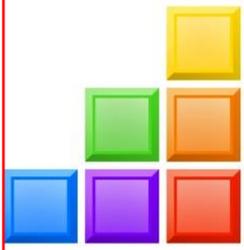


GEORGETOWN COUNTY



**FIRST
STEPS**

Getting children ready for school.



*Early Identification Resource
& Referral Program
(Includes group parenting &
Hispanic Outreach)*

*Early Identification
Scholarship Program*

*Early Literacy
(Storyteller and Training Program)*

*Early Education
(Free 4K Program administered by
South Carolina First Steps)*

*BabyNet
(Program administered by South
Carolina First Steps)*

Annual Report

2014-2015



OUR VISION:

Every South Carolina child
arrives at kindergarten
ready to learn.

First Steps WORKS for the children of Georgetown County.



Getting children ready for school.

Annual Report 2014-2015

Who We Serve

First Steps serves children pre-birth to 5 years old and their families who are at risk of not being ready for school.

Number of Georgetown County children under 5:
2,979

Number of Georgetown County children living in poverty:
4,586 (0-18)

Babies born each year in Georgetown County to a mother without a high school diploma:
15.7%

Our Programs

Early Identification Resource & Referral Program
(Includes group parenting & Hispanic Outreach)

Early Identification Scholarship Program

Early Literacy
(Storyteller and Training Program)

Early Education – Free 4K
(Administered by SCFS)

BabyNet
(Administered by SCFS, enhanced by GCFS)

Our Results

- ✓ Reached 511 children with our Early Literacy Program
- ✓ Screened 55 children for developmental delays
- ✓ Trained 70 child care providers
- ✓ Distributed over 1,140 books!

A message from the Carol Daly, Executive Director

A good teacher can make or break a child’s day and ultimately impact their future. Educators are expected to deal with all of the baggage children bring from their homes into learning settings.

I continue to be impressed with our outstanding public and private pre-school teachers. They have “overloaded plates” and are minimally recognized for their efforts. As administrators, it is our responsibility to provide positive experiences to promote teachers and their efforts toward getting children ready for school.

We are on a winning track for our babies, toddlers, and preschoolers and making a difference.

Carol C. Daly M.Ed.

Executive Director, Georgetown County First Steps



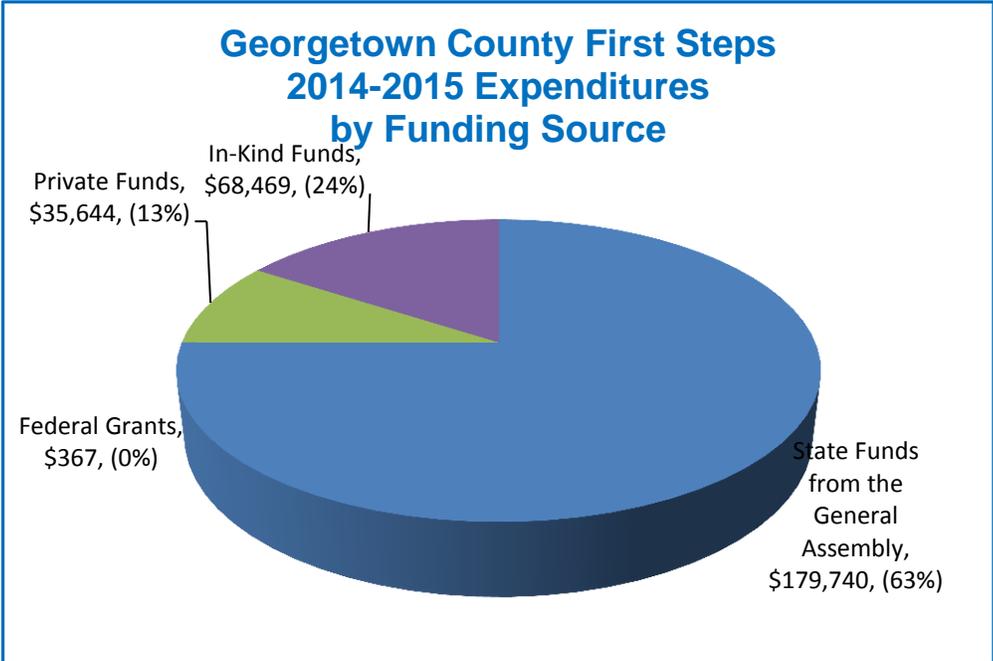
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Executive Director
CAROL DALY

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<http://georgetowncountyfirststeps.weebly.com>

Building brighter futures for South Carolina’s youngest learners.

Financial Impact



Total 2014-2015 Expenditures: 205,661

State Funds Leveraged in 2014-2015*: 33%

**Percentage of state dollars matched by additional federal, private, and/or in-kind funds*

2014-2015 Expenditures by Strategy

	State \$	Federal \$	Private \$	In-Kind \$	Total \$	% of 2014-15 Expenditures
Early Identification Resource & Referral	\$97,586	\$0	\$12,487	\$32,590	\$142,664	69%
Early Literacy Program	\$14,723	\$0	\$2,400	\$0	\$17,123	8%
Scholarship Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%
Program Support	\$12,992	\$0	\$1,858	\$0	\$14,850	7%
Administrative Support	\$29,015	\$0	\$2,009	\$0	\$31,024	15%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$154,316	\$0	\$18,754	\$32,590	\$205,661	

Unaudited numbers for the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015

Since inception, Georgetown County First Steps has leveraged \$2,943,938.40 from sources outside of state government. That's 63 cents for every state dollar!

Making a difference in the community!

Celebrating Week of the Young Child

Every year, thousands of young children and their teachers and families across the county join NAEYC for an exciting, weeklong celebration of early learning! This year's themes included:

- **Music Monday:** We kicked off the week with a day that was about exploring how children learn through song and dance.
- **Taco Tuesday** was to promote healthy eating habits through cooking. This was about more than just cheese and salsa- it was about giving children the opportunity to put their own creativity spin on the popular dish, all while teaching healthy eating habits!
- **Work Together Wednesday.** Georgetown County First Steps celebrated with a field trip to Ripley's Aquarium! We had over 140 children attend! Participating child care centers included: Small Minds of Tomorrow I & II, Little Smurfs Daycare I & II, Beginners Paradise, Bibleway Learning Center, Playhouse Child Development Center, and Choppee Head Start
- **Artsy Thursday.** We celebrated creativity and expression with open-ended art experiences that helped children solve, think creatively, and express themselves.
- **Family Friday.** We celebrated the unique role families play in their children's learning and development.



The Greatest Gift is the Passion for Reading

We wanted to increase our early literacy programs, which is when we decided to do the *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten* program in partnership with our local library. To get children excited about the program we collaborated with **First Book** to order books for every child. With funding raised, we paid for the shipping and were able to obtain over 1,000 free books. We were able to deliver those books in beautiful baskets to every SCFS 4K child in Georgetown County.

THANK YOU to all of our supporters for helping us create effective and fun programs for our children and families in Georgetown County!



Identifying and referring children with possible developmental delays can help assure school readiness.

Program Description

Georgetown County First Steps (GCFS) Early Identification Resource and Referral (EIR&R) strategy is intended to produce measurable improvements in the number of infants and toddlers screened for delays in development. Our goals are an increase in the number of screened referrals to the BabyNet Early Intervention System; and an increase in the number of follow-up referrals to local early learning partners for children found ineligible for BabyNet services.

Program Components

1. **Parenting support** is provided by Family Connections, and GCFS group parenting at the Georgetown Housing Authority, this includes outreach activities for Hispanic families.
2. **Screenings** are done on each child's developmental progress.
3. **Resource and Referral Network** connects families to resources in the community that can help their child's development and other family services.
4. **Scholarship referrals** are made for children displaying a delay or potential delay in their development through the ABC Special Needs Program

EIR&R targets ALL children. There is no income limit or residency restrictions on this program for children that need a little extra help in their development.

EIR&R Outcomes

- ✓ Increased parent's and provider's knowledge of child development and improved parenting practices
- ✓ Provided early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- ✓ Increased children's school readiness and school success

Thank you to our partners!

- ✚ SCFS BabyNet Office
- ✚ Georgetown County School District's Child Find Program
- ✚ Georgetown Housing Authority
- ✚ The Family Justice Center of Georgetown
- ✚ Family Connections, Inc.
- ✚ WellCare Health Plans, Inc.
- ✚ Georgetown County Library

Why Early Identification Works

Research has shown that the time between birth and age 36 months is a critical developmental period in a child's life. These months offer a window of opportunity that will not be available later. Early intervention programs minimize, and in some cases, prevent delays in development of infants and toddlers with disabilities.

This program can decrease the need for special education and related services when a child enters school, and increase independence.

Children whose special needs are identified and addressed during these crucial early years have

Program Results 2014-2015

Early Identification & Referral Results	
Children Served	55
Materials Distributed	5,059



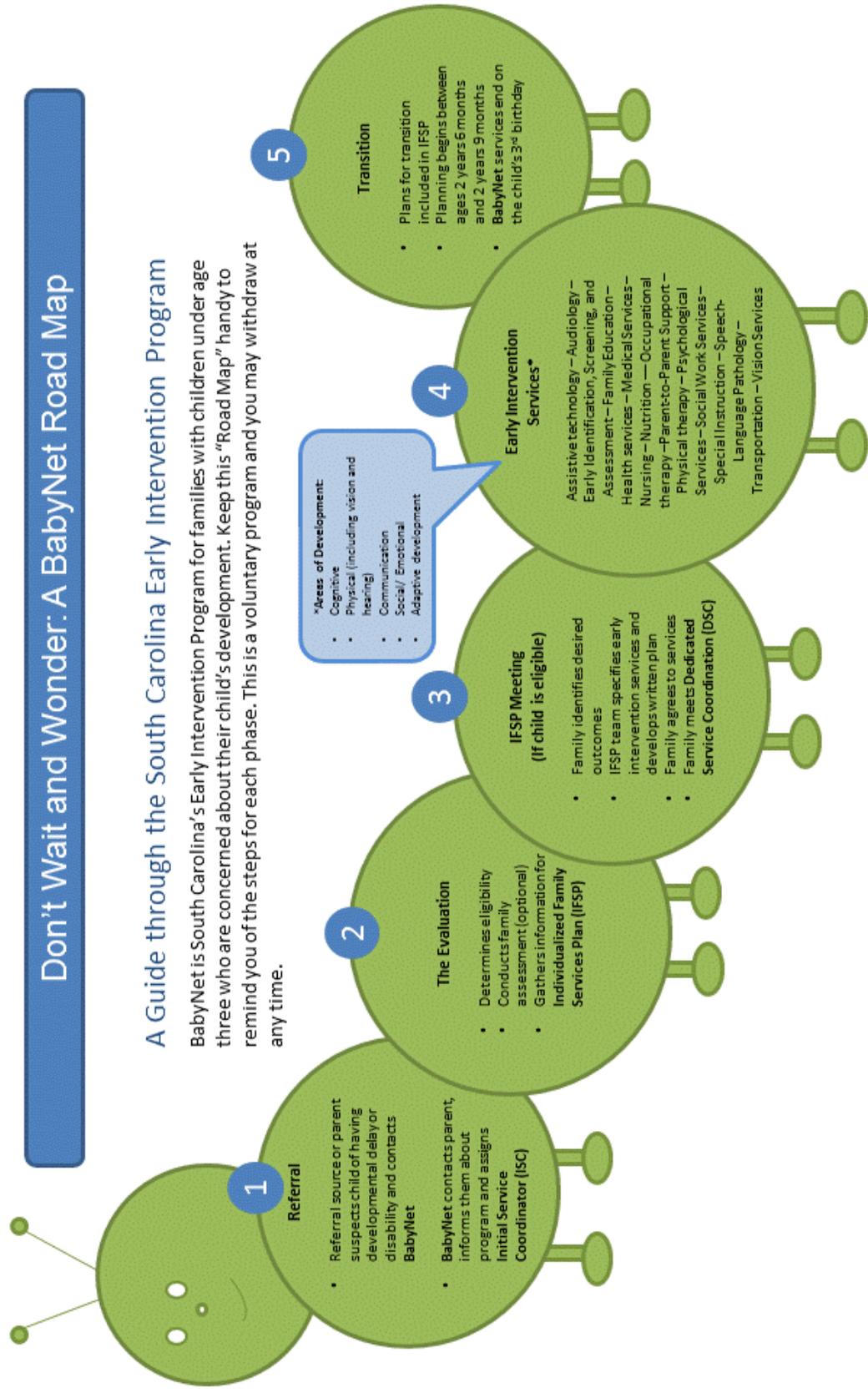
Executive Director and board member, Jane Wishart at a PR Event for our EIR&R Program

Early Identification Resource and Referral

Don't Wait and Wonder: A BabyNet Road Map

A Guide through the South Carolina Early Intervention Program

BabyNet is South Carolina's Early Intervention Program for families with children under age three who are concerned about their child's development. Keep this "Road Map" handy to remind you of the steps for each phase. This is a voluntary program and you may withdraw at any time.



If your child is younger than three and you have questions, call (843) 520-1830. Parent/guardian's consent required for the evaluation, IFSP, provision of services in IFSP, and transition.



Child Care Scholarships

Too many families in Georgetown County cannot afford quality care for their children.

Access to quality child care is essential for children to experience safe, nurturing, and stimulating interactions while away from their primary caregivers. Yet, of those families working or going to school who are income-eligible for child care assistance in South Carolina, only a small fraction receive it due to lack of funds. In the absence of nurturing and consistently available family, friends or neighbors, parents are faced with few - or no - affordable care options.

Scholarships by the Numbers, 2014-2015

Children Served	4
Providers Served	3

Georgetown County First Steps serves families in greatest need. Among our scholarship families:

- 100 % ... live in poverty
- 100% ... had developmental delays



In addition to regular monitoring of childcare providers that receive First Steps scholarships, First Steps conducts at least one developmental screening each year with scholarship children and connects families to needed services within the community.

Georgetown County First Steps Scholarship Program is integrated with the Early Intervention Resource and Referral Program.

This year, our Scholarship program:

- ✓ Connected 4 children with scholarship assistance so their parents could work or attend school
- ✓ 100% of these children were Identified as having a potential developmental delay through our Early Identification Program
- ✓ 100% of the families received connections for services such as: Early Literacy, Early Childhood Education, Parenting, Financial Guidance, Playgroups
- ✓ Supported 3 small businesses in Georgetown County by subsidizing child care tuition for families who would not otherwise be able to afford quality care

Thank you to our partners!

- ✚ ABC Special Needs Program
- ✚ Young Talkers Pediatric Speech Therapy
- Free Baby Talkers Playgroup

Georgetown County First Steps
 2018 Church St.
 Georgetown, SC 29440
 Telephone (843) 520-1830
 Fax (843) 520-1851

Parents play a critical role in their child's development

Group Parenting

Georgetown County First Steps is a portal of information assistance and community support for families. Through our monthly parenting program in partnership with the **Georgetown Housing Authority** and **Georgetown County School District's Family Literacy Program**, we help each family construct a solid foundation from which to foster the growth of their young children. Components of this program include: connecting families to one another, enhancing parenting skills, helping during crises, integrating families into the community, strengthening children's social skills, responding to red flags, and being encouraging and kind to parents.



Group Parenting Program Results	
Number of Families Served	30
Number of Children Served	49

Hispanic Outreach

Our Bilingual Community Coordinator has been able to reach out to the Hispanic families, just as we have with our other families to connect them to the resources they need in our community. The Georgetown County First Steps Partnership has built a strong relationship with the **Georgetown County School District ChildFind Office**. Our coordinator works with the ChildFind Office to ensure that our Hispanic children receive the early intervention services they need to be prepared to start school healthy, happy, and ready to learn. This year we were able to serve a total of 10 families.



"Thank you for assisting us during the evaluation and IEP meeting. With your help, my child can attend the Special Education Program."
 -The Arreola Family

"Thank you for all you do for our families."
 -Wendy W., GCSD School Psychologist

Children's reading scores improve when they are read to on a regular basis.

Program Description

Georgetown County First Steps partnered with the **Georgetown County Library** to provide a literacy instructor/storyteller that visited 21 child-care centers and group homes throughout the county, using a curriculum developed by the storyteller herself (a published author in the community). Our methodology has been approved by the SC State Library and is based on the use of picture books and music to introduce our children to motor skills, rhythm, and other basic means for better learning.

While the children have been impacted directly by these sessions, educators have also learned pre-literacy teaching techniques by observing and participating in these one-hour monthly sessions at the childcare centers. These on-site visits to the centers have proved particularly important in our rural county, where adequate transportation is scarce and distances are great.

The program also provided 2 trainings throughout the year for these teachers, along with follow up with the teacher at their center, addressing the key concepts presented at the training to ensure techniques are being practiced and used properly.

Program Results 2014-2015

Storyteller Program	
Centers and Group Homes served	21
Children Served	511
Adults Served	87
Number of Site Visits Provided	97
<i>*Program ended 12/31/2014</i>	

Early Literacy Training Program	
Trainings held	2
Teachers trained	38



Thank you to our partners!

- Georgetown County Library System
- SCECA District 2
- First Book
- Precious Blood of Christ Women's Group
- International Paper - Georgetown





Georgetown Leadership

Georgetown County First Steps 2014-2015 Board

Name	Position	Category
Jane McSweeny-Wishart	Retired Kindergarten Teacher/ Housing Authority Consultant	Pre-kindergarten through primary educator
Carolyn Ellis	Vice President of The Cliff and Carolyn Ellis Foundation	Nonprofit organization that provides services to families and children;
Whitney Martin - Secretary	Early Childhood Teacher	Childcare and early childhood development/education provider
Lakisha H. Myers	Early Childhood Paraprofessional	Early Childhood Education
Renee Bodie Goldfinch	Parent/ Legal Assistant	Parent of a Preschooler
Gwen McNeil	Andrews Magistrate	Faith community; and
Pam Bradley- Vice Chair	Sales, Kaplan Co.	Business community
Anita Floyd	Attorney	Business community
Ayesha Smith	ChildFind Coordinator	Family education, training, and support provider
Celia Sargent	S & L Services	Transportation provider
Bernard "Garvey" Winans	Family Justice Center	Appointee
Elizabeth Krauss	GC Special Needs and Disabilities'	Appointee
Merit Justice	GCSD Gifted and Talented Teacher	Appointee
Sylvia Mitchum	DSS	DSS Designee
Tiffany Jenkins - Treasurer	DHEC	DHEC Designee
Dwight McInvaill	GC Library Director	Library Designee
Patricia Canada - Board Chair	GCSD ADEPT Coordinator	School District Designee

Thank you to our supporters!

2014-2015 Financial Donors

SCECA District II
 International Paper
 Precious Blood of Christ
 The Cliff and Carolyn Ellis Foundation
 Carl Anderson & Lt. Gov. Yancey McGill
 Georgetown County First Steps Partnership

2014-2015 In-Kind Donors

Georgetown County Library
 Georgetown County School District
 GCSD Family Literacy Program
 Georgetown Housing Authority
 First Book, Inc.
 WellCare, Inc.
 Ripley's Aquarium – Myrtle Beach

Georgetown County First Steps 2014-2015 Local Legislature

Senators

Senator Raymond Cleary

Representatives

Rep. Carl Anderson
 Rep. Stephen Goldfinch

Lieutenant Governor

Lt. Governor Yancey McGill

Georgetown County First Steps 2014-2015 Staff

Carol Daly, Executive Director
 Jazmin Noriega, Bilingual Program Educator
 Jane McSweeny-Wishart, Early Childhood Consultant

Thank you to all of our local legislatures and board members for a great 2014-2015!



Getting children ready for school.

What is First Steps?

South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness was created in 1999 by the South Carolina General Assembly for the purpose of **having every child in South Carolina arrive at kindergarten ready to learn**. Sadly, many South Carolina children possess one or more risk factors that put them at **high risk** (greater than a 1 in 3 chance) for **“early school failure”** – either being retained or scoring below grade level in reading or math – by third grade.

First Steps works to accomplish its mission through a state coordinating office and a network of county partnerships (46), each a private non-profit organization led by a board of early childhood stakeholders. With a modest recurring appropriation of state funding, First Steps leverages cash and in-kind resources at the federal, state and local level to improve services for young children in five strategy areas:

Family Strengthening

A parent is a child’s first and best teacher.

Healthy Start

Children’s development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health.

Quality Child Care

Access to high-quality care is a critical component of a child’s healthy development.

Early Education

Quality preschool opportunities set the stage for success in school.

School Transition

Preparing children and parents for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Each First Steps county partnership determines how to spend its funds based on a needs and resources assessment and collaboration with community partners to **fill gaps in local services** for young children and their families. First Steps has proven its impact through strong program and fiscal accountability and independent evaluations - a requirement of its enabling legislation.

All programs that receive First Steps funding must adhere to program standards that require programs to be research-based and operated with fidelity; staff who have appropriate qualifications, training, and supervision; services to be comprehensive and coordinated with available community resources; standard assessment instruments that document client outcomes; and programs that **target services to children most at risk** for not being developmentally ready for school.

The Goals of First Steps

- (1) provide parents with access to the support they might seek and want** to strengthen their families and to promote the optimal development of their preschool children;
- (2) increase comprehensive services** so children have reduced risk for major physical, developmental, and learning problems;
- (3) promote high-quality preschool programs** that provide a healthy environment that will promote normal growth and development;
- (4) provide services** so all children receive the protection, nutrition, and health care needed to thrive in the early years of life so they arrive at school ready to succeed; and
- (5) mobilize communities** to focus efforts on providing enhanced services to support families and their young children so as to enable every child to reach school healthy and ready to succeed.

-- Section 59-152-30

Other First Steps Services in Georgetown County

Public 4K Expansion

Since 2006, First Steps has been the administrator of our state 4K funds to expand access of low-income children to full-day, four-year-old kindergarten within select rural and high poverty school districts, using community-based settings such as Head Start and private child care.

As of 2014, the General Assembly has appropriated funding to expand 4K eligibility to residents of Georgetown County.

Qualifying children must live in Georgetown County, be four years old by September 1 of the current year, and qualify for free/reduced lunch or Medicaid. Interested parents should contact one or more participating 4K providers to complete an application. Qualifying children may enroll at any participating 4K provider, regardless of their county of residence.

To view a list of participating 4K providers, go to:

<http://scfirststeps.org/4k/>



BabyNet

South Carolina's Early Intervention System

First Steps is the lead agency for BabyNet, South Carolina’s early intervention system for children under 3. Parents of children 0-2 years old with disabilities or suspected developmental delays should contact their local BabyNet office to schedule an evaluation.

BabyNet in Georgetown County:
(843) 839-5045

<http://scfirststeps.org/babynet/>

Board Chair

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Executive Director

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To learn more about GCFS visit us at: <http://georgetowncountyfirststeps.weebly.com/>