

Upstate Circle Of Friends (UCF) is a not for profit organization located in Greenville, South Carolina. Our mission is a solid commitment to expand opportunities, enhance the quality of life, and the progression of at-risk children and their families through various educational recreational, and social programs.



#### Breaking the Stigma: The Importance of Mental Health Awareness and Support in Our Community

A Message From President Deloris Pinson & George Singleton-Vice President/COO

May is Mental Health Month. As an organization that tries to be as impactful as possible in providing resources to individuals and families of the Upstate, it is necessary to provide programs and services that positively affect our community. This is demonstrated by our collaboration with mental health providers to provide services in our UCF Medical Center beginning in August 2023.

Leading into June, where the message will focus on Men's Mental Health, we have partnered with various organizations to be impactful in this broad national effort to



change the narrative regarding Mental Health. There are many forms of Mental Health needs, and it is up to those of us in a position to help to continue to become more educated and be an outlet for those searching for help. Upstate Circle of Friends will continue to do our part during this mental health crisis.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, please contact your trusted provider, check out NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

## How Gardening Can Improve Your Mental Health

Kim Gibson, Urban Teaching Farm Manager

Gardening is not just a hobby, it is also a therapeutic activity that can have a

positive impact on your mental health. Here are some ways gardening can improve your mental well-being:

#### **Reduces Stress and Anxiety**

Gardening can help you reduce stress and anxiety levels. Being surrounded by nature and greenery can help you feel more relaxed and calm. The physical activity of gardening can also help release endorphins, which can improve your mood and reduce stress levels.

# Boosts Self-Esteem and Confidence

Gardening can help boost your selfesteem and confidence. Seeing your plants grow and thrive can give you a sense of accomplishment and pride. It can also help you feel more connected to nature and the world around you.



#### Provides a Sense of Purpose

Gardening can provide a sense of purpose and meaning. Taking care of plants and watching them grow can give you a sense of responsibility and a reason to get up in the morning. It can also be a great way to connect with others who share your love of gardening.

#### **Improves Cognitive Function**

Gardening can improve cognitive function and memory. It requires planning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, which can help keep your mind sharp. It can also be a great way to learn new things and expand your knowledge of plants and gardening techniques.

#### **Encourages Mindfulness**

Gardening can encourage mindfulness and being present in the moment. It requires you to focus on the task at hand and pay attention to your surroundings. This can help you feel more grounded and connected to the present moment.

In conclusion, gardening is a great way to improve your mental health and well-being. It can help reduce stress and anxiety levels, boost self-esteem and confidence, provide a sense of purpose, improve cognitive function, and encourage mindfulness. So, if you haven't already, give gardening a try and see how it can positively impact your mental health.

#### Mental Health Community Summit 2023 " Look Around ,Look Within"

Toya Y. Moore

During Mental Health Awareness Month, Upstate Circle of Friends hosted a Resource Fair and panel discussion spotlighting resources around social and emotional wellbeing. There was a unique panel discussion with local mental health professionals in the community. The panel was facilitated by



the Eta Sigma Sigma RHOer Club. The idea behind having the youth facilitate the discussion is so that we can teenagers, friends, family members together to have a dialogue about this topic. The theme this year for Mental Health Awareness is "Look Around, Look Within". All the questions and talking points all came from the middle and high school students of the Eta Sigma Sigma RHOer Club and made for very impactful dialogue between the audience and panel.

The panel treated the youth facilitators with respect and positive regard, and the

conversation was very meaningful around the topic. Parents and students in the audience were engaged, and several participants were able to identify local resources and information to help them when it comes to Mental Health.



**Upcoming Summer Programs At UCF** 

**ISHAPE ME PREP SCHOOL** 



### StringFusion Summer Camp with Christina Brown

Unleash your musical talents this summer at our string summer camp! Designed specifically for 6th-8th graders who play the violin, viola, or cello, our camp offers an immersive experience that will take your skills to the next level. With expert instructors, a warm energetic environment, and a dynamic curriculum that covers everything from technique to performance, you'll learn, grow, and have fun alongside other talented musicians. Our string summer camp is the perfect place to develop your craft and make memories that will last a lifetime.

#### **REGISTER HERE**





#### Teen Driver's Ed course is Sat. June 3rd.

- 8 hours of classroom training.
- 6 hours of behind the wheel training.
- Lunch Provided.
- Discount for insurance upon completion.
- A deposit of \$175.00 is required to register for the class.
- Remaining balance due at/or before the first behind the wheel training session.



## **SIGN UP TODAY**

Registration deadline is Wed. May 31st

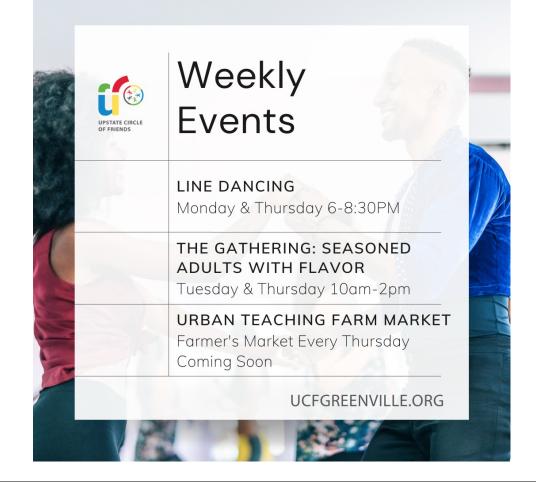
For More Info Email: thedrivesmartacademy@gmail.com



Upstate Circle of Friends is a sponsor for the Summer Break Café under the State Department of Education Food Program. We are accepting new locations to serve summer meals. We can feed Summer Camps, Summer Reading Programs, and Vacation Bible Schools. We offer hot or cold meals. 2 of the following meals are offered. Breakfast, Lunch, Snack and Supper.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED CALL:** Deloris Pinson-864-201-8591









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