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MOULTRIE NEWS

East Cooper's Weekly Community Newspaper Since 1964

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Amid the bad news, much good news to be found

By Richard Eckstrom
S.C. Comptroller

Tuesday, August 26, 2014



Eckstrom

It was a tough month.

First, there was the death of a young racecar driver – a bizarre incident involving one of racing's biggest stars. Days later, America mourned the loss of an actor and comedian beloved by many. Then, unrest in a small Missouri town where the fatal shooting of a teenager by a police officer prompted anger, protests, riots and looting.

On the other side of the globe, there were new fears about the spread of the dreaded Ebola virus. And of course, there remains much anxiety over events in the Middle East, particularly Iraq and the Gaza Strip.

For several days in mid-August, it seemed hard to escape the steady barrage of sad, disturbing or depressing headlines.

Of course, there's still plenty of “good news” to be found – it just gets drowned out by the bad. All around us, people are going above and beyond to serve others. Folks are helping their neighbors, lending a hand to those in need and raising private funds for important causes. Here are some nuggets of good news that I felt were worth sharing:

In Horry County, local police and firefighters squared off on the softball field for a worthy cause. The “Guns ‘n Hoses” softball event raised money for Operation Lifesaver, a tracking program for people who are at risk of wandering off, such as people with Alzheimer's disease or autism disorder.

Members of the Darlington Kiwanis Club in Florence County raised funds to pay for the medical costs of an abused animal, according to a story in the Hartsville Messenger.

Teachers, parents and volunteers in the Irmo-Chapin school district came together to help students facing financial hardship. Volunteers perched outside two area Walmart stores and collected donations of food and school supplies for the students.

The Laurens County Sheriff's Office held a rather unique fundraiser to benefit senior citizens. The “Supporting Our Seniors Wrestling Event” raised money for programs that serve the county's elderly population.

Hoping to increase voter participation, members of the North Augusta High School Student Council used the recent school registration period to promote the importance of voting. They passed out literature and answered questions. “Even though we're young, we can get older people to vote,” one student told the North Augusta Star.

More than 100 Newberry College employees and other volunteers tackled a variety of facility-improvement projects as part of that school's second annual Service Day. According to a report in the Newberry Observer, enlisting volunteers helped to ensure that the improvements were completed by the time students returned.

Lastly, a Midlands TV station ran a heartwarming story about a local woman who was attempting to raise the \$10,000 needed to purchase a new service dog following the death of her golden retriever. The woman, who is battling cerebral palsy and also undergoing cancer treatments, was about \$4,300 short of her goal when she received a donation for that amount from Graham Nash of the folk-rock band Crosby, Stills and Nash. The band was in Columbia for a concert when they heard the woman's story and decided to help her.

Certainly, we hope the weeks ahead bring much happier major headlines than those of mid-August. But during those times when national or world events can bring our spirits down, we can embrace the positive – such as the article I read last week about retired Marine Lance Cpl. Kyle Carpenter, the recent Medal of Honor recipient from Lexington County.

Carpenter spent three years in hospitals recovering from severe injuries he suffered in Afghanistan risking his life while protecting a fellow marine. Still, he wants to continue giving, and he's working to organize and promote a charity 5K run in September. “I wanted to give back,” he told a Columbia newspaper. “I wanted to be a part of something. I wanted to volunteer.”

Even in a tough news week, we can choose to take comfort in that which is uplifting. And we can help spread the word about positive achievements and acts of kindness, so that the bad news of the day doesn't obscure the good deeds of those around us.

Richard Eckstrom is a CPA and the state's comptroller.

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