

GOSPEL MUSICAL STAGE PLAY 'CROWNS' COMES TO THE ARTS CENTER STAGE IN OCTOBER
Community theater No Dreams Deferred kicks off 2023-2024 season

TICKETS ON EVENTBRITE.COM

The curtain will be open and stage the setting for the exciting gospel musical play **CROWNS** at the Simpsonville Arts Center this October.

Community theater *Clark Nesbitt's No Dreams Deferred productions unlimited* will produce **CROWNS** for the Arts Center auditorium on Oct. 6 - Oct. 8 and Oct. 13 - Oct. 15. Nesbitt, an actor and director, quoted *No Dreams Deferred* Production Team Member Latoya Young when asked what he is most excited about for **CROWNS**.

“The story telling,” said Nesbitt, recalling Young’s words. “The stories are very much relatable to so many growing up in the black church and community.”

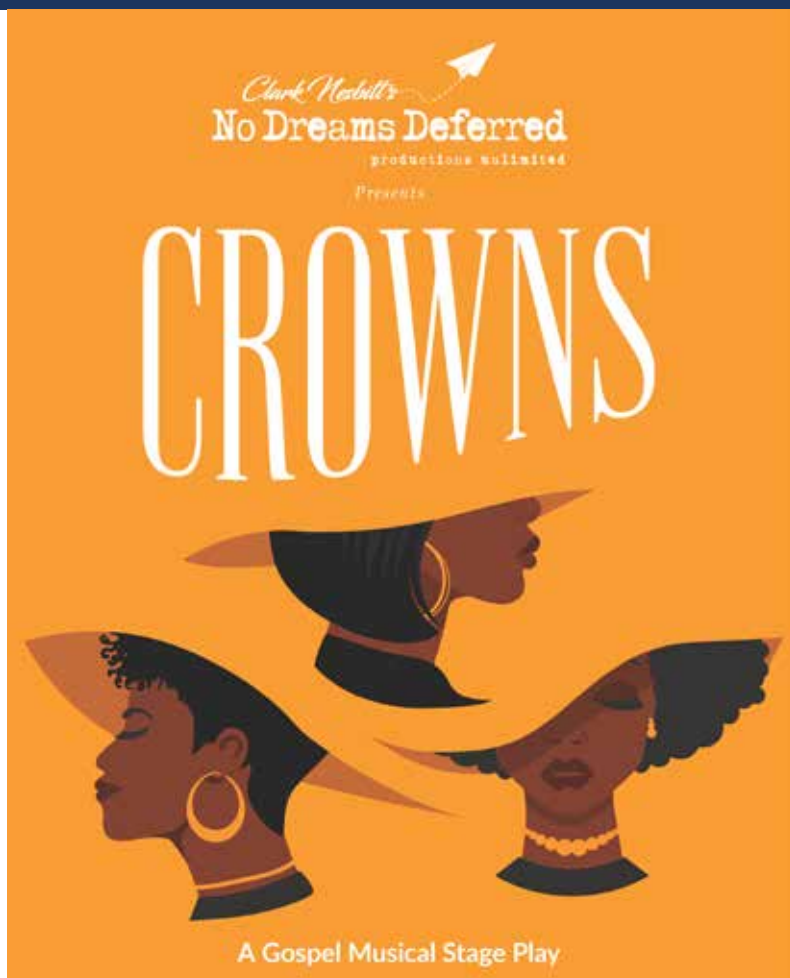
Nesbitt added that the stories from **CROWNS** are “born” in South

Carolina, making them even more relatable.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to share traditional stories born through the experience—whether they be pain, joy, or sorrow, of Black people: their traditions and culture,” Nesbitt said. Who better to tell the story that’s their own!”

CROWNS is an exploration of Black history and identity as seen through the eyes of a young Black woman who has come down South to stay with her aunt after her brother is killed in Brooklyn, N.Y. Characters use hats of exquisite variety to tell tales about the etiquette of hats and their historical and contemporary social functioning.

Arts Center Manag-



er Melissa Sturgis said communities, especially the debut of **CROWNS** (continued on Page 2) on the Arts Center stage is the start of an important and fruitful partnership with *No Dreams Deferred*.

“The stage in the Simpsonville Arts Center is a stage for telling the stories that need to be told, stories from a diversity of com-

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Clark Nesbitt is an actor and the founder of No Dreams Deferred productions unlimited. (continued from Page 1)

truths for all of us to understand in creative and dynamic ways. On top of that, the musical features genres of gospel music, dance and rap all on the same stage.”

With four dates, **CROWNS** is the first production by Nesbitt’s community theater to open on the Arts Center auditorium stage. Nes-

bitt said he hopes the audience will tap their toes and clap their hands at the shows.

“The *No Dreams Deferred* Production Team desires for the audience to experi-

ence an extraordinary cast sharing the stories of their ancestors, grandparents and community,” Nesbitt said. “These stories and songs will have you laughing,



The cast of **CROWNS** rehearses in September. **CROWNS** uses hats to tell stories about the Black experience | No Dreams Deferred

clapping and yes, maybe even shedding a tear! It’s a family event!”

Tickets for **CROWNS** are on sale now on [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).



CROWNS is an exploration of Black history and identity as seen through the eyes of a young Black woman who has come down South to stay with her aunt after her brother is killed in Brooklyn, N.Y. Characters use hats of exquisite variety to tell tales about the etiquette of hats and their historical and contemporary social functioning | No Dreams Deferred

Business licensing in Simpsonville

Reasons for, importance of business licenses to the local economy

Let's say a member of the public wants to open a business in the City of Simpsonville. The future business owner has a business plan and has secured property, labor and goods to sell. Before the retailer or restaurateur can open, however, the person must obtain a business license from the City.

Senior Accountant for the City of Simpsonville Faith Scruggs said a business license is an excise tax—or a tax on certain goods, services and activities, that is imposed on the privilege of doing business in a municipality or county.

“A license is a tool for requiring a business or occupation to contribute its share in support of services provided by the City to residents and visitors regarding profits or advantages of occupations,” said Scruggs, who was hired by the City in 2013 and worked as the business licensing and permitting clerk until her promotion in August. “Business licenses are important to enforcing zoning and occupancy regulations and ensuring the City is treating every business fairly and with consistency.”

Any company or organization that would like to do

business in Simpsonville city limits must have an active business license. The process of obtaining, granting and renewal of a business license aids the City and business owners in adhering to standards that protect businesses and the public and create revenue streams that help fund the operations of and public services by the City.

During the process of obtaining a new business license, the business must inform City officials where the business will be located, which allows the Planning Department to determine whether the zoning district permits the type of business. Zoning ensures the efficient and safe placement of different categories of property throughout the City, preventing conflicts like the construction of a factory directly next to a residential neighborhood.

Multiple types of licenses are available, depending on the nature and location of the business. Annual business licenses, which suit businesses that plan to operate for at least a year, include applications for commercial businesses located in city limits; home occupations located in city limits and non-resident businesses that are not located but do operate inside

Faith Scruggs
Senior
Accountant
for
Finance
Department



Senior Accountant Faith Scruggs can be reached at fscruggs@simpsonville.com or 864-967-9526 ext. 115.

city limits. Applications for non-annual licenses include per-job contractors, special event vendors, temporary businesses and exempt businesses, e.g. nonprofits.

“The tax rates for the different applications vary depending on under which industry the business falls,” Scruggs said.

Applying for a business license with the City of Simpsonville is easier than ever. A couple of years ago, the City transitioned to a new portal for business licensing and permitting.

“We’ve streamlined the process for business license applications, which can be submitted via the online portal,” Scruggs said. “Visit simpsonville.com and select ‘[Business Licenses](#)’ from the homepage.”

Scruggs also provided a few misconceptions about business licenses that she has seen over the years:

Common Misconceptions About Business Licensing

1. A business license is a one-time tax.

Business licenses with the City of Simpsonville are not a one-time tax for annual business licenses, which must be renewed every year. Business licenses for event vendors are a one-time tax.

2. I only need a S.C. Department of Revenue retail license because it is the same as a City of Simpsonville business license.

A business with operations in the City of Simpsonville must obtain a business license. The SCDOR retail license is not the same as a business license.

3. It doesn't matter what kind of business licensing I'm applying for; submitting any application will work.

The correct application corresponding to the specific types of businesses and locations must be selected.

COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO CUT DOWN ON PARKING LOT CUT-THROUGHS

CITY OFFICIALS: CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC IN PARKING LOTS POSES SAFETY CONCERNS

Most drivers have seen a vehicle bypass traffic at a traffic light by swerving out of line to zip through a parking lot or even been guilty of doing so themselves. To motorists such maneuvering can seem unfair and angering when they wait for traffic to clear through the light. To City officials such maneuvering is dangerous.

The City of Simpsonville is addressing the safety concern with Ordinance 2023-04, which prohibits in city limits cut-through traffic in parking lots and access areas, or areas that are driveways into parking lots and any way or drive intended exclusively for parking. Simpsonville City Council approved the ordinance in second reading by a vote of 6-0 at the August business meeting with Councilmember Jenn Hulehan of Ward V absent.

Planning & Economic Development Director Jason Knudsen said the ordinance is about improving the safety of pedestrians and other motorists.

“Public safety is a concern with cut-through traffic as those drivers cutting through parking lots are more

concerned with getting through the property than the welfare of those walking or looking for parking spaces,” Knudsen said.

The ordinance asserts that “cut-through traffic in parking lots and access areas can pose significant safety risks to pedestrians and motorists, and damage the integrity of the parking lot or access area,” continuing with “the city has a responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of its residents and visitors”

Ordinance 2023-04 allows the Simpsonville Police Department to issue citations to motorists who cut-through parking lots and access ways. The goal is that the prospect of receiving citations will decrease the amount of cut-through traffic and improve safety and protect infrastructure.

“As roadways have become more congested, there’s been an increase



An ordinance passed by Simpsonville City Council permits police to issue citations for cutting through parking lots.

in impatient drivers using parking lots to circumnavigate traffic, which places an undue burden on property owners as the increase in traffic can damage the integrity of the parking lot, leading to an increase in maintenance costs,” Knudsen said.

What’s the bottom line? Members of the public will be safer because of the ordinance.

“Drivers cutting through a parking lot tend to travel at higher speeds and pay less attention to pedestrians and vehicles using the lot as intended,” Knudsen said. “This leads to a much higher potential of people and vehicles being struck. The enforcement of the ordinance will help make parking lots safer.”

“It shall be unlawful for a person to use a parking lot for through traffic purposes or to drive in the parking lot in a manner that utilizes the parking area, access aisles, or any other portion thereof for through traffic purposes.”

-Ordinance 2023-04

Public encouraged to explore other city parks
Alder, College, Heritage parks open during City Park closure

During the temporary closure of City Park for construction, three other parks in the city remain available for use by the public and offer some of the same or similar amenities. The Simpsonville Parks & Recreation Department invites Simpsonville residents and visitors to take advantage of Alder, College and Heritage parks.

Parks & Recreation Director Robbie Davis said there is no shortage of outdoor recreation opportunities during the temporary closure of City Park.

“Whether you’re looking for playgrounds for your kids or pickleball for you and your friends, our open parks offer all kinds of amenities,” Davis said. “Parks & Rec and the City are excited about the re-imagined City Park, and in the meantime, we have three other beautiful parks to explore.”

COLLEGE PARK

Located on West College Street and adjacent to Beattie Street, College Park is the “neighborhood” park for the Woodside Mill community, although open to all members of the public. Featured in College Park are a playground with swing sets, jungle

gym and a merry-go-round plus a basketball court.

A recent addition to College Park is four pickleball courts. With the skyrocketing popularity of pickleball, especially among retiree communities,

Parks & Rec saw fit to equip outdoor recreation areas with courts to accommodate the growing demand.

“Our seniors at the Activity & Senior Center have spoken, and we’ve heard them loud and clear,” Davis said. “Pickleball courts are quickly becoming an essential feature in parks across the state.”



College Park features pickleball courts, playground, baseball field, basketball court and community garden Harmony Garden.

Another new feature of College Park is Harmony Garden, a garden run by the Simpsonville community to produce food for James Monroe Mission that serves the Golden Strip area.

ALDER PARK

Alder Park is a second neighborhood park located in the Westwood community off Alder Drive.



Alder Park features paved trails, basketball court, field for soccer or flag football, picnic shelter and playground.

Re-established in 2014 with new playground equipment, Alder Park also features a basketball court plus a rectangular pitch perfect for soccer and flag football, newly paved walking trail and picnic shelter. (continued on Page 6)

(continued from Page 5) Alder and College parks serve both their neighborhoods and the public in the same manner as Heritage Park.

HERITAGE PARK

Heritage Park rivals City Park as one of the two larger parks in the City of Simpsonville. As the center of athletics and outdoor recreation in Simpsonville and host to the CCNB Amphitheatre, Heritage Park provides a multitude of opportunities for fun, leisure and exercise.

Heritage Park, located off South East Main Street, offers the following features and amenities to the public:

- Seven baseball and softball fields with batting cages and soft toss tunnels
- Two playgrounds that cater to younger and older kids
- Miles of paved trail for walking, running and biking
- Magnolia Pavilion that accommodates 100 people
- Dogwood Gazebo that accommodates 30 people
- Azalea, Birch and Cedar shelters for picnicking and small gatherings
- Heritage Park Railway, which features a working replica miniature steam train
- CCNB Amphitheatre at Heritage Park with a full stage, reserved seats, lawn area, bathrooms, concessions and capacity of up to 15,000 people
- Simpsonville rec and athletics
- Ample parking spaces throughout the park



Heritage Park is located off South East Main Street and serves host to Simpsonville Athletics, a miniature train and the CCNB Amphitheatre.



Heritage Park is home to Heritage Park Railway, which features an operable miniature steam train for the young and young at heart to enjoy.

DOGS ARE PERMITTED IN THE FOLLOWING PARKS:

ALDER & COLLEGE PARKS

While dogs are not permitted in Heritage Park, Alder and College parks do permit and accommodate dogs. Both parks have waste disposal bags and receptacles to ensure the public cleans up after pets.

COLLEGE PARK



ALDER PARK



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'Behind the Scenes: A Series on the 5 Public Works Divisions

'LIFE ON THE STREET CREW IS NEVER MUNDANE'

Streets & Sewer is 'catchall' division of Public Works

"The Streets & Sewer Division of the Simpsonville Public Works Department is a multi-faceted operation that is critical in ensuring the functioning of other essential services," Public Works Director Andy West said.

Those essential services include protecting the environment from the impacts of an ill-maintained sewer system; opening streets up for emergency services after storms; maintaining streets to ensure safe traffic flow and evaluating the streets for future paving.

One of five Public Works divisions, the Streets & Sewer Division

is comprised of eight guys who maintain more than 100 miles of city-owned roads, sidewalks, curbs and catch basins in the right-of-way, 115 miles of sewer mains and about 4,000 manholes. In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the Division inspected almost 50,000 linear feet and cleaned more than 40,000 linear feet of sewer main.

After working for the City of Simpsonville 2008-2012, Chris Miles returned in 2022 to become the Streets & Sewer Division supervisor. Miles has extensive experience in equipment operation, asphalt maintenance, concrete finishing and

performing advanced tree work. Assisting Miles is Jimmy Reese, who started working for the City in 2013 in the Parks & Recreation Department under West, who was then grounds superintendent. After Reese joined his current department, he was made in 2022 the first crew leader in the history of the Simpsonville Public Works Department.

Reese is an experienced equipment operator and has the National Association of Sewer Service Contractors Pipeline

Assessment Certification, making him one of only two crew members to have such an achievement. Technician Ricky Campbell, who performs more than 3,000 locates a year, is the second crew member.

"This is the first time that two Public Works employees have held this certification," West said. "This helps the Public Works Department assess the internal integrity of sewer mains and where focus is needed in sewer rehabilitation projects."

The Streets & Sewer Division operates by permit through ReWa, which is the regional collection agency for treating sewer. The City of Simpsonville is preparing for another round of sewer rehabilitation by using almost \$12 million in grant funds from the Rural Infrastructure Authority through its S.C. Infrastructure Investment Program.



From left, Tech 3 Tyler Ford, Supervisor Chris Miles, Tech 2 Ray Slaughter, Tech 3 Ricky Campbell, Tech 3 James Carpenter, Tech 3 Tommy Norman, Crew Leader Jimmy Reese and Tech II Eyder Ruiz comprise the Streets & Sewer Division.

"This is truly the catchall division for Public Works," West said. "A successful Streets & Sewer Division requires staff members who enjoy a challenge, perform a multitude of tasks and are capable of effective cross-training. One thing is for sure: life on the Streets crew is never mundane."



The Public Works Streets & Sewer Division maintains 85 miles of city-owned streets, 113 miles of sewer and more than 4,000 manholes.



Jimmy Reese of the Sewer & Streets Division is the first employee to hold a crew leader position in the Public Works Department.

LEAF PICKUP STARTS OCTOBER, ONLY LOOSE LEAVES TO BE COLLECTED

Despite the warm temperatures that may hang around into October, leaf season is nearly upon us. The Simpsonville Public Works Department will begin collecting loose leaves from residential properties on a monthly basis starting Oct. 1 and ending March 31, at which time the pickup of leaves by Public Works crews will be based on the quantity of leaves and list of locations generated by call-ins from residents and crews.



Simpsonville Public Works Director Andy West said leaf pickup in the fall and winter is a service that his crews are proud to provide the residents of Simpsonville.

“We know that residents take the pickup of their leaves very seriously, so we do, too,” West said. “As leaf season starts, it’s important to remember that it may take some time to reach your yard, but we’ll be there.”

RULES OF LEAF PICKUP FOR RESIDENTS

Only residential properties qualify for leaf pickup - the leaf truck will not retrieve leaves from commercial properties.

Leaves must be placed at least five (5) feet away from obstructions (e.g. vehicles, mailboxes, shrubs).

Do not block traffic lanes with loose leaves as doing so can result in liabilities for property owners or residents.

Only loose leaves will be collected since a mix of leaves and yard waste will damage the leaf truck. Grass clippings and other yard waste must be bagged for pickup by Public Works crews.

Leaf trucks continuously run Oct. 1 - March 31 to collect leaves throughout the entirety of the city on a monthly basis depending on the quantity of leaves set out for collection. From April 1 to Sept. 30, leaf trucks will run based on a list of locations to be collected and generated by call-ins from residents and Public Works crews.

LIEUTENANT TRIPP RETIRES FROM SIMPSONVILLE FIRE AFTER 25 YEARS

'Pay attention to the little things. To me, just do what's right'

Retired Simpsonville firefighter Lt. Eric Tripp practically grew up in a fire department. Tripp's father Jack, grandfather Alan, uncle and cousins created a fire department in Anderson County from their home.

"It's one of the volunteer fire departments that still exists in Anderson County today," Tripp said in the kitchen of Simpsonville Fire Station No. 5. "I think it was 1967 when they opened that department, and I was born in '72, and as soon as I could get around, they started taking me to 3&20 Station 19."

At just five years old, Tripp went to the fire station with his dad any chance he had.

"I went to the meetings, and I hung

out with the firefighters, climbed on and rode in the trucks when they allowed that back then," Tripp said.

Rules for fire departments were a little less strict in the '70s and '80s than they are now.

"I was around it everyday," Tripp said. "Back then at 13, you could join as a junior fireman, and I did that."

Tripp, who retired from the Simpsonville Fire Department in July, volunteered as a junior firefighter through high school until he attended



Lt. Eric Tripp retired in July from the Simpsonville Fire Department after serving 25 years.



Lt. Eric Tripp responded to his first fire as a junior firefighter at the age of 13.

Greenville Technical College and Clemson University for a couple of years before leaving school to work full-time for a company that transported steel via tractor trailers.

"I got married and had kids and so I needed to work," Tripp recounted.

"I was on third shift for almost five years, so I didn't have much of a desire to do anything else. Then one day, right after I got off work—and

I don't know why—it hit me that I needed to rejoin the fire department after I hadn't had anything to do with it in a few years.

Tripp could not recall a specific reason for the moment of clarity except that there were fewer and fewer Tripps in the volunteer fire department.

"My dad was still in the department, but my grandfather had passed away after being chief for 25 years, and so my dad was the only Tripp left," Tripp said. "I decided that there (continued on Page 11)

(continued from Page 10) needed to be another one and rejoined.”

So after about seven years away from firefighting, Tripp stepped back into the station around 24 and began training and taking classes. Within about a year, Tripp applied to work for the Simpsonville Fire Department in 1998.

“I went to fill out an application, and the two lieutenants who were on duty called before I made it back home and wanted to interview me,” said Tripp, who thereafter served the residents of Simpsonville for 25 years.

“It felt like home and right back where I had left off,” Tripp said.

Within six months of firefighting, Tripp began driving an engine, a skill in his career for which he had the most passion. He learned everything he could about the trucks and equipment, and two years later the Department promoted Tripp to engineer. Driving had always come natural to Tripp, and after

having been comfortable with operating a tractor trailer, Tripp simply enjoyed driving an engine. Six months into driving—or about three years into his time with Simpsonville, Tripp earned the rank of lieutenant.

Despite that rank, Tripp spoke with humility about his philosophy of firefighting and public service. Tripp does not believe his rank puts him above doing whatever task is needed for the functioning of the fire department, including washing trucks, cleaning toilets or cooking for his fellow firefighters.

“I wasn’t in firefighting to boss people around but to work with people and guide those I was supervising,” Tripp said. “We’re a family and a team and do everything together. Just because



Lt. Eric Tripp joined the Simpsonville Fire Department at 24 years old in 1998, and within 3 years, earned the rank of lieutenant.

I was a lieutenant didn’t mean I didn’t have to do something and just make the new guy do it.”

While Tripp will miss the camaraderie in firefighting and plans to work part-time driving again for a private company, he’s looking forward to spending more time with his wife and family. Tripp is also focusing on taking care of his elderly uncle and mother and his mother-in-law, who recently moved in with his wife and him.

After 25 years each of volunteering firefighting and career firefighting, Tripp is taking with him into retirement the lesson of “doing the simple things.” For Tripp, life is about doing the job given to you.

“You’re not in firefighting for the glory,” Tripp said. “You take your classes, pay attention and use your common sense. The other stuff will come along. Get the time under your belt. Take those simple things and apply them. Don’t be so gung ho that you got to go do this and do that and don’t get mad because you don’t get to run 20 calls a day, and you might only run 2. Something might happen on that second call you were on that’ll stick with you for the rest of your life. Pay attention to the little things. To me, just do what’s right.”



Third from the right in the back row, Lt. Eric Tripp earned the rank of lieutenant within 3 years of joining the Simpsonville Fire Department in 1998. Chief Wesley Williams is pictured fourth from the left in the front row.

Burning leaves for disposal prohibited in city limits

With the arrival of fall in September, leaf season is upon us. While some residents may overlook or ignore leaves in their yard, other residents want to dispose of leaves.

Options for leaf disposal in the City of Simpsonville include bagging leaves for pickup on trash day and lining leaves up along the edge of property for the Public Works Department to remove between October and April.

One method of disposing of leaves that is not an option in the Simpsonville city limits is burning.

The Simpsonville Code of Ordinances prohibits the burning of leaves for the purpose of disposal. Simpsonville Deputy Fire Marshal Marty Phillips said that outdoor burning is prohibited in Simpsonville city limits with the exceptions of immediate food consumption; warmth; recreation and land clearing. Even the permitted reasons

come with stipulations.

According to [Sec. 20-5. - Prohibition of outdoor burning](#), outdoor burning for the purpose of food consumption requires that the food be immediately consumed upon preparation and the burning or cooking done in an approved container. Outdoor recreational burning is permitted as long as it meets the International Fire Code Section 307.

In connection with clearing land, outdoor burning comes with eight stipulations, which include outdoor burning by a contractor duly licensed in the state with insurance not less than \$300,000; a limit of piles determined by the Simpsonville Fire Department that are no larger than 20 feet by 20 feet and no burning of materials in violation of S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control. Sec. 20-5 of the Simpsonville Code of Ordinances lists all stipulations.



Outdoor burning is permitted for immediate food consumption in approved containers, recreation that meets international fire code and land clearing, per Simpsonville Code of Ordinances.

Why is illegal outdoor burning a problem?

Open burning anything outdoors can present a danger to yourself and the public. The effects of open burning can harm the health of your family and neighbors:

Open burning can cause the following risks:

Release unfiltered untreated toxic pollutants and particles directly into the air and ground level where they can be easily inhaled

Production of ash that can contain toxic metals such as mercury, lead, chromium and arsenic.

Absorption of toxic metals by vegetables from ash that has been scattered or buried in backyard gardens

Consumption of ash or pollutants by children through ingestion of soil

Spread of brush, residential and forest fires, particularly during droughts

Interrupt or complicate breathing for nearby members of the public who suffer from respiratory diseases like emphysema, asthma and chronic bronchitis.

Find more information through the [S.C. Department of Health & Environmental Control](#)

POLICE ‘HONORED’ TO HOLD NATIONAL NIGHT OUT IN OCTOBER **FREE FOOD, PETTING ZOO, TOUCH A TRUCK, CAR SHOW & MORE**

The Simpsonville Police Department will host its annual National Night Out event on Oct. 3 at 6-8 p.m. at Heritage Park.

Moving the event from its usual August date was to ensure that no concerts or other events would interfere with having a fun night for the police and public. National Night Out was established in 1984 to promote community policing by giving officers and members of the public the space in which they can interact in positive ways.

Simpsonville Chief of Police Mike Hanshaw said National Night Out is about community building.

“National Night Out is one of our favorite events of the year because of the open and fun atmosphere that encourages positive face-to-face interactions between our police officers and the people we are sworn to serve and protect,” Hanshaw said. “Much of the time, officers are responding to manage a situation in the worst day of a citizen’s life, and while our duty is to enforce the law, we remember that our calling is higher: to make Simpsonville a better place for all.”

National Night Out this year will feature free hamburgers and hotdogs, bounce houses, VR trailer, petting zoo, Touch-a-Truck, community vendors, car show, The Blood Connection and much more—all free!

Overseeing and planning National Night Out for the second year in a row, Sgt. Karlee Patrikis



said her colleagues and she are excited about Oct. 3.

“The Simpsonville Police Department is honored to hold this event every year to gather with the community and give back to the citizens they serve,” Sgt. Patrikis said. “We invite the community of Simpsonville to come out, meet their local police officers and participate in all the fun activities available.”



POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



ARTS CENTER HOSTS FIRST EXHIBIT FEATURING ONLY SENIOR ARTISTS

The Simpsonville Arts Center experienced one of its many “firsts” to come when it hosted an opening for its first art exhibition exclusively featuring artists who are senior citizens.

The Senior Artists Showcase art exhibit runs Aug. 15 - Sept. 21 and features 10 senior artists. An opening and reception for the artists and exhibit free and open to the public were held Aug. 31 in the Lobby Art Gallery. Arts Center Manager Melissa Sturgis said the Senior Artists Showcase is a landmark exhibit in the history of the Arts Center.

“The Simpsonville Arts Center is what we like to call around the halls ‘the People’s Arts Center,’ and we mean that,” Sturgis said. “The art exhibitions that a gallery hosts should reflect the public it serves, and senior artists play a vital role in and bring invaluable experience to the art scene. What a proud moment it was to welcome the artists and public to the exhibit opening.”

The artists featured in the show are Larry Coble, Gayle Caregnato, Chris Graves, Sandy Maurer, Bibi Perez-Rubio, Sobaida Salomon, Ph.D., Rosemary Slobodian, Pamela Taylor, Ph.D., Dan Wil-



The Simpsonville Arts Center hosted an opening for the Senior Artists Showcase art exhibition on Aug. 31 in the Lobby Art Gallery.

liams and Robin Zotara. Following the exhibit opening was a free concert by the Carolinians Senior Jazz Band. Founded in the 1940s, the Carolinians was re-established in 2013 and has 18 members who play trumpets, trombones, saxophones, piano, string bass and trap set. Accompanying the band was a vocalist.

Simpsonville Community Relations Specialist Justin Campbell said programming is flourishing at the Arts Center, and the dual exhib-

it and jazz concert is a great example.

“Having an art exhibit is great, and having a jazz concert is great, but hosting the opening of an art exhibition of work by senior artists and then a concert by the talented and well-respected Carolinians comprised of seniors as well is truly special,” said Campbell, who works closely with Sturgis to promote the Arts Center. “We like to think of 110 Academy St. as the ‘People’s Arts Center,’ and the senior art exhibit and jazz concert are proof of that.”

The Simpsonville Arts Center hosts several art exhibitions in the Lobby Art Gallery throughout the year. Visit simpsonvilleartscenter.com/events for more information.



The Carolinians Senior Jazz Band performed a free concert for attendees of the Senior Artists Showcase art exhibition on Aug. 31 in the auditorium.

'EXPERIMENTERS WITH OUR ART'

Studio tenant Alicia Griffith of Make & Believe Artists talks about her approach to teaching art

One weekend in September, artist and business owner Alicia Griffith decided to paint with watercolor instead of acrylic, which she normally uses. Griffith may be a teacher of art, but she remains a student as she takes as many workshops offered at the Simpsonville Arts Center as possible.

"Since taking workshops here at the Arts Center, I've gotten more into watercolor painting," said Griffith, who is among the first studio tenants to occupy the Arts Center. "By hosting workshops, I try to take as many of them for adults as I can, and I have gotten more into watercolor painting."

With decades of experience studying, creating and teaching art, Griffith knows exactly what her vision is for her students.

"My mission is to allow creativity to flow through people so that they can express themselves, become more of themselves and be their best selves and trust their inner-knowing and own ideas," said Griffith, who studied art extensively at University of California, Santa Cruz. "People need to know that their ideas matter, that their creativity is special, and that there is no right or wrong way to do anything."

Griffith comes from a family

er. Griffith's grandparents were also artists.

"I have my great grandpa's paintings on the wall at home," Griffith said. "I had an art table always as a kid, and I took every art class that I could."

After graduating from college, Griffith studied photography at the Rock Mountain School of Photography in Montana. On top of her art education, Griffith has taught art classes to kids for



Alicia Griffith is one of the first studio tenants to occupy the Simpsonville Arts Center and owner of Make & Believe Artists.

to see students creating in accordance with who they are.

"I don't want every piece of art to look exactly the same because I want the kids' inner spirit to really shine through in their art so they're expressing themselves and have that deep satisfaction of creativity," Griffith said.

Griffith is teaching art out of what once was an elementary school classroom. Griffith said the energy at the Simpsonville Arts Center becomes more and more exciting as more and more people learn about it.

"This is not a place where artists hide away," Griffith said. "These artists are here to share their art and talents and be involved in an arts community."

Learn more about Make & Believe Artists at makeandbelieveartists.com.

"People need to know that their ideas matter, that their creativity is special, and that there is no right or wrong way to do anything."

Griffith is a photographer, painter, potter, teacher and founder and owner of Make & Believe Artists, which offers art classes and workshops to children and adults.

of artists. Her mother Beverly Dickerson was a professional watercolor painter and stained-glass artist, and her father Dennis Dickerson is an architect, sculptor and paint-

decades since high school in addition to doing professional development for teachers by integrating hands-on curricula in classrooms.

All of her experience has led Griffith to run an art education program with the goal of not only teaching children and adults a full range of media and concepts but also creating the space for student artists to be individuals.

"There is no one set curriculum that we have to follow," Griffith said. "A lot of the classes will track differently based on how the kids are learning together and what they're enjoying."

Griffith said that she wants



Make & Believe Artists, owned by Alicia Griffith, offers classes and workshops to children and adults. Griffith's philosophy for teaching art is encouraging students to trust themselves.