

the Buzz

Summer 2023



Highlights from
SCSDB Hornet's Nest

One of the most beloved traditions of SCSDB continues with extra enthusiasm May 25, as seniors from all three schools are able to graduate together in one ceremony and celebrate with the hat toss in the Walker Hall atrium.



Class of 2023

Robot Ninjas robotics team crowned National Champions

The Robot Ninjas, our middle school robotics team, won the VEX IQ National Competition at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind on Feb. 25.

Competing in their first-ever national competition, the Robot Ninjas won first place against 33 other teams from across the country.

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Pictured left to right: Carter Bryant, Malakhi Monroe, and Toby Allen hold the championship trophy at the VEX IQ National Competition.

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Distributed to the parents of students currently enrolled at SCSDb, parents of students receiving outreach services, the SCSDb Board of Commissioners, and the SCSDb Foundation Board of Trustees.

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South Carolina School
for the Deaf and the Blind



Students and faculty who participated in Low Vision Day activities pose for a photo in front of a SCSDb bus.

President's Message

Dear Friends,

This year, our yearbook staff selected "It's a Great Year to be a Hornet!" as the theme for the 2022-2023 yearbook, and I couldn't agree more – it is a wonderful time to be a Hornet!

We finally saw a return to more normal operations, including campus visitors, student field trips, athletic programs, academic competitions, and in-person performances across the state. We also celebrated all three of our schools together at graduation for the first time since 2019.

I hope you enjoy reading about all the wonderful things happening on campus and through our Outreach programs, and join us in celebrating our graduating class of 2023!

Next year, SCSSDB will celebrate our 175th year serving children in South Carolina! We have wonderful plans in the works for this historic anniversary, and hope that our families, alumni, and community partners will join us at the events. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for updates.

As always, thank you for your continued support as we engage, empower, and equip our students for success.

Best wishes!

Jolene Madison

Jolene L. Madison
President, SCSSDB

Splishing, splashing at Field Day

On May 23, School for the Blind high school students enjoyed getting in the campus pool, making a Field Day wish come true!

School for the Blind staff organized a station for students to experience the newly renovated pool. The station included water activities and pool toys, along with socializing with peers. This was a different type of activity and soothing to the limbs, since students participated in relay races right before.

Students and staff are grateful to Athletic Director Michael Sims, Residential Life Director John Reynolds, the lifeguards, and President Jolene Madison for their persistence in getting the pool open for their use.

Jesus Ramirez enjoys the water activities at the newly renovated pool in Voss Gym.





School for the Blind



Jacob Cooper

Lexington

Jacob served as both the School for the Blind Student Council President and the president of the Student Council for TLC Visually Impaired Boys. He was a member of multiple athletic teams, including football, basketball, goalball, and track and field. Jacob's favorite memory of SCSDB is having teachers who believed in him.

"My favorite quote is, 'Nothing in life is handed to anyone, but you have to want to earn it,'" said Jacob. Jacob plans to pursue a degree in sports management at North Greenville University.



*Top: Jacob's senior portrait.
Bottom: Jacob holds the ball as he waits during a game of goalball.*



Zion Johnson

Dillon

Zion participated in both the Leo Club and SCSB School Improvement Council. While at SCSDB, Zion also received his Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and CPR certifications.

Zion's favorite quote is, "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."

He plans to enter the workforce and work with the SC Commission for the Blind in the future.



Top: Zion's senior portrait.

Bottom: Zion stands with the SCSB School Improvement Council.



Faith Miller

Greenville

Before her graduation from SCSDB, Faith received the American Legion Honorable Mention and won third place at Let's Celebrate Art 2023. Faith plans to continue being an artist.

She was also a member of the LEO Club and the Do Good Feel Good Club.

Her favorite memory from her time at SCSDB is prom.



Top: Faith's senior portrait.

Bottom: Faith Miller dances at prom.



Johnny Owens

Piedmont

While at SCSDB, Johnny participated in varsity goalball, SCSDB choir, and Scouts.

Johnny will study information technology (IT) at Greenville Technical College.

His favorite memories at SCSDB are performing at the State House with the choir and going to the mall during residential time.



Top: Johnny's senior portrait.

Bottom: Johnny sings at the SCSDB Talent Show.



Kyah Palmisano

Gaston

Kyah participated in both choir and Scouts. She received the Performing Arts Award and was crowned prom queen at the School for the Blind prom.

In her future, Kyah wants to pursue music performance.

"My favorite memory at school is senior prom," said Kyah. "I am the prom queen."



Top: Kyah's senior portrait.

Bottom: Kyah is crowned prom queen.



Lonna Pelton

Longs

Lonna participated in work-based learning and received different certifications. She also participated in volunteer work.

Lonna says her favorite memory at SCSDB is getting to know everyone.

Lonna will be attending Horry-Georgetown Technical College in the fall.



Top: Lonna's senior portrait.
Bottom: Lonna holds a class pet at the Applied Academic Center.



Gavin Presley

North Augusta

Gavin was a member of multiple athletic teams, including varsity basketball and goalball, as well as playing quarterback for varsity football.

"I didn't think I would have an ounce of sadness approaching graduation," said Presley. "But man, I'm really going to miss my people."

Gavin plans to attend North Greenville University in the fall where he will be majoring in early childhood education.



Top: Gavin's senior portrait.
Bottom: Gavin stands on the football field at the homecoming game.



Jesus Ramirez

Beaufort

Jesus participated in Scouts and attended Grace Baptist Church weekly after school with his parents' permission.

He received Student of the Month, Scout of the Month, and the American Legion Award.

Jesus plans to enter the workforce and continue his martial arts training.

His favorite quote is, "Never quit and never give up."



Top: Jesus' senior portrait.
Bottom: Jesus shows off his martial arts moves at the SCSDB Talent Show.



Brookelynn Raulerson

Swansea

Brookelynn received fine arts awards, honor roll, and student of the year. Brookelynn's favorite memory was learning the different commands with voiceover at the School for the Blind. "I was very new to using a computer," said Brookelynn. "Learning to use my computer was challenging, but I had a great support system who helped me every time I needed it."

Brookelynn plans to attend Columbia College in the fall and study music. In the future, she wants to become a private vocal trainer.



Top: Brookelynn's senior portrait.
Bottom: Brookelynn holds a sign celebrating her acceptance into Columbia College.

Cedar Springs Academy



Tate Branham

Elgin

Tate attended Cedar Springs Academy on the campus of SCSDB where he received on-the-job training in greeting others with a speech generated device.

"My favorite class at SCSDB is music," said Branham. "Music makes me happy."



Top: Tate's senior portrait.

Bottom: Tate smiles while wearing blue glow-stick glasses.



Charnaye Brown

Moncks Corner

Charnaye received the American Legion Award, Special Olympics High School Athlete of the Year, and Art All-Star award. She was a member of multiple athletic teams, including varsity football, varsity volleyball, Special Olympics bowling, and varsity track and field.

Charnaye gained job experience in multiple areas, including working at Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Carolina Garden World.

Charnaye wants to work in customer service at a home improvement store.



Top: Charnaye's senior portrait.
Bottom: Charnaye works in the CSA garden with her classmates.



Lizzy Cottingham

Rock Hill

Lizzy received the SCSDB Scholarship Award, the DAR Good Citizenship Award, and the Robert and Ruth Joan Millard Memorial Award.

Lizzy's favorite SCSDB memories are from Special Olympics, especially bowling.

Lizzy will attend USC Aiken's Pacer Program. The program supports the development of independent living and provides employment skills and functional coursework. She will also participate in internships.

Lizzy loves animals and would like to be a veterinary assistant.



Top: Lizzy's senior portrait.

Bottom: Lizzy receives the Robert and Ruth Joan Millard Memorial Award at Awards Day.



Zachary Risher

Easley

Zachary enjoyed participating in music, art, and gardening. Zachary received training in the field of hospitality and tourism, and he was recognized as the American Legion Honorable Mention.

Zachary's favorite activity is being outside and gardening. Zachary will live at home and assist with putting away groceries.



*Top: Zachary's senior portrait.
Bottom: Zachary smiles while being outside in the CSA garden.*



Nathan Robinson

West Columbia

While at SCSDDB, Nathan was awarded Outstanding Senior, the Bill and Valerie Barnet Scholarship, and the Cedar Springs Academy homecoming king.

Nathan participated in multiple Special Olympics sports, including bowling, volleyball, and track and field. Nathan worked with SCSDDB coaches on job readiness skills. He has worked at Vocational Rehabilitation Services and at Carolina Garden World. Nathan wants to work as an assistant to a mechanic, detailing and fixing cars.



*Top: Nathan's senior portrait.
Bottom: Nathan smiles with his classmates in the CSA garden.*



Rushanti Smith

Belton

While at SCSDDB, Rushanti participated in both art and music. She received training in greeting others with a speech generated device.

Her favorite memory from her time at SCSDDB is spending time with her classmates and friends.

Rushanti plans to live at home and help her family with cleaning activities.



*Top: Rushanti's senior portrait.
Bottom: Rushanti is crowned prom queen at the Cedar Springs Academy prom.*

School for the Deaf



Tai Allen

Easley

Tai received both his OSHA certification and the American Legion Award while at SCSDb. Tai received vocational rehab and landscaping training, and was on multiple athletic teams, including varsity football, varsity basketball, and varsity track and field.

"My favorite memory is playing football," said Tai.

Tai plans to enter the workforce.



Top: Tai's senior portrait.

Bottom: Tai stands in the bleachers wearing his jersey.



Kristen Barwick

Sumter

While at SCSDb, Kristen participated in training for both vocational rehab and agriculture. Kristen says she would like to work in childcare in the future.

Her favorite memory from her time at SCSDb is being with her family and friends.



Top: Kristen's senior portrait.

Bottom: Kristen greets customers at the SCSDb Spring Plant Sale.



Makayla Billings

Williston

Makayla was a member of multiple athletic teams, including varsity basketball and volleyball.

Makayla received training in graphic design, visual and digital arts, as well as photography. She plans to work for a graphic design company in the future.

"My favorite memory from SCSDb is everything," said Makayla. "My memories from SCSDb will never fade away."



Top: Makayla's senior portrait.

Bottom: Makayla works at her computer during digital arts class at the Applied Academic Center.



Sierra DeVaughan

Florence

While at SCSDb, Sierra participated in multiple athletic teams, including varsity basketball and volleyball. She was also crowned the 2022 School for the Deaf homecoming queen.

Sierra will be attending Florence-Darlington Technical College in the fall.

"My favorite memories at SCSDb are with my friends," said Sierra. "I love to talk with my friends."



Top: Sierra's senior portrait.

Bottom: Sierra is crowned homecoming queen for the School for the Deaf.



Cheyanne Harvell

Roebuck

Cheyanne earned the Norman Pulliam Award, the Academic Achievement Award, and the Outstanding Senior Award. While attending the School for the Deaf, Cheyanne participated in both varsity volleyball and track and field.

Cheyanne plans to attend Gardner-Webb University in the fall.

Her favorite quote is, "Never give up, and keep on trying until you've achieved your goal."



Top: Cheyanne's senior portrait.
Bottom: Cheyanne stands with SCSDB President, Jolene Madison.



Da'Quan Whetstone

Aiken

Da'Quan joined several athletic teams while at SCSDB, including varsity football, basketball, and track and field. Da'Quan holds the record for fastest 100m.

In his senior year, Da'Quan was awarded both the DAR Good Citizenship Award and the School for the Deaf prom king.

Da'Quan plans to work at Amazon.



Top: Da'Quan's senior portrait.
Bottom: Da'Quan points to his track record in Voss Gym.

Robot Ninjas robotics team crowned National Champions (cont'd)

"The competition was crazy! I kept checking our robot between matches to make sure it was together and working, because it was my job to solve any new problems with my team," said Toby Allen, rising eighth-grader and member of the robotics team. "I am so happy we came home champions."

"Our boys kept all of us on our toes the entire time with their scores, staying in the first-place ranking against other schools," said Jessica Gribble, teacher at the School for the Deaf and robotics team coach. "Other schools were talking about the excitement and all the emotions they felt during that time. This is a big deal for our school, and we couldn't be prouder of this team." The Robot Ninjas also took home the Build Award for their best built robot.

VEX IQ is a robot construction system based on plastic, snap-together pieces specifically designed to build highly functional robots. In the VEX IQ Competition, teams of students are tasked with designing and building a robot to play with other teams in a game-based engineering challenge.

Toby, Carter Bryant, and Malakhi Monroe spent hours and hours after school building and testing their five robots. They learned the Slapshot game rules, studied different strategies, and developed strong leadership roles.



The Robot Ninjas practice before their final match.



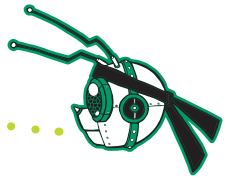
“Through this robotics program, the boys demonstrated improvement in important skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership, critical-thinking, and problem-solving,” said Jessica.

The Robot Ninjas moved on to VEX IQ Worlds in Dallas, TX, competing against teams from 75 countries and finishing 62nd. SCSDB’s team will continue to work together building a new robot and studying their new game, Full Volume. The Robot Ninjas are already looking forward to next year’s competition.

Top: The Robot Ninjas team, their coaches (Jessica Gribble, Joshua Joseph, and Simon McConnell), and student teacher Madeline Walters arrive at VEX IQ Worlds. Toby holds their fifth robot designed this year.



Bottom: The Robot Ninjas and coaches were recognized by the South Carolina House of Representatives for their VEX IQ National Robotics Competition championship win.



Special Education Services



Students acquire practical job skills off and on campus

For the first time since 2020, students returned to off-campus work-based learning opportunities in the Spartanburg community. A plethora of service-learning placements on campus were also offered.

Students were able to acquire work-based learning placements from a variety of different partnerships and agencies within the surrounding community. Some of these partnerships include: Vocational Rehabilitation, Habitat for Humanity, TOTAL Ministries Food Bank, Carolina Garden World, HALTER Equestrian Center, and Mountainview Nursing Home.

On-campus opportunities included: Motor Pool, Voss Gym, office secretary tasks at CSA, assisting braille and assistive technology instructors, and implementing an on-campus mail delivery system.

Students gained practical job skills, and they are looking forward to returning next year to continue their discovery and growth as members of the workforce.

Students that participated in the Vocational Rehabilitation workshop program received certificates for their work service in a May graduation ceremony in Swearingen Conference Center.

AAC

Applied Academic Center



Melanie Gomez and Ke'Mareon Turner hold some of the available plants at the Spring Plant Sale.

Buzz Café shakes things up



Zion Johnson smiles as he drinks his milkshake.



Angela Collier helps Brandy Mezquite-Reyes pour ice cream into cups.



The Buzz Café crew smiles for a picture after a hard day's work.



The Buzz Café offered milkshakes, cookies, and brownies to their customers.

We can help your garden grow

Students and staff from the Applied Academic Center hosted a plant sale for the community at the school's front gate. Plants at the sale included tomatoes, peppers, hanging baskets, ferns, perennials, annual bedding plants, herbs, and more!



AAC faculty and students prepare potted plants for the community sale.



The agriculture class sets up a table for their beautiful, green ferns.

Graduates earn certifications for employable skills

Eight of our graduates earned three or more industry certifications through the Applied Academic Center this year! More than 85 percent of their class earned 45 certifications total.

Certifications include OSHA, CPR/First Aid, Driver's Education, Microburst, Workforce Readiness, Animal Science, and Fork Lift Operation.

Right: Lizzy Cottington accepts a CPR/First Aid certificate from agriculture teacher Annette Bodie. Bottom left: Students at the School for the Deaf hold the certificates they have earned this year. Bottom right: Keke Palmer accepts a certificate as teacher Angela Collier reads aloud what the certificate says.



CSA

Cedar Springs Academy



Students paint rice cakes that, when stacked together, represent the layers of the Earth.

Helping our planet thrive

CSA students celebrate Earth Day with creative, hands-on activities including, tactile Earth art, plastic pollution awareness posters, greenhouse water bottles, and creating edible layers of the Earth with rice cakes.



Halleigh-Catherine McKinney works on molding her clay.



Jonas Ramirez uses a rolling pin to flatten his clay.



Selena Berry works with pudding to create the layers of the Earth.



Brandy Mezquite-Reyes paints a rice cake blue to represent the ocean.



Nathan Robinson and Charnaye Brown help manage the Earth Day stations.



Luis Zuniga-Ocampo and Tristan Bradley build their greenhouse water bottles.



Students choose and place their seeds in the water bottles.



Elliot Germany and Brandy Mezquite-Reyes work together on Earth tactile art.

Low Vision Day scavenger hunts build independence

Low Vision Day is a special day dedicated to providing training and support to our students with low vision through specific activities and real-life scenarios in the local community.

Faculty from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired led our students in various activities across Spartanburg, including scavenger hunts at the University of South Carolina Upstate and Ingles Markets, as well as lunch at Jason's Deli.

Students enjoyed playing games to recognize the parts of the eye and why it matters to know your diagnosis and how your eye functions. While at USC-Upstate, students used a variety of tools, including scopes and magnifiers, to better locate items and places.

The team also went to Jason's Deli for students to individually order lunch and have an opportunity to succeed in money management. Then, the team went to a local Ingles to continue use of the tools and determine which worked best for seeing nutritional labels and sections of the store and identifying products.



Scan the QR code to watch the video!

vimeo.com/806073505



Learning to use scopes and hand-held magnifiers is what Low Vision Day is all about.



Students study the parts of the eye at an interactive station.

SCSB

School for the Blind



Jacob Cooper laughs in the mud pit with School for the Blind teacher, Lindsey Parris.

Barrier Island trip makes learning fun in the sun

Juniors and seniors from the School for the Blind took an exciting overnight field trip to St. Christopher Barrier Island on Seabrook Island April 11-12.

Accompanied by their teachers and staff members, the trip gave students a chance to explore the natural beauty of the island and learn about the different animals and plants that inhabit it.

"My favorite part of my trip to Barrier Island was the view," said Zion Johnson, senior at the School for the Blind, "because I have never been to Charleston before."

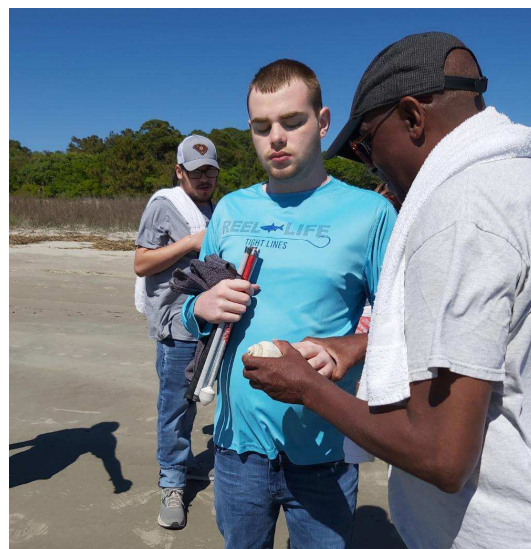
At Barrier Island, students were able to touch and feel the different textures of the sand and the shells, walk through the salt marsh, learn how to make a campfire, enjoy net fishing, and spend time with their friends on the beach.

Johnny Owens, a senior on the trip said, "My favorite part of my trip to Barrier Island was sitting around the campfire at night and telling funny stories."

Students learned about the ecology and history of Barrier Island and observed the different species of birds, turtles, and other wildlife that call the island home. They also learned about the various plants and trees that grow on the island and how they adapt to the harsh coastal environment.

"Field trips are important for our blind and visually impaired students because they provide opportunities for students to explore new environments, engage with their surroundings and learn through multi-sensory experiences," said Valerie Feiling, principal at the School for the Blind. "These experiences can help to build important skills such as orientation and mobility, spatial awareness, and socialization, and can promote a sense of independence and confidence in students."

Students worked hard fundraising through SCSB's Snack Shack. An annual tradition, the trip to a location most have never visited, was also an excellent chance for the students to bond with their classmates and teachers, and to create lasting memories that they will cherish for years to come.



Johnny Owens feels a shell while holding his white cane on the beach.



Students and teachers enjoy the sunset at Barrier Island.

The sky's the limit!



Students from the School for the Blind visit the Spartanburg Downtown Airport for their orientation and mobility lesson.



Michael takes a seat in the plane during a tour of the hangar.



Brookelynn takes a tour of the plane with her orientation and mobility teacher.

BRAVO, BRAVA, BRAVI! Converse Opera Theatre gave stellar performances at the School for the Blind, sharing scenes from their production "Mostly Mozart."



College students from Converse Opera Theatre perform a piece from Mozart's "The Magic Flute."



Destinee Hall feels the opera singer's tall, curly blonde wig.



Students feel the costumes worn by the opera performers.



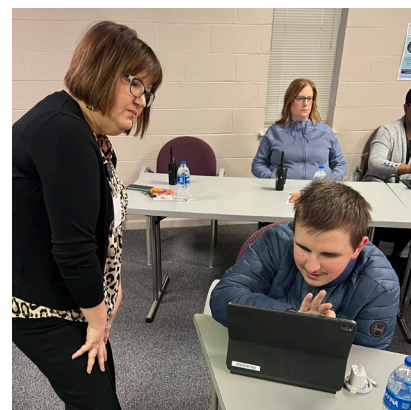
A female opera student sings on stage. She wears a large headdress with a long veil.

Juniors test drive iPad Pro devices before roll out

The education services and information technology (IT) divisions generated an iPad Pro device pilot program for the School for the Blind junior class that ran for four months.

The pilot program allowed hands-on time to problem solve and work through the needs of the users. Workshops were held as a conference style opportunity so students were able to focus on how they used the device and programs like Pages and Keynote versus Word and PowerPoint. High school teachers also participated, learning how to better integrate instructional technology and supervise students using iPad devices. The collaboration provided multiple occasions for feedback that IT and education services were able to use for data points throughout the experience.

Photos, top and bottom: Information technology staff members Kris Guy and Beth Osment, along with Assistive Technology Specialist Allison Tracy, hosted workshops to help students with screen reader options, Canvas interactions, and use of a variety of instructional programs.



SCSD

School for the Deaf

Congrats to our students for winning the Sportsmanship and Hospitality award!



The only competition that counts!

SCSDB hosted nine other schools for the Deaf at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) Middle School Math Competition. NTID Regional STEM Center promotes training and participation for deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. Our math team won the Sportsmanship and Hospitality Award. During this weekend, our students got to socialize with students from other schools and states, making friendships that would last a long time, as well as see that math can be fun.



Students enjoy playing games at the Hornet Cafe!



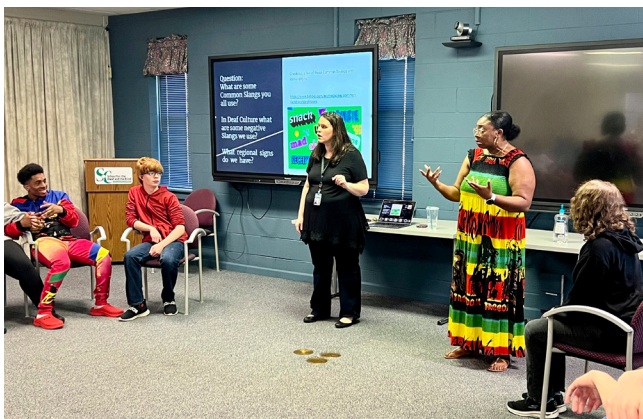
Students and teachers sit in the auditorium. One student gives a thumbs up before the competition begins.



Students from all the teams sit in a row in front of computers, ready for the math challenge.



Two students, each sitting at their own table, complete a math challenge.



Black History Month

Heather Moffett, high school teacher at the School for the Deaf, led a diversity, inclusion, and representation workshop with students to commemorate Black History Month.

Heather (in all black) facilitates Q&A at the Black History Month presentation.

A passion for Trashion Fashion

School for the Deaf students and staff presented a Trashion Fashion Show to celebrate Earth Day, creating things to carry and wear using recycled items. Students presented themselves as Trashion Fashion models on a runway in the cafeteria.



Lucas Coates and Jurnee Anderson model their recycled creations.



Ron'Ziya Boyd showcases her trashion fashion train.



Teachers join in on the fun too.

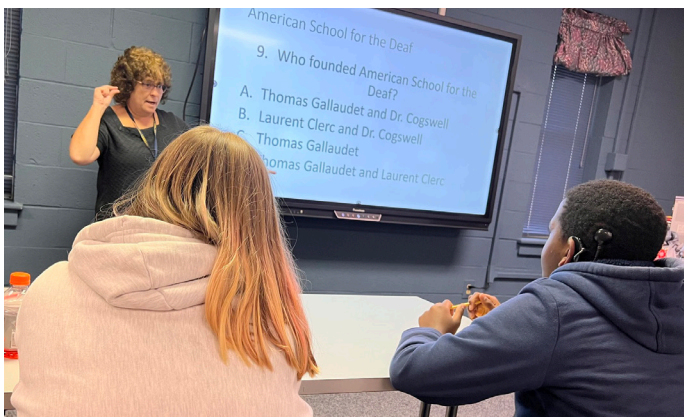
Celebrating National Deaf History Month

April is National Deaf History Month. To celebrate Deaf culture, students and teachers participated in a social media video sharing the importance of National Deaf History Month and why they love SCSDB.



Scan the QR code to watch the video!

vimeo.com/822099732



Cathi Holst, teacher at the School for the Deaf, held a "Deaf Bee."



Congrats to the "Deaf Bee" winners, pictured left to right: Ivan Kariuki, Ayden Johns, and Logan Hollar.



Nutrition Week

Nutrition Week is all about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. Sodexo offered a variety of healthy snack options for students to try throughout the week.

Students choose different ingredients to build their own bags of trail mix.

Library Cleveland Learning Resource Center

There's a mystery to be solved in the library!

Sponsored by the Beacon Society, SCSDB received a Jane Stauber grant to introduce our students to the adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by the Scottish writer Arthur Conan Doyle. As the world's first and only "consulting detective," Holmes pursued criminals throughout Victorian and Edwardian London, the south of England, and continental Europe.

The grant provided the funding to purchase Sherlock Holmes titles in accessible reading formats (i.e., braille, adapted stories, large print, graphic novels) for students.

At the Sherlock Holmes preview party, students enjoyed becoming junior sleuths while learning about the detective himself. In the words of Sherlock Holmes, when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. The "suspects" were fingerprinted and photographed, as they searched for additional culprits.

"Many teachers and students checked out Sherlock Holmes mysteries during the preview party," said Galena Gaw, director of library services. "Our students realized that reading is so much more than 'elementary'!"



Galena Gaw, director of library services, holds a magnifying glass and is dressed like a detective.



Three students from the School for the Blind read "The Hound of Baskervilles" in the library.

“Litter Trashes Everyone”



Our friends (and new puppet friends) at Palmetto Pride taught students about the ways we can keep our state beautiful at the “Litter Trashes Everyone” Puppet Show.

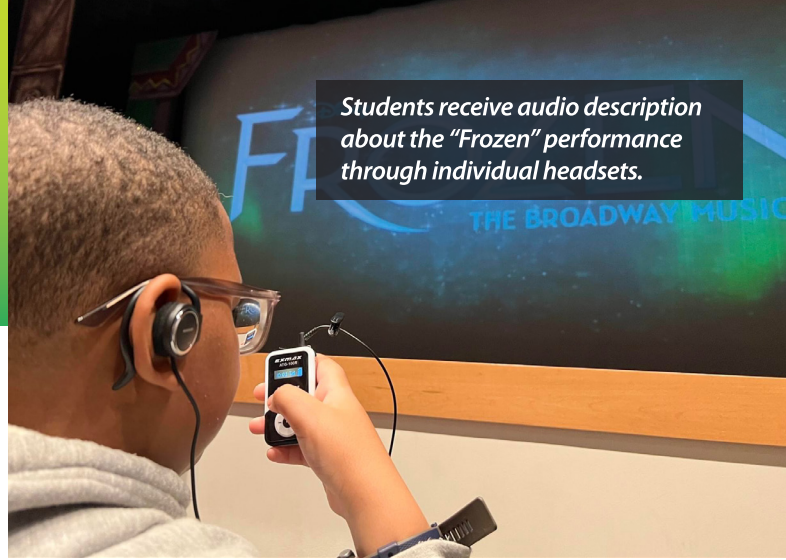


Students sit in the audience and laugh at the interactive puppet performance.

Fine Arts

Experiencing a little “Frozen” magic

Our students were excited audience members at Spartanburg School District 7’s performance of “Frozen: the Broadway Musical” at Spartanburg High School.



Students receive audio description about the “Frozen” performance through individual headsets.



SCSDB interpreters and Dr. Carrie Page, music teacher at the School for the Blind, were integral in making the performance accessible to all of our students through ASL and audio description.



Elsa created a blizzard during her performance of “Let It Go”.

State House Performance



The SCSDB choir performed two songs on the floor of the House of Representatives including, "The Climb" and their original song about our state, "I Love South Carolina."



Students also had the opportunity to visit with representatives from their home counties on the State House steps.

Athletics



Jacob Cooper blocks a shot on the goalball court.

What a block!

The girls and boys goalball teams demonstrated their skills in the gym to teach other students about the game and how to play. Did you know that goalball is a paralympic sport specifically designed for athletes with visual impairments? It was originally developed in 1946 as a way to rehabilitate World War II veterans who had lost their sight.

The goalball teams traveled to two tournaments this year, the VSDB March Madness Goalball Tournament at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind in March and the Savannah International in April.

Scan the QR code to see a video of our goalball teams in action, and learn more about goalball from coach and alumni of SCSDB, Tony Merriweather.



vimeo.com/819888780



Aleena Hamlin throws the ball towards the opposite end of the court.



Sprint to the finish line!

Twenty-four students from Cedar Springs Academy attended the Area 12 Special Olympics Track & Field competition at Spartanburg High School. Our athletes competed in 50-meter dashes, 10-meter assisted walks, 25-meter walks, and ball throws against other athletes from Spartanburg County.

It was a beautiful day to be outdoors, and the students enjoyed showing off their skills on the track! A lot of colorful ribbons were earned.

Tristan Bradley was recognized as the 2023 Middle School Outstanding Athlete of the Year.

Go Area 12 Hornets!

Our Special Olympics basketball team and cheerleading squad competed at Gaffney High School in February. The basketball team played two games against Union County schools, and the cheerleaders performed a chant, cheer, and dance against Gaffney High School. All of our student athletes did a fabulous job.



The 5-on-5 Basketball Team. Back row: Nathan Robinson, Elliott Germany, Jakai Coakley. Middle row: Charnaye Brown, Coach Nate Fuhrwerk, Tristan Bradley. Front row: Ke'Mareon Turner.



The Cheerleading Squad. Back row: Sierra Stefani, Brandy Mezquite-Reyes. Front row: Ca'Mayra Boulware, Melanie Gomez, Ja'Aleeyah Riley, Lizzy Cottingham. Not pictured: Head Coach Aly Davis and Assistant Coach Ashley Schlichting.

Varsity Track and Field

The Hornets track team traveled to Lower Richland High School in Columbia to compete in the 1A Upper-State Track Championship. One high school student from the School for the Deaf ran in the 200 meters race. He did a great job representing the Hornets in the Upper-State Championship.



Members of the track team huddle up during a meet.



Ryleigh Rabon waits in her lane at the start of the race.

Residential Life



Alasia Pifher smiles at prom.



Dreaming of an evening in Italy at prom

Congratulations to our 2022-2023
SCSDB Prom Kings and Queens!
Pictured left to right:

- Rushanti Smith and Nathan Robinson, Cedar Springs Academy
- Da'Quan Whetstone and Cheyanne Harvell, School for the Deaf
- Kyah Palmisano and Johnny Owens, School for the Blind



Lizzy Cottington dances with Valerie Feiling, principal of the School for the Blind.



Students and teachers in formal attire at prom sit around the table.



Charnaye Brown dances in the conga line.



Alan Gaona-Lopez and Tai Allen show off their best brotherly moves.

SCSDB Pageant

The 2023 SCSDB Pageant was an evening filled with fun, glamour, and talent. The students were judged based on categories, including freestyle – casual fashion, formal wear, talent, and interview.

The winners were:

- Charnaye Brown and Nathan Robinson, Cedar Springs Academy Mr. and Miss SCSDB
- Jesus Ramirez and Akeylah Howard, School for the Blind Mr. and Miss SCSDB
- Jacob Cooper, SCSDB Mr. Congeniality 2023



Congratulations to the following pageant contestants: Jesus Ramirez, Ca'Mayra Boulware, Nathan Robinson, Destinee Hall, Charnaye Brown, Akeylah Howard, and Jacob Cooper.



Statewide Outreach Services

Shannon Wright holds her plaque at the Educarer of the Year event.



Kelly's Kids staff reap awards

Shannon Wright, a teacher at Kelly's Kids, a program for our youngest students, was one of the five finalists for Spartanburg County's Educarer of the Year Award!

This award seeks to recognize, acknowledge, and celebrate excellent Early Care and Education teachers in Spartanburg County. Kelly's Kids serves children who are the ages of 6 weeks to 3 years old. Each finalist for the award had professional headshots made and received a certificate, a plaque, and gift certificates from local sponsors. Shannon did an excellent job representing Kelly's Kids during this process!

Also, Early Head Start hosted a Staff Professional Development Recognition event. Each Kelly's Kids staff member was recognized with an award. This event celebrated the dedication and passion of early childcare providers, as well as the partnership between Kelly's Kids, SCSDB, and Early Head Start of Spartanburg County.



Kelly's Kids staff hold awards given at the Early Head Start's Staff Professional Development Recognition program. Left to right: Eliza Rountree, Shannon Wright, Kristin Milner, Johnnica Leath, and Elizabeth Buffington

Aquarium adventure connects families affected by Deaf-Blindness

The SC Deaf-Blind Project hosted families and service providers at the Ripley's Aquarium of Myrtle Beach on May 13. A total of 25 attendees participated.

Deaf-Blindness is a low incidence disability. Often times, children have additional medical, physical, and cognitive needs. This can leave families feeling isolated as they do not often come across others who have shared experiences.

"It was a joy to watch the families explore a fun environment while also talking to others who face similar triumphs and challenges," Robert Hill, SC Deaf-Blind Project director exclaimed.

The date of the event coincided with Ripley's Sensory Friendly Saturday, meaning that lighting and noise were more controlled in the aquarium. In addition, pre-recorded messages, such as the one in the aquarium tunnel were also provided in American Sign Language.

Families gathered at the start of the day to meet each other and catch up with Deaf-Blind Project staff. They were then encouraged to explore the aquarium on their own or as a group.

At the end of the day, the group came together to celebrate one student's birthday and to participate in the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation's Walk-n-Roll to spread awareness about CHARGE and Deaf-Blindness.

The SC Deaf-Blind Project is looking forward to more regional meetups in the future to provide fun, hands-on experiences that allow families the opportunity to get connected to each other!



Student David Hickman is ready to be pushed in his stroller through Ripley's Aquarium of Myrtle Beach. David's mom, dad, and sister are ready to experience sea life with him.

Hearing is believing

Zlata Kuzmina was diagnosed as deaf at 6 months old with no help possible. She is now a joyful and animated 3-year-old who recently graduated from SCSDb's Kelly's Kids program.

Her family came to Upstate South Carolina **in search of a medical miracle**, after leaving their war torn home in Odessa, Ukraine, where mom, Diana Kuzmina, was a doctor and classical musician.

Many doctors stated that Zlata had no cochlear nerve in either ear, and no chance of ever hearing with aids or implants. However, the family held onto hope, as Zlata sometimes seemed to react to loud sounds.

Once in the Upstate, the family enrolled in BabyNet/SCSDb's Early Intervention program, and began working with Service Coordinator Angela Whiteside and Family Trainers Krista Olsen and David Washington, to learn ASL and understand her diagnosis.

Many appointments, and many "no chances" later, the family finally attended an appointment at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), where Drs. Noxon and McRackan conducted another MRI and stated they found a tiny nerve in her right ear that other doctors missed.

Zlata paused, looked up, and touched her ear. She was able to hear! Tears filled the eyes of all in the exam room.

A few weeks later, Zlata received her cochlear implant and returned home to recover. A month later, she returned to MUSC for activation. The

family was nervous, as the surgery was not a guarantee she would be able to hear. As the sound levels increased from low to higher, the audiologist tapped a xylophone.

Diana said they will continue learning ASL because Zlata is still deaf when the implant is turned off. "The doctors are saying Zlata is a true medical miracle. They say the implant shouldn't be working as well as it is in her right ear, and now the surgery team thinks she will benefit with one in her left ear! This is what we had hoped and prayed for," she exclaimed.

"I am so thankful for America and the opportunities our little girl has gotten. We prayed that she would hear, that she would speak, and also, that she would sing. Our whole family sings. She will now be able to sing with our family in her own voice," Diana declared.

Zlata and her family's story can serve as an inspiration of perseverance to us all. Sometimes, it seems, believing may also lead to hearing.

This story has received other media attention! Scan the QR codes below to read more about it:



[cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-war-refugee-hearing-gift-of-sound-south-carolina-doctors-cochlear-implant](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-war-refugee-hearing-gift-of-sound-south-carolina-doctors-cochlear-implant)



[web.musc.edu/about/news-center/2023/05/08/cochlear-implant](https://www.web.musc.edu/about/news-center/2023/05/08/cochlear-implant)



Zlata signs "orange" to label the paper and chalk.



Zlata learns the sign for the color "green," as she paints with the color.



Zlata asks the family trainer what color the paper is. He sometimes answers incorrectly, and she has to sign "no, color is ____ (fill in the blank)."

"A bend in the road is not the end of the road... unless you fail to make the turn." - Helen Keller

SCSDB Foundation



Spartanburg High School wins the People's Choice Award at the 13th Annual 'So You Think You Can Cook' Chili Cook-off.

Teams turn up the heat!

Eight teams representing Spartanburg businesses and schools showcased their favorite chili recipes in an annual competition that supports students at the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind. Through the fundraising efforts of teams and event sponsorships, over \$90,000 was raised.



Spartanburg Day School wins the Judges Choice Award for its chili recipe.

Congratulations to the following winners of the 13th Annual 'So You Think You Can Cook' Chili Cook-off:

People's Choice Award

<i>1st Place</i>	<i>2nd Place</i>
Spartanburg High School	Sodexo

Best Table Presentation

<i>1st Place</i>	<i>2nd Place</i>
Red Hot Chili People	SCSDB

Judges Choice

<i>1st Place</i>	<i>2nd Place</i>
Spartanburg Day School	Dorman High School

Golden Chili Award Winners (*raised \$1,000+ dollars before noon on Saturday, January 28*)

Spartanburg High School	Red Hot Chili People
SCSDB	Smith Drug Company
Sodexo	



Scan the QR code to watch a video of the competition.

vimeo.com/794146581

Books delivered by vending machines reward students for reading

Five Bookworm Vending Machines have been installed across campus. The vending machines, stocked with a variety of books, provide easy access to reading materials for students across campus and are part of a larger initiative to promote literacy and reading comprehension.

Chayse Mole picks out the book he wants to read from the vending machine.



Marlee Matlin inspires students and faculty

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind welcomed a special guest on March 1, as Academy Award-winning actress and advocate for the deaf community, Marlee Matlin, made a visit to the school.

She spent the morning speaking with students, answering their questions, sharing her personal experiences, and inspiring them to pursue their dreams, no matter what obstacles they may face.



Jolene presents Marlee with a framed thank you note outside of the School for the Deaf.

During her visit, Matlin took a tour of Walker Hall and the School for the Deaf. She encouraged students and teachers to embrace their unique identities and to use their voices to create positive change in the world.

Alasia Pifher, junior at the School for the Deaf, shared about having the chance to meet Marlee Matlin at the event.

"I'm very ready to graduate and get out into the real world, and just make something out of my life," said Alasia. "I was intrigued with the whole conversation [with Matlin]. Learning about her experience and the motivation she has, and not backing down to the stereotypes we [deaf community] have. It's tough out there, we know that, but just pursuing and getting that accomplishment betters yourself. Just do it, and don't back down."



Marlee interacts with students after her presentation in Walker Hall.



Marlee smiles with kindergarten students at the School for the Deaf.

Machines empower students to forge ahead with STEAM

The SCSDb Foundation hosted representatives from the funding organizations at a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the school's new Glowforge machines on March 22.

The Glowforge machines, generously funded by AFL, Duke Energy Foundation, and the Junior League of



An ASL and braille "I Love You" pin and a SC state ornament are two designs created by students on the Glowforge machines.

Spartanburg, are state-of-the-art laser cutters and engravers that allow students to explore the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) in a hands-

on, innovative way. With this new technology, students are able to create complex designs, prototypes, and more with ease.



Funders, staff, and a student from the School for the Deaf cut the ceremonial ribbon and celebrate the Glowforge machines.



Scan the QR code to watch a video of the ribbon cutting ceremony.

vimeo.com/810663349



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We want to meet your family!

SCSDB campus programs are always accepting applications for new students. Our online application can be accessed at www.scsdb.org/apply. Please contact **Michaela Wilson** at 864-577-7565 or mwilson@scsdb.org for more information about the application and enrollment process.

If you are interested in applying, we invite you to come visit our campus. Campus tours can be arranged through **Loreta Dylgjeri**. Email her at LDylgjeri@scsdb.org.



*Scan the QR code
to apply today!*

Come and see what SCSDB can do for you in your area of the state! The **SCSDB division of outreach services** provides a menu of options for parents, families, and the professionals who serve them that include and are not limited to, specialized early intervention services, school district educational services, sign language interpreting, and ASL classes! For more information on our statewide outreach services available in your area, please contact **Scott A. Falcone** at sfalcone@scsdb.org or 1-800-984-4357.