

“Relationships That Work in CGLR Communities With Coalition Leads, Schools and Other Partners”

**A Crucible of Practice Salon
February 13, 2023 / 12:30 – 2 pm EST**

CONVERSATION LEADS



Pattie Allen

Ready Schools Coordinator
Down East Partnership for Children
Nash and Edgecombe Counties, NC

Pattie Allen has worked in the field of education since 1977 in both the public school and nonprofit sectors. Presently she works as the Ready Schools Coordinator with Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC). DEPC offers a variety of services and resources for families with children

ages 0-8. The mission of DEPC is to launch every child as a healthy, lifelong learner by the end of grade 3. As the Ready Schools Coordinator, Pattie supports schools and communities to enable children to be ready for school, and schools to be ready for all children and their families. Ready Schools strategies include but are not limited to, building relationships between schools and communities, helping schools create a welcoming environment, promoting family engagement allowing families to have a voice at the school level, and developing practices to create a “healthy school culture.” Successful transition to kindergarten is a primary emphasis of Ready School work. Pattie leads the work collaboratively with two area school systems: Edgecombe County Public Schools, and Nash County Public Schools. A Transition Alignment Committee meets quarterly to plan and implement transition activities between PreK sites and schools to ensure a seamless transition to kindergarten. Pattie holds a BS in Early Childhood, a Master of Library Science, a Reading K-12 certification and a Curriculum Development and Supervision Certification from East Carolina University. Throughout her career, Pattie has worked in many capacities. She taught grades 2, 3, and 4. She also worked as a media coordinator for grades K-8. Administratively Pattie worked in the Edgecombe County School System as Director of Preschool, K-8 Instruction, Middle Grades Instruction, Media Services, Arts Education and Academically/Intellectually Gifted Programs. In 2007, Pattie retired from public school work and joined DEPC as the Ready Schools Coordinator, where she now continues to work. Pattie enjoys spending time with friends, teaching 3- to 5-year-olds at her church (the GLOW KIDS), vacationing as often as possible at the North Carolina coast, and enjoying time with her family, especially her 2 grandsons.



Viola Barnes-Gray

Ready Communities Coordinator
Down East Partnership for Children
Nash and Edgecombe Counties, NC

Viola Barnes-Gray has served as the Ready Communities Coordinator with the Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC), a local nonprofit, for 23 years. Her passion and calling are outreach and leadership development with an intentional focus on building and sustaining relationships, and connecting

resources to children, families, and communities to promote a healthy, happy, hopeful future for children. From a background in banking and retail management, Viola entered the non-profit sector in 1995 as the Project Training Director of a local non-profit, Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center. In 2000 Viola transitioned to DEPC and began her career as the Ready Communities Coordinator. As the Ready Communities Coordinator, Viola ensures the Ready Community Program wraps a network of engaged community-based partners/leaders and resources around the health, early care, and education systems. Ready Communities includes: Community Fellows 12-Week Leadership Development Program, Volunteer Action Opportunities, overseeing the Faith Based Network to include the Faithful Families: Thriving Communities, convening the Latino Hispanic Outreach Committee, partnering with the Housing Authority for nutrition and gardening programs, recruitment of community partners to support school based needs, administration of the Summer Feeding/Summer Learning initiatives and supervision of the Ready Communities Specialist. Community-based volunteers and organizations deepen their involvement, support, and strengthen their leadership and advocacy skills, and help increase referral capacity. Viola received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Marketing from Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia as a 1976 honors graduate. Her strong faith and love of family is a testament, as evidenced by her work in the community. She is a gifted classical gospel singer, as was her mother, the late Roxie Mae Wynn-Barnes. Viola can often be found singing with a “Big Smile” and words of encouragement. Her hobbies include family gatherings, old movies, gardening and simply enjoying life with each new day.



Trish Dupuis

Director of Resource Development
United Way of Regina
Saskatchewan, Canada

With a background in fundraising and community development for close to 14 years, Trish has gained a deep understanding of the challenges faced by underserved populations. Beginning her career with Kids Help Phone, Trish’s passion for continuous professional growth, and her strong work ethic have

contributed to her success of working her way up the ladder into senior roles including Director, and Executive Director. Throughout her career, Trish has successfully implemented various community programs and initiatives, collaborating with local organizations and stakeholders to address pressing social issues. Most recently, Trish developed and executed United Way Regina’s 3-year Campaign for Grade-Level Reading plan which launched in September of 2020. In June of 2023, this initial plan officially wrapped up having provided a total of 12 community schools with intervention and supports totaling close to \$1.7 million within the focus areas of School Readiness, Chronic Attendance, Access to Books, and Summer Learning Loss. Recognizing the importance of building strong partnerships to create long-term sustainability of programs, Trish has worked hard to build a solid foundation with both city of Regina school divisions. These partnerships have enabled United Way Regina to receive more detailed data, and ongoing communications regarding the challenges that students and their families are facing. This allows United Way Regina to be more responsive to immediate needs, and work towards longer-term solutions to address those challenges.



Debra Lanham

Research and Development Director
Down East Partnership for Children
Nash and Edgecombe Counties, NC

Debra Lanham, Research and Development (R&D) Director of Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC), graduated from Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, with a B.A. in Elementary Education. She later attended NC State University and completed a Spanish Teaching Certificate. She earned

her Masters in Supervision and Administration from Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC. Debra enjoys working with people and creating services dedicated to strengthening morale, productivity, and achievement of missions. She is motivational, creative, and a systems thinker, all the while keeping track of the details. Debra retired from the public education system after serving 30 years in various capacities. She taught Pre-K, elementary, and middle school Spanish. Additionally, she served as the Director of Foreign Language, English as a Second Language, Staff Development, School Improvement, Principal, and Student Services/Testing Coordinator. She began working for DEPC as their R&D Director, one year after retirement. Her primary role is managing the research and development component of DEPC including program research, development, and evaluation, strategic planning, community collaborative initiatives, and grants management. She also works as an integral member of the management/leadership structure. Throughout her career, she served as a mentor to school children and new teachers. Her favorite pastimes are reading, gardening, spending time with her grandchildren, fellowshiping with her church family, and spending time with her husband of 46 years.



Gary E. Lee

Faith Partner
Pastor First Baptist Church
Middlesex
Middlesex, NC

Pastor Gary E. Lee expands the Kingdom message outside the walls of the church, answering God's call to equip the church to influence and impact the community. As the youngest of his parents, Pastor James and Merle Lee of Wendell, NC, he was influenced at an early age by his father's ministry and

commitment to God. On August 13, 2017, Reverend Lee was installed as Pastor of First Baptist Church of Middlesex (FBCM), Middlesex, NC. He and wife Linda of more than 25 years are the proud and loving parents of two adult children, Portia, and Daniel. They are also the chosen Godparents of goddaughter Savannah. Adding to the joy of their lives are their three young grandchildren, Kaiden, Saige and Mazi. Pastor Lee serves on several boards, T.J. Warren Foundation, FBC Middlesex Foundation, Stop Hunger Foundation, Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC) Board of Directors, several committees at DEPC and is a Graduate of the 2023 Community Fellows Program, a leadership development program. His mission is to empower communities through targeted outreach initiatives that promote education, healthcare, social well-being, and economic development. By fostering a sense of unity and shared responsibility, stronger, more resilient communities emerge that thrive on collaboration and mutual support. Through this mission, Pastor Lee has transformed his community. He rebuilt relationships & trust between the Faith Community and the family units by hosting community block parties, creating an annual conference, **"Its Takes a Village,"** by partnering with the community-based Middlesex Elementary School and bringing other faith-based partners and non-profit organizations with common goals to meet needs of the elementary school. In 2021 under his leadership, a Community Foundation and Resource Center were founded. The Foundation and Center collaborate closely with community partners to connect children and families to their services. One of the partners is Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC) of

Rocky Mount. DEPC partners with Pastor Lee and Middlesex Elementary School to provide school support. This partnership has served children & families in Southern Nash community since 2021. The community is comprised of over 60% Latino Hispanic families and aligns with the core beliefs and values of Pastor Lee: sharing a commitment of launching every child as healthy lifelong learner by the end of the third grade. He recognizes the strength in collaboration and actively seeks partnerships with like-minded organizations, local leaders, and community members to maximize our impact.



Kristen Miller

G.W. Carver Elementary Principal
Pinetops, NC

Kristen Miller has worked as an educator since 2010 serving Title 1 school communities in rural, eastern North Carolina. Kristin has served as principal of G.W. Carver Elementary School since 2021. G.W. Carver is a PreK-5th grade Title 1 school, located in Pinetops, NC. Prior to leading the school as principal,

she served the school as the assistant principal. Kristin values and understands the importance of deepening learning for all students, helping each one to reach their greatest potential. She recognizes the importance of hands-on learning. To offer these experiences to students, Kristin has worked to build a relationship with a community garden, located one block from the school. Students work in the garden during the spring learning about plants, working as a team, and recognizing the importance of making healthy food choices. She prioritizes and works to build community partnerships, strengthen the social-emotional well-being of the school community, and increase family engagement with the school. During her tenure at the school, activities to improve attendance have been implemented using community volunteers as mentors to support students displaying chronic absenteeism. When asked what she enjoyed most about being a school administrator, she stated, "I love supporting teachers to make an impact on their kids. Not just academically but growing them into successful human beings." Kristin earned an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education with a Reading Certification from East Carolina University in 2009. She taught second grade for six years in Greene County Schools. As a classroom teacher she focused on building curriculum focused on backwards lesson design and increasing student and family engagement. In 2016, Kristin earned a Master's degree in Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Outside of serving as principal, Kristin enjoys spending time on the farm with her husband, Jonathan, and her 4-year-old son, Rhett.



Sandi White

Family Literacy Coordinator
Regina Region Family Literacy Hub
United Way Regina
Saskatchewan, Canada

Sandi White's love of books and literacy began as a child and when she landed a part time job in high school at the Regina Public Library, she knew that her passion could become a career. While attending university Sandi continued at the library planning and delivering programs for children

and their families. Upon convocation she was hired as a teacher/librarian in a quaint rural town just outside the city. During her 34 years of teaching in the public system, both rural and urban, Sandi has been a middle years teacher, teacher/librarian and literacy coach. Retirement didn't last very long when she accepted the position of Family Literacy Coordinator with United Way Regina. The work of the literacy hub aligns well to United Way Regina's Campaign for Grade-Level Reading efforts, particularly in School Readiness, and allows United Way Regina to further their literacy impact.