

Life Connections

A Publication for HTC Members | Summer 2017

Artist
SPOTLIGHT
Oracle Blue

Community
SPOTLIGHT
The magic of Brookgreen Gardens

Tackling
TECHNOLOGY
How to improve your
family's internet experience



REEL KIDS,
real stories



HTC
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FOR ATTENDING
THE 2017
ANNUAL MEETING



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HTC
This is life. Connect with it.
843-369-8969

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Find us online at www.htcinc.net.



A Word From Mike Hagg, HTC CEO

Dear reader and fellow Cooperative member,



Welcome to the latest issue of Life Connections! It's been wonderful to receive positive feedback from the spring issue — we hope you keep the comments coming! If you especially loved a particular article, know of an individual or story that should be featured, or just want to share your opinion, email us your feedback at lifecconnections@htcinc.net.

This summer issue covers a wide variety of interesting subjects: We peer into the unique history of Brookgreen Gardens, hear the inspiring stories of HTC REEL Kids Award winners, tackle net neutrality, sink our teeth into Magnolia's at 26th, and so much more!

This issue also gives more insight into the technological advancements that the Cooperative pursues. Our day-to-day lives are impacted heavily by the internet, and HTC is proud to provide the best and fastest solution to all of our service area. HTC is excited to announce that we are expanding our footprint — providing internet speeds starting at up to 75 Mbps! Read more about this exciting news on page 22.

Beyond providing high-quality products and services, HTC plays an important role in our community and its economy. And it's our devotion to improving the lives of businesses and individuals in our community that allows us to refund more than \$122 million in Capital Credits to our members. As a valued member of HTC, you are a partial shareholder who shares in the financial success of the Cooperative. Capital Credits allocations are dependent upon the amount of services you have with HTC and the revenue that they generate.

Capital Credits, voting on board members and much more was discussed at the HTC Annual Meeting on August 8. We sincerely thank you for coming out to be part of a fantastic event! It was an evening of reconnections, networking and entertainment by Oracle Blue — you can learn more about this phenomenal local band on page 24.

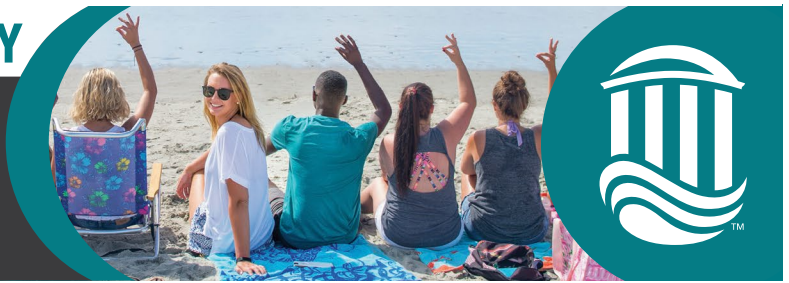
We will continue to work hard to bring you the best services available, and we look forward to another great year together. After all, everything we do — and have done for over 65 years — is to enhance the life of you, our friend and fellow neighbor.

Best regards,

Michael Hagg, Chief Executive Officer
Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc.



IMPACT



A look at the major economic impact Coastal Carolina University has on the economy of Horry and Georgetown counties and South Carolina.



TOTAL TEAL:
565.8 MILLION

CCU'S TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA FOR 2016.



CAMPUS VISITS:
Potential students who travel to CCU with their parents for an initial campus tour spend an average of **\$240 PER DAY.**

Quick Facts:

- Families visiting for summer Orientation weekend contribute approximately **\$788,000** over a two-day period. Many families extend their stay for a vacation.
- The impact of spending on the state economy by visitors associated with CCU students was approximately **\$6.1 million**. The total impact of this spending includes **\$8.5 million** in output, **103 jobs** and **\$2.75 million** in labor income.
- With the money generated by CCU in 2016, you could build **2,470 new homes** across the Grand Strand.
- On-campus students spent an estimated **\$43.8 million** in the state economy in 2016, and off-campus students spent **\$98 million**.

A DAY IN TEAL NATION:

CCU CONTRIBUTES AN ECONOMIC IMPACT OF

\$1.5 MILLION PER DAY TO OUR STATE.



ON THE JOB:

About **206** construction jobs were directly associated with CCU building projects in 2016, with an additional **69** indirect jobs created. In total, **275 jobs** and **\$10.4 MILLION** in labor income impacted the state economy as a result of CCU construction activity last year.

BUILDING BOOM:

The estimated annual impact of CCU construction projects for 2016 was **\$45 MILLION**. Between 2010 and 2016, CCU has increased its total capital assets by more than **\$344 MILLION**—investments in infrastructure that have empowered CCU's growth.



BY THE NUMBERS:



STUDENT SPENDING RESULTED IN AN ECONOMIC IMPACT OF **\$161 MILLION** IN 2016, CREATING **1,011 JOBS** AND **\$30.4 MILLION** IN LABOR INCOME.



Find out more.
coastal.edu/ccuimpact

BROOKGREEN
Gardens



Breathtaking Art Meets Unrefined Beauty

The magic of Brookgreen Gardens

Though it may only seem a small coastal community, Murrells Inlet boasts one of the most majestic cultural hubs in the United States. Packed to the brim with one-of-a-kind sculptures, an array of educational events and an awe-inspiring landscape, Brookgreen Gardens offers a truly unique experience for all who visit.

Brookgreen strikes the perfect balance between untouched scenery and meticulously manicured gardens. While you may easily recognize the stately fighting horses marking the property's entrance, the depth of cultural and artistic significance attributed to Brookgreen's founders may surprise you.



Archer Milton Huntington (1870-1955) was a dedicated historian, scholar and arts enthusiast. He devoted a great deal of his life to the study of Hispanic culture, and even established The Hispanic Society of America on New York City's Audubon Terrace — a pioneering institution that still serves an important purpose today. He inherited his wealth from his stepfather, who successfully founded the first transcontinental railroad, among other endeavors. This allowed Archer to lead a life steeped in museums and travel, and gave him the means to leave a legacy of art and culture. The son of an accomplished art connoisseur, it is understandable why he found himself the lifelong partner to a renowned artist.

Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Anna Vaughn Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973) is the personification of all that Brookgreen represents: scientific exploration, cultural pursuit, appreciation for nature, and truly exquisite art. The daughter of a scientist, Anna's curiosity and keen observation skills were fostered from an early age. Though she had access to fine artists and trained briefly at the Art Students League of New York, Anna was largely self-taught in sculpture. Over the years, she gained national and critical recognition as a sculptor, especially for the detailed realism and emotional depth of

BROOKGREEN'S UNDISPUTED BEAUTY HAS GARNERED NATIONAL ATTENTION, BUT ITS CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE HAS ALSO BEEN LAUDED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION.

National Historic Landmark

**National Register of Historic Places
Accredited by the American Alliance
of Museums**

**Named one of the Top 10 Public Gardens
in the U.S. by Coastal Living Magazine**

**Named one of the Top Five
Favorite Gardens by readers of
Southern Living magazine**

**Named "One of the seven wonders of the
Carolinas" by The Charlotte Observer**

**Rated five circles by TripAdvisor
reviewers and recipient of the site's
Certificate of Excellence**

**Rated a Gem Attraction —
recommended by AAA**

**Named one of the 10 Best (attractions
in South Carolina) by USA Today**

**Named "one of the best things to do
in Myrtle Beach" by AOL Travel**

**Named South Carolina Governor's
Cup Tourism Award recipient**

**Named South Carolina Non-Profit of the
Year by the S.C. Association of Non-
Profits**

**Received South Carolina Heritage
Tourism Award from the Palmetto
Trust for Historic Preservation**

**Given Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award
by the South Carolina Arts Commission**

**Given Herbert Adams Medal
for outstanding contribution to
American Sculpture by the National
Sculpture Society**

**Given Coastal Carolina University
David Drayton Award —
Preserving Gullah Culture**

**Named Historic Ricefields Association
Carolina Gold Award recipient**

**Given Business Image Award,
Excellence in Customer Service Award
and Going Green Award by the Myrtle
Beach Area Chamber of Commerce**

**Given Excellence in Customer Service
Award and named Non-Profit of the
Year by the Georgetown County
Chamber of Commerce**

her work — most notably, for her depictions of horses. In a period during which female artists were vastly underrepresented, Anna enjoyed a prosperous, fulfilling career. Widely recognized as one of the finest American animal sculptors of the 20th century, she was named by the Metropolitan Museum of Art among the foremost women sculptors in the United States to have undertaken significant, publicly commissioned work. In sum, she was a legendary talent who left a remarkable legacy.

So how did such influential art patrons end up on the Waccamaw Neck? The Huntingtons paid a visit to the former rice plantation in 1929, in search of a place where sea salt and mild winters might serve to rehabilitate a tuberculosis-ridden Mrs. Huntington. Anna saw more than a collection of swamps and forests situated between the Waccamaw River and the Atlantic coast — she saw potential. The area's rugged beauty captivated the pair, inspiring them to purchase just over 9,100 acres, which included what is now Huntington Beach State Park. By 1931, the couple decided they couldn't keep such beauty to themselves, and they established a non-profit corporation to protect the land and to exhibit outdoor sculpture alongside native plants and

animals. And Brookgreen has been doing exactly that since its gates opened to the public in 1932.

There truly is something for everyone at Brookgreen: Artists and art lovers find endless inspiration; history buffs enjoy the rice plantation narrative told throughout the grounds; horticulture enthusiasts relish in educational series, the annual local plant sale and the beauty of the grounds; birdwatchers and animal lovers observe wildlife in a natural habitat — the list goes on and on. There's plenty for the young ones in your family to love, too, including the Children's Discovery Room, Children's Nature and Sensory Trail, Native Wildlife Zoo and Enchanted Storybook Forest. And, from April to October, the Whispering Wings Butterfly Experience allows visitors to observe a lush garden where hundreds of butterflies soar through the air.

The educational events, awe-inspiring grounds and unique experiences of Brookgreen are made possible largely thanks to private donations, annual membership fees, event tickets, the Friends of Brookgreen and corporate sponsorships.

One such partnership is with HTC, a longtime supporter of this local gem. HTC is proud to be a premier corporate sponsor of Brookgreen's much-loved seasonal event, Nights of a Thousand Candles.

"HTC's sponsorship of Nights of a Thousand Candles has been integral in the growth of this event from a local celebration to a premier regional holiday event," says Lauren Joseph, Director of Marketing for Brookgreen. "As a not-for-profit, mission-driven organization, we depend on our corporate partners to come alongside us with funding and marketing opportunities to spread the word about this amazing place."

BROOKGREEN
Gardens

HTC
This is life. Connect with it.

VISIT BROOKGREEN

Archer Huntington called Brookgreen the "quiet joining of hands between science and art" — experience it for yourself soon!

Various membership offerings are available, the most popular of which are the Individual Membership (\$65 annually) and the Household Membership (\$100 annually).

Admission tickets (good for seven consecutive days):

Adults 13-64: \$16
Seniors 65 and over: \$14
Children 4 -12: \$8
Children 3 and under are FREE when accompanied by an adult.

Get your ticket at the gate, or save \$1 by purchasing online!

Open daily from 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. (closed on Christmas)

Learn more about special exhibitions, events, group rates and much more by visiting www.brookgreen.org.



CAN'T-MISS UPCOMING EVENTS:

National Sculpture Society 84th Annual Awards Exhibition | August 5–October 29

The annual juried exhibition of the National Sculpture Society, the oldest professional organization of sculptors in America, presents the work of masters alongside rising stars in American sculpture.

Be sure to cast your vote for the People's Choice Award! Free with garden admission.



The Music of Motown | September 7–10

Experience the music that defined a generation, featuring a live band performing the greatest hits of the Temptations, The Supremes, Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops and many, many more. Get your tickets for The Music of Motown today!

Call 1-888-718-4253 or visit www.brookgreen.org/MusicofMotown
Members: \$30
Non-members: \$35



Brew at the Zoo | September 23

Although it's a relatively new event, this craft-beer fest is already a local favorite. The tasting features over 30 regional and national selections and offers a rare after-hours opportunity to see Brookgreen's Native Wildlife Zoo. Food and wine are also available for purchase, and guests will enjoy a silent auction.

To purchase tickets, please go to: www.brookgreen.org/BrewattheZoo
Members: \$35
Non-members: \$40
Designated drivers: \$15





5 ways to score big this football season

The time has again come for tasty tailgates, armchair analysts and rivalry rematches — football season is officially upon us. This year, don't be caught off guard by a single kickoff or be the only one at work who missed that "crazy comeback." Read on for resources that ensure you won't miss a second of the action.

Watch NFL Network app:



With this app, you can catch all the action on the NFL Network and NFL RedZone LIVE, plus get trending videos, game highlights and the latest stats. Free app for iPhone and Android.

Live games only available on select mobile devices and with proper cable subscription.

College Football Scoreboard app:



If college football gets your fire going, this may be the app for you. Similar to the NFL app, this app allows you to view up-to-the-minute NCAA football scores, news, recaps and more. The app includes all major conferences and Top 25 schools. Free app for iPhone and Android.

ScoreStream app:



This fan-driven app brings the love of the game to a community level by featuring real-time scores for all your favorite local teams. ScoreStream allows you to share scores, photos, videos and more with friends near and far. Free app for iPhone and Android.



WatchESPN app:



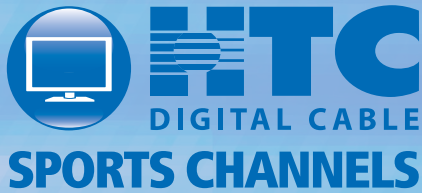
Can't get enough football? Now, you never have to miss a minute of the excitement! Thanks to WatchESPN, you can take the game to go on your computer, smartphone or tablet. With a valid HTC Digital Cable account, you can log in and watch LIVE programming anytime, anywhere! Available through TV Everywhere from HTC for iPhone and Android.

HTC Digital Cable:



Catch your favorite team from the comfort of your living room! With the exception of being in the stands, there's nothing quite like watching your team ring in victory in HD. Whether you bleed teal, are a Carolina Panther to the core or proudly wear a tiger paw, HTC Digital Cable has you covered.

Can't make it to see your hometown football heroes? Get exclusive local content from HTC Channel 4. See some of the best local sports, including games from Carolina Forest High School and more.



- Channel 4 HTC Local Programming
- Channel 28 ESPN — **HD** 828
- Channel 29 ESPN2 — **HD** 829
- Channel 48 Fox Sports Carolinas — **HD** 848
- Channel 49 Fox Sports Southeast — **HD** 849
- Channel 55 Fox Sports 1 — **HD** 855
- Channel 73 SEC Network — **HD** 873
- Channel 74 SEC Network (Overflow)
- Channel 75 NBC Sports — **HD** 875
- Channel 96 CBS Sports Network — **HD** 896



So ... who's the playmaker?

Ever wondered why some games appear on nationwide networks, while others are not broadcast? The hierarchy of games largely depends on the major networks and viewership demands.

Take NFL games, for example. The rights to broadcast an NFL game are the most expensive of all American sports. Because of this, strict rules are collaboratively created by the NFL and the networks that carry the games (FOX, CBS, NBC, ESPN and NFL Network). Local affiliate stations (for example, WPDE in Myrtle Beach) don't have much say in that process, and instead must play by the rules of the major networks.

Some schools and college conferences have established their own networks (e.g., the Southeastern Conference's SEC Network). However, scheduling is vastly dependent on major-network broadcasting schedules. Often, the number of games being played at the same time exceeds the number of available channels/networks. When this occurs, the second (or third) simultaneous game will be televised on a part-time, extra channel — for HTC, this is channel 74 for the SEC Network.

It's shaping up to be an exciting season, and we here at HTC want you to enjoy every minute of it. There are a variety of viewing packages available — check out www.htcinc.net/digital-cable to explore the full lineup!

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Must be redeemed within the 1st hour of gaming.

Cannot be combined with other offers.

Limit (1) per person. Exp. 12/30/2017





Making a Myrtle Beach landmark: Magnolia's at 26th serves up farm-fresh food

Amongst the flashy signs and bright beach sunshine lies a restaurant that remembers a quieter time along the Grand Strand. In an age of progress and fast-paced living, Magnolia's at 26th serves up consistently authentic, farm-fresh foods right in the heart of Myrtle Beach.

Owner Bobby Anderson welcomes each guest with a wave and friendly greeting, many by their first name. Born and bred in Conway, South Carolina, he's a first-generation restaurateur — a true success story who's built a small empire from the ground up. A restaurant-industry vet of 36 years, he runs it alongside many dedicated employees. This includes CEO Ray Cassidy, a "fixture" of the organization for nearly 25 years, according to Mr. Anderson.

FARM



The men behind Magnolia's are magnetic, but the food is the true star of this place. The smell of Southern fare engulfs the restaurant, which is filled with equal portions of businesspeople, beachgoers and families with children. The country-style buffet offers a variety as diverse as the patrons: corn as bright as gold; squash emitting a magnificent cloud of steam; a pile of watermelon seeping fresh juice; a mound of mouthwatering fried chicken. The spread gives new meaning to "farm-to-table" — almost all of the food on display is from Mr. Anderson's Conway farm.

Images provided by www.magnoliasat26th.com.

Can't-miss dish:
Okra

Hours:
6:30 a.m.–9 p.m.
daily (except Christmas Day)

Location:
2605 N. Ocean Boulevard,
Myrtle Beach

Learn more:
www.magnoliasat26th.com

FRESH

"We don't buy anything already made — nothing from cans and boxes," says Mr. Anderson. "It's all made in the back."

Magnolia's offers up a taste of Myrtle Beach that locals love and tourists might otherwise miss.



"The unique thing about Magnolia's is that very few people in the restaurant business are also farmers," explains Mr. Anderson. "I grow 40 acres of produce every year, and I always tell people that we sell our veggies by the spoonful, not the bushel."

In a city known for seafood buffets, fresh ingredients make Magnolia's a true standout. Here, people can know exactly where their food is coming from, all while supporting local farmers.

That's how Mr. Anderson approaches all aspects of business — he likes to work with homegrown people and support local businesses as much as possible. And that includes HTC, his personal and business provider for internet, cable, telephone and security services.

"I just can't say enough about HTC. Every time I call, they take excellent care of me and say, 'Yes sir, Mr. Anderson, we'll be there' — and usually by lunchtime," he says with a chuckle.

In fact, he keeps plenty of HTC linemen fed on a weekly basis. As a community staple, Magnolia's serves as a hub for community, family and "just good food." Above the restaurant are conference rooms that host everything from bridal showers to business meetings. For Mr. Anderson, the most rewarding part has always been the beauty of bringing people together over a good meal.

"It's all worth it when I overhear someone lean back and say, 'Oh, mercy, that is good okra.'"

Get a taste of the South for yourself. Stop by Magnolia's for breakfast, lunch or dinner — or all three, if you're lucky.

COASTAL CAROLINA CHANTICLEER FOOTBALL

GET TICKETS

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2017 HOME SCHEDULE

SEPT. 2 UMASS	FIRST FBS GAME
SEPT. 23 WESTERN ILLINOIS	YOUTH DAY
OCT. 7 GEORGIA STATE*	FAMILY WEEKEND
OCT. 28 TEXAS STATE*	HOMECOMING
NOV. 11 TROY*	MILITARY APPRECIATION/ HALL OF FAME
DEC. 2 GEORGIA SOUTHERN*	

*SUN BELT CONFERENCE ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

@coastalfootball
 @GoCCUsports
 #TEALnation

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Making sense of net neutrality

It's all over the headlines and mentioned in political debates, but what is net neutrality, and how does it affect YOU?



What exactly is net neutrality?

Net neutrality is the principle that internet service providers (ISPs) and any governmental regulation of the internet should treat all content on the internet equally. It is currently mandated in the U.S. by a set of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules and policies requiring ISPs to treat all users, platforms, apps and data providers the same. The regulations were put in place in 2015 after ISPs were accused of manipulating the speeds and accessibility of certain websites.

This type of discrimination would include charging some companies more than others to send their data through, or slowing down the load times of certain sites. For example, an ISP cannot intentionally slow down load times for or block access to certain sites, or speed up other sites, based on the individual interests of the ISP (e.g. Comcast, an ISP, purposely slowing down the load times of Netflix, a content provider).

Theoretically, net neutrality levels the playing field for all involved. However, it raises concerns about what happens when the government regulates public entities.

Who wants to keep it?

Those in favor of net neutrality argue that it prevents ISPs from speeding up or slowing down web traffic. Major tech companies (think Facebook and Google) argue that the internet should be regulated like any public entity, and that

ISPs shouldn't be allowed to play favorites.

Supporters say that repealing net neutrality would allow companies with big dollars to buy favor with ISPs — and that because users are intolerant of slow-loading sites, any company that cannot pay to be in “the fast lane” would be at a great disadvantage. Some see this as limiting to young start-ups and technology companies that cannot afford to “pay to play.”

Who wants to remove it?

The most prevalent opposition to net neutrality stems from people and organizations who view it as unnecessary government regulation. They assert that net neutrality puts ISPs at a disadvantage because they have to foot the bill for pushing through the incredibly large amounts of data from content providers.

Critics of net neutrality also assert that internet-based innovation would not suffer as a result of net neutrality's repeal, while those in favor of net neutrality claim it would. The critics argue that the internet has in fact experienced unprecedented success and revolutionized the way we live — and that all happened before the internet was policed by the government. Those against net neutrality see further regulations as stifling to future innovation and outside the government's scope of responsibility.



Where does the issue stand today?

Under the Obama administration in 2015, the FCC reclassified ISPs as “common carriers” — meaning they would be placed under FCC oversight. This decision enabled the FCC to adopt the stricter net neutrality policies as well as require ISPs to ask for individual consumers' consent to collect their internet-use information.

However, the new head of the FCC, appointed by President Trump, is strongly in favor of removing the regulations. Congress recently voted to repeal a series of internet-privacy protections approved in 2015. Furthermore, as of May 2017, the FCC voted to move forward with a proposal to roll back net neutrality, too.

It is important to note that none of the privacy regulations actually ever went into effect — they didn't have a chance to do so before the process was reversed. This means you probably won't notice any of these policy changes on a day-to-day basis. As a user of the internet, though, it is important to stay informed in order to protect your own rights.

Visit www.htcinc.net for updates on net neutrality that may affect our members.

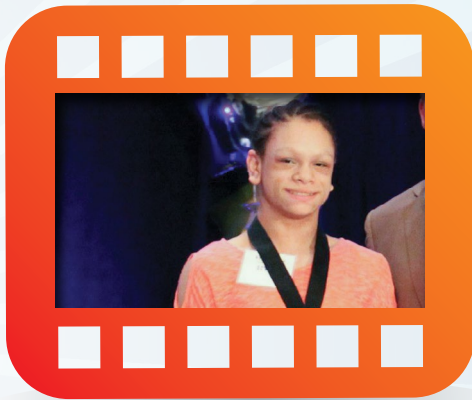


THE REAL STORIES BEHIND THESE HTC REEL KIDS

Since 2001, HTC has proudly partnered with Horry County Schools to present the HTC REEL Kids Awards (Recognizing Extraordinary Examples of Leadership). The 17th Annual REEL Kids Awards were presented in May to 52 of our county's most outstanding young individuals, who are nominated by their teachers, principals and guidance counselors for exhibiting extraordinary leadership qualities in spite of extenuating circumstances. Continue reading to dive into the incredible stories behind two of this year's winners.

Kyleigh Dean

Winner, 2017 Taylor McKinney Award for Courage



Get knocked down. Stand up. Repeat. This mantra is personified in Kyleigh Dean. A rising eighth grader at Aynor Middle School, Kyleigh wrestles opponents daily. On the mat, she is a champion who's earned over 100 trophies. However, her biggest challenger is a genetic disorder known as congenital generalized lipodystrophy (CGL).

Like Kyleigh, this disease is rare — it only affects one in 10 million people. Her coach and teacher, John Morello, finds this strangely poetic, saying Kyleigh would have an incredibly rare condition, because she is that kind of person and athlete — the kind that the world is graced by once in a blue moon.

CGL essentially affects everything Kyleigh eats — all the fat from the food is stored in her muscles and liver; her blood sugar skyrockets without regulation; she has an insatiable appetite; and her bones are rapidly aging. Though it shares some similarities, this condition is far more impactful on its patients than Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. Kyleigh was diagnosed as a baby, and she now takes five shots every day — a mix of insulin and a medicine that helps control her appetite — and makes frequent hospital visits. Despite the medicine that she takes, her condition is ultimately unlikely to improve.

"Sometimes it puts me on edge," Kyleigh admits, "but I just like to live life like there's no tomorrow."

And that's exactly what she's done.

Initially sparked by a desire to end bullying at her school, Kyleigh signed up for wrestling with the hopes of proving how strong and capable she was. Petty schoolgirls used her broad shoulders, big muscles and different looks as ammunition to tease her. Eventually, her tears turned into trophies as she found an outlet in wrestling.

"I loved the first practice that we had," says Kyleigh. "It's so fun."

It definitely seems as though it's fun for her — if "fun" equals winning a national championship. She brought the gold medal back from the U.S. Marine Corps Girls Folkstyle Nationals in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, earlier this spring.

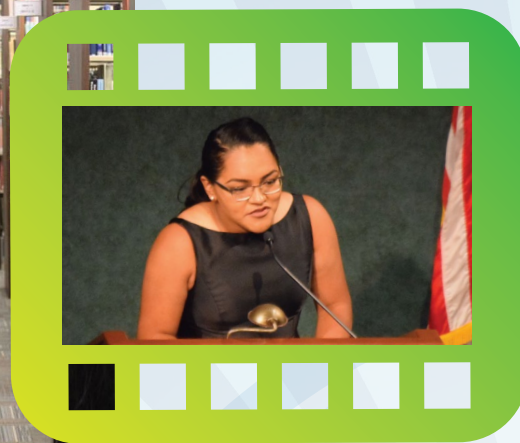


2017 Taylor McKinney Award for Courage:

This award is in honor of Taylor McKinney, a 2005 HTC REEL Kid and courageous young lady who lost her long-fought battle with leukemia.

2017 Meagan Connor Award:

This award is in honor of Meagan Connor, a 2001 HTC REEL Kid whose story has touched many lives. She lost her battle with cancer, but we continue to pay tribute to her life.



"As much adversity as she's faced off the mat, she brings all that to the mat and is able to turn it around and use it as a positive," says Coach Morello. "She uses those skills and the talents that God has given her. You look for that type of athlete."

She calls herself aggressive on the mat, and is finding her groove again after a fairly recent hip surgery — a surgery that was predicted to end her wrestling career then and there. But Kyleigh proved once again that she is stronger than her condition. Her life goal? Make it to the Olympics. Her pristine technique, steely determination and unceasing support system make that dream a real possibility, according to Coach Morello.

She looks like a healthy young lady, but she deals with this condition every day. Though her liver and kidneys betray her, it's clear that Kyleigh has more than enough heart to be an inspiration to kids everywhere.

"Although she's fighting an illness that has no cure, she's competing, she's fighting, she's putting herself out there," says Coach Morello. "It shows, truly, how strong of a person she is."

She often travels to the National Institutes of Health in Maryland and stays there for several days each trip. Despite enduring multiple tests, scans, pokes and blood work, Kyleigh has remained on the A/B honor roll and is called a leader in the classroom.

"It takes someone who is not only physically strong, but emotionally and mentally strong," says Coach Morello. "I think it's a testament to who she is as a person, no matter what she does on the mat. It takes a lot of determination not only to wrestle in the first place, but also to win state championships and national championships — and beat some guys while she's at it."

For Kyleigh, persistence is key to rising above an incurable illness.

"Even if you're having your bad days, just keep moving on — no matter what is in your way. Never give up."

Cinthia Zavala-Ramos **Winner, 2017 Meagan Conner Award**

Like many 18-year-olds in their senior year of high school, Cinthia Zavala-Ramos stressed over college applications. She also joked around with her siblings, gave love advice to her friends and was a Sunday school teacher. But unlike the majority of her peers, Cinthia once fled to the United States from Honduras — mostly on foot.

When Cinthia was barely six years old, her father was in an unexpected car accident that resulted in the death of a gang member — a gang that would no doubt seek retribution. Out of fear for his life and his young family's safety, Cinthia's father made the trek to America alone. After working two jobs and saving as much as he could, he was able to send for his wife, and later Cinthia, her younger siblings and her grandmother.

Her parents' decision to escape to America not only meant a chance at life, but also a chance for a better life for their children. A canyon-sized poverty gap exists in Honduras that's nearly impossible to close, no matter how hard you work. Cinthia's father marveled at the opportunity that still exists in the United States, and he did not take that opportunity for granted.

With their sacrifice in mind, Cinthia vowed at a young age to make their journey worth it. Those who watched her stand up in front of 400 people this past May to give the valedictorian speech at Socastee High School graduation would agree: She stood by her word.

"I wanted my parents to see that all the struggling they went through silently — all the pain and suffering — it was for something. I want them to know that I'm grateful for what they've done for me, and that it's given fruit."

Over the last 20 years, Cinthia's father built his small, one-man painting operation into a small business with employees and company vans.

"He's my role model," she says. "He came to this country knowing nothing, and now he's building a name for himself. He has respect here."

It's clear that his relentless work ethic has rubbed off on Cinthia.

"Cinthia is one of 42 students who attend the Scholars Academy from across the school district. And she's done an amazing job," explains Scholars Academy Program Administrator Norman McQueen. "She'll graduate with somewhere between 70 and 80 college credit hours toward her degree. Between AP classes and CCU dual-enrollment courses, she's chosen one of the hardest roads that you can take educationally, and risen to the top of that group of children. It's an amazing job by her."

No stranger to responsibility, Cinthia was often relied upon by her parents to converse with adults and act as translator at the bank, on the phone regarding legal documents and in various other situations — even as young as 8 years old. Though she didn't realize it at the time, handling those mature situations helped shape her into a wise young woman with the audacity to dream of helping others in similar situations and the discipline to follow through.

She's the first in her family to graduate from high school — top of her class, no less. In fact, she's the first to make it past elementary school. Despite her added family responsibility, Administrator McQueen says Cinthia handles it all with grace.

"She bee-bops through the doors every morning with that smile, and you'd never know that she was up all night studying or writing a paper."

She's the first one in her family navigating the college-application process — a stressful task for anyone, especially when you don't have the luxury of asking Mom or Dad to edit a resume or call an admissions associate. It's obvious Cinthia leads by example, though she doesn't seem to spend time patting herself on the back. However, she does hope that she makes a positive impact on the kids in her Sunday school class and surrounding community; her message is simple: If I did it, so can you.

After her family's daunting experience with the U.S. legal system, a middle-school-aged Cinthia set her sights on becoming an immigration attorney so that she might eventually guide other families to resources that hers didn't know were available. Though that may still be down the road, for now, Cinthia is preparing for her next big journey: Yale. There, she'll study bio molecular genetics.

In contrast with many teens her age, Cinthia can get



trapped thinking of the big picture too often. She credits her family and "amazing support system" for keeping her grounded and helping her remember to find joy in the small things. In her household, family comes before everything else — her family operates as a unit, instead of individual entities. And together, they've made it this far.

"From the beginning, I've always just seen Cinthia make things work," explains McQueen. "She's the person who makes the cogs roll and makes it all happen — and with a smile, no less. There's a wisdom there — there is an inner soul and strength she's found that many people don't find until later in their lives. And she's very comfortable sharing that with other people and guiding other people."

How does she manage it all? In the midst of all the "big-picture stuff," she focuses on one good thing at a time — no matter what that looks like. Even if it's simply looking forward to a good dinner her mother cooked, or a quiz she knows she'll ace, finding these little victories keeps Cinthia sane.

"If I focus on my past, I get bogged down. My family helps me keep it in perspective."

There seems to be a message in her story for all of us: Productivity and progress can't happen if we are too busy dwelling on the past. That's why we must keep our eyes on the future.

There simply isn't enough space here to highlight all 52 HTC REEL Kids Award winners, but that doesn't make their stories any less remarkable. Learn more about each inspiring REEL Kid story for yourself by reading their biographies and seeing the faces of the winners at www.htcinc.net/htc-reel-kids and — tune in to Channel 4 on Sunday, Aug. 27, for the airing of the REEL Kids Awards Ceremony and rebroadcast of interviews.



Tackling technology: How to improve your family's internet experience

Did you know?

On average, American adults spend approximately 10.5 hours each day consuming media — this includes using smartphones, personal computers, video-game systems, tablets, DVRs, radios and TVs (Nielson, 2016). While that number may seem staggering, it makes sense when you consider how heavily we rely on these platforms to connect us to our world. A source of endless education, entertainment and information-sharing, technology has connected us in ways we couldn't have even imagined 50 years ago.

Whether we are online working on a project, streaming a movie for family night, learning a new language or catching up on homework, we spend an extraordinary amount of time using the internet. It's even become an integral piece to a contemporary education. And with everyone in the family connected to Wi-Fi at the same time, internet speeds can slow down. Continue reading for tips on improving your family's experience.



Dual-band router

The age of your devices affects functionality. In addition to making sure that your router is up to date, consider getting a dual-band router. These routers provide dual standard signals, so you can put your newer devices (like your tablet or smartphone) on one band and your older, slower devices on another — thus preventing your older devices from slowing down your newer ones. With more and newer devices in the household, this can help keep connectivity running smoothly.

Modem/router placement

Boost your modem and Wi-Fi router's reach and effectiveness by placing it in a centrally located area in the house. Do not place directly near walls, mirrors, metal furniture or appliances, as they can obstruct the Wi-Fi signal and reduce the performance. For best results, your modem/router should not be placed on the floor or in a closet/cabinet. In fact, studies have shown that Wi-Fi signals travel best downward and laterally.

Increase your internet speed

Since we rely so heavily on our internet, it makes sense to get bandwidth that can keep up. Selecting an internet bandwidth that matches your family's needs means more speed and less time waiting for the dreaded "buffering" signal to disappear. Higher bandwidths offer efficiency in a world where time is limited and precious.

Watch this video on tips to improve Wi-Fi: www.htcinc.net/videos/media-minute/tips-for-improving-wi-fi/.

Another important component to a positive internet experience for your family goes beyond physical and logistical needs. As the time that children spend with devices steadily increases, it's more important than ever to monitor their access. The tips below are a good starting point to keep your family in check.

Internet Safety Tips

1

Establish rules.

Set clear parameters regarding what sites are allowed, what hours are acceptable for internet use and what the repercussions are if the rules are broken. And don't be afraid to monitor what content your child consumes — regularly check in, set time limits and have a central area (like the living room or kitchen table) where they can surf the web.

2

Open a dialogue.

Make yourself an important part of your child's cyber world. By keeping the conversation open, you build trust, foster a safe environment and ensure that your child isn't afraid to come to you for help. Be sure to discuss the dangers of communicating with people they don't know and sharing private information. In the instance that they do come across content that makes them uncomfortable, they will be more likely to be honest with you without fear of punishment.

3

Install parental controls.

Several apps and software platforms that allow you to monitor site use, set time limits and easily manage online activity are available for your web browsers and devices like tablets and smartphones. Here are a few resources to consider:

Trend Micro — www.trendmicro.com

Net Nanny — www.netnanny.com



Your device's operating system — Windows, Mac and Google Chrome already feature robust parental controls that are free.

Internet access can undoubtedly be an amazing connection point and add value to our lives — so long as we use it consciously and responsibly.

Find out more ways you can improve your in-home Wi-Fi experience and increase your internet safety in your home at www.htcinc.net/high-speed-internet.

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Things here in the South tend to move a little more slowly — and that’s not a bad thing. We take pride in stopping to speak to neighbors and relish our time on front porches in rocking chairs — even our subtle drawls suggest a less-hurried way of life. Though that may all be true, there is certainly one area of life here that demands as much velocity as even the busiest cities: internet speeds. Life in the country and along the Grand Strand can get just as busy and demanding as in say, Greenville. So we think it’s only fair for residents in smaller towns and rural areas to have internet that keeps you better connected to the outside world.

We’re bringing more speed to more people in the HTC territory, with increased access to internet speeds starting at up to 75 Mbps. Our goal is to reach as much of Horry County as we can. The team at HTC has been hard at work making significant improvements to our high-speed network, and now more areas than ever will have access to new speed options.

Laying the groundwork for faster internet in Horry County didn’t happen overnight. Our engineers first started the network overhaul a year ago, and now the benefits are coming to fruition. Our network engineers reviewed our entire broadband network looking for opportunities to deliver high-speed internet more efficiently. At the start of 2017, we started increasing speeds throughout the areas served with cable modems. Then, we continued to build fiber optic cable into densely populated areas only served by older copper phone lines. This addition of fiber optic cable provides much greater speeds to fast-growing sections of the market. Our Information Services team worked with the

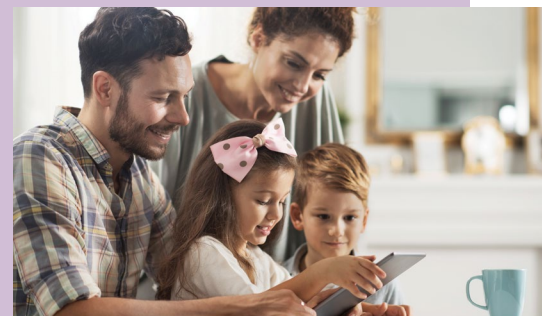
Engineering team to create a new way of sending information updates to members’ modems. These updates help ensure that members who have modems capable of the new speeds can get those new speeds without a visit from an HTC Technician. That saves our members time and the Cooperative money.

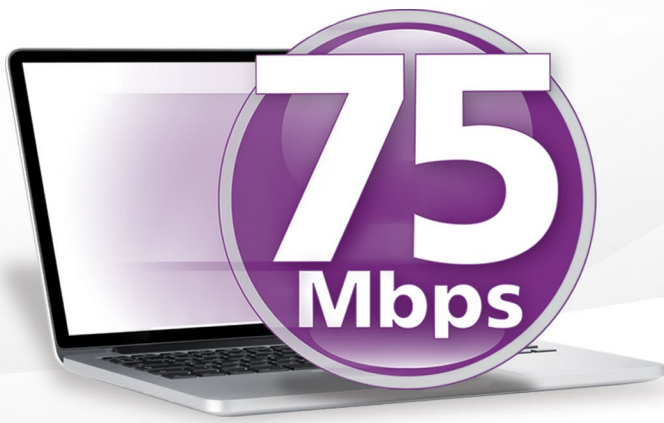
Why does internet speed matter?

In today’s world, nearly everything we use for work, security and entertainment purposes uses the internet in some capacity. Without high-speed capabilities, your internet connection can slow down significantly — that’s when the dreaded “buffering” symbol appears on your screen! Like tons of cars crowding the highway during rush hour, having multiple friends or family members connected at once can cause serious traffic jams.

It may seem like your family can “take turns” using the internet, but if you’ve ever lived in a house with one bathroom, you know that this is easier said than done. Some of us are old enough to remember a time when there was one desktop computer in a house, but those days are long gone. Now, many of us have dueling smartphones, and a tablet for good measure. We use laptops like TVs, and our TVs are getting more and more like computers.

When you stream a movie for family night or binge-watch your favorite shows on an internet streaming service, you use a large amount of bandwidth. Likewise, commenting on your friend’s vacation photos on your smartphone while simultaneously comparing plane-ticket prices to the Bahamas eats up quite a bit of space in your bandwidth. High-speed





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internet can eliminate those slow-loading screens and get you on to your own vacation a whole lot faster.

So, while your cousin in Charleston overpays for unreliable service from a big-name provider, you can rest easy and surf faster with HTC. From the farmland in Aynor, to the beachy shores of Garden City, to the riverfront in Conway — we've got you covered with NEW internet speeds.

The best part? Wi-Fi is included free, there are NO hidden fees, and all of the equipment is included! And when you bundle your high-speed internet, you'll save even more. With school starting back up in the fall, there's never been a more important time to upgrade.



Big-name competitors don't even come close to offering the comprehensive coverage that HTC provides. But that's probably because they don't understand how life functions in our neck of the woods. You are our friends and neighbors — that's why we've worked so hard to bring you the best in new technology, right to your own backyard.

Get a complete look at HTC High-Speed Internet offerings at www.htcinc.net/high-speed-internet. Don't want to wait to upgrade? Call 843-369-8969.

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HOW THIS LOCAL BAND IS HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

ORACLEBLUE



Photographed by Pablo Viafara. Edited by Alexander Tavernier.

Myrtle Beach-based band Oracle Blue is challenging norms on all sides: that a band has to fit exclusively within one genre; that Miles Davis and the Grateful Dead don't fit in the same sentence; or that big talent demands high drama. But notably missing with Oracle Blue is the tension that regularly flanked Fleetwood Mac, or the egomaniacal disputes of Axl Rose with, well, everyone. They are just six people who really, truly love music. One conversation with the group quickly proves they aren't a ragtag group of wannabes — they are the real deal.

Liz Kelley-Tavernier – vocals, guitar + songwriting

JP Taylor – keyboard, trumpet

Zachary Douglas – trumpet, keyboard

Wade McMillan – drummer

Timothy Hardwick – vocals, guitar + songwriting

Mckinley Devilbiss – bass, background vocals



All six of the members' passion for the craft is supplemented by higher education and an impressive résumé of performance experience. The four-year-old ensemble originated at Coastal Carolina University as the CCU Jazz Combo under the direction of Dr. Matthew White, an assistant professor of music at the school. Although they've since graduated, the group's members couldn't get enough of playing together. They are honest-to-goodness music nerds, disguised by trendy hairstyles, self-deprecating humor and a darn good sound. Conversation flows easily, but their natural chemistry shines brightest when they play music.

If they had to categorize themselves, Oracle Blue would fall somewhere in the space of funk, blue-eyed soul and jazz — creating a smorgasbord of sounds to form a genre that is entirely their own. When asked about their favorite artists and musical backgrounds, the bandmates' answers span the far corners of iTunes. From jam bands to indie blues, classical jazz to pop/rock, it's hard to pin down any one — or five — musical influences for Oracle Blue's collective sound. And that's a positive thing.

"The more we can include everyone's different influences to create a soup of whatever sound we can make together, the better the writing is going to be," explains Mckinley Devilbiss, who plays bass and sings background vocals.

In addition to penning and playing original songs, the band often performs covers, too. Liz Kelley-Tavernier, the band's vocalist, guitarist and songwriter, says the group enjoys the fluidity and diversity of its repertoire. "We love to take songs that we like or songs that are popular right now and arrange them to incorporate our influences and be more of our style," she says.



Keyboard and trumpet player JP Taylor notes that the group's mash-up of musical tastes works in harmony.

"We all come from different backgrounds. I've always liked jazz a lot — it's always been my go-to genre. But I've also been really into hip-hop and electronic — and at one point," he chuckles, "heavy metal."

The group concedes with laughter.

"I grew up playing guitar," says guitarist and vocalist Tim Hardwick. "My dad listened to a lot of Eric Clapton and Peter Green — that was guitar music to me. Then, going to school and meeting these people playing classical guitar — it was a completely different universe. It's been a really cool growing experience."

"I like the heavy, expressive element of music, but I also like the sensual, intimate side, too," JP says, "and I feel like that's what we're trying to achieve: a balance of those two things."

Drummer Wade McMillan chimes in, saying, "I think the jazz part of it, for us, is pushing boundaries of what is perceived to be the norm."

Oracle Blue rocked the HTC Annual Meeting on August 8 — this featured entertainment event was the hit of the night!



From exhilarating dance sets to on-stage stories not suitable for print, the band laughs as they relive their most memorable moments together. And those experiences aren't by any means limited to the Grand Strand. Not too long ago, the band was honored with an invitation to play the Montreux Jazz Festival in Europe.

"The university helped us with fundraising to help cover expenses," says Liz. "We've received so much community support — we really couldn't have done it without the help of donors from the Myrtle Beach and Horry County area. We're so grateful."

"I also think that studying jazz has helped us with improvisation — not necessarily within a certain style or genre, but just the ability across the board to create and compose on the spot, and interact with each other while we're playing music," says Liz.

According to the band, that's where the most excitement happens during a show.

"That's my favorite part — when somebody in the group does something unexpected," claims trumpet and keyboard player Zach Douglas. "Anything I'm not ready for — that makes it super exciting."

"It's a musical conversation," explains Liz, "and you don't always know exactly what's going to happen, but you enjoy interacting with one another."

"Well, I like it best when people dance!" says JP with a grin.

"Yeah! We were playing the other night and there was a bunch of little kids dancing," says Liz. "To me, that makes it super fun because, at that age, they don't have any hesitations yet and they're just kind of experiencing the joy of music. It's really pure."

The others nod vigorously and start rattling off genuine shout-outs to everyone who's propelled them to where they are today: their professors, directors and other supporters at Coastal Carolina; WAVE 104.1 radio personality Scott Mann; local booker Scott Byrd; a slew of venue owners along the coast; and "anyone that's ever come out to a show."

After being well received on their 2016 European tour, the band put energy into recording an all-original, 4-track EP — drop date TBD. They hope to hit the road again soon, and continue to build a regional audience in Charleston and Wilmington. In the meantime, they'll continue to perform locally at a variety of events and venues ranging from restaurants to music festivals to private functions. Look for a sample of Oracle Blue's music on their website, where you can also keep tabs on upcoming shows and inquire about bookings.

A world tour? A Grammy? Only time will tell what's in store for this bunch. For now, they'll keep playing music, keep writing songs and keep the people dancing. Keep up with them at www.oracleblueband.com, and be sure to find the band on Facebook.



Renovations, relationships and recommendations — **oh my!**

HTC Employee Spotlight: Murrells Inlet Branch



HTC Customer Relations Associate Tammy Barfield assists an HTC member.



At right, the HTC Murrells Inlet branch is seen before renovations (top) and after renovations (bottom).



From upgrading plans to offering expert advice, life at the HTC Murrells Inlet branch never brings the same day twice.

At least that's the case according to 18-year HTC employee Rita Gainey, a Customer Relations Associate and My Account Advisor.

"My particular responsibilities are mostly online communications with customers," says Rita.

Questions come in through several different avenues on the HTC website, and if Rita can't resolve them herself, she points the customer in the right direction. She also handles processing for the HTC Lifeline program provided to low-income members. All in all, she's a busy lady.

Tammy Barfield, a Customer Relations Associate and 10-year HTC veteran, can relate. Among Tammy's responsibilities are signing members up for new telephone, cable, internet and home security services, upgrading their existing services and troubleshooting their mobile devices.

"Helping people is my favorite part. I've always enjoyed working with the public," says Tammy.

Caroline Rabon, a fresh-faced Customer Relations Associate who is only a few months into the job, seconds that opinion.

"My favorite part is building personal relationships. I love when I know that I helped a member — and hopefully they'll come to me again and let me help next time!"

She's been well trained not only in the technological aspects of the company, but also in empathy, how to match communication tone, and other ways to connect with members.

That's where Rebecca Turbeville, the Murrells Inlet branch supervisor, comes in. In addition to performing countless office-administration tasks

and organizing sessions with the HTC training department, a large part of Rebecca's role is ensuring quality control for HTC members. She explains that outstanding service is paramount at the co-op.

"It's very, very important to us that customers are satisfied, and even beyond satisfied. We want them to have an excellent customer experience, and my focus is mainly on guaranteeing that they receive that."

In other words, it's Rebecca's job to notice where there is room for improvement and make the necessary tweaks to make the customer experience as exceptional as possible. To that end, the Murrells Inlet location recently underwent office renovations, largely to enhance the customer experience while inside.

"Before, we had a very long counter that was similar to a bank teller line, with four young ladies sitting side by side helping customers on the opposite side of the counter," explains Rebecca.

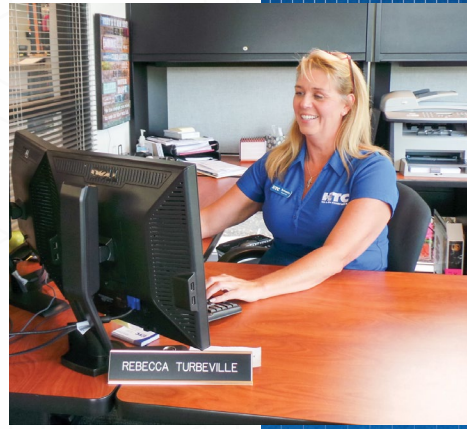
The Customer Relations Associates now have personal workstations spread throughout the office, offering a better opportunity for one-on-one communication. An upgraded Live Bar allows customers to operate devices for themselves — online research and expert opinions are helpful when making a purchase decision, but there's nothing like a live demo with your own two hands.

"We've received a lot of positive feedback about the renovations here. The new, individual customer-relations stations really make it more homey," explains Rita. "There's now a flow in the office that makes sense. And, it's given us room to grow."

Rebecca agrees, adding that the whole customer experience is now much more streamlined.

"With this setup, it's very nice that customers have the opportunity to speak freely and not worry

HTC Customer Relations Supervisor
Rebecca Turbeville



Pictured left to right:
Rebecca Turbeville, Caroline Rabon,
Ellen Vaught and Tammy Barfield.



about who can overhear. If we are talking with a customer about an interrupted service or handling cash payments, we can address that person's needs without sharing it down the line."

"It's much more personable," adds Tammy. "I can hear them, they can hear me, and we can have a more private conversation."

It's all in the name of serving members to the best of their ability. In fact, that's the basis for all of HTC. Community-focused to the core, the co-op participates in a variety of local causes, including March of Dimes, Relay for Life, Shepherd's Table, the American Heart Association, the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department and the American Cancer Society, just to name a few.

"My favorite thing that the organization does is the HTC REEL Kids Awards — those kids are so inspiring," says Rita. "It's such a special program."

Read about this year's REEL Kids Award winners on page 16.

Their heart for community doesn't stop there.





“One thing people love in our immediate community is the flag that flies over our branch to camouflage a cellular tower,” says Rita.

When Hurricane Matthew hit in October, the tower had to be fixed, and community members frequently asked when the flag would be hoisted again.

“They notice,” she says. “That gives you a sense of pride — not just for our community, but for all of America.”

All in all, the ladies agree that HTC is a valuable asset to the area and a great company to be a part of.

“I drive from Conway every day to work here, if that’s any indication of how much I love working here!” says Tammy. “HTC frequently introduces bundle options to try and save customers money. It’s an excellent company that truly cares about its members.”

Caroline adds that in addition to that, HTC takes care of its employees, too.

“I love that I am able to work a great job, with great benefits, and still be able to spend a lot of time with my family,” says Caroline. “HTC is very family-oriented, and it’s cool to think

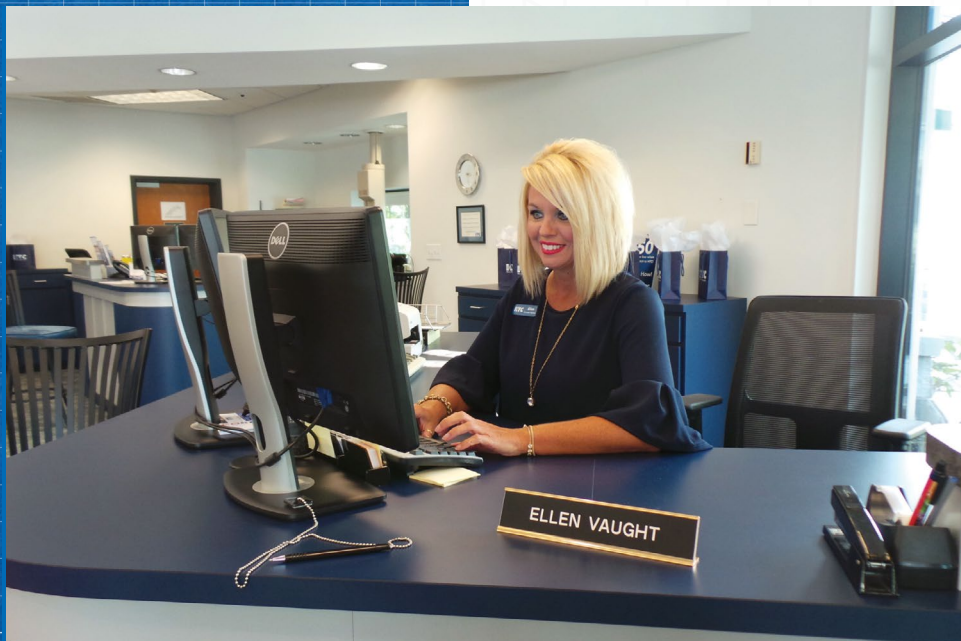
that when my child gets old enough, maybe he could work here.”

Rebecca notes that she’s proud to go out into the community with an HTC badge on.

“I may be at the grocery store or the hair salon, and people will recognize that I’m with HTC, and we’ll work out a question they have about their smartphone right then and there. It’s that interpersonal reaction that makes this job special,” she says.

“HTC is very community-based. I’m very proud to say I work for a company that not only cherishes us, but also looks out to the community and sees what can be done. Being able to give to them is very rewarding.”

Stop by and visit Rebecca, Ellen, Tammy, Rita and Caroline —and check out the new office renovations — at 9500 Frontage Road, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576.



HTC Customer Relations Associate Ellen Vaught

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