer can get their work completed and the customer is happy and their vehicle runs safe and sound,” Blake said.

Bruce Mills, facility manager in engineering and facilities, works regularly with Blake in managing his department’s fleet of 14 pickup trucks, a minivan and MUSC Health-owned vehicles.

“Wanda is pleasant, friendly and knowledgeable,” said Mills, whose department is perhaps University Transportation’s largest customer base. “She’s helpful in providing a quick response, especially when it relates to our operations and daily priorities. Working with her has been great.”

Today, there are only about a handful

of employees who have continued to work at University Transportation Services for 20 years or more.

“Through the years, we’ve managed to be family to each other. We’ve lived through each other’s life milestones and watched our children grow up together. It’s a good thing,” Blake said.

Smart, giving, dedicated and a genuine lover of people is how coworker Sonta Holmes describes Blake. “She has so many gifts to share from her heart,” said Holmes, whose son and daughter also grew up with Blake’s children.

Blake remarried in 2013. Looking ahead, she hopes to retire in 2019 and spend more time with her husband, Joe “C.J.” Blake, who works in dietetic services. She also plans to continue with her hobbies of sewing, crocheting and quilting. For years she has donated her handmade burp cloths, blankets, hats, heating pads and dresses to MUSC, Hollings Cancer Center, Roper Hospital, St. Francis Hospital, Jenkins Orphanage and the Florence Crittenton Programs of S.C., a home for pregnant teens and single parents. She has sewn pillowcase dresses that have been donated to aid organizations in Africa, Haiti, Honduras and other locations.

“I have a talent that I love to share and give to others,” Blake said.

WOMAN *Continued from Page Twelve*

violent crime is brought to MUSC’s Trauma Center, hospital security is notified and Public Safety must respond. They control both the traffic going into the trauma parking lot and the trauma door foot-traffic, and they have officers in the waiting room helping with security control.

While instances such as helping in trauma cases are rewarding to Miller, she gets a great sense of accomplishment from the smaller tasks as well.

“Even the little things here, like helping someone change a tire, someone who locked their keys in their car, or, if someone needs directions – it is all important,” she said.

Miller’s job doesn’t stop there. She goes above and beyond her required duties to help make MUSC as safe as possible. One of her accomplishments has been the design and implementation of the Cautionary Advisement program. Under this program, Public Safety officers leave notes if they notice something that could put a civilian at risk of being a victim.

“We find doors open, keys in the locks, students leaving book bags and laptops in the library. Under this

program, if we see something like that, we just leave a note basically saying we saw it while patrolling and secured it for them,” said Miller.

Miller’s voluntary efforts extend beyond the walls of Public Safety. In November she, along with other female members of the department, put on weekly bake sales, which ended up raising more than \$1,000. The women divided up the money to spread the generosity. They gave half to the MUSC Institute of Psychiatry children’s ward through the purchase and donation of coloring books, colored pencils and other toys, and they gave the other half to My Sister’s House, a local nonprofit that provides services, programs and resources to empower domestic violence victims.

Miller has since taken a step back from her extensive volunteering to focus on her academic career. When she is not working, she is taking online courses to obtain her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. “I hope that will give me more of an opportunity to move up in my career,” said Miller.

One inspiration for Miller’s career growth aspirations has been Major Delores Simmons. “Here you have a woman who has reached the rank of patrol commander and who is so respected. Seeing her day to day has reinforced for me that is something I could potentially

do down the road,” praised Miller.

While pleased with her personal experiences, Miller is not naive about the stigma some people have against women in law enforcement.

“There are some people who you just aren’t going to change the way they feel. I can’t change if someone thinks women shouldn’t be in law enforcement, but I can control how I react to that. I just try to do my job and do it well,” she said proudly.

Miller doesn’t see her career slowing down anytime soon. “I plan to finish out my career here at MUSC. I am very happy here, and I hope to advance within Public Safety. I’ve been blessed to be able to do a lot, and now I am ready to step into that leadership role and give back to some of the newer people and be a positive influence on those who haven’t been in the field very long.”

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MUWC BRINGS POSIES FOR PATIENTS



Photo provided

Members of the MUSC Women's Club met recently to help out with their annual Posies for Patients project. The ladies, who supplied the flowers and materials from their gardens and area stores, gathered to create more than 235 flower bouquets to give to patients at the main hospital, Children's Hospital and ART. They also worked with the Volunteer Center volunteers to deliver the flowers to grateful patients.

Twenty-Third Annual

THOMAS A. PITTS MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP
IN MEDICAL ETHICS



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Yale University School of Drama
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Annette Leibing, PhD
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University of Pennsylvania Memory Center
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Contact Information: (843) 876-4844; mcrear@muscedu