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ENJOY PICTURES FROM THE WADESBORO CHRISTMAS PARADE IN THIS WEEK'S EDITION.

Apply For NC Pre-Kindergarten Today

Anson County Partnership for Children is accepting applications for NC Pre-K, a Kindergarten readiness initiative that is proven to help four-year-olds gain basic skills needed for success in elementary school. Children who are four years of age before August 31, 2023, are eligible to apply for this high-quality program, which is free to qualifying families.

"Pre-K is a place where children learn skills that are vital to child development. NC Pre-K children learn how to socialize, make their own decisions, and interact with others. These are all important skills for child development. To make the transition to kindergarten easier, children learn eye contact, gain self-confidence, develop work efficiency, create a stronger attention span, and work on temper control," said Karen Gerald, Child Care Services Coordinator, Anson County Partnership for Children.

Not only are children who attended Pre-K more successful in school, they usually have higher grade point averages and are more likely to graduate high school and college.

NC Pre-K classes operate on a regular school calendar and are designed to address emotional and social development, physical health, language development, and cognitive functioning. Through the incorporation of indoor and outdoor learning environments, students participate in active learning experiences to foster a lifetime love of learning.

A high priority is placed on serving children who meet the following criteria: child's family is at or below 75% of the state median income level, a disability has been identified, limited English proficiency, developmental differences, chronic health conditions, or a parent who is active military service personnel.

There are currently four centers operating NC Pre-K classes in Anson County. These classrooms are located at Anson Children's Center, Central Center for Children and Families, C's & T's Childcare, Morven Elementary School, and Open Doors Center for Children.

Parents or guardians interested in learning more about the NC Pre-K program should contact Karen Gerald at 704-694-4036 (Ext. 105) or:

karen.gerald@ansonchildren.org.

Applications are available in the Partnership's Early Childhood Resource Center located at 115 East Morgan Street or online at www.ansonchildren.org.

Tips for Holiday Returns and Exchanges

Holiday returns aren't easy! And we don't mean the part where you explain to your mother why you returned the sweater she gave you.

Stores are not legally required to accept exchanges or give refunds unless the merchandise was defective or misrepresented. While most retailers do offer refund and exchange programs, policies vary greatly from one store to another. Be sure to double-check policies this holiday season, even if you are familiar with the brand, as stores can change their policies whenever they want.

The following tips from the Better Business Bureau should help to make your holiday returns run more smoothly.

- Get to know store policies. Before you make a purchase, find out if the store has a return policy and, if so, how it works. Understand that many retailers change their policies for the holiday season. If the store allows returns or exchanges, find out if you need to pay a restocking fee. Ask the seller if they offer cash refunds, exchanges, or only store credit. Store policies are usually posted at the check-out counter or printed on the back of receipts.
- Understand online store return policies. If you are shopping online, search for the seller's return policy and read it through before clicking "buy." Find out if they accept returns or exchanges and who pays for the shipping when an item is returned. In some cases, you can save on shipping fees by returning an online purchase to the local brick-and-mortar store. See more of our tips for hassle-free returns for online purchases at www.bbb.org.
- Get the details on a product's warranty. Most electronics and home appliances come with warranties that are to be fulfilled by the manufacturer, not the retailer. Find out how the store handles returns and repairs if an item stops working or needs replacement parts. Will the retailer ship the item to the manufacturer for you? Or will you need to deal with the manufacturer directly? Knowing the answers will leave you well-prepared for any future issues.
- Keep your receipt and packaging. Most stores will only accept returns and exchanges if you can present the item with its receipt and original packaging. Always include a gift receipt with items you give, and hold on to any gift receipts you receive.
- Bring your ID. Many stores ask to see your ID when you return an item to avoid holiday return scams. Sometimes retailers require you to bring your ID and the original form of payment. If this is the policy of the store where your gift is from, you may need the assistance of the gift-giver in order to be reimbursed.
- Make returns in a timely fashion. Almost all return policies are valid during a specific time period. Some stores modify their return period during the holidays, so don't risk missing your chance to make your return. Take the item back to the store without delay.

Moderna Covid Vaccine is Available Now at the Health Department

The Anson County Health Department has a limited amount of Moderna vaccine available. If you would like to schedule a vaccination, call them at 704-694-5188.

The Health Department also has flu shots available. If you would like a flu shot please call 704-694-5188.

The Health Department is located at 110 West Ashe Street in Wadesboro. You can find them on Facebook and the website is: www.co.anson.nc.us/164/Health-Department.

Would You Like to Help Deliver Meals to Home Bound Citizens?

Grace Senior Center is in need of volunteers to deliver meals to their Home Bound Clients on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays, from approximately 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Please come by Grace Senior Center to Sign up. The Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, just past IGA.

For more information call 704-694-6616.



Giant Crowd Comes Out to Enjoy the Wadesboro Christmas Parade!

The 2023 Wadesboro Christmas Parade was held on Thursday, December 7, a beautiful and cool day. The parade featured lots and lots of festive participants who entertained the extra large number of people in attendance.

Pictured above on the left, parade emcee Chipper Long kept the crowd informed about each parade entry - but better than that, he kept everyone revved up with his boundless energy and good humor!

Brandon Chewing Sworn in as Wadesboro Police Chief

At a ceremony held on Friday morning, Dec. 22, Brandon H. Chewing was officially sworn in as the Police Chief for the Town of Wadesboro. The ceremony was packed with friends, family and officers who watched as Chewing's wife Brandis held the Bible for him as he took the oath of office.

Chief Chewing would like to thank the citizens of Wadesboro, the Wadesboro Town Council, and all the men and women of the Wadesboro Police Department for having the confidence to know that he will faithfully execute the duties of his office.

Chewing is pictured above with his family. They are, from left, Brooklin, Bristol and Brandis.



Anson County Activities to Commemorate the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Members of the Anson County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dreamkeepers Association are developing and preparing activities to celebrate the birthday of the late, slain civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The theme for this year's activities is "The Urgency of Creating the Beloved Community." This theme comes from the many references in Dr. King's speeches about building a community of "social equity and belonging, peace, and freedom from prejudice, i.e. a 'beloved community.'"

Events will begin with an MLK, Jr. Jazzy Gala which will be held at the HOLLA Center, located at 229 East Main Street in Morven on Friday, January 12, from 6:00 until 10:00 p.m. The soulful melodies of jazz music will be provided by the Stanley Baird Group. Expect an unforgettable evening filled with live performances by this renowned jazz artist. And, dance music will be provided by Anson County's own DJ Gate 3. Enjoy delicious food and drink along with a vibrant atmosphere. To purchase tickets for this event, go to the www.ansondreamkeepers.org website.

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Unity Prayer Breakfast will be held on Saturday, January 13 at 9:00 a.m. on the steps of the Anson County Courthouse. The community breakfast will address themes of unity, love, peace, end of poverty, freedom from prejudice, and belonging-social equity. Area ministers will render thoughts and prayers on scripture and current events. Refreshments will be provided.

Also on Saturday, January 13, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dreamkeepers Association cordially invites you to participate in the Annual MLK, Jr. Parade at 1:00 p.m. in uptown Wadesboro. Participation in the parade is not only great fun but it also provides an excellent way to promote your organization free of charge. Parade applications can be downloaded from the website: www.ansondreamkeepers.org and the application deadline is January 10.

On Sunday, January 14 all local churches and other organizations are encouraged to sponsor an activity at your church commemorating the birthday of Dr. King. A particular focus could be on creating the beloved community.

The annual Memorial March and program are scheduled for Monday, January 15 beginning at 8:00 a.m. The Memorial March will begin at the Anson County Department of Social Services building, located at 118 North Washington Street in uptown Wadesboro, and conclude at the SPCC Lockhart-Taylor Center where the program will start at 9:00 a.m.

For more information contact Ms. Winnie M. Bennett, 704-465-0867.

All events are open to the public.

Lions Club Brooms - THE BEST Broom You Can Buy!

The Wadesboro Lions Club sells brooms to help meet humanitarian needs worldwide, and help local causes right here in Anson County.

In support of that mission the Lions Club sells brooms, and the brooms are of excellent quality. The Original Soft Sweep Magnetic Action Broom features a unique magnetic cleaning action that picks up lint and dust, especially human and pet hair. It will not scratch any floor, and rinses clean and dries quickly. The kitten soft bristle is approximately 12" long and comes with a metal handle.

Pick up yours at Allen's Restaurant in Peachland or Lacy's and Martin Furniture in Wadesboro for only \$12. The Lions Club's purple handled straw broom is also available.

For information about the different projects of the Wadesboro Lions Club, please call Lion Jim Chandler at 910-571-1448.

Anson Democratic Party Meets Thursday

The Anson County Democratic Party will meet for their monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28 at the Hampton B Allen Library, located at 120 South Greene Street, Wadesboro. Democratic candidates for the 2024 Elections are encouraged to be present. All registered Democrats are welcome and invited to attend.

Anson County Offices Holiday Schedule

All Anson County offices will be closed on Monday, January 1 for the New Year holiday.

All emergency services and law enforcement will be full operation during that time.

Live Bluegrass Music at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting a musical program on Monday, January 8 at 10:30 a.m. in the library's Little Theater. The featured musical group will be Anita and John Bishop with a concert of bluegrass music. Hope to see you there.

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

Beginner Beekeeping Class Offered

The Anson County Extension Office is offering a Beginner's Beekeeping class that is starting on Tuesday, January 30. The 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. classes will be held every Tuesday through March 5 at the Anson County Extension Office, located at 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro.

The cost is \$35 for individuals, \$40 for families. For information about the class, to register and to make payment, please contact Aimee Colf at 704-694-2915.

For more information about the Anson County Beekeepers, visit their Facebook page, "Anson Beekeepers Association."

The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com