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Annie Jackson and Karen Gerald Named Teachers of the Year

In a release from the Anson County Partnership for Children: The Anson County Partnership for Children was pleased to present the annual Child Care Appreciation Banquet for early childhood education professionals in Anson County at First United Methodist Church in Wadesboro on April 23. Early childhood educators work tirelessly, contributing countless hours and resources to provide quality education and care for young children in Anson County. The Child Care Appreciation Banquet is the Partnership's way of showing gratitude and bringing attention to the importance of their jobs.

Special recognition and awards were presented to those early childhood educators who go above and beyond their jobs. The NC Division of Child Development issues star rated licenses of 1 to 5 stars to licensed child care centers and family homes. Child care centers and family child care homes work diligently to achieve high quality in child care which is designated by a 4 or 5 star rated license. A rating of 5 stars means that a child care program meets North Carolina's highest quality licensing standards for child care. Back to Basics Child Care Center, Butterfly Explosion Family Child Care Home and All My Children Family Child Care Home were recognized for maintaining 5 stars. Borden's Day Care Family Home, Little Stars Child Care Home and We Care Child Care Center were recognized for maintaining 4 stars.

The Anson County Partnership for Children selects two child care providers as Early Childhood Teachers of the Year for providing exemplary early childhood education. Annie Jackson of Central Center for Children Head Start and Karen Gerald of Morven Elementary Head Start were recognized as the 2015 recipients. These Early Childhood Teachers of the Year will also be recognized by the Wadesboro Rotary Club in May.

Other awards were presented to the providers who have successfully completed the educational requirements for a degree in Early Childhood Education or in a related field. Lashonda McClendon, Jeanette Smith and Patricia Medley were recognized for achieving Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education degrees and Katrena McMillan was recognized for achieving a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education degree.

Ashley Huntley of Anson Children's Center was recognized as the Child Care Provider Volunteer of the Year for her tireless support and volunteer service to the Anson County Partnership for Children.

The Anson County Partnership for Children welcomed key note speaker Andee Edelson, Child Care Services Coordinator for Randolph County Partnership for Children. Andee specializes in the Outdoor Learning Environment for the Shape NC program which brings together experts in early childhood education, nutrition, physical activity and landscape design to improve children's health and wellness in North Carolina. Shape NC focuses on the importance of nutrition and physical activity among young children, their families and teachers with the goal of promoting healthy weight in young children. Andee's presentation, entitled "From Play Daze to Outdoor Design for Everyday Play," provided information about Play Daze events for young children using activities and spaces outdoors at child care centers. Play Daze celebrates the value of free play, providing opportunities for children ages three and up to explore and use materials in play stations. Play Daze is fun and interactive, helping children to stay healthy and physically fit. The Anson County Partnership for Children is planning a Play Daze event for young children in Anson County in fall 2015.

The family of the late Mrs. Mary Alice Smith Liles, including her husband Frank Liles, daughter Keisha and granddaughter attended the Child Care Appreciation Banquet. Mrs. Mary Liles, a dedicated child care provider who worked with young children for over thirteen years at the Anson Children's Center, passed away in March 2015. Mrs. Liles, 2014 Early Childhood Teacher of the Year, touched the hearts and lives of the children, families and coworkers at the Anson Children's Center and across the county. The Anson County Partnership for Children donated a memorial plaque and weeping cherry tree to the Anson Children's Center in memory of Mary Alice Smith Liles. The tree will be planted on the playground at Anson Children's Center as a reminder of Mrs. Liles' dedication to young children in her care. The memorial tree will also remind the community that early childhood education establishes the roots of learning and development in young children in Anson County.

The Anson County Partnership for Children is a non-profit public/private organization formed in 1996 in response to the North Carolina Smart Start initiative. The Partnership's mission is "helping to make Anson County a better place to be a child and to raise a child." For more information about Child Care in Anson County, contact Susan Armstrong at 704-694-4036 or susan.armstrong@windstream.net or visit the Partnership's website at www.ansonchildren.org.



Pictured here are Teachers of the Year, Annie Jackson from Central Center for Children Head Start and Karen Gerald from Morven Elementary Head Start.

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100 Bargains in Wadesboro

100 people showed that they recognize a bargain when they see one by attending the fourth edition of Back Porch Stories at the Ansonia Theatre on Friday, April 17. They enjoyed more than two hours of live entertainment for \$5. They heard Michael Reno Harrell, one of North Carolina's great storytellers and country songwriters, sing his stories about life in the hills. J. A. Bolton told them about wrestling the legendary Pee Dee catfish "Old Whiskers," and Martha Johnson told them how Josie, a challenged student, inspired her teachers and classmates to "Josie Up." The entire audience was then invited to meet the storytellers at a free reception at Southern Medley Wine Cellar.

The actual cost was about \$19 per ticket, but attendees only paid \$5 because of the generosity of Anson County businesses and organizations. Anson County Tourism Development Authority paid the storytellers and their travel costs, Anson County Arts Council paid for half the theatre rental, SPCC printed the program booklets, 13 local businesses bought ads in the program booklet, Anson Sign Company printed the highway banners at a deep discount and the Anson County Writers' Club paid for the reception and made all this happen. All of these sponsors get a huge round of applause for making this bargain available to the community.

The businesses that bought ads for this event were Wadesboro IGA, Anson Health & Rehabilitation, Plank Road Realty, Turner & Tyson CPAs, Brown Creek Animal Hospital, Southern Medley Wine Cellar, Oliver's Hometown Restaurant and Bar, Parsons Drug, Poisson, Poisson & Bower Attorneys, Price's Place Pottery and Antiques, Diane Shackelford/Woodmen of the World, Beachum Landscaping Materials, Brown Creek Creamery, and presenting sponsor Uwharrie Bank.

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