



Your involvement is the next step in creating a community where the Golden Rule is part of everyday life, where families are strong, and where children are safe.

Please use the contact information below to learn more about the Strong Communities initiative and its volunteer opportunities.

To Help Keep Kids Safe...

Phone: 864.688.2214 - Greenville County
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Simpsonville, SC 29681

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Strong Communities

STRONG COMMUNITIES is a comprehensive initiative to build systems of support for families of young children. Strong Communities builds, strengthens, and renews community norms of neighbors' help for each other, an important step in preventing child abuse and neglect.



Supported by a generous grant from The Duke Endowment to the Clemson University Research Foundation, Strong Communities is a project of the Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life. It is a Public Service Activity of Clemson University in collaboration with the Center for Community Services.

Perhaps unprecedented in its level of community mobilization to ensure child safety, Strong Communities builds on the research-based premise that, to be effective, child protection must become a part of everyday life in the neighborhoods where children live, study, and play. Our goal is for every parent and every child to be confident that someone will notice and someone will care whenever they have cause for joy, sorrow, or worry. We seek to accomplish this goal through partnerships with schools, civic groups, businesses, housing agencies, health agencies, law enforcement, religious organizations, social service agencies, and individuals.

The strategy behind the initiative is to build community itself—not merely foster collaboration among community organizations. Strong Communities strives to make help “natural” in the institutions of everyday life, ranging from religious fellowships to pediatric and family health clinics to YMCAs and other family centers.

Research shows that child abuse and neglect most often occur when parents and other caregivers are alone—when they lack the social and material resources needed to care adequately for children. Strong Communities works to increase resources for families by building a norm of mutual assistance—an expectation that people will watch out for each other. Building parent leadership and strengthening the connections among families are important steps in keeping children safe.

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“Strong Communities has enabled expansion of Greenville County Schools’ preschool and family programs. It is also providing many opportunities for parents of young children to become engaged in the community, receive help from each other and from community agencies, and obtain greater confidence as parents. Building on Clemson University’s innovations in family support, the groundbreaking collaborations in the Strong Communities initiative assist us in our work to provide state-of-the-art services to young children and their families.”

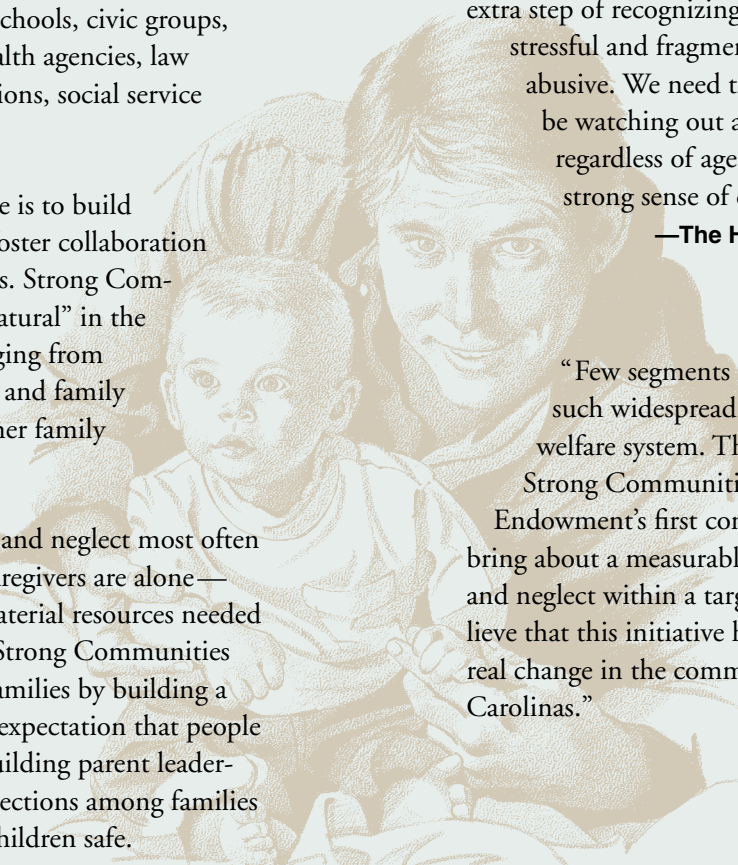
**—Doris Santanello, Principal
Child Development and Family Centers
Greenville County Schools**

“This is another step forward in leading the nation to develop a comprehensive approach in supporting children and families. This initiative takes the extra step of recognizing that family life can be stressful and fragmented and sometimes even abusive. We need the entire community to be watching out and protecting children, regardless of age, because we all need a strong sense of community and family.”

**—The Honorable Richard W. Riley
former U.S. Secretary
of Education**

“Few segments of our society have seen such widespread change as the child welfare system. This grant, in support of the Strong Communities initiative, is The Duke Endowment’s first comprehensive effort to bring about a measurable decrease in child abuse and neglect within a targeted community. We believe that this initiative has the potential to effect real change in the community and throughout the Carolinas.”

**—Ms. Minor Shaw
Trustee
The Duke Endowment**



I have worked with Strong Communities from the very beginning.

During one of the initial meetings with the community, we all agreed that the citizens of Simpsonville and the Golden Strip area needed recognition for all their hard work. Out of that meeting, the Champions for Children program began—a recognition given to family-friendly organizations, businesses and individuals. Relatively speaking, our community may be small, but our concern for our children is great.”

—The Honorable Patricia Thomas
Mayor Pro Tem
City of Simpsonville



Serving as fire chief of Belmont means keeping the community safe and keeping kids safe.

That is exactly what Strong Communities does; they *keep kids safe*. Fire stations do more than fight fires; we provide a vital resource for the community. Strong Communities has provided assistance with everything from helping with our new moms’ program to providing books for the neighborhood children. We work together as a team to look out for our neighbors.”

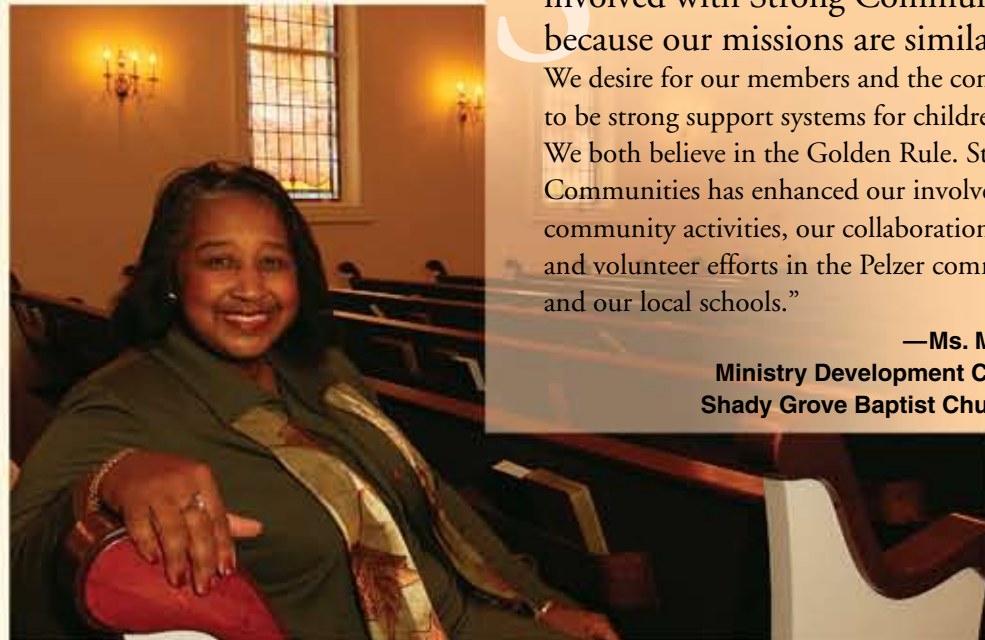
—Chief Anthony Segars
Belmont Fire Department



Shady Grove Baptist Church became involved with Strong Communities because our missions are similar.

We desire for our members and the community to be strong support systems for children. We both believe in the Golden Rule. Strong Communities has enhanced our involvement in community activities, our collaboration efforts, and volunteer efforts in the Pelzer community and our local schools.”

—Ms. Mamie Reid
Ministry Development Coordinator
Shady Grove Baptist Church, Pelzer



I saw a flyer in my church bulletin about needing volunteers to get toys together.

I called community outreach worker Janine Sutter and told her that as a single mom with a baby I didn’t have a lot of time or money. We realized that the Granny Ellisor Toy Lending Library in Fountain Inn would be the perfect place for me because I could take my son with me. Now that I know more about Strong Communities, I see it as more than just a way to help out; it brings the citizens of Fountain Inn together.”

—Ms. Tracy Mitchell
Community Volunteer
Fountain Inn



My involvement with Strong Communities has been as diverse as the number of programs they facilitate.

Central Carolina Bank purchased Shaken Baby prevention videos used in local high schools to help educate teenagers about the dangers related to this syndrome. We also participated in the Financial Wellness Fair, which provided an opportunity to help community members learn more about their economic future and equip them with the skills needed to make sound financial decisions.”

—Mr. Ernest N. Irby
Vice President
Central Carolina Bank

