

Fall 2025 the Buzz



Highlights from
SCSDB Hornet's Nest

2025 Homecoming Court



Homecoming royalty from each school stand together for a photo with their principals and SCSDB President Jolene Madison.



School for the Blind

Pictured with President Jolene Madison
and SCSB Principal Peter Kosko Ocampo

Queen: Piper Graham
King: Michael Clifton
Princess: Makenzie Bartlett



Cedar Springs Academy

Pictured with President Jolene Madison and
CSA Principal Elizabeth Baird

Queen: Ca'Mayra Boulware
King: Ke'Mareon Turner
Princess: Mila Smith



School for the Deaf

Pictured with President Jolene Madison
and SCSD Lead Teacher Alicia Blake

Queen: Ryleigh Rabon
King: Reuben Monroe
Prince: Bruin Abdelgheny

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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

Dear Friends,

Fall is truly a special time for our SCSDB community — a season filled with celebration, growth, and gratitude. Throughout the Buzz, you will see examples of students being engaged, empowered, and equipped for success. We are proud to share our stories with you, and hope you will find them uplifting and informative.

Imagine the thrill of finally being able to celebrate our Homecoming — an event that had to be postponed last year because of Hurricane Helene. The energy and excitement on campus were unmatched as we gathered to cheer for our Hornets, reconnect with alumni, and honor 175 years of SCSDB history. Homecoming is so much more than just athletic events — it honors our past, embraces our present, and celebrates our future.

In addition to Homecoming, this school year has begun with new opportunities for learning and discovery. We opened our new greenhouse at the Applied Academic Center, a project that will allow our students to experience hands-on learning in plant science, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. It's a place where curiosity grows — literally — and we're already seeing students take ownership and pride in nurturing the plants and produce within it.

We also unveiled the updated science lab at the School for the Deaf, a space designed to make scientific exploration accessible and engaging for all learners. This transformation reflects our continued commitment to providing top-quality educational environments where students can see, touch, and experience the wonder of discovery.

Another exciting addition to our campus is the new History Wall, a beautiful visual timeline that tells the story of SCSDB's rich legacy. As students and visitors walk its length, they can experience the generations of innovation, advocacy, and love that have shaped our school. It's both a reflection of where we've been and an inspiration for where we're going. The history wall is dedicated to Mr. Bobby Dobson, longtime friend and supporter of SCSDB.

Each of these moments — the celebrations, the new spaces, the stories — are part of a larger theme this year: growth through connection. Whether in classrooms, labs, or at community events, we continue to learn from one another, support each other, and honor the shared mission that defines SCSDB.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and your belief in every student we serve. Together, we are writing the next chapter in SCSDB's proud history — one filled with purpose, progress, and promise.

Best wishes!

Jolene Madison

Jolene L. Madison
President, SCSDB



Homecoming alumni and guests were served at the concessions stand by current students under the supervision of transition staff. In the top photo, Connor Miller assists Yakera Martin (senior) and Azaria Chalk (9th grade) in accepting payment from a guest. In the bottom photo, Elizabeth Crawford, inserts a footlong hotdog into the waiting bun in a cardboard tray held by Camren Lowe (11th grade). Both are wearing food service gloves.

The Most Spirit at the Pep Rally



School for the Blind students play large green trumpets to vie for the title of the loudest.



Tazmin Hill (10th grade) makes a powerful sound with his trumpet.



Malakhi Monroe (10th grade) and Bryce McRae (8th grade) slam gym mats on the floor.



School for the Deaf students cheer loud and proud.



Madeline Walters and James Zera (Kindergarten) dance to the music.



Buzz the Hornet builds anticipation before announcing the Spirit Stick winner.



CSA wins the Spirit Stick Award!

Spirit Week dress-up days



Tenth graders Gideon Inman and Cameron Stitt take their fashion spirit back decades.



Mila Smith (PK4) and Banwo Rabiw wear purple for MPS (Mucopolysaccharidosis) and ITP (Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura) Awareness.



Selena Gregg (8th grade) wears red and white for white cane awareness. Ava Raleigh (senior) also wears red, and teacher Brett Grayson dons sticky polka-dots on his shirt.



School for the Deaf staff Cathi Holst, Victoria Roa, and Christy Kincheloe dress to impress for Career Day.



Bonfire



Camren Lowe (11th grade) and Lor'reyel McClinton (9th grade) enjoy some spooky fun around the bonfire.



School for the Blind students have a great time taking photos with the massive bonfire.



Damari Heyward (6th grade) makes the fire appear with his magical abilities.

Homecoming Day



Izzy Collins (10th grade) gears up to roll the ball across the court.



What a block by the girls goalball team!



Coach Mary Lister encourages her team during a time out.



Michael Clifton (senior) sets up a big offensive play.



Coach Gerald Hughes talks strategy with the team.



Tomier Sanders (9th grade) winds up for his shot.



The varsity football team gets into position.



Malakhi Monroe (10th grade) pushes towards a first down.



Both teams celebrate a game well played!



Ryleigh Rabon (senior) and Logen Belmont perform the national anthem.



Students, families, and fans support the players from the stands.



Emma Atkinson (8th grade) and Aaliyah Zimmerman (7th grade) cheer on the team.

SCSB

School for the Blind



High schoolers Cameron Stitt, Brian Starkey, Kaitland Davis, Evelin Ochoa, Gideon Inman, and Cailynn Campos are standing in a semicircle and are extending their white canes till the tips meet on the ground together outside Robertson Hall. They are "all in" for White Cane Day!

School for the Blind celebrates White Cane Day

Due to scheduling conflicts, the School for the Blind dedicated Oct. 17, instead of Oct. 15, to a full day of celebration and education about White Cane Day.

The elementary students began the day creating "white canes" using Rolos, LifeSavers Mints, and red and white electrical tape. While the elementary students created their sweet "white canes," the secondary students were able to hear firsthand experiences about the life journeys with vision loss from two of their own faculty members, Tony Merriweather and Lori Donguines.

The festivities continued with groups alternating stations where they created red/white bracelets and navigated an obstacle course blindfolded. The day was wrapped up with a fun and informative game of "Jeopardy" led by teacher Kosta Kakouras.

National White Cane Day was also celebrated across the SCSDB campus by wearing red and white.



Daniel Sanders (10th grade) wears a blindfold and uses his white cane to traverse a walkway on the playground.



High schoolers Cailynn Campos, Bre Sharpe, Mila Hovis, Reniece Vassell, and Ellie Horton navigate a curving pathway while wearing blindfolds and using their white canes.



Mia Moldthan (2nd grade) pulls beads out of a zippered baggie to make a white cane bracelet.



Stephen Caddell (3rd grade) offers a friendly Clemson Tiger wave. He is wearing a team jersey and a red and white bracelet.



Tazmin Hill (10th grade) holds a small paper and tape version of a white cane with a red tip and a black top.



Students split into groups to play "Jeopardy" in the Robertson Hall cafeteria.

Real treats accompany virtual travel during Hispanic Heritage Month

Viewing or hearing a video made by Principal Peter Kosko Ocampo during his most recent trip to Colombia kicked off the School for the Blind's month of celebration of Hispanic heritage.

Students were able to experience a variety of artwork, dishes, fruits, and music through the video presentation created in the heart of Hispanic America. Students and staff also were able to taste some sweet treats that people all over Colombia enjoy.

The School for the Blind observed Hispanic Heritage Month Sept. 15 – Oct. 15. The month-long observation of culture included a thought of the day each day from a variety of famous Hispanic people, as well as snippets of history about how the culture has evolved over time.

To close out Hispanic Heritage Month and bring in White Cane Day, the thought of the day on Oct. 15 was a quote from the uber famous Hispanic-American Grammy-winning singer Jose Feliciano who was born blind in Puerto Rico.



A few scenes from Principal Peter Kosko Ocampo's video tour of Colombia presentation. Above, a larger-than-life outdoor sculpture and colorful art beckon visitors to engage, experience, and take photos. Lower far left, a table at a restaurant is filled with local dishes that were described to students and staff. Lower center, a market abounds with a large variety of tropical fruits and produce.

Mini Renaissance Art Gallery opens for one day

Students from Mary Lister's World History classes participated in a tactile art showing that included various pieces recreated by the talented School for the Blind Fine Arts Teacher, Liz List. The arts of the Renaissance Period were emphasized.

Art was the topic of the day on Aug. 28, as discussions about realism, humanism, and perspective filled the room. Refreshments were served as students circulated the room to enjoy the art.

Right: Gideon Inman (10th grade) feels the tactile artwork.



CSA

Cedar Springs Academy



Porsha Pollock, mother of Mason Mack (3rd grade), is directed in the use of her white cane by Dr. Tina Herzberg, professor and Coordinator of the Visually Impaired Education Program at USC Upstate. Behind them is Kimberle Cornelius, mother of Mya Cornelius (11th grade). Porsha is wearing a red blouse with a black cardigan, jeans, and a blindfold.

Cedar Springs Academy Celebrates White Cane Day

Parents joined their Cedar Springs Academy students in hands-on activities designed to simulate completing everyday tasks with limited or no vision in an Oct. 15 celebration of White Cane Day.

This annual event honors individuals who are blind or visually impaired and who use a white cane to navigate their environment safely and independently. The white cane — marked with red and white — is a powerful symbol of independence and also serves as a signal to drivers and pedestrians that the user is blind or visually impaired.

Using sight-limiting glasses and blindfolds, parents practiced human guide techniques, learned to use a white cane, and navigated simple tasks such as getting a drink from the water or juice fountain and opening pudding or applesauce containers.

Parents also explored a technology room, where they learned about the wide range of assistive technology tools their children use at school. Staff demonstrated refreshable braille displays, iPad accessibility features, and specialized apps, giving families an opportunity to ask questions and better understand how technology supports their child's independence and learning.

Students also enjoyed rotating through each activity, gaining new experiences and celebrating the importance of the white cane. It was a day filled with learning, awareness, and appreciation. Parents shared that the experience was eye-opening and provided valuable insight into their child's daily experiences.



Da'Juan Peake (11th grade) finds his way through a curtain of crepe paper streamers.



Ja'Alceyah Riley (10th grade) encounters, with her white cane, a low wooden stool as an obstacle in the center of a classroom. Dr. Herzberg gives verbal direction as needed.



Mya Cornelius (11th grade) travels with her white cane between two very long counters. A large plastic chair is a potential obstacle to her.

Field-tripping back in time at the Upcountry History Museum

Several classes from Cedar Springs Academy spent the day going back in time at the Upcountry History Museum in Greenville.

During the day, students explored the essential goods and skills that American Indians and early settlers relied upon for survival. One of the highlights was a hands-on simulation of work in a textile mill, where students took on roles to better understand the labor and craftsmanship of the time. Activities included measuring and cutting yarn, threading needles, weaving, winding yarn onto loom spools, inspecting material quality, and even hanging finished textiles to dry. This gave students a realistic sense of textile production during the industrial era.

The learning experience extended to time management and economics as students practiced starting and stopping work shifts using timers. Following their “work,” they participated in a lesson on wages, where they learned how to calculate earnings and discuss real-life concepts such as expenses and deductions.

Afterward, students explored the museum’s historical storefront exhibits, which showcased goods and tools from the 1800s, including a wagon filled with period-appropriate items, old clothing, and early trade tools. These displays offered a vivid look into daily life during the 19th century.

The museum provided knowledgeable interpreters and exceptional hands-on experiences that made history tangible and fun for the students.



These four students capture a memory of their field trip to the Upcountry History Museum in Greenville. Left to right: Selena Berry (3rd grade), Angelina Gonzalez (6th grade), Halleigh McKinney (4th grade), and Reece Huggins (3rd grade)



High schoolers Ca'Mayra Boulware, Ja'Aleeyah Riley, Da'Juan Peake, Alexiana Lopez, Azael Cruz, Ke'Mareon Turner, and Mya Cornelius stand in front of an old wagon from early America.



A museum staff member describes her job duties of inspecting items to Natasha Payne (Trinity Wilkins' mother), Trinity Wilkins (5th grade), Maliah Ballou (7th grade), and teacher Tessa Whitson.



Reece Huggins (3rd grade) threads a square in a job simulation activity to learn about production in a textile mill.



Sierra Stefani (senior), Tristan Bradley (10th grade), teacher Bridget Sitarski, and Jonathan Perez-Gomez (senior) measure thread in another activity.



Mya Cornelius (11th grade), teacher Dagmar Herzog, and Azael Cruz (9th grade) enjoy the "War Dog" exhibit.



Tristan Bradley (10th grade), Sierra Stefani (senior), and Jonathan Perez-Gomez (senior) look at the "Avengers" exhibit.

SCSD

School for the Deaf



Terah Allen (8th grade) and other students practice a sign from a presentation.

Students celebrate moving “Beyond Silence”

The School for the Deaf embraced the International Week of the Deaf 2025 global theme, “Beyond Silence: Overcoming Barriers,” with a wide range of interactive and meaningful activities.

The theme came to life, as throughout the week, students participated in workshops, cultural events, and classroom discussions that focused on Deaf identity, access to communication, and empowerment. They created PowerPoints, shared stories, and explored the history and significance of Deaf culture, all while building confidence and pride in their unique voices.

This week was about more than awareness—it was about celebration. “Our students are resilient, expressive, and full of potential. The International Week of the Deaf provided them with a platform to shine and educate others,” said teacher Heather Moffett.



Aaron Sease (senior) and Cathi Holst explains different sayings in ASL slang.



Jasper Womick (senior) presents a PowerPoint on Deaf identity.



Jahmere Daniels (7th grade) signs in detail during his presentation.



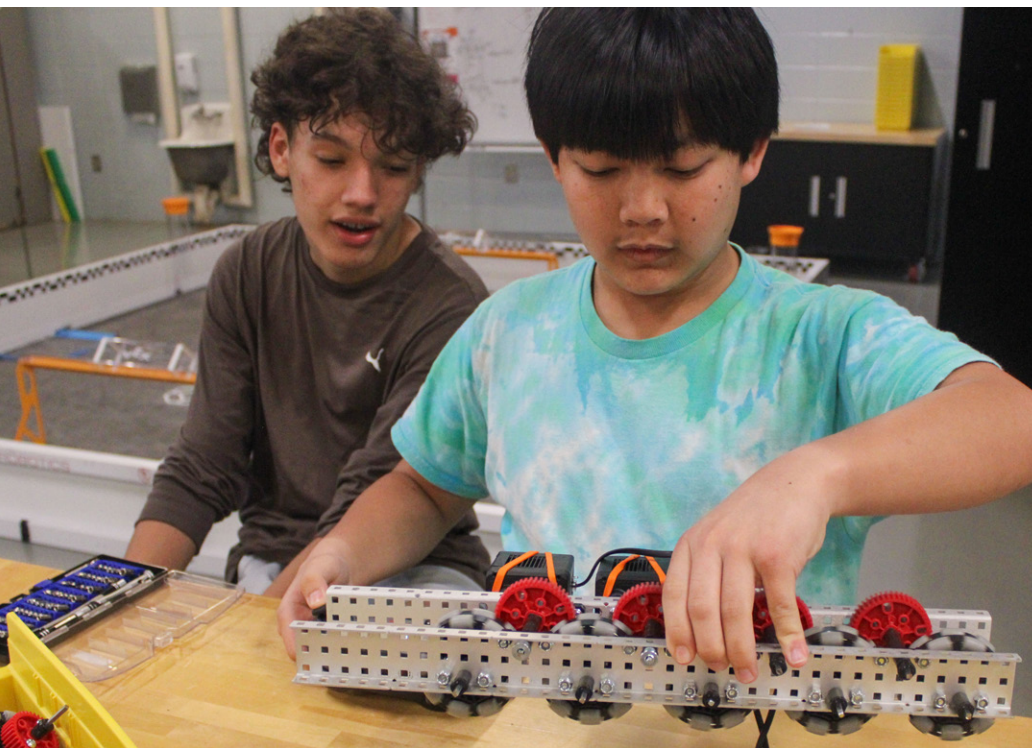
Cammie Lowe (11th grade) and Azaria Chalk (9th grade) focus on the message.



Didier Lorenzo (7th grade) shares differences between ASL and Japanese Sign Language.



Dayana Orellana (11th grade) describes the positive experience of an SCSD alumna.



National Technical Institute for the Deaf Regional STEM Center (NRSC) at Rochester Institute of Technology will host its 8th Annual V5RC competition in Colorado Springs, CO, in April. V5 Robotics is for high school. Carter Bryant (9th grade) and Toby Allen (10th grade) are on the V5 competition team along with Jasper Womick and Ryleigh Rabon, both seniors, under Coach Brett Grayson. Toby and Carter were the first robotics team members who began competing when SCSDB first established a robotics program four years ago and here, four years later, they are still committed to their passion for designing and engineering. These two boys won the Deaf national championship two years in a row. NRSC will also host its 7th Annual VEX IQ competition for the Deaf. Our School for the Deaf VEX IQ competition team, under Coach Jessica Gribble and Coach Cary Jones, is working hard on their robot design to play this year's new game called "Mix and Match."

STEM/STEAM powers academic days

National STEM/STEAM Day occurs annually on Nov. 8, but students at the School for the Deaf are regularly engaged in this learning through hands-on activities inside and outside the classroom.

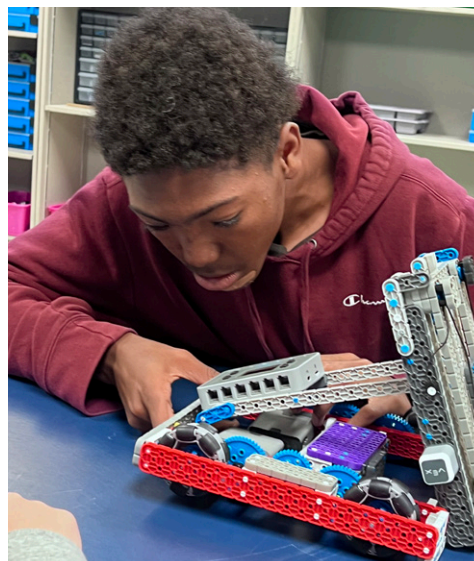
The day is meant to encourage children to explore their interests in the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and math. STEM education throughout the academic year allows students to embrace and explore STEM. Students learn about different STEM careers and how to pursue STEM-related fields.

Through the robotics and Aerial Drones program at SCSD, teachers and sponsors equip deaf and hard of hearing students with crucial skills for future STEM careers; foster creativity and problem-solving; enhance teamwork and communication; and provide practical experience with programming/coding and real-world technology.

"This lays a strong foundation for understanding the modern world, as our students learn best through visual, tactile, and hands-on experiences," said Jessica Gribble, science teacher, VEX IQ head coach, and Middle School Drone head coach. "Through STEM, we empower our students to overcome any challenges they face. Here at SCSD, we are very proud of our five robotics/drone teams as they meet and practice, preparing for their competitions that will take place this school year."



Didier Lorenzo (7th grade) tests the first of a few ideas.



Jeremiah McFadden (8th grade) works on his first robot design.



8th graders Jeremiah McFadden, standing, and Bryce McRae, seated, assemble their second robot design.

AAC

Applied Academic Center

Ryleigh Rabon (senior), wearing a safety vest and personal protective equipment, drives a riding lawn mower during her Power Equipment Technology class.



New greenhouse cultivates successful fall plant sale

Following the ribbon cutting on Oct. 1, the new greenhouse supplied its inaugural fall plant sale on Oct. 2 - 3, welcoming community members to support AAC's agriculture program.

While taking home beautiful plants for their gardens and porches, shoppers heard the excitement of staff and students about the new state-of-the-art addition greenhouse that provides students with accessible, hands-on learning opportunities in agriculture and horticulture.



Ava Raleigh (senior) carries yellow mums for a customer at the fall plant sale.



Kaitland Davis (senior) holds a pot of red mums at the fall plant sale.

Looking Ahead: Spring Plant Sale

Under the expert guidance of Annette Bodie, AAC's agriculture instructor, students have already begun preparing plants for the spring season. Annette and her students are cultivating a diverse selection that will be available at the spring plant sale March 30 - April 2.

The spring sale will feature:

- Annuals - colorful blooms perfect for seasonal displays
- Perennials - long-lasting, garden favorites that return year after year
- Vegetables - fresh varieties for home gardens
- Herbs - aromatic plants for cooking and landscaping

Public sales not only provide the community with quality plants but also give students valuable real-world experience in plant production, customer service, and business operations.



A healthy array of growing plants are on display for the fall sale.

Elementary school students will flip over cars they create

Holiday Craft Time for elementary students on Dec. 16 will be hosted by AAC instructor Andy Breitenbach who will lead the students in creating and decorating their own flip cars!

This will be more than just seasonal fun — it offers students in SCSD's elementary schools valuable opportunities to follow directions, work with different materials, and take pride in their completed projects. The hands-on activity will allow children to express their creativity while developing fine motor skills and experiencing the satisfaction of making something they can play with and enjoy.

The event annually creates wonderful memories and helps foster a sense of community and holiday spirit throughout the elementary schools.

Last year, students crafted adorable stackable snowmen that brought smiles to faces across campus. These festive creations showcased the students' artistic abilities and became cherished keepsakes for families. This year's flip cars promise to be just as exciting and engaging.



Two toy cars on a green and white track

Drawing up ideas with new tech

The Digital Arts and Design program updated its equipment this year, giving students the opportunity to learn on professional-level tools.

Seven Wacom Cintiq drawing tablets with built-in screens have been set up. These allow students to draw directly onto a screen, making for a more natural transition from paper to digital art. They are also more accessible for low vision students, who can now be closer to the screen as they draw. Students will use these to learn industry-level software, such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

The Digital Arts and Design classroom also saw the addition of two new Nikon Z5 mirrorless cameras. Mirrorless cameras, which have begun to replace DSLR cameras in professional photography, take photos more quickly and true to what the photographer sees.

These cameras also have a moveable LCD screen and two SD card slots so students are less likely to run out of storage while taking photos. Approved student photos are used in the yearbook, marketing materials, school decor, and of course the Buzz newsletter.



Izzy Collins (10th grade) uses a new Nikon Z5 mirrorless camera to take photos of class activities.



Yakera Martin (senior) practices drawing directly on the Cintiq tablet's screen.

Transition Services



Kendriyana Brown (senior) folds towels at the Marriott in Spartanburg.

Learning on the job

SCSDB job transition coaches empower students by providing them with the skills and resources needed to successfully transition from school to the workforce. This comprehensive program offers personalized career counseling, job training, and placement services, tailored to meet the unique needs of students. Students gain valuable real-world work experience with local businesses and organizations.



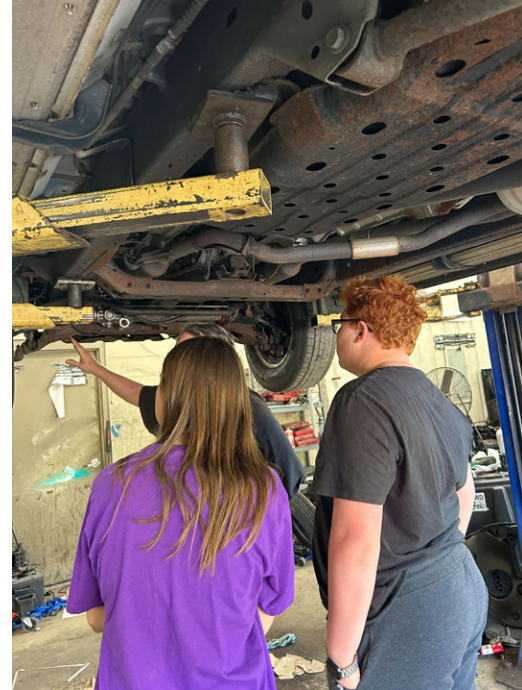
Above: TJ Jones (junior) slides a sheet of baked goods onto a cooling rack while working with Sodexo.



Zacchaeus Reaves (senior) packs paper bags with shelf stable food at Total Ministries.



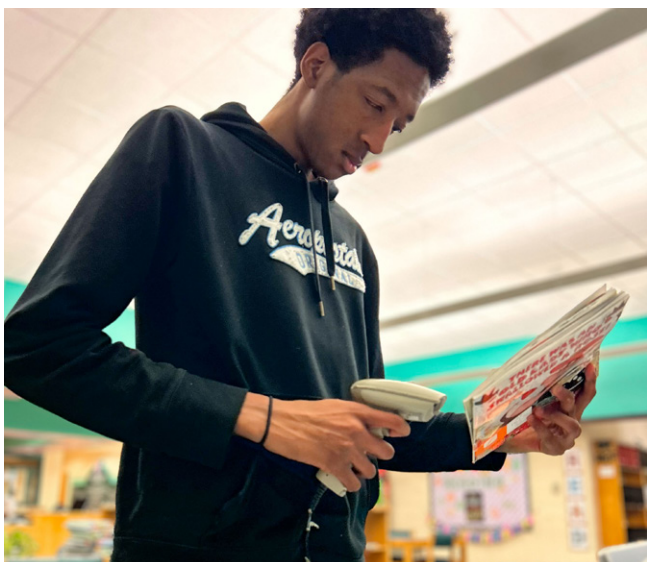
Evan Gimmaka (senior) works at Chick-fil-A.



Ryleigh Rabon (senior) and Robert Wofford (10th grade) visit Britt Automotive & Express Lube to learn the process of oil changes.



Library assistant Jennifer Dul and Brian Starkey (senior) work at the front desk in the library.



Tyrek Capers (11th grade) scans a book for a customer during the Scholastic Book Fair.



Seven Franklin (11th grade) shelves books while working in the library.

Library

Cleveland Learning Resource Center



Kaison Smith (2nd grade), Eden Sanderson (1st grade), and Zoe Smales-Craig (2nd grade) are ready for the Scholastic Book Fair to begin!

Scholastic Book Fair



Librarian Mary Diones assists students at the payment counter during check-out.



Ja'Aleeyah Riley (10th grade) considers which book to choose.



Izzy Collins (10th grade) checks out the selection of fantasy novels.



Mary Diones and Brian Starkey (senior) have some fun with the checkout scanner at the book fair. If you could be any book, which one would you choose?



Beth Osment (IT) reads aloud with an interpreter to a group of students from all three schools.



Kendra Aguilar (5th grade) and Hayden Peterson (1st grade) have snacks and questions.



School for the Deaf students check out a stack of "Star Wars" books.



Students are engaged as Beth Osment reads a book to them.



So many books to choose from! Dekoata Smales (4th grade) and Luna Murrell (3rd grade) review the options.



Fifth graders Hannah Fox and Knightlyn Greene are happy with their book choices.



Justin Bravo (4th grade) eats from a bag of popcorn that's the size of his head!



Ninth graders Jaka'i Coakley and Luis Zuniga-Ocampo choose cookies for a snack.

Fine Arts



Members of the SCSDB Chorus perform for upstate schools and faculty at the annual Mayors of Spartanburg Walk and Roll event.

Mayors of Spartanburg Walk and Roll Performance



Kaitland Davis (senior) was presented with a certificate by Mayor Jerome Rice of the City of Spartanburg following her speech at the event, where she shared insights about her work experience with the city.



Kaitland Davis (senior) poses with her certificate and City of Spartanburg Manager Mark Cleveland.

Tactile Artwork Creations Arts

Fine arts teacher Liz List's lesson plan, "Tactile Artwork Creations Arts," has been selected by the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Institute team as an "exemplar" in arts or arts-integrated education! Liz was invited to publish her lesson through ABC in partnership with the SC Department of Education's Instruction Hub. Her work may also be featured in ABC's District Arts Integration Toolkits.

Right: Tazmin Hill (10th grade) works on a loom in Liz List's high school art class.



Special Education

School is out for students but not teachers

The Professional Development/Teacher Workday on Oct. 10 finds faculty and staff engaging in life-long learning in small groups.



Two trainers from Goalbook facilitate progress-monitoring strategies and tools for student achievement.



Other staff meet in Swearingen Conference Center for Goalbook training. Cathi Holst responds during the discussion of strategies.



Sessions by Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) trainers give insight in de-escalation and opportunities to engage with students for positive behaviors and social experiences. Trainer Jameka Moses leads a presentation explaining the brain's response to crisis. This session is in the Cleveland Learning Resource Center.

See teachers teaching

Teachers and associates work hard to foster connections that lead to independence in skills and goal setting. Teachers bring in real life situations to help students apply knowledge and concepts. Often, teachers build academic foundational skills while also assisting students in growing their ASL, braille, or assistive tech skill sets.



CSA teacher Bridget Sitarski leads Sierra Stefani (senior) to solve math problems within a budget.



Lori Donguines develops first grader Hayden Peterson's literacy in braille at the School for the Blind.



CSA associate Ana Sousa increases 10th grader Tristan Bradley's communication in ASL while figuring out a math problem.

Athletics

INTRODUCING OUR **FALL TEAMS...**



Volleyball

Left to right: Ryleigh Rabon, Azaria Chalk, Kenzie Childress, Hannah Collins, Zoey Blackman, Yakera Martin, A'She-Rah Jeter, Cammie Lowe, Dayana Orellana, Kaylee Ellison, Lor'reyel McClinton; *Not pictured:* Assistant Coach Alyssa Carpenter, Head Coach Jessica Creech



Football

Back row: Russel Hill, Assistant Coach KC Smith, Assistant Coach Jon Placko, Assistant Coach Carl Duke, Head Coach Mike Sims, Team Manager Seven Franklin, and Team Manager Zeaveon Washington; *Middle row:* Malakhi Monroe, Robert Wofford, Bryce McRae, Kyle Van Der Berg, Jasper Womick, and Emmanuel Geronimo Marcos; *Front row:* Toby Allen, Jeremiah McFadden, Carter Bryant, Wyatt Harvell, and TJ Jones



Cheer

Left to right: Head Coach Shannon Wright, Emma Atkinson, Emily Hernandez, Aaliyah Zimmerman, and Assistant Coach Jacqueline Booker



Special Olympics Bowling

Back row: Ca'mayra Boulware, Jaka'i Coakley, and Luis Zuniga-Ocampo; *Front row:* Da'Juan Peake and Tristan Bradley



Special Olympics Volleyball

Back row: Head Coach Aly Davis, Jaka'i Coakley, Tristan Bradley, DJ Peake, Luis Zuniga-Ocampo, and Assistant Coach Rachel Moreno; *Front row:* Jonathan Perez-Gomez, Ca'mayra Boulware, and Sierra Stefani



Boys Goalball

Left to right: Assistant Coach Cynica Middleton, Tazmin Hill, Michael Clifton, Tomier Sanders, Team Manager Tyrek Capers, Melvin Fuentes Gomez, Cameron Stitt, Zacchaeus Reaves, and Head Coach Gerald Hughes



Girls Goalball

Back row: Coach Mary Lister, Team Manager Breanne Sharpe, Assistant Coach Susan Gault; *Front row:* Piper Graham, Reniece Vassell, Elaine Horton, and Izzy Collins

Goalball teams travel to Savannah for tournament

The SCSDB Girls and Boys goalball teams performed their best at the 4th Annual Georgia Blind Sports Association Goalball Tournament in Savannah, GA, Sept. 19 – 21.

The Boys team advanced to "The Final Four" and lost to Florida in the Bronze Medal Game. Overall, the boys came in 4th place. Coach Gerald Hughes was appreciative of the staff and parent chaperones, bus driver, and fellow coaches.

The Lady Hornets fought hard against the Georgia Blind Sports Girls Team, Ontario, the Georgia Academy for the Blind Girls Team, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind Girls Team. Piper Graham scored two goals overall; Elaine Horton scored one goal overall; Izzy Collins scored three goals overall; and Reniece Vassell scored five goals overall. "Although we did not bring home a win, they represented SCSDB well," exclaimed Coach Lister.

Residential Life



SCSDB students and staff commemorate the evening with a photo including two of the Scouts staff members who lead with such enthusiasm.

Scouts Camp Out

Students and staff from the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind gathered for a fun-filled Scouts Camp Out in the Civitan Gym. The evening was packed with team-building activities, games, and camping experiences designed to build confidence and camaraderie. Everyone enjoyed the chance to bond and make lasting memories under the “indoor stars.”

The enthusiasm and leadership of Scouts staff members helped make the event a success, providing students with a memorable night of learning, teamwork, and fun. The dedicated team worked together to create an engaging camping experience right on campus.



Scouts staff members proudly pose during the SCSDB Scouts Camp Out held in the Civitan Gym.



Three students and a member of the Scouts staff share smiles and laughter while settling into their tent for the night. The event gave students a chance to experience the excitement of camping in a safe and supportive environment.

SCSDB's Got Talent showcases variety of performers

From powerhouse vocals and moving ASL performances to high-energy dance moves and dazzling Hula-Hoop tricks that wowed the crowd, the SCSDB's Got Talent showcase on Sept. 30 had it all!

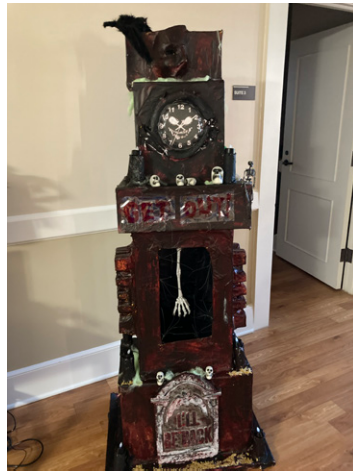
SCSDB students and staff lit up the Pulliam Auditorium in Walker Hall stage with creativity, courage, and pure fun.

LaTarsha Durrah, residential life direct support manager, kept the show flowing as master of ceremonies. She had the audience laughing, cheering, and on the edge of their seats from start to finish.

The Spring showcase is already in the works, and students and staff are encouraged to be part of the performances.



Azael Cruz (9th grade) and Da'Juan Peake (11th grade) give their thanks to the audience after their performance.



TLC is in the Halloween spirit!

From glowing jack-o'-lanterns to lurking tarantulas, the Hughston Transition Living Center (TLC) was transformed with frightfully festive décor to send a shiver down your spine.

No space was left un-haunted. Even the floral arrangements were “spooked out” which added the perfect eerie touch throughout!

A spirited shout out to Crystal Imig, residential advisor, for conjuring up this creative transformation. The attention to details was nothing short of spook-tacular!



Students had a great time celebrating Spirit Week with a social at Bock Activity Center.

Top left: Azael Cruz (9th grade) and staff play pool together.

Top right: Residential students Carter Bryant (9th grade), Robert Wofford (10th grade), and Didier Lorenzo (7th grade) find hanging out with each other in Bock, watching TV, and playing games a fun change from evenings in their individual residential halls.

Left: Mozzarella sticks and drinks are enjoyed by Zarannah Womick (5th grade), Anyeli Ortiz Sabillon (5th grade), Terah Allen (8th grade), and Sierra Stefani (senior).

Statewide Outreach Services

DeafBlind Project staff define literacy for little learners

“How do you define literacy for young children?” This was the question posed to attendees of the Early Childhood Partnerships for Inclusion (ECPI) Conference on Sept. 25.

Mary Robbins and Krista Olsen, technical assistants for the SC DeafBlind Project, had the privilege of talking to Early Childhood educators, future educators, administrators, and families about providing foundational literacy skills for children with complex care and/or learning needs.

Participants were encouraged to think of literacy as experiences that are individualized, accessible, and meaningful. Throughout the session, examples of literacy were demonstrated through pictures, videos, hands-on materials, and interactive discussion.

This Early Childhood Partnership event was funded by the South Carolina Department of Education and was held at Richland District 2.



Following the session, DeafBlind Project staff build connections with professionals, families, and other agencies with a shared goal of enriching the lives of families and children in South Carolina. DeafBlind Project staff from left to right: Director Robert Hill and Technical Assistants Krista Olsen and Mary Robbins



Four teachers are seated at student desks. They are wearing green goggles to represent a visual difference and ear plugs to simulate a hearing difference. They are tactilely exploring items in brown paper bags placed in front of them.

Aiken County teachers learn basics of deafblindness

A “DeafBlind 101” session for Teachers of the Visually Impaired and of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Aiken County on Sept. 17 answered the call for technical assistance.

The educators wanted to ensure they were providing quality assessments for students with dual-sensory differences. In the training, Mary Robbins and Krista Olsen, technical assistants for the SC DeafBlind Project, included information about identification and referral, basic

strategies for working with children experiencing dual sensory differences, samples of products used with complex learners, and deafblind simulation and discussion.

Future sessions will allow the DeafBlind Project team to work with additional service providers in Aiken County. In addition, the team will assist in developing and supporting assessment protocols for students with dual-sensory differences through a Professional Learning Community. The product of this partnership will have a great impact on the students served in Aiken County and is intended to serve as a model for other teams across South Carolina!

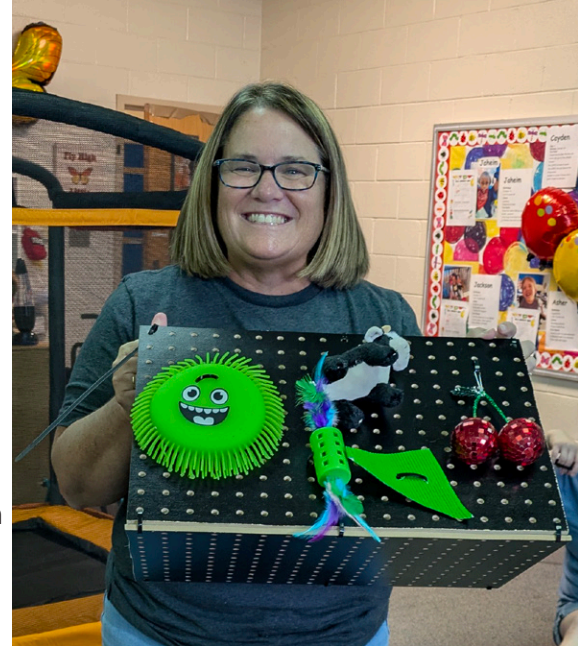
Grownups need Active Learning, too!

Teachers and staff at Ballentine Elementary in Irmo explored and experienced firsthand “Active Learning” in a “Make and Take” workshop led by the SC DeafBlind Project.

Technical Assistants with the DeafBlind Project, Mary Robbins and Krista Olsen, came ready for a day of learning and creating with this Lexington-Richland District 5 educational team.

Active Learning is a strategy developed for complex learners who do not independently explore the world around them. During this workshop, the team learned that Active Learning Environments could be used to create individualized student-centered learning activities that help children learn to initiate and engage in meaningful activities safely.

Right: An “Active Learning Make and Take” workshop participant displays the sensory board that she created following the informational session.



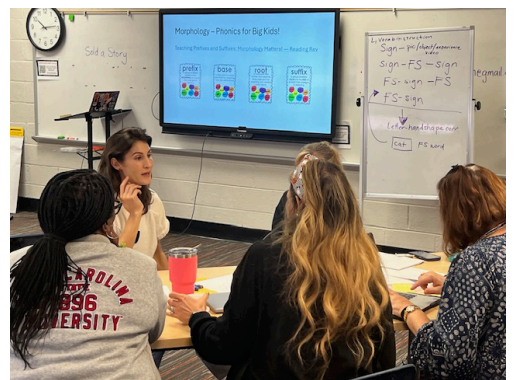
Low country educators go in-depth with the “Science of Reading”

More than 30 teachers from the low country undertook professional development training in early September, entitled “Big 6 for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners” and featuring Dr. Stacey Tucci.

Dr. Tucci is the co-author, owner, and national training director of the Foundations for Literacy program. As more and more SC school districts utilize the Foundations for Literacy program, it was necessary to have Dr. Tucci provide guidance on how Foundations fits into the broader “Science of Reading” conversations.

The new SC State Reading Plan requires that “reading instruction, interventions, resources, programs, and other reading services, are based on evidence-based practices. Dr. Tucci’s training provided evidence-based approaches for students who are deaf and hard of hearing — taking into consideration three modalities of communication: listening and spoken language, American Sign Language, and a blend of the two previous modalities.

In addition to the “Big 5” Essential Components to Reading Instruction, identified by the National Reading Panel (Phonemic Awareness, Systematic Instruction in Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension), Dr. Tucci stressed the importance of Language as the 6th essential element for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Communication exchanges are non-negotiable in literacy development in deaf and hard of hearing learners.



Dr. Stacey Tucci, wearing a white shirt and with her hand up to her chin, provides intensive one-on-one training to attendees during an activity. She is an international consultant and trainer on literacy development for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Dr. Tucci is also the parent of a deaf adult child.



Staff go on the road again

Statewide Deaf & Hard of Hearing Education Services (SDHHS) staff hit the road providing educational assessments and consultations, along with direct and indirect service to students.

The SDHHS currently partners with 21 local education agencies across the state. Specialized instruction utilizes Listening and Spoken language strategies, ASL, or a blending of both spoken English and visual language approaches to support students -- based on their individual preference, skills, and educational plans.

Allen Sanderson, teacher of the deaf with the statewide division of outreach services, uses a fun pointer on a screen image to engage a young student in answering his questions.

SCSDB Foundation



A close-up view of the quilts, featuring ASL "I Love You" hands.

Stitching a legacy of language and love

From Conway, Rose Russ began a heartfelt journey, stitching together the threads of her family's history and her own creativity.

Rose's father, a graduate of SCSDB in 1955, was hard-of-hearing due to Usher's disease. Her mother attended the Cave Spring School for the Deaf, now known as the Georgia School for the Deaf. While Rose's mother was totally Deaf, she possessed a remarkable talent for quilting, a craft that Rose admired but never learned in her childhood.

"I may not have inherited my mother's quilting skills, but I fondly remember the details of her work," said Russ. "I decided to try quilting myself, using some of my mother's pieces she left behind."

Rose's mother sewed many variations of American Sign Language "I Love You" hands. After her passing, Rose was inspired to repurpose the hands by sewing them onto 16 quilts which she donated to the Kelly's Kids.

"Through quilting, Rose Russ has honored her family's history and language," said Sam Hook, executive director of the SCSDB Foundation. "These quilts, woven with love, will be cherished by Kelly's Kids for many years to come."



In her home's sewing studio, Rose Russ is busy crafting a quilt.



President Jolene Madison and SCSDB Foundation staff present the quilts to Kelly's Kids.

New greenhouse gives students hands-on, accessible learning space

Donors were on hand to help students and staff cut the ribbon, visit the new greenhouse, and marvel at its advanced technical components on Oct. 1.

Under sunny skies, the SCSDb Foundation held a Ribbon Cutting to celebrate the opening of the new 24 feet by 60 feet greenhouse for students at the Applied Academic Center.

The “Cultivating Careers” program began as a vision of Director of Career Technical Education Dee Stark and agricultural science teacher Annette Bodie. They dreamed of having a larger, more accessible greenhouse. This new building would allow students in wheelchairs to have room to work. It would make it possible for blind/visually-impaired students with canes to navigate through the building and for deaf/hearing-impaired students to have enough space to see the interpreters while learning agricultural science.

The Foundation raised more than \$80,000 which was combined with money from grants to the AAC. At the ribbon cutting event, Annette expressed thanks to the late staff member Lisa Bowen, and also Ben Riddle, (both in the SCSDb finance division) for their efforts to get the project through the state approval process. As a result of everyone’s hard work, students have a state-of-the-art greenhouse in which to learn new STEM skills to prepare for jobs in agri-business.

The Foundation is grateful for the grants and gifts from AFL, Downtown Spartanburg Sertoma Club, Foundation for the Carolinas – Longleaf Fund, Milliken & Company Charitable Foundation, Peggy Bolin, Sidney DeVaul, The Episcopal Church of the Advent, and Tractor Supply. Their generosity helped make a dream into a reality for SCSDb’s students.



Students, school staff, and donors cut the ceremonial ribbon.

SCSDb Foundation benefits from Michelin Charity Golf Tournament

In May 2024, the SCSDb Foundation was selected to be one of the charities benefitting from the annual Michelin Charity Golf Tournament over a three-year period.

The charities chosen were from North America and other locations around the world, representing areas served by Michelin tire company plants.

In 2024, the golf tournament was canceled due to Hurricane Helene. However, in January 2025, the Foundation received funding from money pledged by suppliers before the event. Fast-forward to

this fall, and nine volunteers from the Foundation and SCSDb were ready to volunteer at the October events.

On the evening of Oct. 5, at the AC Hotel in Greenville, Executive Director Sam Hook and Director of Development, Weslie Higdon, participated in the pairings party. They hosted a display table, and then enjoyed a dinner for representatives of the charities, Michelin suppliers, and Michelin staff. At the event, it was announced that each of the 10 charities would receive a check for \$77,000!

On the next day, SCSDb’s volunteers were stationed at either Green Valley Country Club or Greenville Country Club golf courses. The assigned task was to verify hole-in-one shots. Each time a new group of golfers came through tees staffed by SCSDb, they were told about SCSDb and the Foundation.

In the fall of 2026, the SCSDb Foundation will have another opportunity to participate in the golf tournament and be the recipient of a third and final gift. “We are grateful to Michelin for supporting our students through this charity event,” said Sam.



Sam Hook and the Michelin Man give a thumbs up at the display table.



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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 **Angela Fordyce** at **864-577-7506** or admissions@scsdb.org for more information about the application and enrollment process and/or to schedule a campus tour.

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**.