



MIRCI

E-Newsletter

We hope your new year is off to a good start. Did you know that since the pandemic began, there has been a 25 percent increase globally in diagnosed anxiety and depression? It's clear that Mirci's mission to provide behavioral healthcare, outreach services and affordable housing options for people who are vulnerable to the adverse consequences of mental illness has never been more important. Increased demand for our services means that we, in turn, need additional support. Please join with the community leaders below in partnering with Mirci in 2023 to support positive mental health in the Midlands.

Why Mirci?

Meet Mirci's 2023 Board Chair, Debra Hamm, Ph.D. A former superintendent of Richland County School District Two, she shares how she originally became involved with Mirci and why her entire family continues to wholeheartedly support its mission.



“We proudly think of ourselves as a Mirci family, although the journey to become such started quite by serendipity. Our daughter, Kristen, was working for a law firm that was invited to recommend someone to serve on the Mirci board. At the time, she was unfamiliar with Mirci, had a big job, was mom to four little girls and, nonetheless, said yes. Not only did she serve on the board, she eventually became its chair and a Mirci

devotee.

My husband, Steve, and I got “hooked” when we attended a Mirci annual meeting to see Kristen begin her tenure as chair. There, I heard the story of a young woman who had tried to kill herself seven times, starting when she was just 14 years old. She landed in the hospital for mental health treatment, where healthcare providers learned she was pregnant and dealing with a substance use disorder. When the time came to discharge her, there was nowhere for her to go and no one for her to turn to.

Thanks to Mirci, the story had a happy ending. The hospital had reached out to Mirci for help, and Mirci said yes. At the annual meeting, that young woman was sitting right behind me with her darling little boy.

She hadn't returned to the emergency room, and her substance use disorder was in remission. She had a job, a place to live and was about to buy a car. With the help of Mirci, she had overcome the odds that were so stacked against her.

Steve and I were moved to get involved. Steve volunteered to serve holiday meals and I made a window for the Mirci art sale gala, *52 windows* – and someone actually bid on it! I took a Mirci tour, and I eventually joined the board myself. Today, I'm honored to serve as board chair. Even my granddaughters are involved with Mirci. They bring Girl Scout cookies and other treats to Mirci each year to share a little sweetness with clients. This is teaching the girls lessons on the importance of being a blessing to others.



I have been touched by Mirci's stories, but I am a bit of a "data geek" too. I'm impressed with the return on investment that Mirci provides — saving literally millions of dollars on mental health-related hospitalizations that are avoided when clients are under Mirci's wing. So Mirci is in both my head and my heart.

Take a tour with Mirci, learn about its outreach, see its facilities, meet the people who now lead happy lives and feel at home with Mirci. Your head and heart will be touched too."

Mirci Welcomes New Officers and Board Members

Mirci welcomed new officers and five new professionals to its board of directors this month.

Debra Hamm, Ph.D., a former superintendent of Richland County School District Two, has been re-elected chair of the board. Lucy Easler, Ph.D., has been elected vice-chair. She is director of Behavioral Care Services for Prisma Health-Midlands. Woody Moore, executive vice president of Colliers International | South Carolina, remains immediate past chair.

New Board Members

New board members include Shayla Riley, the Rev. Troy R. Washington, Anthony Cortopassi, Ronald Burkett and Olivette Ford.



Riley is president of new construction sales and development for Raising Columbia SC, a residential real estate division within Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Midlands Real Estate. Washington is the business administrator for Bostick Tompkins Funeral Home and an ordained minister. Cortopassi is a certified public accountant and manager for Elliott Davis with an MBA from Stony Brook University. Burkett is president of Burkett, Burkett & Burkett Certified Public Accountants. Ford is a retired certified nursing assistant who has worked as a valuable Mirci volunteer for the past decade.

All have agreed to lend their talents, experience, and unique viewpoints to help Mirci meet its goals in the future.

"The talents these members bring to our board will be instrumental to our ability to continue helping people find a way forward," said Mirci CEO Julie Ann Avin.

Returning board members include Tosin Adelakun, PharmD, Elaine Delk, Mike Kelly, Melanie Matthews, Shayla Merritt, Brad Shell, Shannon Tallent, and Mary Winter Teaster.

Please Join with Debra and Our Board
Members in Supporting Mirci by Making a
Donation Now - Simply Click Here.
Thank You!

Save the Date for *52 Windows!*



Mirci's annual fine arts auction and gala featuring 10 of the Midlands most talented artists will take place from 6-9 p.m. on Thursday, May 18th, at 701 Whaley. If your business is interested in sponsoring, call Karen at (803) 786-1844, ext. 103.



For questions about volunteering or hosting a supply drive or fundraiser, please email:
mail@mirci.org

[Donate one of our most needed items.](#)

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