



CommunityAction

a Skyline CAP Newsletter



Celebrating Our People, Our Progress and Our Purpose

Skyline CAP employees, Board members and leadership came together on August 25 for the organization's Annual Meeting, a day to celebrate accomplishments, recognize dedicated employees and spend time connecting with the colleagues who make Skyline CAP's work possible.

The gathering offered an opportunity to look back on a year of progress across Skyline CAP's programs and communities. A presentation highlighting the organization's successes showcased the many ways Skyline CAP continues to strengthen families, expand opportunities and help individuals throughout its service area build greater stability and self-sufficiency.

But behind every accomplishment are people, and one of the highlights of the day was recognizing five employees whose milestone anniversaries represent a combined 75 years of service to Skyline CAP. Their dedication is celebrated in the special feature below.

Several members of Skyline CAP's Board of Directors joined employees for the gathering, offering another opportunity for Board members and staff to connect outside of the regular work of programs, committees and meetings.

Following the morning's activities, everyone gathered for lunch and conversation. It was a chance to catch up with colleagues from across the organization, share a few laughs and simply enjoy being together. This was especially meaningful for an organization whose employees work across multiple programs and communities.

As Skyline CAP looks toward another year of serving our communities, there is much to celebrate and even more to look forward to.

Honoring Commitment. Celebrating Milestones.

One of the highlights of this year's Annual Meeting was recognizing five employees who reached milestone anniversaries with Skyline CAP. Together, they represent 75 years of dedicated service supporting families, strengthening programs, building relationships and helping move our mission forward.



KIM RUCKER | 5 YEARS



GUNNER CAIN | 10 YEARS



KATHY LILLARD & CHARITY McCLUNG | 15 YEARS



FAY BUTCHER | 30 YEARS
★ THREE DECADES OF SERVICE ★

A New Year, New Adventures and Lots of Reasons to Smile!

Across our Head Start classrooms, teachers and staff have been busy welcoming children and families, establishing new routines and creating spaces where our youngest learners can explore, play, make friends and discover just how much they can do.



For some children, this is a return to familiar faces and favorite classroom activities. For others, it's their very first Head Start experience, complete with new friends, new teachers and maybe even a few first-day jitters. Before long, though, those classrooms will be filled with artwork, songs, stories, laughter and plenty of "Look what I did!" moments.

New Faces on the Head Start Team

A new school year also means welcoming new members to our Skyline CAP family! We're excited to have several new employees joining our Head Start team this year:

- Stephanie Barron, Teacher Assistant, Madison
- Lauren Cebula, Teacher Assistant, Page
- Essence Fields, Classroom Aide
- Susan Hingst-Mueller, Education & Disabilities Manager
- Michelle Maraffi, Operations & Compliance Manager
- Macy McCombs, Classroom Aide, Greene
- Kim McPherson, Teacher, Greene
- Amy Schroyer, Teacher, Greene
- Emma St. Clair, Classroom Aide

To our returning employees, welcome back! To our newest team members, welcome aboard! And to all the children and families beginning another year with Skyline CAP Head Start, we're so happy you're here!



Healthy Families: Building Strong Foundations from the Start

Skyline CAP's mission is centered on helping people achieve greater stability and self-sufficiency, and for some families, that support begins even before a child is born. Through Healthy Families, Skyline CAP partners with expectant and new parents during a critical time in their lives, providing encouragement, information and connections to resources that help strengthen families and give children a healthy start. By supporting parents early, Healthy Families reflects an important part of Skyline CAP's work: meeting families where they are and helping them build a stronger foundation for the future. That support begins with a simple connection between a family and a Healthy Families team member.

So, what does a Healthy Families home visit actually look like?

It might begin with a conversation about how the baby is sleeping or feeding. A parent may have questions about development or safety. A Family Support Specialist might share an activity that encourages early learning, talk about ways to strengthen the parent-child bond, or help the family connect with community resources. Every family's needs are different, but the goal is the same: helping parents feel supported and confident as they give their children a healthy start.

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Before home visits can begin, the team first has to make a connection. A recent Initial Engagement report shows that of the 15 referrals Healthy Families received last year, 93% received initial contact and were offered services.

Once a family chooses to participate, Family Support Specialists can provide information about child development, encourage positive parent-child interaction, conduct developmental screenings, share health and safety information, and connect families with other resources. Visits also provide an opportunity to check in with Mom and ask how she is doing, how she is feeling and whether she needs additional support or resources.

And sometimes, the most important part of a visit is simply having someone there to listen, answer questions and encourage a parent along the way. That's Healthy Families: starting early, building relationships and supporting families from the very beginning.

Another Door Opens: Newest Affordable Home Welcomes a Family

When Skyline CAP celebrated the addition of its newest affordable housing unit with a ribbon cutting on August 28, the three-bedroom, two-bath townhouse in Barboursville represented another important milestone for our Housing program. Now, it represents something even more meaningful: home for a mother and her three children.

The family had learned that the lease on their previous home would not be renewed in October because the owners planned to move back into the property. Faced with the need to relocate, the mother was having difficulty finding another home that was both affordable and suitable for her family.

That's when Skyline CAP's newest affordable housing unit became much more than the 31st affordable housing unit in our portfolio. It became an answer to a very real need: providing this family with an affordable, stable place to call home.

It's also a reminder of why our work matters. Affordable housing is often discussed in terms of units, funding and statistics, but behind every number is a person or family looking for the security that comes with having a safe and stable home.

Bringing this property from purchase to occupancy took the combined efforts of our Housing team, Affordable Housing Committee, Board of Directors and community partners. The ribbon cutting gave us an opportunity to celebrate that teamwork. Knowing that a family is now settling into the home gives us an even better reason to celebrate.



Skyline CAP Board members, staff, and community partner TJPDC cut the ribbon on our newest property in Barboursville.

Project Discovery Kicks Off a New Year

Skyline CAP's Project Discovery program is underway for the 2026–2027 school year, with participation from six high school and seven middle school students from Madison County.

The program kicked off September 22 with a visit to Bridgewater College, giving students an opportunity to experience a college campus firsthand and begin exploring possibilities for life after high school.

Throughout the year, Project Discovery will continue helping students explore educational and career opportunities while building the knowledge and confidence to plan for their futures.



Project Discovery students enjoyed their visit to Bridgewater College for a firsthand look at college life, from exploring the campus to learning about academic opportunities.

Board of Directors
SPOTLIGHT



RUSTY BURWELL

President, Skyline CAP
Board of Directors

ORIGINALLY FROM

Jackson, Mississippi

CURRENT HOME

Stanardsville, Virginia

EDUCATION

Mississippi State University
Business Statistics and Data
Processing

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

- American Lung Association – retired after 35 years
- Former Vice President of Governance

CURRENT ROLES WITH SKYLINE CAP

- President, Board of Directors
- Chair, Executive Committee
- Chair, Strategic Planning Committee
- Member, Affordable Housing Taskforce

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Greene Co. Habitat for Humanity
- Botanical Garden of the Piedmont
- Building Goodness Foundation

Getting to Know Our Leadership: a Conversation with Rusty Burwell

Our Board Member Spotlight series continues with Rusty Burwell, who began serving as President of Skyline CAP's Board of Directors in July 2026. With 35 years of experience at the American Lung Association, Rusty brings a wealth of knowledge in nonprofit governance, fundraising, technology and strategic planning to his new leadership role. His involvement with Skyline CAP grew from years of collaboration through Greene County Habitat for Humanity and a shared commitment to strengthening our communities. As Skyline CAP enters a period of transition and develops its next five-year Strategic Plan, Rusty is focused on strengthening Board engagement, supporting staff and helping guide the organization's future.

What brought you to Skyline CAP's Board of Directors?

I have served on the operating committee for Greene County Habitat for Humanity for the last decade, and we have worked collaboratively with Skyline CAP over those years. My fellow committee member, Bruce Seger, served on the Skyline CAP Board, and when he retired, I was asked to join.

I knew the value of nonprofit work, and it has been wonderful learning about Skyline CAP and all aspects of its important work—particularly its critical Head Start operations and support for families.

How did your education and early career experiences shape your professional path?

I attended Mississippi State University, where I majored in Business Statistics and Data Processing. My first job out of college was as a mainframe computer operator in the mid-1970s, when computers were just beginning to become part of the workplace. We were still using punch cards! That experience sparked a lifelong interest in technology and its impact on people and organizations.

I later went into the restaurant and catering business with my older brother, where I learned a great deal about business management, customer service and, of course, cooking. From there, I joined the Mississippi Lung Association as a Field Representative, organizing volunteers across 27 counties.

You spent 35 years with the American Lung Association. Tell us a little about your career.

Over the course of my career, I worked in three major areas: fundraising; technology systems, databases and the internet; and finally governance.

I eventually served as Vice President of Governance, working with the Board on meetings, strategic planning, bylaws and legal affairs. What I valued most was working for an organization with such a long history and so many public health successes.

What experience do you bring to your role on Skyline CAP's Board?

My background includes strategic management of fundraising, technology and governance. One of my key interests is the value that strong committee work can bring to Board planning and operations.

Through my work with Habitat, I also bring a passion for affordable housing issues, so supporting that aspect of Skyline CAP's work has been especially rewarding.

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What other organizations are you involved with in the community?

In addition to Greene County Habitat for Humanity, I volunteer with the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont and the Building Goodness Foundation.

Who has had a significant influence on your life?

My mom was a stay-at-home mother until I was a teenager—I was the youngest of four—and then she went to work in the records department at a large hospital. Within a couple of years, she was asked to join the Housekeeping department, and a few years later she was chosen to run the Housekeeping department at a new county hospital, managing 200 employees.

She retired from that job with honors after 25 years. She was a great person, mother and an inspiration to many, including me.

What do you enjoy outside of your Board and volunteer work?

I'm a history buff and am currently reading Ron Chernow's biography of George Washington. I also enjoy traveling, gardening and woodworking.

What are you looking forward to most as you begin your term as Board President?

As we begin this new work year, Skyline CAP is experiencing significant change with the departure of longtime CEO Simon Fiscus. While Simon will be sorely missed, change is always an opportunity.

The Board is working on a new five-year Strategic Plan, giving us an opportunity to think critically about where we've been, where we are and where we need to go next.

It's more important than ever for the Board to be fully engaged in the issues at the heart of Skyline CAP's mission, to lead and support our tireless, dedicated staff, and to work every day to positively impact the lives of people throughout our service area.

From Technology to Nonprofit Leadership

A career spanning technology, business, community engagement, fundraising and governance.



EARLY TECHNOLOGY CAREER

After graduating from Mississippi State University, Rusty began his career as a mainframe computer operator in the mid-1970s.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Launched a catering and restaurant business with his older brother, gaining valuable experience in business management, customer service and, of course, how to cook.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Joined the Mississippi Lung Association as a Field Representative, organizing volunteers across 27 counties.



FUNDRAISING & TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP

Held national roles focused on fundraising, technology systems, databases, the internet and online engagement.



GOVERNANCE & BOARD LEADERSHIP

Served as Vice President of Governance, working with the Board on meetings, strategic planning, bylaws and legal affairs. Today, he brings that experience to Skyline CAP as Board President.

"Bring your voice and skills to the table to help others. In the end, your life will be enriched as well."

– Rusty Burwell, President, Skyline CAP Board of Directors

Our Vision:

All people within the Skyline CAP service area will have access to education, housing, economic opportunities and services necessary to become self-sufficient.



Our Mission:

To strengthen our communities by improving the lives of those in need through actions promoting self-sufficiency. We seek to eliminate the impact of poverty by focusing on education, housing stability, and economic opportunities.