



Springfield Elementary School

Anita W. Huggins Ed.D
Deputy Superintendent

Jennifer Swearingen, Ph.D.
Associate Superintendent of the
Elementary Learning Community

Megan Williams
Principal

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Contact:
Megan Williams, 843-763-1538

Media Release

Pulse of CCSD – Tara Cobb has a passion for serving others

Charleston, S.C. - Sometimes it takes one caring person to put a person on a life trajectory of service. That is exactly what happened to Tara Cobb, Springfield Elementary School's parent advocate. She has purposefully dedicated her career and her life to helping others.

"I have found that my passion is working with families of all ages," said Cobb. "I want to be the glue for these families at Springfield and anywhere else I serve."

That passion was born from Cobb's interactions with a social worker, many years ago. She has a family member who entered state custody via the Department of Social Services (DSS). Cobb was a very young child when this happened but she remembers clearly the social worker picking them up on several occasions and driving her family members to visit her young cousin.

"She (the social worker) was a very kind person," said Cobb. "She truly cared about our family and helped us in many ways, particularly navigating the complex DSS process."

Cobb's cousin was later adopted and the two lost touch, but she never forgot the "nice lady" who helped her family through such a difficult time.

After graduating from R.B. Stall High School, Cobb went off to college and earned her bachelor's degree in social work. Cobb dove into her studies, excited to one day be of service to others. Little did she know, Cobb would receive the surprise of a lifetime.

"There was a female on campus that looked very familiar," said Cobb. "I kept seeing this female student on campus and one day struck up a conversation with her. It was my cousin from so many years ago."

The two have remained in contact ever since.

Serving a "hand-up," not a hand-out

Cobb has had a gratifying career that spans a variety of opportunities. She worked in preschools, at a hospice facility caring for elderly adults, at a non-profit serving disadvantaged adults, and at DSS for 14 years. She came to Springfield in 2019.

"I have always been interested in working with young children and reaching families," said Cobb. "In this role at Springfield, I have been able to form a bond with my families and give them insight into the importance of education."

Cobb does that by serving as the avenue to resources. She is the link between home, the school, and the community.

"We appreciate all that Ms. Cobb does for the families at Springfield," said Principal Megan Williams. "She has established a multitude of community resources that provide much-needed support to our students and families. We are so very grateful to have Ms. Cobb on our Springfield staff."

Her colleague Savannah Santis describes her as one of the heartbeats of Springfield.

"From the students to the staff, she makes everyone better than before, even if you did not know you needed it," said Santis. "Families and students alike know they can find a warm hug, something to eat, and even something to wear if need be. She provides so much to so many, that I have heard the students call her everything from 'Principal' to 'Mom,' and that is a perfect summary. She guides with love and compassion and students know they can find a safe space with her."

Cobb said she gets hundreds of hugs a day.

"I love it here," said Cobb. "I love what I do, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Hands down, I love this role and I am blessed to be someone who offers a hand up and not a handout."

Cobb forms relationships with not just the students, but the parents as well. They have her personal cell phone number, and can even speak Spanish to even better communicate.

Every day is different, but Cobb most often assists with resources such as food, utilities, gas money, transportation, home visits, and community partners for outside help.

"My job is to make things as smooth as possible for families so kids can get to school and learn," said Cobb. "Students and families trust me because they know I am a safe place. I emphasize confidentiality and I live it."

Cobb's door is always open and her office and conference area are welcoming and cozy. She invites parents to come by at any time and encourages them to join their children for lunch.

"We want to see parents in our school," said Cobb. "When parents are involved kids do better and strive academically. Additionally, parents take ownership in the school."

Cobb described Springfield as a family-positive environment.

"We are not only there for our families, but we're here for each other," said Cobb. "I personally hope I am thought of as a listening ear for my team and fellow staff members."

A hand in student success

"My circle is who motivates and mentors me to be the best servant leader I can be," said Cobb. "If I am at my best, I can better help students and families in their success."

Cobb also credits her children, who are in college and high school.

"They ground me and that allows me to be a positive role model at school," Cobb added.

The first students Cobb began working with when she came to Springfield are now in middle school. She said it has been rewarding watching them grow.

"I will always think of them as my babies, though," Cobb said. "Those families still reach out and thank me for my continued support. It's nice to know I had an effect on certain students and changed the trajectory of their lives, perhaps."

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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.