

# Miss Ruby's Kids

*Enabling parents to inspire a passion for learning in their children*

(843) 235-3185

www.missrubyskids.net

pchp@en-visions.com

## Miss Ruby's Kids is growing up

Founded in 2003 under the auspices of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church, and initially operating as one of its Baskervill Ministries outreach programs, **Miss Ruby's Kids** began the new year as an independent charitable organization. This transformation is a result of the program's growth and its intention to better serve children and families throughout all of Georgetown County.

During the first months of 2006, **Miss Ruby's Kids** will operate under the sponsorship and with the support of Georgetown County's United Way, which is assisting the program in obtaining state and federal certification for its independent 501(c)(3) charitable organization status. The United Way has also made available a more centrally located office space for our Executive Director and Home Visitors.

Another positive development is in the program's leadership. Formerly, a group of volunteers, loosely organized as a Steering Committee, offered counsel and support to Jo Fortuna, Resource Coordinator, and Betsy Marlow, Program Director. This group has now assumed the role of a Board of Directors, with Jo Fortuna, co-founder of **Miss Ruby's Kids**, as the Chair of its Board of Directors and co-founder Betsy Marlow as the program's Executive Director. The other 13 Board members and officers have attendant commitments and responsibilities.

On Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, the newly-constituted Board held its first retreat/workshop devoted to identifying organizational priorities, setting long-range goals for the program's growth, and putting initial systems in place to achieve its desired objectives.

In future newsletters we will keep *Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids* and other interested members of the community apprised of our progress as we achieve final independent status, continue to grow, and reach out to an ever-increasing number of Georgetown County families.

## Early childhood literacy: An idea whose time has come... finally

A spate of recent studies and well-publicized programs seem to indicate that early childhood literacy programs of the kind **Miss Ruby's Kids** has launched in Georgetown County are finding greater support and affirmation throughout the state.

Beginning close to home, *The Georgetown Times* ran a story on December 26<sup>th</sup> with the headline: "Early Childhood Education Delivers Strong Economic Development Returns." The authors, Bob Faith, South Carolina Secretary of Commerce, and Susan DeVenny, Director of S.C. First Steps, approach the subject from an angle they believe particularly relevant to this state. Their thesis: "Education and workforce development remain critical components in South Carolina's strategy for a stronger economy . . . the high-paying, knowledge-based jobs that will improve our state's standard of living and quality of life."

Rather than focus on higher standards in public education or more equitable teacher pay, Faith and DeVenny zero in on where literacy efforts will "get the biggest bang for the buck" – early childhood education. "Early childhood education is rarely viewed in economic development terms. But, we believe it should be." The authors cite a pre-school intervention program carried out in Michigan during the 1960's. The Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis recently came up with the following analysis: "The 40-year return on \$1 invested in the Perry project is \$17.07. The real return? Better educated workers, reduced school remediation and dropout rates, lower crime and higher wages – all of which can help South Carolina attract quality jobs to fuel our future economy."

Economic growth is much on the minds of Georgetown County's leaders. On Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup>, *The Myrtle Beach Sun News's Money* section featured "The Evolution of Georgetown." Chamber of Commerce President Annette Fisher described the county as "incredibly positioned for great growth in the next five to 10 years. I think what you're sensing is . . . a whole new era for this area. Her view was supported by county council members who pointed to a spurt in residential development south of the city and a projected pier/marina on the Sampit River.

Beneath all this optimism, however, is the troubling fact that local businesses and franchises of national chains continue to close and large corporations, such as Lowe's, continue to shy away from commitment to Georgetown County.

It's not difficult to connect the dots. "Carefully focused investments in early childhood education . . . (produce) 'ready children,' who become early readers and math-proficient learners, high school graduates, tomorrow's knowledge-based economy workers. Through increased coordination between public and

private entities, we envision a state whose goal is high-quality early childhood programs for all children who wish them ... with redoubled efforts toward targeting intensive, research-based interventions for children whose medical, environmental, or special needs demand greater public resources and support.”

This last phrase perfectly describes the mission of **Miss Ruby's Kids** which is delivering such “intensive, research-based intervention” to 19 “at risk” children in Georgetown County and whose ultimate goal is to see that all such children receive similar preparation for success in school and for productive lives as citizens of their community.

## Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids plan winter programs

At its first official meeting on January 11th, the newly-constituted Board of Directors of **Miss Ruby's Kids** approved an initiative by Friends of the program to sponsor three events during February and March.

A grant from the Psaras Foundation received last October supports the Friends group in its “friend-raising” and fundraising efforts on behalf of **Miss Ruby's Kids**. Psaras monies underwrite mailings to donors, printed materials created to promote the program, and, now, a group of events designed to foster financial support from proven and potential donors and to raise community awareness of **Miss Ruby's Kids**.

### **Friends Valentine Party**

On Sunday afternoon, February 12th, the Friends will host a Valentine Party for all those “sweethearts” who have supported the program with donations of dollars, time, and talents throughout our two years of operation. Fittingly, the party will be held in the Parish Hall of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church, formerly the site of Miss Ruby's School. The program's Directors and Home Visitors will be introduced to our donors and a brief history of the school and its building presented. Videos of Home Visitors “in action” will play continuously throughout the afternoon as guests enjoy refreshments and getting better acquainted with each other and the mission of the organization they support.

### **Learners for All Seasons**

Two “consciousness-raising” events have been scheduled: the first on Thursday, February 23rd, the second on Monday, March 6th. Both events will take place between 10 a.m. and 12 Noon and, like the Valentine Party, be held in the church's Parish Hall – a.k.a. Miss Ruby's School. Because **Miss Ruby's Kids** is an education-based effort, the Friends have billed these as “Learners For All Seasons: A Series of Learning Adventures.” Our lead-off adventure features a talk by well-known local historian and raconteur Lee G. Brockington entitled: “Women of the Waccamaw: The Strong Women Behind The History of Georgetown County.” All readers of this newsletter are cordially invited to

attend one or the other of Lee's talks. Refreshments – made possible by the Psaras Grant – will be served, and information about **Miss Ruby's Kids** and how to become a Friend of the program will be available.

As **Miss Ruby's Kids** grows, and as volunteer support for the program through the Friends group increases, we hope to continue scheduling similar events designed to educate and enrich the lives of our supporters as they enrich the lives of our program's children and their families.

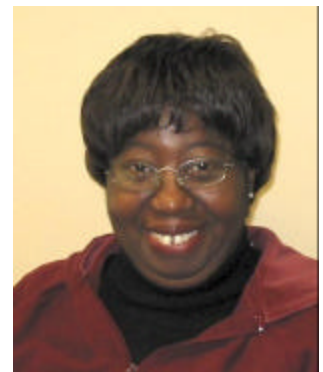


**Miss Ruby's Kids** is a **PAIRS** affiliate (Parents & Adults Inspiring Reading Success) and a **Georgetown County United Way** Agency.

## Home Visitors: The heart of Miss Ruby's Kids

For this issue of the **Miss Ruby's Kids** newsletter, we interviewed two of our Home Visitors: Lucille Grate and Zelma Carr. Both are in their second program year with Lucille visiting two and Zelma visiting six children.

A native of Pawleys Island, Lucille is a member of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church, under whose sponsorship **Miss Ruby's Kids** was launched three years ago. Lucille's son and three daughters were students in Miss Ruby's School, and she has served on the church vestry and the Board of



Baskervill Outreach; her ties with the educational tradition Miss Ruby represented go back, as she says, “a long way!”

Lucille became a Home Visitor in the fall of 2004 following her retirement from The Hammock Shops, where she worked in management and retail sales. She looked forward to visiting the children assigned to her, thinking it would fill her new-found free time. Little did she know how much her association with the children would grow on her. “Once you get close to them,” she says, “they grow on you.”

When she first visited her **Miss Ruby's Kids** families, Lucille encountered skepticism and a reluctance to have an outsider coming into their homes. One of her children wouldn't speak to Lucille at all. But “what a difference between September and December,” she recalls. The key was building trust. Once the mother began to feel comfortable and to trust Lucille, the child began to make great strides. “I realized then,” Lucille says, “that the parent is the key to the child's success. Parents need pushing,” and Lucille pushed them to be home

for their appointments, make sure their children were awake and ready to learn, and to participate themselves in the reading or play time together!

Now in her second year as a Visitor, Lucille notices her families have made even more progress. She can rely on the parents to be home and to be prepared. "If they can't make an appointment, now they call me and we find a time when they know they'll be home," she says. And the children are more comfortable with her. "They are very enthusiastic!" With pride, Lucille states that her children will graduate from the **Miss Ruby's Kids** program in May and look forward to success as they head for pre-K and kindergarten in the county school system.



Zelma Carr came to the **Miss Ruby's Kids** program from a background in science teaching, social work, and religious education. She spent twelve years as a social worker before returning to Atlanta's Morehouse School of Religion to obtain her Master's Degree in religious education. Zelma put her training to work in Florida where she organized Sunday School programs, conducted workshops in teacher and leadership training, and oversaw Christian education programs for various churches.

Moving back home, Zelma was recruited by Barbara Logan, one of **Miss Ruby's Kids** original Home Visitors, to work for the program. She began by visiting two boys last year and is now assigned four boys and two girls, seeming to enjoy the added responsibility. Like Lucille, Zelma has noticed a marked improvement in her original students, one of whom was largely inarticulate and enjoyed only "hands on" activities. By working with his parents to make reading an enjoyable activity, Zelma has noticed marked improvement in his skills.

Zelma stresses the importance of providing parents with guide sheets which show them how to relate the reading to things their children will know. She also is convinced that parental support is the key to this program's success. Zelma takes advantage of her background in social work of opportunities to model helpful behaviors to her families in dealing with their children. The mother of one of her second-year children is already preparing for his graduation in May, and her first-year children seem to be more interested and participate

more now that the program is becoming established in their lives. "I was quite surprised," she says, "when I had finished my visit and one of my little girls said: 'Now, stand up, and JUMP! She wants to teach *me* aerobics!'"

With their dedication to their responsibilities and their families, Lucille Grate and Zelma Carr are living testimony to why the Parent Child Home Program has such a long history of preparing children for success in learning and life!

## Chili Cookoff

Our own Alice Young has volunteered to be chief cook for the **Miss Ruby's Kids** entry in the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Georgetown County United Way **Chili Cookoff** in Murrells Inlet in February. It is always a "hot" event where you get to taste a host of chili dishes to your heart's content.

So come on down, y'all, and support **Miss Ruby's Kids** and the United Way. You'll find us at Inlet Affairs in Murrells Inlet on Saturday, February 25 from 11:00-3:00. Call the Pawleys office at 235-3185 if you'd like to purchase advance tickets.



## Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids

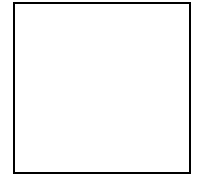
*A big thank you to those who renewed their membership and to those who became new "Friends." You are truly investing in the future!*

William Allen, Ruthenia Alston, Linwood & Nancy Altman, Don & Carole Anderson, Charlotte & Kerry Bafile, Jack & Sylvia Bame, Susan Benati, Dot Bonds, Nancy & Mac Boyle, Nancy & John Bracken, Nancy Bride, Johanna Brown, Alan & Katy Burrell, Charles & Val Calderbank, Robert & Jill Callahan, Zelma Carr, William & Anne Chandler, Jeane and James Chapman, Audrey Christensen, Mary & Al Clark, Babe Cone, Jack Cook., Carol Corey, Eleanor & Matt Currin, Dottie & Chip D'ambrosio, Liz & Duff Dawson, Paul & Carol DuBois.

George & Barbara Ermentrout, Betty Farley, M.P. Ferris, Jacqueline Flaherty, Grace & Thomas Flanagan, Ann Floyd, Jo & Wally Fortuna, Eleanor & Julian Friday, Connie Furrer, Evans & Ron Garber, Ruth & Wharton Gaul, Edith Gaylord, Lynn Gender, Wilhelmina Gibson, Sarah & Tom Gillespie, Mary Ella Greene, Lynn Gunder, Jim & Betty Lou Hall, June & Ed Hard, Elizabeth & James Herbert, Robert & Leora Hileman, Jane Hinton-Smith, Caroline Hoffman, John & Jane Holloway, Laurie & Christie Hopkins, Harriet & Hugh Hostetler, Jim & Molly Huntoon, Judy & Ron Ingle, Bobby & Suzy Jayroe, Margaret & Bob Jones.



**Miss Ruby's Kids**  
PO Box 191  
Pawleys Island, SC 29585



Sis Kelly, Ann Knight, Kenneth & Joan Kreikemeier, Pixie & Tom Kubeck, Don & Pat Lacy, William & Cynthia Lapworth, Katrina Lawrimore, Renee Lewis, Barbara Logan, Barbara & Paul Logan, Pamela & Richard Mahany, Betsy Marlow, T. Chandler Martin, Ann & Jason Mayhew, Pamela & Laurie McAlpine, Beth & Kelly McCallister, Doyle & Lillis McWhorter, Joyce & Ted Meldahl, John & Dorothea Mentzell, Barbara & John Miller, Lynn Miller, James & Gail Millett, Laura & Thomas Milstead, Eleanor Moody, Gene & Betsy Nemeth.



*"As independent booksellers we naturally support all literacy based programs. Miss Ruby's Kids is special, however, because it seeks to bring a bright future, through reading, to the underserved children of our county."* Vickie Crafton and Tom Warner, owners, **Litchfield Books**.

Doris & Jerome O'Donovan, Barbara & Robert Ottinger, Joy & Joe Pinson, Clay & Doris Pioth, Vivian Powell, Kevin & Mary Prince, Alberta Quattlebaum, Myra & Rex Quigley, James Rider, Judith Robertson, Carroll Roe, Jean & Ronald Runkle, Tony Salerno, Philis Sarto, Susan & Paul Scheno, Charles & Pat Schooler, Tonya & Alphonso Scott, Lois Scott, Lois Shaw, Percy Sherald, William Skilton, Ann Smith, Kathryn Solarek, Annette & Leon Spangler, Becky Sparrow, Bob & Peggy Stahlberger, Peggy & Jim Stallings, Claudia & Harold Stowe.

Jerome Thomas, John & Jenkins Trotter, Mabel Vervaat, Rosa Williams, Peggy & Bill Wilson, Sarah & Jeff Wilson, Kate & Marvin Wilson, Rosemary & Charles Wittrock, Alice Young, BNI International of

Pawleys Island, Holy Cross Faith Memorial Vestry & Staff, and the Holy Cross Faith Memorial Episcopal Churchwomen. Gifts-in-kind: Nancy & Mac Boyle, Susan Geiger, Amy Webb, the Georgetown County United Way, Litchfield Books, and a friend of Tideland Hospice. Georgetown County United Way business designations: Brookgreen Gardens, Chicora-Coldwell Banker, Georgetown County Government, Georgetown County Schools and Santee Cooper.

## Thank you Friends!

*Takhia and her mom Tiesha Landbaez received some of the almost 200 Angel Tree gifts collected by the **Pawleys Island Piggly Wiggly** for Miss Ruby's Kids program families this Christmas. This is the second year "The Pig" has sponsored the Angel Tree for the program.*



## Invite your friends

**Miss Ruby's Kids** thanks you for being our Friend. Do you have a friend who shares your interest in early childhood literacy and the benefits it will bring to Georgetown County? Tell them about us! Or, better yet, tell us about them!!

Who else should be reading this newsletter? Call Pixie Kubeck at 237-4611 or Nancy Bride at 237-2492 and let us know your friend's name and address. We'll invite them to join us as a **Friend of Miss Ruby's Kids**.

Pixie produces this newsletter quarterly. Contact her at [pkubeck@sc.rr.com](mailto:pkubeck@sc.rr.com).