

The Village Group

Bridging the gap for a better Community

Celebrating 10 years of helping youth



This past year was a monumental one for The Village Group. It was our 10th year and not only did we reflect on our past accomplishments, we built on them and positioned ourselves for a second decade of improving lives, broadening young minds and helping our community.

We made some exciting new connections, grew programs including the Summer Academy, so we could reach more young people, and helped make another year of great memories for youth and volunteers.

The Village Group never would have made it to the point it has without some special people who deserve a very special thanks. Those people include our volunteers and members of our Board of Directors — past and present. It's also important that we recognize our benefactors. We're blessed that they are too numerous to list them all here, but we couldn't do what we do without those who donate to The Village Group.

We're also grateful for support from our local media,

which helps us spread the word about programs we make available to youth in Georgetown County.

We've received exceptional support from Georgetown County School District under the leadership of Dr. Randy Dozier, and we certainly hope to continue that relationship for the betterment of our youth.

There have been many people who helped and influenced the growth of our organization from the original conceptual meeting through today. I wish I could

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The Village Group named County's Nonprofit of the Year

The Village Group, its board of directors, staff and volunteers were honored in May, when the organization was named Georgetown County Nonprofit of the Year.

The presentation was made during the Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce's 98th annual meeting and gala during presentation of the 2015 Business Excellence Awards.

Recipients are selected based on the following factors: stability and/or growth, innovation, ability to overcome challenges, commitment to community, and unique value to the community. The Village Group is proud to have been recognized and will strive to maintain and improve upon this reputation in 2016 and beyond.



Ray Funnye, executive director of The Village Group, accepts the Nonprofit of the Year award from presenter Adrel Langley of Santee Electric.

Celebrating 10 years

Continued from front page

name them all. Though I can't, their contributions are appreciated and helped make this organization into what it is today. We look forward to making new friends who will help guide The Village Group's growth in the decades to come.

Personally, my biggest thank you, of course, has to go to my wonderful wife Queen and my family for their support and contributions to this endeavor.

As it has been since day one, our goal will continue to be to make a difference in the lives of young people. That mission includes halting the "summer slide" in reading and math for students, and summer enrichment programs, such as educational field trips and tours. I ask you to continue to lend your support as we look to future programs and endeavors to help us continue our mission.

Monetary donations of all sizes are always appreciated. For information on how you can donate, see below. If you can't donate, there are other ways to contribute. Contact us about becoming a volunteer or sharing a skill.

*Ray C. Funnye,
Executive Director*

Scenes
from our
10th year



We need your help!

The Village Group has already reached out and joined forces with numerous community organizations and individuals. We need your financial support to help sustain this important community project, which has such a significant impact on the lives of so many of our area's young people.

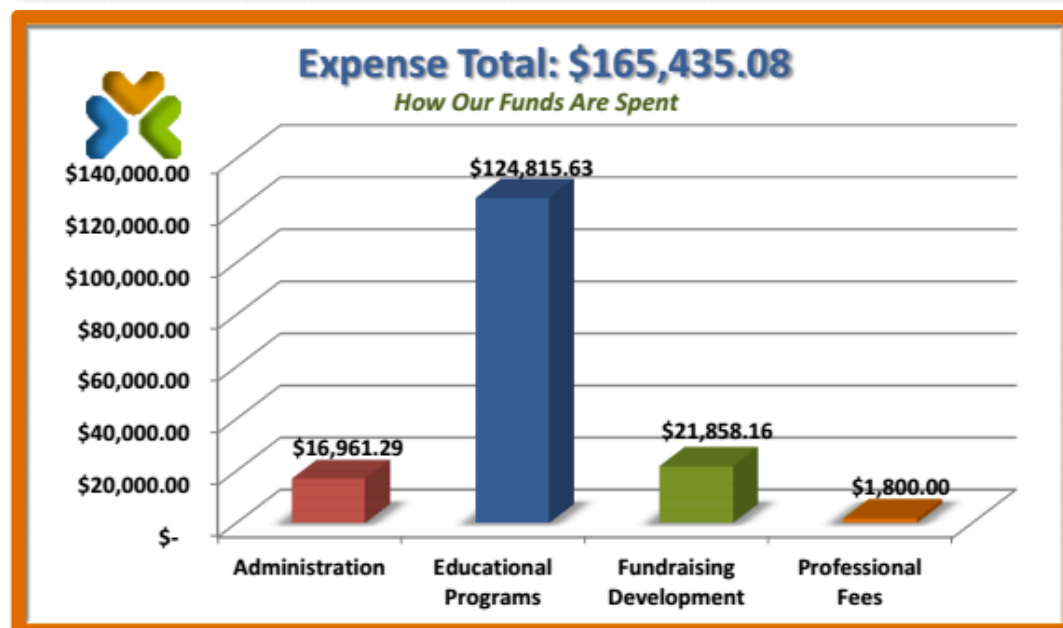
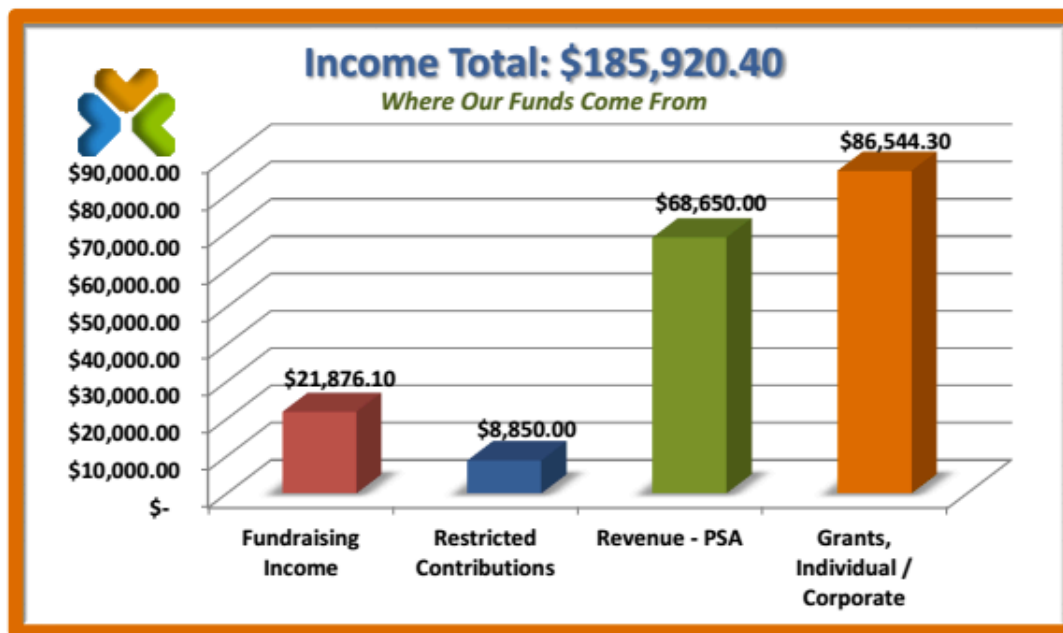
We ask that you please consider making a tax deductible contribution so that we can continue our work. Donations can be made online at www.thevillagegroup.org, or you can mail your donation to:
The Village Group, P.O. Box 700, Georgetown, S.C. 29442.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2015

The Village Group had some excellent financial accomplishments during 2015. Among them, we're proud to report a 34 percent increase in net income from 2014! While we were determined to keep overhead expenses down last year, our administration cost increased by 7 percent due to investment in capacity building needed to strengthen the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the organization.

Nevertheless, we want to express our sincerest thanks to those who gave their time and resources in support of The Village Group. We ask you to please continue your support in one of the following ways:

- 1) Tell one new person about The Village Group.
- 2) Send us a note about how involvement with The Village Group has touched your life, or
- 3) Make a financial gift and have a direct impact on the lives of youth in our community!



Summer Academy has record year

The Village Group's Plantersville Summer Academy, which administers a math- and literacy-focused educational curriculum for 1st- through 9th-graders, had a record 236 students in 2015.

That was up from 198 the previous year, and there were still 30 children on a waiting list. Those numbers demonstrate how the academy has grown since it started six years ago.

"The program has grown tremendously over the years. I think the biggest change is we are focusing on ways to not only provide meaningful summer experience for the kids, but also hone in on reading and math," said executive director Ray Funnye. "We've realized in post-testing where our deficiencies happen to be. The math scores were decent, but the reading scores left some challenging opportunities, so we are working to help the youngsters' reading and comprehension abilities."

In addition to educational programs, students enjoyed activities including swimming lessons, basketball camp, field trips and a visit from disco legend Gloria Gaynor.

Funnye said the program couldn't operate without its partners

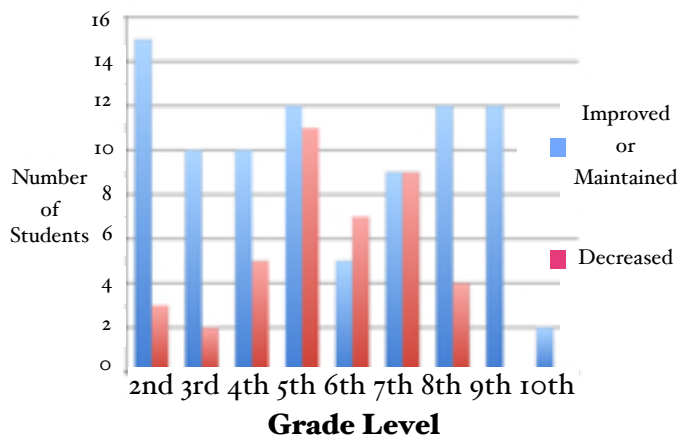


Students on the first day of the 2015 Summer Academy.

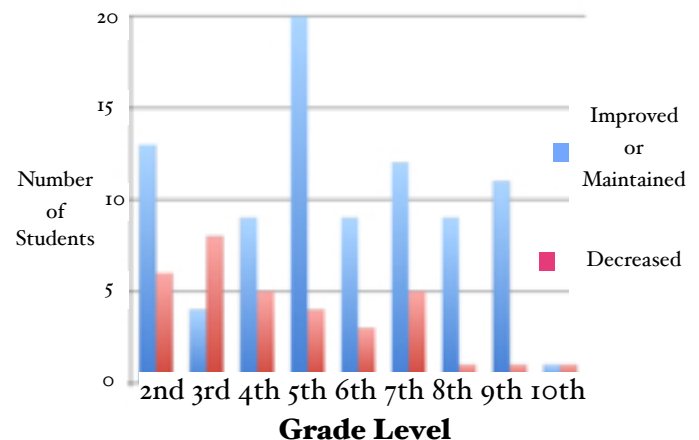
"All kinds of people make this program a reality. From the bus driver to the custodian and kitchen help, it takes all of us to make this a reality for youngsters attending the Plantersville Summer Academy," Funnye said.

Article courtesy of Southstrand News and Taylor Griffith.

Student Progress — Easy CBM Math



Student Progress — Easy CBM Reading



Above are pre- and post-assessments from the 2015 Plantersville Summer Academy showing scores for reading and math. An overwhelming number of students showed improved or maintained scores in both categories.

Music legend Gloria Gaynor visits Summer Academy

The Queen of Disco, Gloria Gaynor, came to speak to students at the Plantersville Summer Academy, as well as guests, last June. She has a vacation residence in Murrells Inlet and took time out of her busy schedule to stop by to deliver a message of strength, hope and spirit. It's something those present won't soon forget.

"She inspired them never to give up," said Ray Funnye, the Village Group's executive director. "She told them to work hard and press on. Her visit made a sizable impact for our program."

Gaynor's best known hit, "I Will Survive" was recorded in 1978 and was certified double platinum. Decades later, the song of personal strength still resonates with people today.



Gloria Gaynor is pictured with youth from the Plantersville Summer Academy in June.



TVG receives \$10k donation in honor of Frieda Smith

In December, Montie and Terrance Meehan of New York made a \$10,000 donation to The Village Group. The donation was in honor of the late Frieda Smith, Montie Meehan's mother.

"We are thrilled to contribute to The Village Group," she said.

"The group's mission is all about the next generation and making sure that each child has access to education and an unrestricted set of dreams for their adult lives."

The funds will be used to help pay staff to assist with capacity building of the organization's programs. The Village group relies on generous donations such as this to positively impact youth in the Plantersville community.

The Village Group takes part in regional teen summit

2015 brought an exciting experience for teens involved in The Village Group when the organization was a partner in the annual Teen Expo in September at Horry-Georgetown Technical College. The one-day expo was a chance for teens in Georgetown and Horry counties to voice their opinions about their community, hear motivational speakers and receive information on the next steps after high school.

The event was geared toward teens ages 13-18 and their parents. It delivered a positive, uplifting message, utilizing talented performers and speakers from across South Carolina. Scenarios portrayed were intended to help youth deal with everyday issues and inspire them to become better citizens and succeed in life.

Students also received information and spoke with representatives from nonprofits, receiving valuable information on the services these agencies provide. They also received information on colleges, internships, jobs, health screenings and mentoring.

There were also gender-specific sessions, for which males and females were separated for a conversational-style program. A breakout session was devoted to parents to help them with issues they face in raising teens, and last but not least, all students received school supplies.

This was a wonderful and exciting event, and the Village Group was honored to participate, said Ray Funnye, executive director.



Summer Academy continues partnership with Duke

Since 2013, Benjamin N. Duke Scholars have had the privilege of partnering with the Plantersville Summer Academy. The B.N. Duke Scholarship program is a merit scholarship that offers full support for four years at Duke University, and two summers of community engagement — one in the Carolinas, one abroad.

Importantly, these scholars are residents of the Carolinas who distinguish themselves in terms of their outstanding academic records and commitment to service. The rising sophomores spend 10 weeks in Georgetown living together and working with the community. They are eager to make a difference in their native Carolinas and make a positive impact on the lives of the young people they work with over the summer.

Each May, the scholars trek down the S.C. Coast, full of energy, excitement and eagerness to engage their community partners. Four students are lucky to be placed in internships at the Summer Academy. They are given the opportunity to teach students, create newsletters, chaperone field trips, implement new programming, work closely with students and establish new courses for middle and high school-aged youth.

The scholars act as role models and mentors, teaching through words and actions, that education

is not only important to life-long success, but can also be fun. They work hard to show the students that asking questions and being open to new information and experiences will enrich their lives and put them on a path to life-long success.

Shubham Patel, a sophomore scholar, summarized his experience at the Summer Academy in 2015 this way: “I have learned that the community must make an effort to help one another. The motto of The Village Group is that ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’ The Summer Academy is a great way to create a village and keep the students’ minds active over the summer, avoiding other undesirable activities, and positively influence students by exposing them to dedicated faculty. It’s a great model for better education in the community. If the students become inspired or gain a better mastery of academic topics they learn during the regular school year, they will be able to do more in the classroom the next fall. The Summer Academy helps them do that.”

The B.N. Duke Scholars look forward to partnering with Plantersville Summer Academy again in 2016 and for many summers to come.

*Article courtesy of Jenny Wood Crowley, Ph.D.,
Duke University*

TVG celebrates 10 years with gala, presents awards

The Village Group's model for student success parallels the state's profile of a 21st century graduate, which sets the goal for every high school student to be prepared for the next step, whatever that might be.

Molly Spearman, state superintendent of education, shared that message with attendees of The Village Group's 10th Anniversary Benefit Gala in October. "As I go around and speak to groups, I will talk about The Village Group and all of the great work it is doing for Georgetown," she said. "Thanks for being role models for so many."

She added that she was particularly glad to see that The Village Group helps youth build character as well as helping them succeed in school. Character skills, such as manners, can be extremely important to in helping young people get hired and succeed in the workplace.

In addition to the presentation by Spearman, the gala offered attendees dinner, music and dancing, along with red carpet style photographs. The evening also featured an awards ceremony in which five people in the community received awards.

Article and photos courtesy of Southstrand News and Clayton Stairs



Above: Molly Spearman, S.C. Superintendent of Education, speaks at the gala. Left: Dr. Randy Dozier, second from right, is presented with the inaugural Education Award. He is pictured with, from left, Monique Williams, Ray Funnyspe and Spearman.



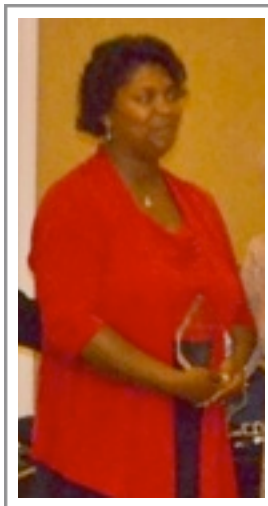
Bob Schofield received the Humanitarian Award.



Dr. Floyd L. Keels received the Public Service Award.



Evelyn Murray Drayton received the Village Award.



Lisa Burrage received the Executive Director's Award.



Our Board of Directors

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Edrick Alston, Secretary
The Rev. Brian Swinton
Eileen Patonay
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Ray C. Funnye, Executive Director

You can change a life!

Be a part of something special. Make your tax deductible donation today! Donate online at www.thevillagegroup.com

**How to Contact
The Village Group**

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Georgetown, S.C. 29442

Phone: (843) 240-0534

Join our email list at:
thevillagegroup@frontier.com

Find us on the Web!
www.thevillagegroup.org

You can also find us
on Facebook and Twitter!

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