



## **SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES**

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August 14, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NOTE:** Upon request, photos will be provided by e-mail.

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### **SCDDSN PRESENTS GOLDEN PALMETTO AWARDS TO LEXINGTON AND WILLIAMSBURG COUNTIES**

The S.C. Commission on Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN) presented Golden Palmetto awards to Lexington and Williamsburg counties on August 6 at SCAC's 51st Annual Conference (August 5 – 7). The award recognizes South Carolina counties that provide exemplary support to people with disabilities and special needs.

"Lexington and Williamsburg counties have each done a commendable job," said Pat Maley, Interim State Director, SCDDSN, when presenting the awards to Debra Summers, Lexington County Council Chairman, and Stanley Pasley, Williamsburg County Council Chairman. "Significant improvements and a strong relationship, forged within these local communities, have enhanced the support they provide to people with disabilities.

"These two counties richly deserve this honor," Maley added. "The enthusiasm and commitment from Lexington Williamsburg counties give individuals with disabilities a life transformation through daily jobs, essential services and increased community involvement."

Lexington County Council's accomplishments include the renewal of the county's contract with the Babcock Center to continue its partnership, which began in 1994. County council has provided opportunities for Babcock's consumers to operate and staff nine collection sites across the county, giving them a chance to integrate into their community and to be fairly compensated for their efforts. The consumers are able to work in customer-facing jobs and act as friendly faces for locals, building interpersonal relationships over time.

This renewed contract allows more than 40 people with disabilities and special needs to have full- and part-time jobs working at recycling centers and collection sites around the county. This contract also provides jobs to more than 30 full-time Babcock staff members, who are proud of their jobs and the money they earn.

Williamsburg County Council's accomplishments include contracting with 12 individuals at the Disabilities and Special Needs Board for janitorial and maintenance services at three of their county offices, and hiring two persons the agency supports with a 20-hour weekly position. The county allows Williamsburg County Disabilities and Special Needs

Board consumers access to the Kingstreet Recreation Department at no cost. The individuals are able to train there for the Special Olympics and participate in sporting activities.

Williamsburg County has donated to the board's fundraising efforts and provided financial support for the consumers' Annual Prom, and annual stipends to the board to help cover the cost of transporting consumers.

SCDDSN is the state agency that provides services to people with severe, lifelong intellectual and related disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injury and similar disability. DDSN has presented the Golden Palmetto Award annually since 1975 to the most deserving counties in South Carolina.

"This is our way of thanking county governments for making the lives of people with disabilities a priority in their communities," Maley said. "County government efforts in partnership with their local disabilities and special needs boards are greater and more valuable than ever before. The Disabilities and Special Needs Commission applauds the leadership and dedication of all county governments across South Carolina."

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