

South Carolina First Steps e-Spotlight

February 26, 2016



Volunteers and community members stand outside of the Blessings Resource Center.

Chesterfield County First Steps' Blessings Resource Center: Creating Change through Collaboration

The Blessings Resource Center is a collaborative partnership between Chesterfield County First Steps (CCFS) and the Pageland faith and business communities with the purpose of strengthening families and improving the well-being of children. Since opening its doors in 2014, the Blessings Resource Center (BRC) has provided a wide-range of support services for families in need in Chesterfield County including emergency food from their food pantry, contact with assistance services, access to First Steps programs, and health/nutrition information and referrals.

The BRC is staffed with community volunteers and funded with private donations, including a \$30,000 grant from the Walmart Foundation's State Giving Program to enable the BRC to supply families in need with a variety of healthy food in times of crisis. What makes the BRC's food pantry operation so unique is that it not only provides a diverse range of nutritional options but also allows needy families to shop the selection and choose their own groceries based on preference and family need. In less than two years of existence, BCR has served more than 300 non-duplicated families.

Working with the business, education, and faith communities, collaborating with agencies and charitable organizations, and involving hundreds of individuals, the BRC's primary goal is to ensure the well-being and health of children in the community. The BRC is also the foundation of CCFS's portal to comprehensive early childhood services for children and their families. Through interviews with clients, volunteer staff helps identify appropriate and available resources and initiates the process for securing those resources. Through the CCFS collaborative network, the BRC makes referrals to medical, child care, employment, educational, and spiritual services.

Word has quickly spread throughout the community about the BRC and, as more and more people hear of and partake in the services offered, CCFS is able to identify, reach and directly serve more at-risk children and their families. The BRC has been recognized for its positive effect on the community and outstanding service delivery. At its Annual Banquet in early February, the Pageland Chamber of Commerce awarded BRC the "Outstanding Community Service Award", an honor bestowed for significant community impact. The award presentation included the following acknowledgement of the work of the BRC: "This recognition from the Pageland Chamber of Commerce demonstrates how effective a caring community can be when it seeks to help its neighbors in need. Blessings Resource Center is truly a community partnership. Dozens of businesses and churches and literally hundreds of individuals have helped the Blessings Resource Center help families. This award is theirs."

For more information on the Blessings Resource Center, please contact their office at (843) 672-5095 or Chesterfield County First Steps at (843) 623-5904.



The Blessings Resource Center accepts the "Outstanding Community Service Award" from the Pageland Chamber of Commerce.

Opportunities: Community Conversations About Childhood Data

If you are curious about what the most recent [KIDS COUNT data](#) says about your county or interested in discussions about improving early childhood and racial and ethnic disparities in South Carolina, this opportunity might be right for you! Children's Trust is looking for community partners to host conversations throughout the state as a way to engage leaders to create solutions. Anyone with an interest in supporting families, including faith leaders, law enforcement, state agencies, business leaders, and civic groups, is invited to participate. Children's Trust staff will provide all materials and facilitate the 90-minute, interactive conversation.

Contact Whitney Tucker at wtucker@scchildren.org for more information or to host a community conversation.