

# Reflecting On Five Years...

Looking back over the past five years, I am filled with pride and gratitude to have been part of Healthy Learners' journey. When I first joined the organization, I knew there was immense potential for Healthy Learners to make an impact across South Carolina. I feel privileged to have been present for so many milestones that are making that goal a reality.

During my first ride-along with one of our staff, I connected with a first grader who was non-verbal. He was running around the clinic, so I picked out a book to read and engaged him. Though he was very fidgety, we managed to get through the book, and he put it back on the shelf. After about ten seconds, he took the same book out and found a spot right next to me, showing me he wanted to read it again. This time, I read at a slower pace, savoring each word. He reached over, clasped my hand, and gently squeezed it as I read. This experience formed a simple yet profound connection between us. I realized then that Healthy Learners must blend clinical efficiency with love and compassion.

We created a new strategic plan with this blend as the cornerstone of who we are. However, one month after it went live, the pandemic hit. The pandemic tested our resilience and adaptability, pushing us to rethink our service delivery model. Initially, we operated as a school-based program, but we had to innovate quickly when schools shut down. We expanded our reach, picking up children from homes, rec centers, and even grandparents' houses, ensuring no child was left behind. This shift helped us continue our services during a crisis and laid the foundation for a more flexible, responsive approach that we continue to use today.

Securing funding from our generous community was also pivotal in our expansion. With their support, we doubled our staff and vans, allowing us to serve additional counties and reach more children in need. Our proactive approach, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, proved effective and scalable. Hiring Spanish-speaking staff was essential to building trust and providing crucial healthcare services to the underserved Hispanic community.

As we expand Healthy Learners to serve every county in South Carolina over the coming years, our unwavering commitment to love and compassion remains steadfast. Every aspect of our operations, from strategic planning to daily interactions, is driven by our heartfelt desire to care for the children we serve. As we grow, we're dedicated to balancing efficiency with our mission and inspiring hope for a brighter future for all the children in our care through love and compassion.

*Amy Splittgerber*  
Executive Director





Over the course of the past seven years, we've witnessed a profound and hopeful transformation in this family. Healthy Learners has provided 195 services to these three vulnerable children, each now stable and taking active care of their oral and behavioral health. They are now booked for regular checkup appointments facilitated by Healthy Learners.

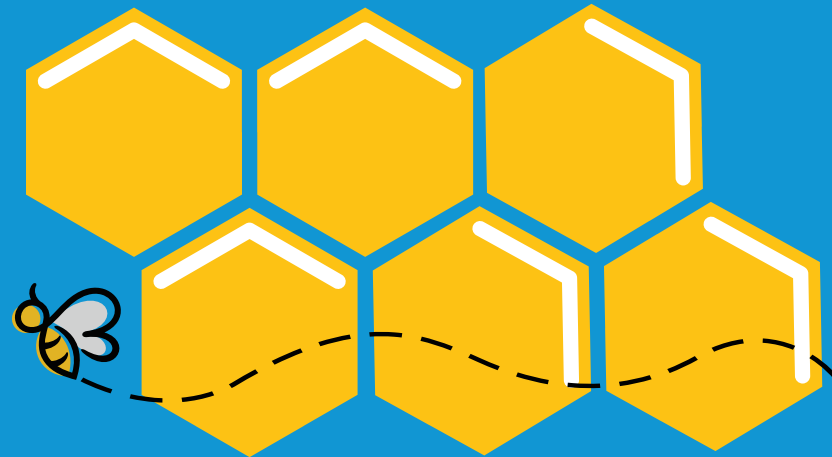
# Unwavering *Determination...*

Sometimes, a child's greatest barrier to their success is within their own family. Devon, Darryl, and DeShawn Jackson have been friends of Healthy Learners ever since school leadership approached our team in 2017 with concerns that their family had limited resources to care for them.

Devon was struggling with behavioral health issues, Darryl and DeShawn needed oral health care, and all three children were struggling with school absenteeism. Devon had previously been diagnosed with ADHD, which was well-controlled when he was on medication. However, his mother also experienced mental health challenges and was not supportive of the medication, which resulted in lapsed prescriptions and continued difficulties with his focus and behavior in school. Devon told his school nurse he wanted the medication but couldn't get it at home.

In a spirit of unwavering determination and collaboration, Healthy Learners stepped in and worked closely with the children's mother to support their health. Despite the daunting challenges, we helped Darryl and DeShawn get the dental care they needed and corrected a discovered vision challenge for Darryl. This was a testament to the shared commitment and resilience of the Jackson family and Healthy Learners.

For Devon, Healthy Learners began delivering ADHD medication to his school nurse to be taken daily. Our team also addressed identified health problems surrounding his vision, oral health, and an infection affecting his foot.



# What's All *The Buzz...*

Join us for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Adult Spelling Bee – a fun and competitive event to support children's healthcare in Greenwood, SC. Mark your calendars for September 24, 2024, and prepare for an exciting evening of orthographic battles for a great cause.

Whether you're representing your school, college, business, church, non-profit, or just joining friends, this is an event you won't want to miss. Sign up with your team, secure buybacks, or become a sponsor and be part of a fun-filled competition that inspires hope and transforms futures for hundreds of children in Greenwood. We promise you'll have a great time while making a meaningful impact!



Scan the QR code to learn more, sponsor  
the event or register your team.





During a recent vision screening at Dr. Benjamin E. Mays Elementary School, our Community Manager, Aimee Clark, informed a teacher, Ms. Timmons, that several of her students had not passed and would need follow-up care. Several weeks later, Aimee ran into Ms. Timmons at the school. She was excited to share the news that not only had the students received their glasses, but they had also shown significant progress in learning their letters and numbers. These students had been struggling to learn, unbeknownst to Ms. Timmons, because they could not see the board. After the removal of this health barrier to learning, these students were able to learn smoothly.

**“Hearing this made me realize how critical our work is. Providing these screenings removes health barriers to learning and gives children the tools they need to succeed. It's gratifying to know that a pair of glasses can drastically alter a student's educational experience.”**

*-Aimee Clark*

# Removing Barriers...

Stepping off the school bus and entering your first classroom can often be a daunting experience for many students. Additionally, obstacles to learning, such as health-related issues, usually become apparent or begin to impact a student's life once they start their first year of school.

Healthy Learners plays a crucial role at the start of each school year by providing essential health screenings—vision, hearing, and dental—to students in many counties we serve across South Carolina.

These screenings often represent the first chance for many children to have their vision and hearing evaluated and receive a preliminary oral health assessment. For students needing additional medical attention but lacking the resources to secure it on their own, Healthy Learners offers continued support and guidance to children and their families. This assistance addresses immediate health concerns, fosters hope, and has a lasting positive impact on their educational journey.

An opportunity arose in Greenwood when Healthy Learners participated in the spring assessments for children whose parents wanted to register them for K4 instruction. This screening ensured early detection and intervention for health issues that could become health barriers, allowing students to begin their educational journey well and setting them up for success in their formative years.

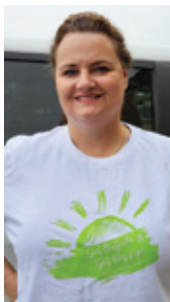
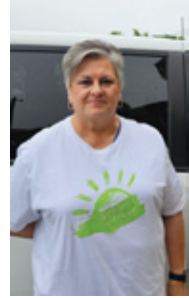


# Unforgettable Evening...

Save the date for an unforgettable evening on September 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> as Healthy Learners presents its signature fundraising event, Nashville Songwriters in the Round. The musical event is led by gifted songwriter and instrumentalist Phillip Lammonds in Columbia and Murrells Inlet. Each event features four Nashville singer-songwriters, all of whom have received high acclaim in the music industry for their songwriting mastery with chart-topping artists and individual industry success. With a round seating layout, each guest will have the exclusive opportunity to experience these artists in an up-close and personal way, hearing the stories behind some of their best-known songs. Nashville Songwriters in the Round exists to support Healthy Learners in their mission to serve children and families across South Carolina.

**Scan the QR code to learn more, sponsor  
the event or purchase tickets.**





Throughout May, our Mental Health Initiatives Manager, Kathy Wilbur, has offered invaluable strategies and resources to reduce stress, enhance mental health, and boost physical health. By encouraging outdoor activities with the "Get Outside and Get Happy" campaign, Kathy has provided a beacon of hope for the entire community, demonstrating a deep understanding of nature's positive impact on mental health. Her hard work in caring for our student's mental well-being serves as an inspiration to all.

**"I've been traveling around the state this month, raising mental health awareness. Seeing kids' positive reactions to the "Get Outside and Get Happy" backpacks and school nurses appreciating the mental health materials has been inspiring. The positive responses to the Youth Mental Health First Aid classes validate the purpose of the Healthy Learners' Mental Health Initiatives." - Kathy Wilbur**

# Thank You For *Transforming Futures...*

We are so grateful for our Midlands and Georgetown County friends who supported Healthy Learners during Midlands Gives and Palmetto Giving Day! We can support so many healthy journeys this year for children in Georgetown and in the Midlands, thanks to our donors. We could not have done this without our amazing match sponsors.



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