

For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Andy Pruitt, 843-937-6583

Media Release

CCSD recognizes National Family Week

Office of Communications

Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed.
Acting Superintendent of Schools

Vanessa L. Denney, M.Ed.
Interim Executive Director of
Communications

Charleston, SC – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is unique in that it serves over 50,000 students in over 80 schools and programs. CCSD is also a special district in that some of the staff in offices and schools are family – actual family members. For example, at Carolina Park Elementary School three parents on staff have grown children just down the hall serving the students there. West Ashley High School boasts two parent/child pairs. There are most certainly many others across the district as well.

In honor of National Family Week, November 19–25, 2023 CCSD celebrate the families that make up the staff within the district.

Haecherl and Paul

Stephanie Haecherl (a former [District Teacher of the Year](#)) is a second grade teacher at Carolina Park and her daughter Taran Paul became a first grade teacher there last year.

Like many young girls, Haecherl played “school” by teaching her stuffed animals and any neighborhood friend that would participate. She got to live out that dream and is now in her 17th year as an educator.

Like most children of educators, Paul practically grew up in her mom’s classroom. That lit the spark for her to become an educator. Coupled with Paul’s empathetic personality and desire to help otherwise, teaching was a natural fit.

After teaching for five years in Orlando, Paul and her family moved to Charleston. After hearing so many wonderful things about Carolina Park from her mother, she applied for a position. Haecherl wanted Paul to earn the position on her own. While she knew her daughter would be an amazing asset to the Carolina Park family, she respected the boundaries and the process.

Paul was a good fit and appreciates the warm welcome everyone at the school has given her.

“After hiring Taran I asked her what it will be like working in the same building as her mother and she shared, ‘My mom is my best friend,’” said Principal Michael Antonelli.

While the pair do not normally see each other during the school day, there is comfort in knowing the other is just down the hall or a phone call away if support is needed.

Carolina Park students and parents think it is cool that Haecherl is Paul's mother. Haecherl could not be more proud.

"Teaching is a tough job," said Haecherl. "I am proud of the human being that Taran is. She's a good mom, wife, daughter and teacher. I will always be there for her because I am her mom. It brings me so much joy that we share the same passion for education."

In Paul's interview with Antonelli, she expressed that it would be an awesome opportunity to see her mother in a professional environment doing what she loves, every single day.

"Not many people get that," said Paul. "I am one lucky daughter."

Wise and Loayza

Stephanie Loayza and her mom Sheila Wise have been planning for the opportunity to teach at the same school for years. Wise was a teacher in Fort Mill for 30 years. Being at the school where her mom taught gave Loayza a first-hand glimpse into the impact her mom was making.

It motivated her to follow in her mother's footsteps, which made Wise so very proud. That is when they got to planning. The original idea was to teach together at a Fort Mill High School and really confuse everyone by having the same last name. The only difference would be one taught math and one taught history and social studies. That did not pan out exactly as planned.

As luck would have it (for Loayza), she fell in love and married a man who wanted to go into the medical profession. So, with her new last name, they moved to Charleston so her husband could attend the Medical University of South Carolina.

Loayza fell in love with West Ashley High School (WAHS) and told her mom over and over again how fabulous it was.

"We're completely redoing how education used to be done," said Loayza.

It took a little convincing. Wise and her husband sold their home and picked up everything to come to Charleston.

"I was ready for a change but not ready to retire," said Wise. "It has been a good change for me and a good challenge. I'm glad I did it."

Wise is now not just Loayza's mom, but everyone's mom at WAHS.

"Even though she is only in her first year here, everyone is calling her 'mom'," said Loayza. "It's fun to know she's just down the hall. If I need her or need to borrow some supplies, I just ring her extension."

This dynamic duo, as Principal Ryan Cumback described them, wave to each other as they leave the teacher parking lot. Then they promptly call each other to see how their day went. It is a daily ritual.

"People don't get what being a teacher is like," said Wise. "She gets it in ways that others wouldn't. There are some days we don't see each other at all but we make that call every day."

Wise appreciates being able to watch her daughter, in her element, doing her thing.

"She's exactly where she's supposed to be," said Wise.

So is Wise. As a veteran educator, she is there to help guide her daughter as needed and play "mom" to the hundreds of others who need her too.

Thomas and Williams

Dirk Thomas is the Physical Education teacher at Carolina Park, and his daughter Johnnie Williams, is a fifth grade teacher there.

Thomas knew his career would one day involve being an educator and a coach. As a child, he wrote down his aspirations and today, he is living out all of them, just as he had planned. He is the head baseball coach at Wando High School, just across the street, and he is just down the hall from his daughter (which was not planned).

Becoming an educator was natural for Williams as both of her parents are teachers. After meeting her husband in Charlotte and spending some time there, they moved their family to Charleston where there just happened to be a job available at Carolina Park.

"I texted my dad to see if he cared if I applied and I got two thumbs up," said Williams. "That's a pretty good response coming from a man of very few words."

Williams was hired just a few weeks later and her dad said it validates all he tried to instill in his children as they were growing up.

"It also validates her own career as an educator and mine," said Thomas. "The administration was not afraid to hire my daughter. It validates what people think of your credibility."

Williams said her father did not try to influence the interview process in any way and instead told her to hold her head high and stand on her own success. She did and could not be more excited to work at Carolina Park.

"Dad was so happy for me which made me proud and what an opportunity this is for me to work at this school and for Mr. Antonelli," said Williams. "I earned it on my own which made me proud but it is even more awesome that I get to see my dad every day. He loves his job and having a positive impact on kids' lives. I get to see it firsthand."

On Williams' first day of school, Thomas was nervous for his child.

"Nothing compares to the nerves you feel for your children when you want them to be successful," added Thomas.

Williams might be Thomas' colleague at work, but to him, she is still his little girl whom he can count on to steal his last Coke from his office fridge.

Jenkins and Jenkins

Shajuana Jenkins is the bookkeeper at Carolina Park Elementary School. She fell in love with the school while working through a temporary employment agency as a front desk clerk. Principal Michael Antonelli just happened to have a more permanent position as a bookkeeper and suggested Jenkins would be perfect for it. She is and she describes Carolina Park as the happiest place on earth. It became an even happier place when her son Chris Jenkins began as a substitute.

He was a natural with the students and they gravitated to him.

Chris attended Trident Technical College to study Astronomy and he is testing the waters to see if he likes Criminal Justice. In the meantime, he was hired as a teacher's assistant in a special needs classroom and loves it.

"I am a helper by nature and I love to see my students happy," said Chris. "I also love to assist the classroom teacher so she can do what she loves, which is teach. Principal Antonelli has built a culture here where the kids and the parents want to be here and it is a place where great things are happening."

Jenkins loves to see Chris in action, in the workplace.

"I see him in the hall, and he smiles and I think, 'That's my baby'," said Jenkins. "I usually get to see him every day but it is special when he stops by my office to say good morning or pops in to check on me. It's rewarding to see him shine."

Jenkins and Chris acknowledge that expectations are high at Carolina Park.

"I love working with my mom and I love working here," said Chris. "She pushes me to do my best. I want to make her proud and I want colleagues in the building to compliment me to her so she will know I am working ten times harder than she would expect."

The mother and son pair also work in the afterschool Kaleidoscope program together.

I love the kids in my class and through Kaleidoscope I get to know students in other classes," said Chris. "I get to watch them learn and grow into young adults. We are preparing them for middle school and that's an honor."

His mom gets the same joy from watching Chris excel.

"I get to see him grow into what he loves," said Jenkins. "I am here to support him in those raw moments and celebrate the small victories with him I couldn't ask for more."

Jenkins said she has always been a working mother and there were some things in Chris' life that she had to miss out on.

"This is a super big deal for me to get to see all of his adult success," said Jenkins. "This is the child that I raised and hoped for. I am so proud."

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.