ROCK HILL
SOUTH CAROLINA
HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Doing Good in the Neighborhood

HOW CAN WE HELP?



During these unusual times, as the City organization that works most closely with our neighborhoods, we continue to seek way to share information and keep the broader Rock Hill Communit many in our neighborhoods ask has been brought to our attention that the number one issue facing many families during the COVID-19 crisis is food insecurity.

The York County Interagency Coalition (YCIC) is a group of nonprofit organizations in York County that have come together to collaborate and, share information and resources to meet the needs of our communities. During the COVID-19 crisis they have come together through online meetings to keep the every one working as effectively and efficiently as possible. Through YCIC we have found that many of our nonprofit agencies have been hit hard due to a decrease in donations, skeleton staff and limited volunteers and an increase need for their services. Even with that they have continued to gallantly meet the needs of our communities.

Because of the increased unemployment in our area, more families are now facing food insecurities and need help with everyday expenses. Here are a few ways and a few suggested places where you can help with in-kind donations, or by volunteering. Our food pantries and homeless shelters also need toilet paper, paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand wipes and cleaning products.

PILGRIMS INN

Their shelter is at capacity and they are not accepting new clients at this time. They are in need of food items for their pantry and those can be dropped off during their open hour; The food pantry open Tuesdays-Fridays from 8:30am – 1pm.safter hours, donors can call 803-327-4227.

HOPE HOUSE

HOPE of Rock Hill, known as HOPE House continues to serve families, operating with special safety procedures. They have reported that they are running low on food donations. Hope House reported serving 565 families and 1,355 individuals in March. Hope House In-Kind Donations

PATHWAYS COMMUNITY CENTER & MANNA HOUSE

Pathways continues to serve the area's homeless population. In addition, Manna House provided groceries to 140 families this past Saturday. They also have an emergency food distribution on-site. The Manna House Pantry

BACK THE PACK

In collaboration with Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, United Way, business and community investors, Back the Pack is providing improved meals over the weekends to hungry students in every elementary & middle school in Rock Hill Schools. During the COVID-19 crisis, Back the Pack is currently providing weekend food packs to 950 children and have already provided 6,000 meals. This is an increase of 350 students from when schools were closed. Because of restrictions on the types of foods that can be distributed, they are unable to receive in-kind donations. You may make a cash donation at Back the Pack

And, remember the nonprofits you have typically supported in the past. Practically all charities had to cancel or postpone major fundraisers this spring. If you can continue your regular donations - or make a special one - we know they would appreciate it!

Another way to donate is through The York County Relief Fund. Contributions through this fund will be distributed to local organizations who are providing resources to meet critical needs for our local families. As you can, we would encourage you to click on the link above and make a donation of any size. Every little bit counts to make a difference to the York County communities. (See our Healthy Eating Guide on back.)

Public Messages from Mayor Gettys

The City of Rock Hill continues to be "Always On" and the Mayor is staying connected.
The City's primary focus will continue to maintain the safety of our residents.



Please use this link,
Messages from Mayor John Gettys
to hear the most recent updates directly from Mayor Gettys on YouTube.

https://www.cityofrockhill.com/



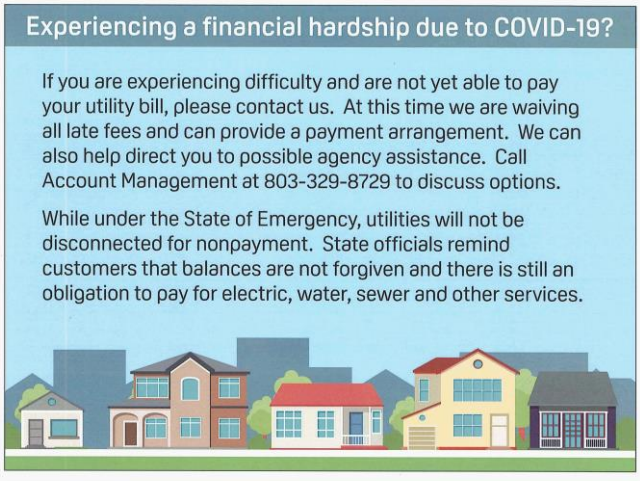
We are aware of communities that have converted Little Free Libraries to Little Free Pantries. In essence the books are replaced with prepackaged nonperishable food items.

Are you seeking an opportunity to help those who may be in need during this time? This is an easy creative way to support your neighbors as an individual, or through your neighborhood organization. You may consider taking on this venture to assist others in need of food by stocking a Little Free Pantry with nonperishable prepackaged items close to you. ***If so, please contact Arty Brown at 803-325-2528.***



Cares Act Update on Evictions

On April 30, the SC Supreme Court's Chief Justice Beatty issued a new order that extends the hold on evictions and foreclosures in South Carolina until May 15. Beginning then, courts will accept new eviction and foreclosure filings and proceed with previously filed ones. However, evictions still cannot be filed for properties that are covered under the CARES Act and those filing for eviction will need to certify that the property isn't subject to it. The actual order can be read here: Eviction Order Details. For further information on properties that are subject to the CARES Act, see CRSReports



While we traverse this difficult time, the Community Relations Council has begun sharing, stories, activities, information, and words of encouragement. Though this will typically be a part of the Housing & Neighborhood Services Newsletter, this week's piece will stand alone and is dedicated to the class of 2020.

Class of 2020, Your Dream Still Lives

By Carlo L'Chelle Dawson, CRC-Rock Hill Chairperson, Educator, & Author

As an individual, I "wear" many hats. I serve as the chairperson of the Community Relations Council of Rock Hill, an author, a storyteller, a dramatic interpreter, and an educator. I have served as an educator for almost two decades, and over my tenure, I have had the privilege to teach high school seniors for 10 of those years. My greatest joy was watching my high school seniors cross the stage and the hours leading up to the momentous occasion because I watched many of them mature from childish teenagers to budding adults. Some had survived unimaginable odds to finally don their caps and gowns. Some never thought the moment would ever come, but there they were about to embark upon the ending of an era and the beginning of a bright future.

On graduation, as teachers and students, we waited for sometimes hours in the sweltering tunnel of the Winthrop Coliseum. I would bring my requisite bag of mints to lighten the mood (and for obvious reasons). I offered them one by one to each student in my graduation row line to ensure that for one last time in their high school careers they know someone cares about them. As the students waited in anticipation to march in, the questions were often the same: "How's my hair?", "Should my tassel be on the right or left?", "Is my lipstick okay?", "Do you have some gum?" "Do you have some candy?" "How's my tie?", and "How do I march in again?" Many students would capture photos with each other and their favorite teachers for one last time. Some would stand paralyzed, shocked that this moment was finally here. Some students would run late as usual, so their friends and teachers texted and called them as they had done so many times before.

Then, the horns, strings, and drums invited the teachers to prepare for the graduation entrance lines. Pomp and Circumstance, our cue, signaled the faculty to line up, but not until we rechecked the graduation lines to guarantee that they were properly organized before departing. As we, the faculty, walked through the throng of anxious teenagers to our teacher lines, we felt like celebrities. The soon-to-be graduates yelled our names and clapped in adoration. Even now, I can hear the shouts: "Mrs. Dawson!" "Daw Daw!" "We love you!"

As the faculty marched in, our students followed. We lead our students one last time. However, this time we lead them to their alphabetized seats. For the last four years, we hoped they would behave well at school assemblies. In school assemblies, often there was chatter, some were rude, some were on phones, or asleep, but at graduation, we never had to worry about that. This was their moment! The graduation ceremony was about to begin!

Each year the graduation ceremony outline was the same: a welcome, student officers spoke, and the valedictorian and the salutatorian left students with encouraging words. The chorus sang like heavenly angels, the principal offered his words of hope and reflection, the diplomas were conferred, and the final proclamation was made. During the graduation, the students walked meticulously to the stage, hoping to not fall in their heels or trip on their pants. And, they all prayed that the announcer would pronounce their names correctly.

However, while the line-up was the same each year, each graduation was special. No two were alike. Each year was different. Each child was different. Each memory was different. And, each time I cried, knowing the endless opportunities that lie ahead for each student, hoping they take advantage of them.

And, then, the principal would finally utter the words that the each student had been waiting for, "Congratulations! You may move your graduation tassels from the right to the left. You have now fulfilled the requirements to be a graduate of South Carolina. Congratulations!"

As always, the crowd erupted in thunderous applause as the newly christened graduates belt out the school's alma mater. Signs tossing in the air like confetti. Parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends shouting until they lose their voices. Cameras clicking for the stars of the show. Yes, this was THE moment.

Some would say high school graduation is just another day or it's just a simple walk down an aisle in a robe. But, for many, it symbolizes the end of a long journey traversed, a milestone that is unmatched. For some, this event signifies the end of a journey with classmates who have yet to reach the finish line. Sadly, some who started did not make it to this day. Some classmates have gained their heavenly wings, but memories of life-time friends will forever linger in the hearts of the graduates.

For some, this is a historic moment because they are pioneers. These students are the first to graduate in their families.

But, for all of the students who march down the aisle donned in their caps and gowns, this is more than a day. It is a dream fulfilled. Indeed, this year will be different. This year is 2020. And just as always, each graduation is special. No two are alike. Each year is different. Each child is different. Each memory is different. And, this time I will still cry, knowing the endless opportunities that lie ahead for each student, hoping they take advantage of them. Class of 2020, congratulations. Your dream still lives.

If you would like to help, you can donate to our Rock Hill Schools high school seniors at each high school in order to allow a dream to be fulfilled in the form of gifting students with graduation wants and needs. While graduation may look different from previous years, we can still support the dreams of our high school seniors. Donations should be made by May 15. Donation information is below:

1. **South Pointe High School**

Make checks payable to "SPHS Graduation". (In order for checks to be processed, add your license and phone number on personal checks.)

Cash or Check donations may be mailed to:
Attn: Principal Marty Conner
South Pointe High School
801 Neely Rd.
Rock Hill, SC 20730

Or
Individuals may donate to the SPHS Academic Booster Club by going to PayPal. Send money to the SPHS Booster Club using email sphsabc4@gmail.com. Put "senior activities donation" as the reason for donating.
For questions, email SPHS Principal Marty Conner at msconner@rhmail.org Or SPHS Academic Booster Club President sphsacademics@gmail.com

2. **Northwestern High School:**

For senior graduation donations, make checks payable to "Friends of Northwestern". This is the Northwestern High School Booster Club (In order for checks to be processed, add your license and phone number on personal checks.) The Friends of Northwestern contact is Patti Tate at ptate@rhmail.org. She will accept the communication and coordinate the donation! For questions, email NWHS Principal Hezekiah Massey at hzmassey@rhmail.org or NWHS Financial Secretary Amy Dalamangas at adalamangas@rhmail.org.

3. **Rock Hill High School:**

You may support RHHS seniors at the Adopt a Bearcat group on Facebook via this link: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2639530669617158/