

Miss Ruby's Kids
Every Child Deserves An Equal Start

Working to end the cycle of poverty through education in Georgetown County.

"Every generation leaves behind a legacy. What that legacy will be is determined by the people of that generation. What legacy do you want to leave behind?"

— John Lewis, Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 2020!

The following Waccamaw High School students were Miss Ruby's Kids participants in 2005 & 2006. We are excited to see 100% of our first two classes of Miss Ruby's Kids graduate high school and become successful members of their communities. Congratulations to them and their families on this major milestone.



Nygere Jones graduated with a 3.9 GPA. She has always enjoyed reading, but she is passionate about math. She will attend Coastal Carolina University where she will begin her studies to become a Math Teacher.





Ms. Jayla Dereef was very active in school in the TADA & Gems after school programs, she was on various committees, studied photography and was on the Newsletter Team. Jayla will attend HGTC to study to become a medical assistant and then on fulfill her life long dream to be an RN.

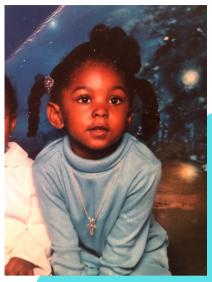




Mr. Joshua Dadd will attend Horry Georgetown Tech this fall. He will major in either Sports Medicine or Business.



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 2020!



Ms. Tan'Asia Johnson graduated with a 4.3 GPA! Tan'Asia has been a member of the National Honor Society since middle school. and was a member of the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation Youth Board. She will attend Francis Marion College to pursue a nursing degree.





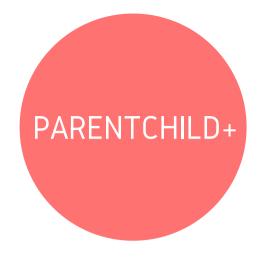
Ms.Kalia Burgess will attend Horry Georgetown Tech and study to become a Cosmetologist





Ms. Jaylynn Rutledge graduated from Georgetown High and will attend
North Carolina A&T
State University
where she will study Psychology.





Natasha Brockington Director of Programs

As Director of Programs, it is my responsibility to ensure that programs are run efficiently, families receive quality services, and staff is supported and supplied with what they need to perform their jobs effectively. Each day when I come into my office I'm greeted by a portrait of Miss Ruby. I sometimes try to imagine what she thought as she planned to open the first school for African Americans in Pawley's Island. Was she afraid? Did she know how significant the impact would be? As a black woman myself, I feel the pressure. I have to carry the torch. Full transparency, last year I struggled. I don't mind being honest about my struggles, because I am sure that we all had moments when the obstacles seemed stacked, but you have to keep pushing. I could dwell on the things that didn't work out, but as I sit here having completed my first full year in my current role at Miss Ruby's Kids, I'm able to reflect on the tough lessons learned and celebrate all of the goodness in between.

Annually, our goal is to serve 60 families. Retention is always a concern because we work with such vulnerable populations. Because of the relationships that our Early Learning Specialists (Home Visitors) build, we don't typically lose many families over the summer. Last year was different. During the summer, we lost two of our Early Learning Specialists, and a number of their returning families chose to leave the program. From conversations with the exiting families, I realized that our home visitors created a great rapport with their families, but they were their only connection to the agency. Upon realizing this, I was so proud of the work that my team had done, but I knew that I had a responsibility to foster relationships of my own with program participants and strengthen their ties to Miss Ruby's Kids. To do this, I had to increase my interactions with our families. I made sure to call, observe visits when I could, and be a connector to resources when the opportunity presented itself. Parents have shared struggles and successes with me. In my very intentional work to create relationships, I've been able to learn so much about our family's needs, goals, and obstacles faced. Although we served fewer families last year, the relationships and valuable information gained will help to inform service delivery for the upcoming year and years to come.

As months passed and as we began to settle and get into our groove, we and the rest of the world were faced with Covid19. As a program whose primary method of service delivery is home visiting. I feared for our program's future. We are experts in home visiting. We know how to respectfully enter homes and engage in fun educational encounters. How do we continue to do this if we are to social distance? As a leader, how do I provide direction on a path that isn't clear? I had to calmly assess the situation. Without the help of Miss Ruby's Kids or other Early Childhood Education programs, many of the children that we work with will enter school behind, further widening the achievement gap. For us to pause or halt services wasn't even a thought. Like so many other organizations we had to pivot and switch directions. Critical times call for tenacity and creativity. We had to go virtual. To do this we first had to conduct a technology assessment. We didn't want to create any barriers to services. Were there any families who didn't have access to technology? Luckily, all of our families had adequate Wi-Fi and a device that would enable them to utilize a video conferencing platform of their choice. Whew! While Zoom meetings may have been the norm for many of us, for some of our families this transition would take them out of their comfort zone. Blessed is the leader who has a great team. My team showed up and showed out! Those relationships that they've been building with families were so beneficial to the success of the virtual rollout. Early Learning Specialists held tech tutorials to get parents on board and comfortable with the new "home visit". That same level of support that families had grown accustomed to now took place over the phone or computer. For some of our tiny learners, it was difficult not having their "teacher" as they are affectionately called in the home. After a few visits, we were able to work out the kinks, and our new normal was solidified. The safety of our families and staff is our priority. As we prepare for next year, we will continue with our virtual visits. We are receiving guidance from the ParentChild + National Office on best practices for visiting, curriculum selection, and recruitment during these uncertain times. As things continue to change, we will evolve. Our work cannot stop!

Ruby Forsythe set out to create learning opportunities for the educationally disadvantaged. Although years have passed, there is still SO much work to be done. I will work endlessly to advocate, instill, and support the families we serve and the community at large so that the disadvantaged receive quality educational programming so that all children have equal possibilities from the very start. My first year is officially done. As I reflect, I'm definitely better and wiser from my experiences. I'm looking forward to continuing to push forward in the fight for equality.

Natasha Brockington

More Than Just a Home Visitor

The job of a Early Learning Specialist entails wearing many hats. Visiting with a family twice a week for thirty minutes per visit may not seem like a lot of time, but so much is accomplished when participants are willing. Sometimes you will show up and fulfill your duties as a "teacher" and also be called upon to be a nurse, confidant, and encourager. Whatever the role of the day, our Early Learning Specialists embrace it and get the job done.

Miss Ruby's Kids is grateful to have three fantastic Early Learning Specialists on staff. In a year where we have experienced life-altering changes in many areas of our lives, their commitment to our families remained consistent. Their hard work doesn't go unnoticed and is appreciated by all.



Early Learning Specialist pictured with Director of
Programs L-R
Tiffanie Thomas, Lisset Martinez, Samantha Saber

Words of Gratitude

Samantha was great! She was so patient and always prepared for visits. I was impressed with how creative she could be on the spot to get my son to participate. My son is very active, and Miss Samantha found a way to keep him interested and focused on the day's activities. We are grateful for her and all (she went above and beyond) that she did for my family.

I loved working with Lisset. It takes my son some time to warm up to people, but he was different with Lisset. She came in and made sure that we were both comfortable. I have a newborn baby, and I would sometimes be tired during visits, but her enthusiasm would wake me up! Since visits have stopped for the summer, my son always asks about Lisset and when she's coming back. We miss her!

Tiffanie has worked with two of my children. My kids have learned so much, but I have also learned. The one thing that I've learned from my time in the program is to be patient. I have to recognize learning differences in my children and work with them. My kids have made significant progress, and I owe so much to Tiffanie.

Family Child Care

Family child care, or home-based care, is often the most accessible, culturally appropriate, and affordable childcare option. Miss Ruby's Kids follows the ParentChild + model to support local family childcare centers. Our in-home approach makes it convenient for providers to access professional learning support that is individualized to capitalize on their talents and passions while strengthening their observational and reflective capacities. Instead of prescribing remedies to address perceived deficits, the Early Learning Specialist builds a relationship with the provider with the aim of learning how best to support them. Over the course of the 24-week program, family childcare providers receive 48 home visits and acquire a library of 12 high-quality books and educational materials. *



Last year Miss Ruby's Kids worked with Latonya Duncan, Director of Little Leaders Childcare. Her in-home center serves children in Oatland and surrounding areas of Georgetown County. Our work with Miss Duncan allowed us to work with ten additional children. When asked about the program, "My time with this program has been great. I refer Miss Ruby's Kids programs to parents and my fellow childcare providers. Miss Amanda is excellent with the kids, and they enjoy her visits. I even find myself excited to read with her and do the activities. I am grateful for Miss Ruby's Kids and all that they do in the community for my little leaders.



As with many industries, Covid-19 has wreaked havoc on the childcare industry. Because of safety concerns, many centers closed and discontinued services. There was a time during the pandemic where 67% of South Carolina was considered a child care desert due to temporary closures associated with Covid-19 response. These closures will have detrimental effects on children throughout the state. To do our part in working to reach as many children as possible, Miss Ruby's Kids will partner with four in-home childcare facilities next year. Our services will be virtual but executed with the same care, professionalism, and quality as our in-person visits.



Amanda Oliver Education Mentor Coordinator

The Education Mentor Program is the next step for children who've graduated from our ParentChild + program. The program has been around since 2009 and was created to extend the support for families past the two-year program. We knew that the factors that put a child at risk of school failure wouldn't disappear after working with them for two years. We wanted the "mentoring" that we were able to provide for the parents to transfer to the child. The program, which is a collaboration between Miss Ruby's Kids and Georgetown County School District, consists of weekly meetings in a school setting. The "mentoring" that we were able to provide for parents will transfer to the child.

For the 2019-2020 school year, the program consisted of 45 mentees and 34 mentors.

Mentors regularly visited mentees in school, attended extra-curricular activities and awards ceremonies. Many of our students excelled in their academics and received special recognitions such as honor roll and various character awards.

Through a generous donation from the Georgetown Chapter of the NAACP, we were able to award students gifts for their accomplishments.

Our mentees greatly appreciate their mentors.

One mentee shared, "Having a mentor has really helped me and has played a major role in my life. I look forward to Wednesday mornings because I know Im going to see you. I enjoy our time together, especially our talks and the many activities that we do."-Jermaine, 3rd grade.

EDUCATION MENTORS

The closure of schools due to Covid19 made it impossible for in-person visits to occur but mentoring continued. Check in's were made via phone calls, text messages, and online using different platforms. Parents are always very appreciative of our mentors and their commitment. We often get phone calls from parents expressing their gratitude, but in these difficult times, our mentors' attempts to keep in touch with their mentees meant a lot to our families. "I truly am thankful for my child's mentor. You volunteering to be the extra special person in my child's life is more appreciated than you know."-Shashaunta-Mentee Mom. Through the many challenges faced this year, the Education mentor program was successful. We can't wait to continue next year.







THE PROGRAM NUMBERS

858
Books
Distributed
358
Educational
Toys
Distributed

1,529
VISITS
W/CHILDREN

53
Families
Served

Data based on last assessment administered after program completion



46%

Data based on first

of program graduates are able to describe in words or sentences the pictures in a book.

85%



of graduating parents explain rationale for directions/expectations for their child.

75%



of graduates understand and complete activities that are developmentally appropriately.

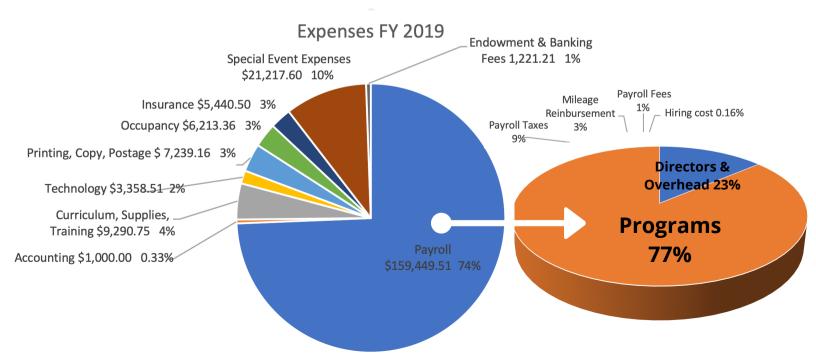
94%



of graduating parents train their children to perform age appropriate activities.



END OF THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2019 TO JUNE 30, 2020 THE **NUMBERS** \$303,393 TOTAL **REVENUE Revenue FY 2019** \$214,431 **EXPENSES Special Events &** \$76,917.66 25% **Palmetto Giving** Day Revenue \$88,962 \$124,383.99 41% **CASH ON** Grants **HAND** \$101,637.00 34% Interest \$454.56 **Expenditures FY 2019** .15%



DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Lisa Haas

If I were to say that the last year has been challenging, exciting, and encouraging, it would be an understatement. From Office Manager to newly appointed Director of Operations, a position that had not previously existed at Miss Ruby's Kids, I set out to define my role and goals with the never-ending support and guidance of Co-Founder Betsy Marlow. One look at the Balance Sheet, and I had my first goal.

Set MRK back on a positive financial track- I knew I had to get back to the foundation that created a healthy organization. I had to reach out to the founders, get close to the Board of Directors, reconnect with long- time donors, and volunteers. My training has never been in public speaking or working with donors; it was commercial insurance and business. I was unsure of what to say, how to talk about our work. I began by calling donors every chance I had, establishing relationships, building friendships, and talking about MRK everywhere I went and to everyone I know. I stumbled at first and may stumble again, but sharing MRK's mission outshines my insecurities. I have been overwhelmingly accepted by civic groups, churches, and other organizations to talk about MRK.

New ideas- The Garden Party was growing weary, so we decided to restart Georgetown's Mardi Gras tradition. The first year, 2019, was successful, but 2020 was phenomenal. The 2020 Mardi Gras committee was a blessing; it consisted of many of the former Garden Party Committee and members of the Board. What a group of ladies! They collected so many donations for the silent auction the tables were overflowing. The food was perfect, Tru Sol Band was a blast, and the added MC kept everyone laughing. The event was a financial success, dubbed by most everyone that attended as the "best event of the year."

New friends- The Board of Directors, was growing, and the new members were settling into place, giving much-needed assistance to long-serving members. The new Board Members began calling on friends and connections, using their network to garner further MRK support. The newly named Director of Programs, Natasha Brockington, and I were quickly making community connections. Attending every non-profit event we could, booking appearances on Carolina and Co. Live to promote our events and programs, and reaching out to every grant-maker that supports our cause. We have built partnerships with other non-profits like The Village Group, whom we now share an office, and by certifying Natasha, and three of our team members to instruct courses in Triple P, a positive parenting program for community and other non-profits. Something I have learned about Natasha is that she cares, she is a fighter for families and children, she is a hard worker and is a great leader.

Wanting to develop a more responsive social media and online presence, we were able to build a new interactive website to make signing up for our Programs much more user friendly. Creating an online reporting form for our Mentors to report visits more efficiently, adding explicit content to explain our Programs better, and detail precisely what we do at MRK. Our social media is building friends and followers; we now have active Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts with information for our families, donors, and community. Recently we were able to secure a Facebook Live interview with Jamie Harrison (for Senate) for *Harrison Helps*, a national and statewide platform.

Continue building the MRK Culture- We have concentrated on re-establishing Miss Ruby's Kids' workplace culture. By developing a culture that works with each MRK team member's strengths, fosters a close relationship with our donors, the public, our grant-makers, and the families we support, our mission is clear: **every child deserves an equal start!**

Here is to a better 2020, one with an understanding that we need to continue educating the most vulnerable children in our communities, building access to technology and the internet, and supporting parents in their goal to <u>be their child's first, best teachers</u>. We need to continue building reliable community partnerships to enhance our families' support throughout their children's academic careers so that they may become successful members of their communities.



a Special Thank You

Donations over \$500

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Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation

Holy Cross Faith Memorial Espiscopal ECW

Lucille Pate, Vandy Charitable Foundation

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"It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."

Mother Teresa

We are very grateful for all donations in all amounts!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Ruby West - Board Chair



Vaudrien Forsythe Ray Vice-Chair



De'Ontay Winchester Sr.
Treasurer



Myrtle Milton, Member



Evelyn Lewis , Member



Founders Emeritus,
Jo Fortuna and
Betsy Marlow
Thank you for your
continued support
and guidence.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS *NEWEST MEMBERS*



Leigh Ann Brown

Leigh Ann Brown was born and raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. As most ugly ducklings do, she developed a sense of humor during her formative years that have carried into adulthood. She is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill and a former member of the Tar Heels marching band, where she met her future husband.

Leigh Ann worked for WTVD 11, an ABC affiliate in Durham, NC. While working on televised stories for The Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, she was inspired to change her path and become a nurse. She worked as a nurse at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, NC, and The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, as an Emergency/Trauma nurse. Leigh Ann is now a full-time mother of a 10-year-old daughter and 7-year-old boy/girl twins and has lived in Georgetown for nine years. Surviving twins has been her greatest accomplishment to date. She is not a homebody, and she takes exception to the "stay-at-home" part of Stay at Home Mom, so Leigh Ann spends her time volunteering at her children's schools to avoid the endless piles of laundry. She was the PTO chair and served on the School Board for St. Peters Lutheran School, and she currently is in the PTO for Lowcountry Preparatory School and Waccamaw Intermediate School. Leigh Ann is also known for creativity, planning entertaining social gatherings, and her love for costuming, chinchillas, and glitter eyeshadow. Her service on the Board for Miss Ruby's Kids will pay homage to her Granny Edith whose passion was an education for every child and preventing the achievement gap in the impoverished areas of the Appalachian Mountains.



been very active in: Teach My People (Parent Committee and Volunteer), Optimism Preventive Services (Parent Volunteer), and Pawleys Island Civic Club (Marketing and Advertising), to name a few. She has joined MRK to show that early childhood education closes the achievement gap, and closing the achievement gap means more success stories.



Kaneeka Johnson



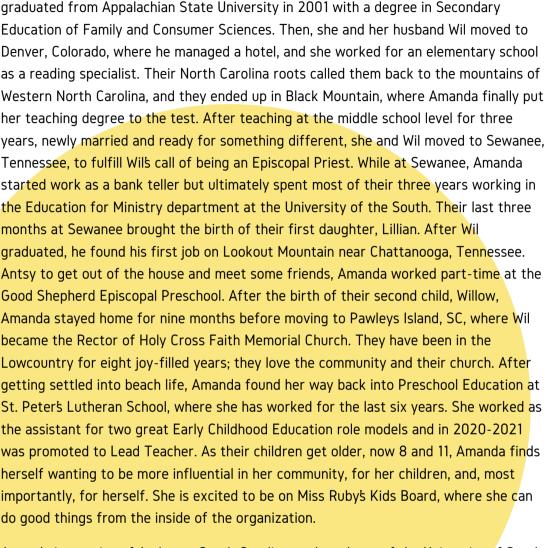
Leona Joy Bonds

Joy is a native of Georgetown, South Carolina. She graduated from Claflin University with a B.S. in Biology in 2002. She obtained her Master's Degree in Education from the University of Phoenix in 2007, and complete Post-Masters work at Cambridge College in Boston, Massachusetts. Leona has taught high school science for 18 years, currently teaching at Georgetown High School, where she was named GCSD's Teacher of the Year 2011-2012. Leona is the local Technology Club Sponsor, teaches robotics in the summer for the Governors School Summer Camps, the Regional Director of South Carolina Science Council, and a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, where she serves on the Education and the Arts Committees. In addition to spending time devoted to her family, Leona devotes time to work in various capacities in the community, including Volunteer Leader at the Winyah Auditorium. She is married to Dedric Bonds, and together they have seven children, Xavier (22), English (20), Ian (7), Mason (6), Dedric (4), Paityn (3) and Landyn (4 months).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS *NEWEST MEMBERS*



Amanda Keith



Growing up in Asheville, North Carolina, Amanda is a "mountain girl at heart." However, she was more than excited to move to Pawleys Island in the summer of 2012. Amanda



Amanda Hayward Cohen

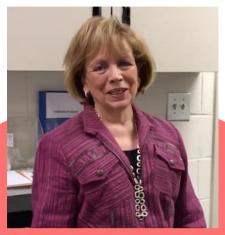
Amanda is a native of Andrews, South Carolina, and graduate of the University of South Carolina (2002) with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. She received a Masters of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling from South Carolina State University (2004). Amanda's background experience includes therapeutic counseling, family support programs, case management, behavioral intervention, program development, and implementation. She is very passionate about working in areas that focus on promoting healthy and happier families. She also loves strength-based and family-centered approaches when working with clients, which provides individuals and families with the right kind of support. Amanda is currently the Triple P Program Coordinator at Tidelands Health and has been an advocate for families for over 15 years. She continues to provide resources to her community inside and outside of the workplace. Amanda is a wife, mother, and sister, and when not working, Amanda enjoys traveling, evening walks, reading, adult coloring, and event planning. Amanda is a new addition to the Miss Ruby's Kids Board and is looking forward to making a significant impact on families' lives.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RETIRING MEMBERS

Our sincerest gratitude for your service to Miss Ruby's Kids



Fedrick Cohen 2008 to 2020 Member, Board Secretary



Suzanne Zeddun 2017-2017, 2019-2020 Member



Anne Mountford 2011 to 2020, Member



Reta Schaap 2014 to 2020 Member, Chair Emeritus



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