



South Carolina Department of  
**CHILDREN'S  
 ADVOCACY**  
 Advocacy. Accountability. Service.

# MONTHLY UPDATE

Department of Children's Advocacy Monthly Update  
*Connecting with and updating our community*



*Governor Henry McMaster is shown with Department of Mental Health Director Dr. Kenneth Rogers, Department of Children's Advocacy Director and State Child Advocate Amanda Whittle, and Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette at the ceremonial bill signing of the Student Identification Card Suicide Prevention Act on July 22, 2021. Photo Source: Office of the Governor; See ABC Columbia's news article [here](#)*

*To our partners, leaders, providers and advocates ~*

*Governor Henry McMaster signed the Student Identification Card Suicide Prevention Act at a ceremonial bill signing on July 22, 2021 (see photo above). I am pleased to provide you with information about this bill as well as other key updates from the past month in this edition of the Department of Children's Advocacy's monthly newsletter which highlights July 2021. Please [contact us](#) if you would like more information about our agency.*

- Amanda F. Whittle, J.D., CWLS  
 State Child Advocate and DCA Director



## IN THIS ISSUE

**GOVERNOR MCMASTER  
 SIGNS STUDENT ID CARD  
 SUICIDE PREVENTION ACT**

**WILLIAM J. MCCORD  
 CENTER IN ORANGEBURG**

**CONGRATULATIONS TO  
 NEW COORDINATOR**

**LAW STUDENT SERVES  
 AS SUMMER EXTERN**

**MEET KARDAY -  
 S.C. HEART GALLERY**

**DCA ENHANCES  
 INVESTIGATIVE  
 RESOURCES**

**MEET MATTHEW -  
 S.C. HEART GALLERY**

## Governor Henry McMaster Signs Student ID Card Suicide Prevention Act



***Governor Henry D. McMaster was joined by SCDMH Office of Suicide Prevention's Jennifer Butler; SCDMH Director Dr. Kenneth Rogers, S.C. Senator Katrina Shealy, Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, Mental Health America's Jennifer Piver, and Department of Children's Advocacy Director and State Child Advocate Amanda Whittle for a ceremonial bill signing on July 22, 2021.***

On July 22, 2021, Governor McMaster signed the Student ID Card Suicide Prevention Act which requires schools to provide the number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline on student ID cards. This legislation (S. 231) was sponsored by Senator Katrina Shealy and was supported by many agencies and organizations including the Department of Children's Advocacy, Department of Mental Health Office of Suicide Prevention (DMH OSP), National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI), and Mental Health America. According to the most recent publication of the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children (JCLCC), suicide is the leading cause of death for South Carolina children between the ages of 10 and 17, and this law is an important part of our state's suicide prevention efforts.

### ***Suicide Prevention Training at Department of Children's Advocacy***

The Department of Children's Advocacy has been provided with the opportunity to complete online suicide prevention training through the Department of Mental Health's Office of Suicide Prevention. All DCA staff have completed the training, and Guardian ad Litem Program volunteers and Foster Care Review Board members have been invited and are encouraged to complete the training and should email [SuicidePrevention@childadvocate.sc.gov](mailto:SuicidePrevention@childadvocate.sc.gov) for assistance with accessing the online suicide prevention training

### ***How can you be involved in combatting suicide?***

Contact the Department of Mental Health's Office of Suicide Prevention for ways that you can be involved in making South Carolina a Zero Suicide state.



## William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility Serves South Carolina's Children, Adolescents and Their Families



Thank you to South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drugs (DAODAS) Director Sara Goldsby for introducing DCA Director and State Child Advocate Amanda Whittle to the William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility's Executive Director, Mike Dennis. Director Goldsby's connection was helpful in raising awareness about the availability of treatment and placement resources at the McCord facility.

The William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility was established in 1993 and is a leader in the field of addiction treatment. The McCord facility is operated by the Tri-County Commission, which is a local treatment provider of DAODAS. They are located on a beautiful campus at 910 Cook Road in Orangeburg, South Carolina near the Orangeburg Regional Medical Centers and many restaurants and businesses. They provide inpatient and outpatient services to individuals throughout the state. Qualified professionals provide treatment services based on nationally recognized standards of care.



On July 12, 2021, DCA Director Amanda Whittle and DCA Deputy Kayla Capps visited the William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility and met with Executive Director Mike Dennis, Deputy Dee Robinson and Outpatient Services Director Melina Lambert. Director Whittle and Deputy Capps were able to see the dorm-style inpatient rooms as well as educational, recreational and counseling areas which are equipped with modern technology and welcoming motifs. There were youth and staff at the facility during the visit, and the youth were engaged in treatment with one of McCord's treatment professionals. The facility provides a voluntary program for adolescents and their families to meet the distinct needs of adolescents whose lives have been or are currently being affected by substance use and/or behavioral disorders.

(continued on next page)

Dee Robinson (Deputy with the William J. McCord Center) participated in the Department of Children's Advocacy's visit to the William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility on July 12, 2021 and is shown here with DCA Investigations Unit's poster.

## William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility (Continued)



### Outpatient Services

Adolescents displaying behaviors that are not associated with substance use but are causing problems in school, at home, with the legal system, or any other facet of life are also assessed for services. The William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment professionals believe it is important to intervene before this behavior becomes unmanageable. As a result, counselors are trained to work with individuals ages 10-18 that are experiencing behavioral issues. with outpatient programs including:

**Adolescent Outpatient** for individuals aged 10-18 who are struggling with emotions, exhibiting high risk behaviors for substance use and/or using drugs or alcohol. Trauma is also addressed.

**The Bridge** for adolescents aged 13-17 to reduce/eliminate the behaviors that result from involvement with DJJ and decrease the chances of recommitment.

**Connecting the Dots** for parents and guardians to enhance parents' and guardians' skills with concrete solutions to help adolescents change their behavior. The interactive group includes parent to parent support.

The S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA) is charged, among other duties, with examining system-wide services; ensuring timely, safe, and effective services for children by state agencies; developing and promoting a broad vision of reform; and making recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

### Inpatient Services

Their inpatient services are for adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 with a primary alcohol and drug diagnosis that requires out of home treatment. Services include daily monitoring by licensed nursing staff; medical and psychiatric evaluations and monitoring, including medication management as needed; individual, group and family counseling; social/recreational therapy; homebound educational instruction; and discharge planning. Treatment at this level revolves around a structured schedule of 24-hour medically monitored treatment. There are 15 beds available for this level, and the counselor to client ratio is 1:3 thereby increasing the personal attention the adolescents receive. Treatment is designed to address multiple issues that have contributed to the adolescent needing inpatient treatment.

### Referrals

*The William J. McCord Adolescent Treatment Facility is an impressive treatment program with a 3:1 ratio of nurses to youth. in their inpatient program and with an effective array of outpatient services to strengthen families and communities.*

*Referrals can be made by parents, guardians, school staff, healthcare providers, law enforcement, probation officers and others.*

*To make a referral,  
call 803-534-2328 (extension 118)*

*To learn more, click [here](#).*

## Congratulations to Elizabeth Bryant: Berkeley County Guardian ad Litem Program's New County Coordinator



**Elizabeth Bryant**

***Berkeley County Coordinator with the  
Guardian ad Litem Program***

Elizabeth Bryant has served with the Cass Elias McCarter Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program since February 2018. Prior to this, she was a foster care case manager with DSS. Elizabeth has a passion for advocating for the best interests of the children and supporting the GAL volunteers and being a team player. She has worked in both the Charleston and Berkeley County offices as a case manager where she supervised volunteers in addition to managing a case load and assisting with recruiting and training.

She is honored to undertake this new opportunity and is looking forward to building on the strengths of the GAL program in Berkeley, managing a team of four case managers and an administrative assistant in addition to more than forty (40) volunteers.

**Congratulations, Elizabeth!**

## Ambyr Goff: Department of Children's Advocacy Investigations Unit's Summer Extern



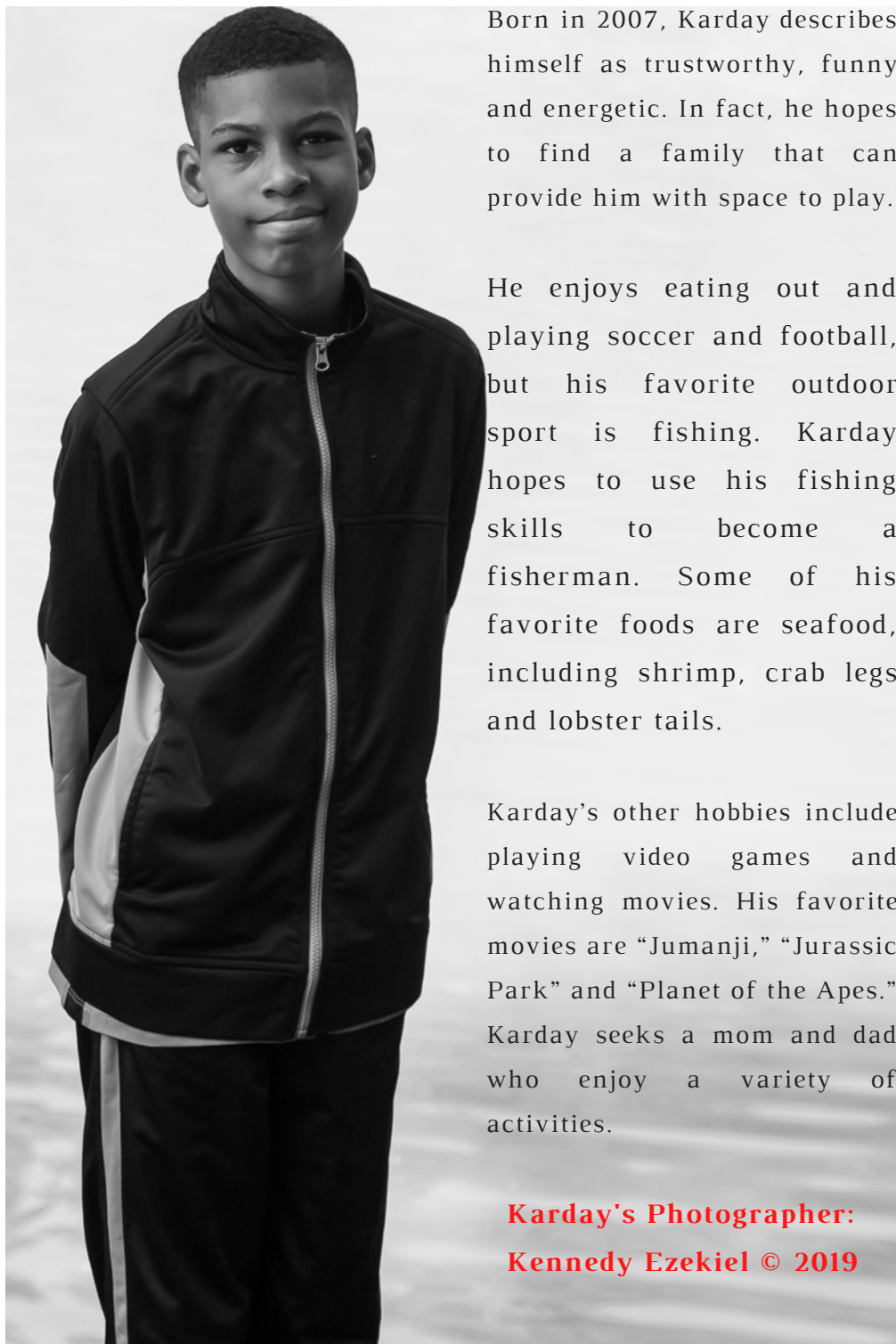
**Ambyr Goff**

***Rising 3L at the University of South Carolina School of Law and Summer Extern with the Investigations Unit***

Ambyr Goff is DCA's Investigations Unit's summer extern. She is a rising 3L (third year law student) at the University of South Carolina School of Law and is pursuing her Juris Doctorate degree and a Children's Law Concentration. Ambyr's interest in family law and children's issues was piqued and enriched by a Family Law class with Judge H. Bruce Williams. Ambyr shared that the most rewarding aspect of her externship with DCA's Investigations Unit has been the feeling that she was involved in the process of improving the lives of children that are being served by the state of South Carolina.

Dept of Children's Advocacy Deputy Kayla Capps shared, "We are fortunate Ambyr chose to extern with us and have greatly appreciated her research concerning services and processes by child-serving agencies and her assistance with our most recent grant-writing project."

# Meet Karday featured on the S.C. Heart Gallery



Born in 2007, Karday describes himself as trustworthy, funny and energetic. In fact, he hopes to find a family that can provide him with space to play.

He enjoys eating out and playing soccer and football, but his favorite outdoor sport is fishing. Karday hopes to use his fishing skills to become a fisherman. Some of his favorite foods are seafood, including shrimp, crab legs and lobster tails.

Karday's other hobbies include playing video games and watching movies. His favorite movies are "Jumanji," "Jurassic Park" and "Planet of the Apes." Karday seeks a mom and dad who enjoy a variety of activities.

**Karday's Photographer:  
Kennedy Ezekiel © 2019**



*Are you the forever home  
for Karday?*

Learn more about Karday [here](#).

Learn more about other children who are in foster care and who are waiting for a forever home at [S.C. Heart Gallery](#).



## DCA Enhances Investigative Resources



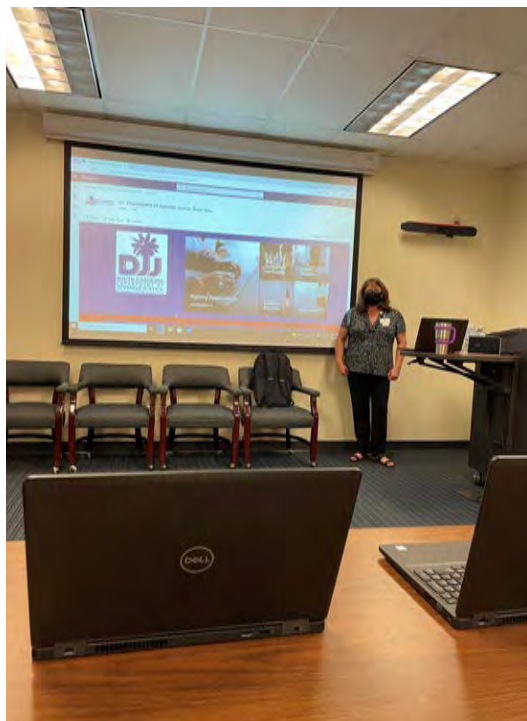
INVESTIGATIONS UNIT  
1-800-206-1957  
info@childadvocate.sc.gov

Pursuant to a request by the Department of Children's Advocacy (DCA), the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has provided DCA's Investigations Unit with access to its Event Reporting System (ERS) regarding youth served by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Access to these confidential electronic records will strengthen DCA's Investigations Unit's ability to effectively receive, refer, monitor and/or investigate complaints regarding services provided to children concerning DJJ.

Consistent with the duties of S.C. Code of Laws Ann. Sections 63-11-2240, 2270, 2280 and 2290, and subject to the confidentiality provisions of 2250, Section 63-11-2270(8) authorizes the DCA to "have access at any and all reasonable times to any facility, residence, program, or portion thereof that is operated, licensed, or funded by a state agency and shall have unrestricted access to all electronic information systems records, reports, materials and employees in order to better understand the needs of children in the custody of the State or children who are receiving services from a state agency."

DCA appreciates the training, overview and assistance provided by Ashley Crider, Business Analyst/Automation Director for DJJ's IT Department; Sean Stogner, DJJ's IT Director; Beverly Springs with DJJ's IT Helpdesk; and James Flowers, Chief Investigator with DJJ's Office of Inspector General; the coordination and facilitation by DJJ's General Counsel Elizabeth Hill; the work of DJJ's IT Department to configure the remote access, security credentialing and laptop configuration; and the cooperation and direction of DJJ's Director Freddie Pough in response to DCA's request for unrestricted access to DJJ's Event Reporting System (ERS) electronic records of juveniles served by DJJ pursuant to Section 63-11-2270(8). To learn more about DCA's Investigations Unit, click [here](#).



*Pictured above:* Ashley Crider provided training regarding DCA Investigations Unit's leadership-level access to DJJ's Event Reporting System (ERS).



*Pictured from left to right at DJJ's Central Office:* State Child Advocate and Director Amanda Whittle; DCA Investigator Hayley Bolin; DCA Investigator Melissa Fowler; and DCA Deputy Child Advocate of Investigations Kayla Capps received training, technical assistance and privacy/security credentials from DJJ on July 15, 2021 regarding DCA's remote access to DJJ's confidential Event Reporting System (ERS).

# Meet Matthew

## featured on the S.C. Heart Gallery

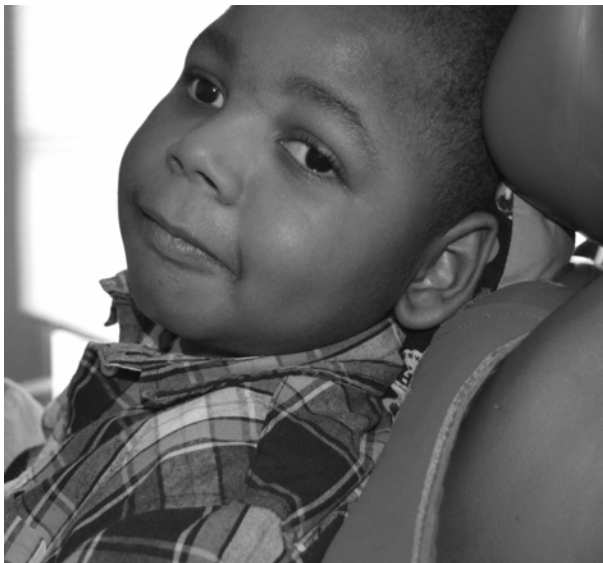


Matthew is a very happy child, despite his challenges. He enjoys learning and interacting with educational toys, including those that teach letters of the alphabet.

Matthew's Photographer:  
Latrice Williams © 2017

Matthew often feels accomplished during his physical therapy class when he gets help playing his xylophone and is most excited when others sing, clap and dance to entertain him.

His favorite songs are lullabies and he enjoys the outdoors where he is most at peace. Matthew also enjoys the windy days and likes to listen to the birds. He is seeking a caring family who can offer affection and provide special attention to his needs.



*Are you the forever home for  
Matthew?*

Learn more about Matthew [here](#).



Learn more about other children who are in foster care and who are waiting for a forever home at [S.C. Heart Gallery](#).



S.C. Department of Children's Advocacy  
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 471  
Columbia, SC 29201  
[www.childadvocate.sc.gov](http://www.childadvocate.sc.gov)  
803-734-3176