

HIGHLIGHTS



SOUTH CAROLINA
Developmental Disabilities Council

October 2018

The mission of the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council is to provide leadership in planning, funding, and implementing initiatives that lead to improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families through advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change.

EMPLOYMENT EMPOWERMENT

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an opportunity to celebrate many contributions of workers with disabilities. More than a billion people in the world are living with a disability. Developmental Disabilities Councils advocate in the United States and its territories to ensure people with disabilities have meaningful, equal access to employment opportunities and are able to successfully navigate the workplace.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month not only provides the opportunity to heighten awareness but also promotes respect and helps to educate others regarding the abilities of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities. The South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council wants to have stronger conversations on important topics on how to include people with disabilities: Letting it be known that every relationship is significant, each voice is unique, and every individual counts. Working with people with disabilities will enhance your life, especially when you learn about the adaptive and unique ways they manage the same tasks as people without disabilities.

The South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council is excited to feature three of our Council Members who continuously strive to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities within their communities as well as those throughout the state: Connie Gallman, is employed with the Newberry County Disability and Special Needs Board. Derrick Means is employed as a library media assistant at Spartanburg High School and Kimberly Maple works at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter.



Governor Henry McMaster signed the proclamation declaring October 2018 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Carolina.

State of South Carolina

Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, South Carolinians with disabilities have the same aspirations to competitively work and contribute to their communities as everyone else; and

WHEREAS, business and community leaders have called for a diverse and capable work force to further advance the economy of the Palmetto State; and

WHEREAS, the support and cooperation of all people are needed to reduce the attitudinal and physical barriers that hinder full acceptance of people with disabilities and their rightful place in employment; and

WHEREAS, National Disability Employment Awareness Month recognizes that individuals with disabilities are capable, contributing members of society worthy of full access and inclusion in South Carolina's workforce.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Henry McMaster, Governor of the great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim October 2018 as

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to work together to advance the message that people with disabilities are equal to the task.



Handwritten signature of Henry McMaster in black ink.

HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

CONNIE GALLMAN



Connie Gallman is the Administrative Assistant for Newberry County Disabilities and Special Needs Board. Connie has been employed with this organization for a little over 10 years. Connie states that she speaks up for herself and she is not afraid to speak her mind and say how she feels. She states she is also not afraid to speak for others who struggle with their disability.

Connie says her parents were a huge driving force in her life. Her friend and main support person Cindy is a constant motivator. She states that Cindy will not allow her to just settle for anything. Even if the answer is “NO”, Cindy knows that Connie is able to figure out another way. Connie’s support person is extremely beneficial in helping her follow through on things.

She will not do the work for Connie, but she pushes her to do the work because she understands Connie can. They truly support each other.



Cindy Farr pictured with Connie

When asked, “Why not settle for what is handed to you?” Connie’s powerful, bone-chilling reply was, “WHY SHOULD I? We need things just like other people have. We have to work hard and strive, and we deserve things in life as well!” Connie shared, “just because I have a disability, I can do just as much or more because of my disability. I have to work harder. Even when people do not understand, I still have to push through because I don’t fit the norm. Even when people stereotype you, you have to ignore them and push harder. This is why advocacy is so important to me. Advocacy is a strong word and it is important because we want to be strong leaders and help others who desire things out of life as well.”

Connie states, “I have never thought of myself as a role model. I’ve just been working for 15 years and serving on boards, I am just Connie; but I guess it does feel good that people look up to me or consider me to be a role model.”

“Employment is very important because people like to have money in their pockets whether you have a disability or not. People with disabilities like to go places and do things too.”



The day of homeownership

Connie is a part of Newberry County Disabilities and Special Needs Board, IMPACT SC (self-advocacy council) and the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council. She works with Voices of Pride and she is a Partners in Policymaking® graduate. She also works with the Ruth S. Pugh Foundation and SC Partnership for Disability Organizations (SC PDO). Connie was one of the Disability Advocates who fought to change the language in the law; removing the “R” word. Connie states “the “R” word is like a curse word, it makes you feel down and discourages you. It is degrading and when I hear it, I ask the question, Do you know the definition of that word? It really makes me angry?”



Connie loves her husband Leon and her dog Scooby-doo, eating ice cream sandwiches, reading Hollywood News magazines, shopping for pocketbooks, traveling and trying new things. Connie states her faith is strong and she wants to continue doing what she is doing and be able to enjoy retirement one day. Connie is a newlywed and enjoys being with her husband. She states, we have our days, but we make each other laugh. Connie states she also enjoys working with good co-workers at the Newberry Disabilities and Special Needs Board.



Connie and Derrick take time to pose after the Council Meeting

DERRICK MEANS



Derrick Means is currently employed as a library media assistant at Spartanburg High School. Derrick states what makes him unique is his sense of encouraging others to succeed at whatever they put their mind to. He stated his parents pushed him to do things despite his disability. "They shared that I would have to push myself and not focus on my disabilities. When they saw I could do things for myself, they never allowed me to settle for the excuse of having a disability. They made me focus on my abilities."

When asked "Why not settle for what is handed to you?" Derrick stated, "my parents taught me that if you want something out of life; no if's, and's, or but's about it, you have to work for it. I cannot go to the electric company and pay my bill with food stamps. It takes money and we deserve things out of life. You have to remain motivated and not lazy or use your disability as an excuse. Too many times I see people with disabilities say I can go to a party, but when it comes to work, they get lazy. Derrick stated, "Nothing in life is free" whether you have a disability or not."

He stated there are times when people with disabilities are given an excuse or a "pass". We have abilities, just give us the opportunities to go out and express ourselves and show that we do have abilities and are capable. Don't look down on us, because we have a disability. If you look at the word disability, at the end of the word is ABILITY!

Derrick stated Advocacy is important because people do not know what you want unless you speak up. Don't wait for someone to tell you what is important to you. You tell them the things that are important in your life. No one can speak for



you better than you. Being a role model makes him feel good about himself and that having a positive impact on people and helping them strive to do better re-energizes him.

Derrick shared that employment is important because nothing ever comes to fruition unless you go out and work for it. We have the ability to compete for jobs and make an impact. Sometimes when people have disabilities, they can have extremely high medical bills. Being able to afford medication, treatment, assistive devices (i.e., wheel chairs, crutches, canes, etc.) is expensive. We need money too, not just for medical bills, but to enjoy life.

Derrick currently works with the “Hire Me” campaign aimed at helping people with disabilities gain employment. He goes out to different companies and advocates on why they should hire people with disabilities. Derrick states when it comes to advocacy, he teaches others to advocate for themselves. He enjoys working with DD Council because it helps him increase his knowledge regarding what is taking place around the state, in different communities and how we can best affect change. Derrick is a part of the Developmental Disabilities Council, Medical League of Union County, and Equip. His favorite things are hanging out with his family and friends, watching sports, spending time with his girlfriend, playing bongos and congas, music and watching television. Derrick states his faith in God is strong and he wants to do motivational speaking, write a book, travel around the world and tell his story and inspire others to succeed at whatever they put their mind to. Derrick states he believes in living life because you never know when your time may come.



Derrick speaking at the State House on Disability Day

Kimberly Maple

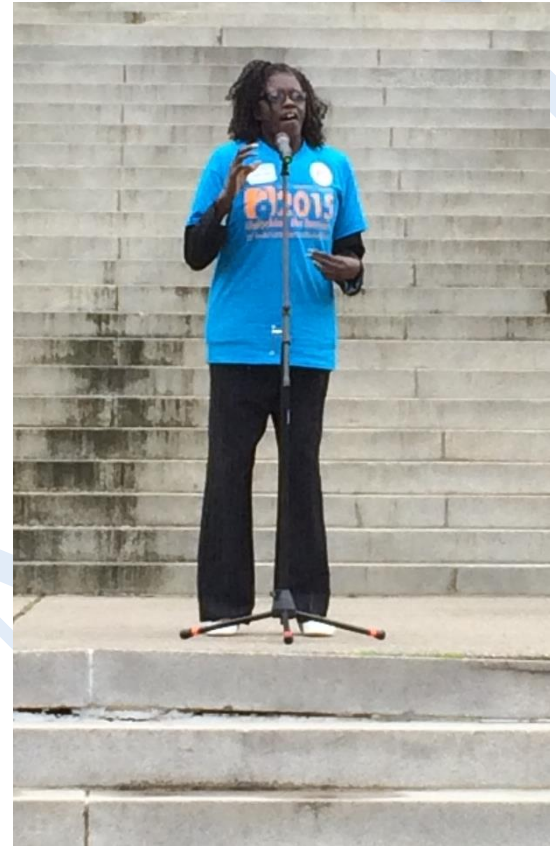
When asked, what makes you different, Kimberly Maple proudly declared, I have a big mouth and I stand my ground. I let people know how I feel and if they cross the line, I try to teach them how to treat people with a disability. Kimberly stated her parents pushed her and motivated her. They told her not to worry about what people said just for her to do what was right and necessary to succeed. Kimberly stated she learned a lot about advocating, by watching others who came before her.

Kimberly stated advocacy is important to her because she is committed to helping people understand the barriers that exist. That this is real and just because you may not experience things does not mean they do not exist. Employment should not be a struggle, but an open unbiased opportunity for everyone even with a disability. She stated I need money and things just like everyone else and being able to do nice things and go places and pay my bills. My bills do not stop just because I don't have a job and they certainly don't stop because of my disability.



Kimberly, was also one of the people who was instrumental in changing the language in the law and removing the “R” word. She is a part of IMPACT SC, Developmental Disabilities Council and has done several speaking engagements including advocacy days at the state house. Kimberly stated that these are important to her because she enjoys being a part of programs and seeing things change for the better.

Kimberly likes to write and is currently working on her book she hopes to publish one day. Kimberly’s faith is strong, and she believes she will accomplish her goals of receiving her diploma, becoming a supervisor and one day becoming a nursing assistant. Kimberly stated all these things help her build her confidence and help mold her into the person she is. She states she wants to become an even stronger advocate, not just in the disability community, but a strong voice for all people around the state.



<https://www.hiremesc.org/employers>

The “Hire Me” campaign answers questions regarding disabilities, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) such as,

- Where can I learn more about reasonable accommodations?
- What agencies can assist with my efforts?
- What are my tax incentives for hiring an individual with a disability?

Some powerful quotes by employers are:

- Employers noted that 59% of accommodations cost nothing and 75% reported that the accommodations were either very effective or extremely effective. Source: AskJan.org
- Employers consistently rate works with disabilities as average or above average in performance, quality and quantity of work, flexibility to demands, attendance, and safety. Source: Virginia Commonwealth University
- 92% of the American public view companies that hire people with disabilities more favorably, 87 % prefer to give their business to companies that hire people with disabilities. Source: Virginia Commonwealth University

Self-Advocate statement: “You can hire someone with a disability and in doing so, help your business thrive!”