

Raising Our Children



There are few better ways to assure a bright future for Oconee County than to invest in its children. One way to do that is to support the work of the Collins Children's Home.

Established in 1980, Collins Children's Home provides private foster care for abused, abandoned, and neglected children. Some were homeless, others in the care of grandparents who could no longer provide for them, some with single parents who had to work away from home, and yet others with drug-addicted parents entering rehabilitation. They aren't necessarily troubled kids, but come from troubled circumstances, in need of structure and support to successfully navigate their way to adulthood.

True to its founders' philosophy that "it's not the job of the government to raise our kids," Collins Children's Home shelters children in a safe environment, and nourishes them not only with food but with a nurturing family environment that cares for their physical, spiritual, educational, and emotional needs.

Based on Christian values, married couples serve as live-in house parents and role models to provide family settings, one for the boys and another for the girls. They live as families, learning to get along with each other, express and settle differences amicably, and develop healthy relationships. They're given responsibilities that teach good work habits, such as making their beds in the morning and doing their laundry. All of this gives them a sense of acceptance, permanence, belonging, and dignity.

The kids attend community churches to fill their spiritual needs and are encouraged to be involved in youth group activities. They go to public schools and are tutored to improve academic performance. Some have become the first in their family to graduate from high school. Many "graduates" have become productive members of society with successful careers in nursing, computer science, and business. And they're provided counseling to overcome any emotional problems.

Their private placement program allows children to be placed when parents/guardians are going through difficulties—without court involvement or the ability to pay. This allows families to keep custody and stay in contact with the children, with the expectation that the children will eventually return to their families/guardians.

The majority of its funding comes from donations and grants. They operate a thrift shop at 504 W. North 1st Street in Seneca and hold two major fund-raising events each year: a golf tournament in the spring and a

BBQ in the fall. One project currently on the drawing boards is to build a back patio onto the boy's dwelling.

You can make a difference in these children's lives by supporting the Collins Children's Home. They are one of twenty local, non-profit organizations partnering with the Keowee Key Community Partnership to have their good works promoted, and their needs identified to Keowee Key members.

Information about all twenty organizations can be found, and donations made directly to these organizations, through the "Philanthropy" tab on the Keowee Key internal website under "Member Services." Be sure to let them know you're a Keowee Key member.

Scholarships Associated With Keowee Key Are Making a Difference in Oconee County

Nearly one in six adults in Oconee County have never completed high school¹. Because they earn roughly forty percent less than someone with an associate degree², their children often don't have the resources to continue their education. South Carolina Lottery funds and federal Pell grants can provide part of the tuition, but there is still a shortfall – one that too often means a young person not getting the education they need. But there is hope.

With the improving economy, jobs now exist, but still, not enough people are trained to fill them. Two special scholarships associated with Keowee Key are making a difference, and you can help.

Keowee Key Community Partnership Scholarships Keowee Key Community Partnership (KKCP) Scholarships were created in late 2018 to enable qualified students from Oconee County to continue their education, secure the training they need and help break that cycle. Based on an applicant's academic and financial criteria, the financial aid office of (KKCP Partner) Tri-County Technical College (TCTC) selects recipients on a case-by-case basis and awards the scholarships.

Tri-County has the highest student success rate among the state's 16 technical colleges and is ranked in the top one percent nationally for successful transfers to four-year colleges and universities. They were the first Keowee Key Community Partnership Partner, coming on board in October 2018.

While pursuing the scholarship's goal of giving a helping hand to qualified Oconee County students, an opportunity emerged to also provide an extra benefit to Keowee Key full- and part-time employees and their immediate families. This was accomplished by ensuring they receive first consideration for these need-based scholarships if they meet TCTC requirements.

Now, in little more than two years, five worthy Oconee County students have been awarded scholarships, with two more to be awarded this month. (And

three of the recipients have been employees or in the immediate family of an employee of Keowee Key!)

To donate, visit the Philanthropy site on the Member Central page of the internal Keowee Key website. You can also visit www.tctc.edu/kkcp or mail your check to Tri-County Technical College Foundation, Attention: KKCP, P.O. Box 587, Pendleton, SC 29670 (Be sure to write, "Keowee Key" on the memo line.)

¹ American Community Survey 2017 through Towncharts.com, Oconee County Education, Figure 5

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Population Survey, Earnings by Education



Oconee County Habitat for Humanity's Holzhauser Education Fund (HEF) Scholarships

Almost exactly ten years ago, the board of (KKCP Partner) Oconee County Habitat for Humanity initiated a fund to assist any Habitat homeowner and their children to attain a GED or post-high school degree. The fund was named in honor of long-time Oconee County Habitat volunteers Grace and Bill Holzhauser.

Deliberately held separate from donations for homebuilding, the fund in recent years has been sustained by individual and corporate donations and bequests specifically earmarked for its use. Students helped by the fund are usually the first generation in their family to ever go beyond high school.

Since its inception, more than 190 grants totaling \$136,370 have been given out, changing lives in the process. With the program's assistance, many homeowners and their children have obtained their GEDs as well.

Long a favorite of Keowee Key members, Oconee County Habitat for Humanity became a Keowee Key Community Partnership Partner in July 2019.

To donate, send your check to Oconee County Habitat for Humanity, P.O. Box 685, Seneca, SC 29769. (Be sure to write, "Keowee Key/HEF" on the memo line.)

Keowee Key Community Partnership (KKCP) supports deserving, effective, nonprofit organizations that make a difference in Oconee County. These Partners record that donations from Keowee Key members came from Keowee Key, but report only cumulative results back to KKCP, enabling KKCP to seek matching funds. No individual donor names or donation amounts are ever shared with KKCP by Partners, and no money passes to or through KKCP.