Operation Educate receives honor for inmate training program

Operation Educate, a partnership between Spartanburg Community College, the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office Detention Division and numerous other organizations, recently received a statewide honor for an innovative inmate training program.

The Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award highlights organizations that create regional partnerships to find solutions to challenges, according to the S.C. Association of Counties, which presents the annual award.

In 2015, after a conversation between County Councilman Jeff Horton, Major Neal Urch, Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office and director of Jail Operations, and SCC President Henry Giles, the Spartanburg County Detention Center launched a pilot program and began training eight female inmates for administrative assistant positions. Later in the year, eight male inmates received manufacturing assistant educations as part of the program.

Within a year, nearly 70 inmates had participated in Operation Educate, earning vocational certificates in manufacturing, cell phone repair and office administration. According to Spartanburg County, of the 26 inmates who have been administered one of the four sections of the General Education Development certificate, none have failed. Also, 26 inmates have earned a bronze level or higher certificate toward a Work Keys accreditation.

Through education, program organizers hope to give participants a renewed outlook on life, reducing jail overcrowding, decreasing recidivism, and improving Spartanburg County’s quality of life.

Other organizations supporting the program include Adult Education, the Workforce Board, SC Works, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, a panel of local business owners, and the University of South Carolina Upstate.
Lives & Building

Campus Highlights

SCC Central Campus

The College received official notification from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Board of Trustees and its Committees on Compliance that the institution has received reaffirmation of accreditation for 10 years. The reaffirmation is through 2026 with a five-year review in 2021. Accreditation is required for college and universities to have access to federal funds, such as student aid and other federal programs, and federal student aid is only available to students if the institution is accredited by a recognized accrediting organization.

SCC Cherokee County Campus

Enrollment at the Cherokee County Campus has grown for the fall 2016 semester, with even more students taking advantage of the Cherokee County Know2 K-14 scholarship fund. Developed to encourage Cherokee County residents to continue their education beyond high school for two years, the fund covers any tuition amount remaining for students after all other funding options have been exhausted.

SCC Downtown Campus

The Great Voyeur, a painting by local artist, Jonathan Swift, was recently dedicated to the SCC Downtown Campus in honor of SCC veterans and Upstate Warrior Solution, which is located at the Downtown Campus. SCC student Travis Haynes, a veteran who served in the Marines for 14 years, accepted the painting on behalf of his fellow servicemen and women, along with Tyshae Hicklin, administrative assistant with Upstate Warrior Solution.

SCC Tyger River Campus

On Aug. 12, a group of 75 individuals from the S.C. Economic Development Institute visited the SCC Tyger River Campus, with attendees from all over S.C., including local politicians and community volunteers involved in economic development in their respective communities. The institute is a partnership between the S.C. Department of Commerce and the S.C. Economic Developers' Association. Mike Forrester, SCC’s director of economic development, addressed the group and led tours of the Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Development.

SCC Union County Campus

SCC Union County Campus has partnered with Union County Schools on two new initiatives, which began in August 2016. A dual enrollment program in the mechatronics and welding programs has been established, allowing high school juniors and seniors to earn dual credit in technical and general education courses while completing their high school diploma. In addition, the Union County Adult Education program has relocated its operation to the SCC Union County Campus. For the current academic year, Union County Schools will continue as the fiscal agent for the program. SCC will assume full operation and management of the program in the 2017 academic year.
Leaders In Our Community:

Linda Cobb’s passionate support plays vital role in the SCC horticulture program

When students and visitors drive along Community College Drive, a touch of the English countryside greets them in front of the Tracey J. Gaines Auditorium. This neatly kept plot of land is an informal nod to one of Spartanburg Community College’s most enthusiastic supporters, Linda Cobb.

A certified Master Gardener with a passion for education, Cobb’s contributions to the SCC horticulture department are immeasurable. Cobb “lives and breathes” horticulture, said Department Chair Jason Bagwell.

Through her wide array of contacts, Cobb has connected SCC with a network of internationally renowned horticulturists and gardeners. In 2013, Cobb was instrumental in bringing Fergus Garrett, head gardener at the 15th century estate, Great Dixter, in East Sussex, England - part of an ongoing relationship between the two institutions. Cobb has also been a catalyst for providing internships to SCC students, and, of course, is a tremendous supporter of the SCC Arboretum.

An avid lecturer, Cobb is passionate about teaching gardening and inspiring her fellow gardeners to success.

“Enthusiasm … You cannot talk about Linda Cobb without the word enthusiasm,” Bagwell said.

The former host of WSPA-TV’s “Rookie Gardener,” Cobb continues to pen a gardening column for the Herald-Journal in Spartanburg, and her expertise has been featured in publications including South Carolina Home, Garden Magazine and Better Homes and Gardens.

Dear friends,

Spartanburg Community College made great strides in its mission to bolster the Upstate economy this summer by expanding a tremendously successful business development center in Duncan and opening a campus in Union.

In August, SCC celebrated the expansion of the Center for Business and Entrepreneurial Development at the Tyger River Campus in Duncan. By adding 22,000 square feet of space, SCC added 22 offices to the facility - 20 of which are already occupied. These additional offices represent a continued investment in our community’s future.

In the decade since its launch, the CBED has become a model for success, attracting and launching technology and manufacturing related businesses. According to a June 2016 economic impact study, the Center has helped generate nearly 20,000 jobs, representing $1.2 billion dollars in earnings. The facility has provided services to 61 international and domestic companies, which have generated almost $69 million in tax revenue annually.

These numbers - and the expansion of CBED - are a testament to the shared vision of many leaders in this community, and the Center will continue to be an engine for Spartanburg County’s continued economic growth and development.

Also in August, SCC celebrated the opening of its fifth campus, the SCC Union County Campus, which will provide career opportunities to the county’s residents closer to home. The campus will focus on two programs - mechatronics and welding - both of which will prepare students for careers in high-demand fields. Opened in December 2009 as the Union County Advanced Technology Center, the 14,000-square-foot facility represents a permanent commitment to the economic vitality of the county and the education of its residents.

The College’s continued devotion to each of these communities is evident in each of these facilities, and future generations will no doubt find success thanks to the lessons and investments made within their walls.

Sincerely,

Henry C. Giles, Jr.
President, Spartanburg Community College
Camps teach programming, STEM skills to youth

From creating an app for an iPhone to programming a robotic car, dozens of area youth got a taste of the kind of advanced learning Spartanburg Community College offers during STEM camp and Code Academy this summer.

Rising 7th, 8th and 9th grade students penned essays describing why they wanted to participate in STEM camp this summer. During this camp - held Monday through Thursday - students learned to create apps for the iPhone, as well as program robotic cars, industrial robots and the NAO humanoid robot. Culminating in a Thursday night showcase, the students demonstrated their new skills for their families.

Meanwhile at Code Academy, a series of camps held in June and July, high school students learned C++ and C-sharp programming languages, as well as advanced programming for robotic cars. In total, 45 students participated in the SCC camps, which were funded through grant money.