

# Team-Times

Newsletter

Bi-monthly Employee Newsletter of the Richland County Recreation Commission -- February 2013

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*Dedicated to enriching lives and connecting communities through diverse recreational opportunities.*



## Veteran Benefits Can Help Families

John Griggs, Veteran Specialist, Agape'

Our veterans and their families are important to all of us, especially in the Columbia community. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs offers many pension programs for veterans, their spouses and/or family members but one lesser known program is the Aid and Attendance plan. This pension plan allows for veterans and surviving spouses, who require the regular attendance of another person to assist in eating, bathing, dressing, undressing or taking care of the needs of nature, to receive additional financial assistance to help pay for the costs associated with assisted living. It also includes individuals who may have problems with their sight, those who with physical challenges or those who may live in a nursing home.



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This is a “pension benefit” and is not dependent upon service-related injuries for compensation. Many veterans who are in need of assistance qualify for this pension. Aid and Attendance can help pay for care in the home, nursing home or assisted living facility. A veteran is eligible for up to \$1,703 per month, while a surviving spouse is eligible for up to \$1,094 per month. A couple is eligible for up to \$2,019 per month.

Qualifications are:

- Veterans must have served 1 day during an active wartime era and have no less than 90 days of consecutive, active duty service.
- Surviving spouses must still have been married to the veteran when they passed.

- A doctor’s order is required.
- There are asset limitations, but your primary residence may be exempt from total assets. Many veterans may qualify even if their current assets are over the limits.
- You must have received an honorable discharge or general discharge.
- You can choose where you want to live as long as it is a credible facility or community.

For more information about this benefit, talk to your Senior Solutions Advisor, or call 1-800-411-AGAPE (1-800-411-2427).

## Lights Over Eastover

On December 7, 2012, Robert Davis, Park Manager at Eastover Park was asked to be “Santa” for the Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade for the Town of Eastover. What did Robert think about being Santa’s helper? “I really enjoyed being Santa for the children of Eastover, giving out presents and candy was a lot of fun and I look forward to the next opportunity again next time.”



## Basketball Game to Benefit Foundation

Elizabeth Poole, Development Support Coordinator, RCRF

The Richland County Recreation Foundation has a great family event coming up that is a definite must attend for everyone! They will welcome the internationally-acclaimed Harlem Ambassadors on Sunday, March 10 at 5:00 p.m. Not only will you witness on-court antics, comedy routines and superior ball handling, high-flying slam dunks and lots of kids activities, the Harlem Ambassadors will take on the Recreation Rebounders, a team of locally known community members, media personalities, retired NFL, NBA and University of South Carolina athletes, as well as some familiar RCRC faces!

The Harlem Ambassadors are a group of college-educated, drug-free professional basketball players who tour the country promoting positive programs for kids and adults.

So who’s been drafted to be on the Recreation Rebounders team? The team, coached by Xavier McDaniel and legendary coach, George Glymph, will feature an all-star line up. You’ll see the Michael Ross, Mayor of the Town of Blythewood; former USC and NFL player, Harold Green;

To round out the team you’ll also see RCRC’s very own James Darby, Jermaine Washington, David Wine and commissioner, Mr. Todd Latiff.

**Be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, March 10, 5:00 p.m. Westwood High School, 180 Turkey Farm Road, Blythewood**



**Advance Tickets:  
General Admission: \$9  
Children under 5: Free  
Students/Military/Seniors: \$7**

**Tickets can be purchased online on the Richland County Recreation Commission website or at the Adult Activity Center.**

**Tickets will be sold at the door but get yours early!**

Chicago Bulls player, JoJo English; former Clemson player, Edward Scott; brothers, Perry and Terry Dozier; USC stand-out, Jamel Bradley; media personalities, Jonathon Rush and Kelly Nash and Brian McConchie from WACH Fox.

# Traditions: A Look Back

Lisa Smarr, Adult Services Coordinator

For the 31 years, on the third Saturday in January, I have found myself at 2800 Trotter Road for The Snowman Run.



A funny thing happened in 1982. It was the first year of the race, I was about to graduate from the University of South Carolina. The running boom was in full swing and road racing was fairly new. I heard about a new race in Hopkins,

at Caughman Road Park ("Where was that?" I asked myself) called The Snowman Run. Registration was around \$6 and at the time there weren't any races in January. The weekend of the race rolled around and on Sunday I headed out down Sumter Highway to find the park. Upon my arrival, assistant park director, Miss Lovist, informed me I had missed the race. It had taken place on Saturday. However, she was kind enough to give me my t-shirt, a short sleeve navy blue shirt with about three sponsors and a little Snowman on it. And thus, my relationship with the Snowman Run began.

The following year, I applied for a position at Caughman and hoping to improve my chances of getting the job, I volunteered to help with the race. They told me to go stand on the corner and wait for the runners to go by. No one actually explained that I was to direct the runners around the corner, so when the first guy came blazing by he missed the

turn. Needless to say he realized what happened and turned around quickly and continued in the correct direction but I felt terrible. Despite my mistake, I

was hired the following August to be the Assistant Director at Caughman Road Park. Unfortunately the third year was overshadowed by tragedy. I don't remember much about the race except for the events at the finish line that day. Just prior to crossing the finish line,

a runner collapsed and died. Medics worked quickly but to no avail. The gentleman died.

The years have come and gone, and thousands of runners have participated. The Snowman Run is the second longest running race in Columbia.

While there are larger events, held in larger venues, few have offered the kind of personal experience that runners have come to love and expect at Snowman. Our volunteers, sponsors, supporters and our runners have a connection to Snowman that stems from the passion that has gone into planning, executing and following up after the race each year.



As a runner myself, it has given me a perspective from which to anticipate and plan. My philosophy has always been to put on the kind of race that I and others would

enjoy running. Those who choose Snowman and make the trip to Hopkins to challenge themselves over the eight kilometer course, deserve the best possible experience that we can deliver.

This year was truly one of our best. Each of us who had a hand in the 32<sup>nd</sup>

Annual Snowman Run can be proud of a job well done. Our customers have commented on how well the course was managed and how friendly our staff and volunteers were on race day. Thank you to each of you for the part you played in showing the runners how we do it at The Snowman Run.



I have truly enjoyed my twenty-nine years as the director of The Snowman Run. While I will miss my role,

I look forward to the seeing the race evolve as new leadership, youthful energy and passion emerges. Thank you all for the support you have given me during my time as race director. I could not have done it without you.



missed the

## Radon Safety

Chris Santino, Safety Manager

You may have heard of radon in chemistry class or in science class but did you know that this chemical occurs in a natural environment?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water from the natural decay of uranium. While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. You can't see, smell, or taste it but an elevated radon level in your home could affect the health of your family.

The Environmental Protection Agency designated January as National Radon Action Month. Even though January has come to an end, awareness and information about radon levels is important.

According to the EPA, exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the number one cause among non-smokers. The EPA estimates that more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths are caused by exposure.



The EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General urge everyone to protect their health by testing their homes for higher levels of radon. Exposure to radon is a preventable health risk and testing the levels in your home can help prevent unnecessary exposure. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family.

Radon has been found, in elevated levels, in every state. The best way to know what the radon levels in your home are, is to use the EPA approved test. High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Radon gas enters through cracks and openings—such as sump pump lids and plumbing features—on the lower levels of your home. Hot spots include basements, first-floor rooms, and garages, but radon can be found anywhere in your house.

Testing for radon is easy to do. It's as easy as opening a package, placing a radon detector in a designated

area, and, after a set number of days, sending the detector back to a lab for analysis. The lab will then inform you of the test results. Radon test kits are available at your local home improvement or hardware store, or in most cases, from your state radon office. The South Carolina Radon office is part of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and has a great website with a wealth of resources. You can find information about statewide levels, as well as levels within Richland County. It also provides contact information for the state's Radon officer and other professionals.

The cost of making repairs to reduce radon level depends on several factors, including how your home was built.

Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new hot water heater installed. It's best to contact the state Radon Office to locate a

certified mitigator.

Radon-resistant construction methods can be effective in reducing radon entry. When used properly, these simple and cost-effective techniques can help reduce the accumulation of radon gas in homes.

Every new home should be tested after occupancy, even if it was built using radon-resistant construction methods. If radon levels above EPA's action level at or above 4 pCi/L are detected, it is easier and less expensive to reduce radon levels in homes that have been built with radon-resistant construction techniques.

Many local stores sell testing kits. Stores like Wal-mart, Lowe's, Home Depot and local hardware stores usually have them for around \$25.

Radon presents a serious health risk, but it can be controlled easily and cost-effectively.

Take action today. Encourage your friends and family members to do the same!

## Be a NAMI Walker!



The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness.

1 in 4 adults (approximately 57.7 million Americans) experience a mental health disorder each year, no matter their age, gender, race or socioeconomic status. At this year's NAMI Walk kickoff legendary and Hall of Fame coach George Glymph spoke about the positive effects that physical activity and recreation has on mental and overall health.

NAMI's annual walk is a way to increase awareness of mental health issues and a way to show your support of family members, friends, co-workers, and fellow South Carolinians as we deal with mental illness and remove the stigma that comes with that diagnosis.

RCRC would like to have a team participate in this year's event. The walk will be on Saturday, April 20 at Riverwalk Park in West Columbia. This 5k (3.1 miles) will be rain or shine and check in starts at 7:30 a.m. and the walk starts at 9:00 am.

There is no fee to be a walker but all team members are encouraged to gather donations from friends and families. All proceeds will be used to fund NAMI's programs. These programs include support, education, and advocacy involving Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Panic Disorder, Schizophrenia, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and Borderline Personality Disorder.

**For more information, sign up to walk or make a donation, please contact Team Captains, Comilla Sampson at 754-7275 ext. 200 or David Stringer, 754-7275 ext 206.**

## Tips to Go Green

Tavares Hanks, Graphic Designer/Webmaster

Here is a simple list of ideas on how to cut down on waste and save energy. Every little bit helps to save the earth and can save you money too.



### 1. Change to Incandescent Fluorescent Bulbs

If every household in the U.S. changed switched the light bulbs in their home, it would equal taking one million cars off the street.

### 2. Don't Rinse

Skip rinsing your plates before putting them into the dishwasher. On average, you can save 15 gallons of water per load. Plus, you will save time.

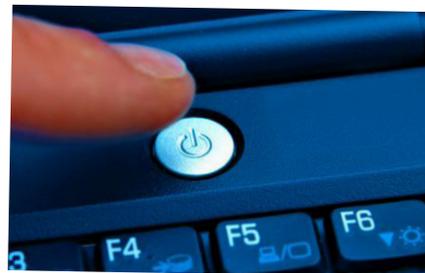
### 3. Hang Clothes to Dry

Get a clothes line or rack to dry your clothes. Your clothes will last longer and you will save money.



### 4. Turn Off Computers at Night

Don't just put them to sleep. You will save an average of 4 cents a day which adds up to \$14.60 a year.



### 5. Use Both Sides of Paper

If you have a printer with a double sided print option, use it. You will save half of the amount of paper. Then when you're done, recycle it.

## Columbia Marathon Partnership

February has been an exciting time for the marketing and communications department. We are so excited to announce that RCRC will be a sponsor and partner with the Columbia Marathon. This year marathon organizers have added a marathon relay event and RCRC will provide shuttle buses for the relay event.

The Columbia Marathon held its first event last year. The crowds were tremendous.

Runners came from all over the United States and from several other countries to visit our beautiful city. Having an event like this really showcases the beautiful urban and rural parts of our community.

The Columbia Marathon does its part to give back to the community. They donate a portion of their proceeds to Home Works, a locally based charity that repairs homes; the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in

Training and Girls on the Run, a running program for girls that promotes positive self-esteem, healthy choices and exercise. It is an honor to be a part of this great event and a great way to showcase all that our agency has to offer.

The marathon will be Saturday, March 9 but there are also pre and post race events.

# COLUMBIA SC MARATHON

A Health and Wellness Expo will

be held on Friday, March 8 at the Columbia Marriot. Even if you aren't a runner, this is a great event to attend. It's totally free and there will be tons of vendors and information. We'll have a table so come and see us!

Organizers also encourage residents to come and cheer on participants the morning of the race. After you are done cheering everyone on, there will also be vendors and food at a post-race event on the State House grounds, on South Carolina's Main Street.



The Health and Wellness Expo and the post-race expo are free for everyone but if you are a runner you can still register for the 5k, half marathon, marathon or marathon relay.

For registration information visit [www.columbiascmarathon.com](http://www.columbiascmarathon.com). If you'd like to volunteer to help with our table at the expo on Friday, March 8, please call Leigh Cheatham, 754-6720 ext. 233.

## Love Yourself Health Fair

Pam Jones, Program Coordinator, AAC

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Love Yourself Health Fair was held on Monday, February 11 at the Adult Activity Center. Each year this event gets bigger and this year we had a great turnout! Our goal is to provide patrons with current and relevant health and wellness information while creating an atmosphere of fun. We had great vendors from local businesses and health facilities. We were joined



by the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging, the AARP and Senior Resources.

*8th Annual*

# LOVE YOURSELF HEALTH FAIR

*A Wellness Celebration*

We strive to make sure that our patrons and the community have helpful and useful resources to be empowered to take on their health and live healthier lifestyles.

## The Eyes Have It

Ashley Jones, Park Manager, Blythewood Park

Blythewood Park held a unique event in January for Glaucoma Awareness month. On Monday, January 28 Blythewood Park held the Vision for the Future event. The park partnered with Carolina Vision and Glaucoma Center to provide free eye pressure exams. Eye pressure exams are used to show signs of glaucoma. We had a great turnout especially with our older adults and we're looking forward to doing future informative events like this.

For more information about Glaucoma and how to prevent and detect it, visit the Glaucoma Research Foundation's website, [www.glaucoma.org](http://www.glaucoma.org).

## Be Responsible

Julian Shabazz, Recreation Program Coordinator

December was designated National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Trenholm Park held the Be Responsible-Driving Impaired Changes Lives program on Thursday, December 13, 2012. Theron Chandler and Ashley Jones organized an informative and educational program which featured a presentation and impaired driving simulation by Trooper Brent Kelly of the South Carolina Highway Patrol and representatives from the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles.



## March

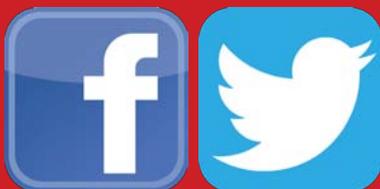


- 8 Payday
- 9 Columbia Marathon
- 10 Harlem Ambassadors Benefit Basketball Game  
5:00 pm, Westwood High School
- 15 Quarterly Staff Meeting,  
10:00 am, AAC
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 18 Commission Board Meeting,  
6:00 pm, AAC
- 22 Payday
- 23 44th Annual Cottontail Festival,  
10:00 am-2:00 pm,  
Sesquicentennial Park
- 31 Easter

### Special Thanks to our Team Times Contributing Authors:

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