

EXPANDING BOUNDARIES

Happy New Year

Featured Graduate



Trayci Brazell

We would like to introduce to you one of our Partners in Policymaking® graduates and new Developmental Disabilities Council member, Trayci Brazell. Trayci is a graduate of our 22nd class and is passionate about others learning what resources are available. She is 53 years old and has been married to her husband for 9 years. She has two sons, Cody, 28, and Jessie, 6. She has two grandchildren, Gabriella, 9, and Stefan, 19 months. She has four dogs, is very family oriented and loves sports and old movies. Her favorite teams are the Pittsburgh Steelers, Pittsburgh Penguins, Pittsburgh Pirates/Arizona Diamondbacks/Atlanta Braves, and the Phoenix Suns. She is also an avid tennis fan and Roger Federer is her favorite player of the modern era and Bjorn Borg in the 70s and 80s. She worked in retail management until she became a

mom and then went work for the US Postal Service for 15 years as a manager. She left there to become a manager at a Harley-Davidson Dealership and left there to begin working from home when she had her youngest son. Her passion in advocacy is fueled by her love for her son Jessie who is autistic. There are so many parents with children that are diagnosed with autism and other neurodiverse conditions that need to know how to help them navigate the world with their children. Helping parents help their children has been important to her. She wants to help Jessie live his life on his terms and see him as happy, healthy, and independent as he can be. As a Partners in Policymaking® graduate, Trayci was invited to apply for the DD Council when a Parent/Guardian seat opened up. A fun fact about Trayci is that her two children were born 22 years apart!

Request for Proposals (RFP)

In 2021, we put out two employment and one self-advocacy request for proposals if you would like to view the RFP click this link <https://sccdc.sc.gov/funding.html>.

COVID-19 Campaign

Recently, we have kicked off our COVID-19 campaign, in partnership with other agencies. The SC Disability Vaccine Access Network is a group of disability-focused nonprofits, state agencies and leaders in SC with a mission to act against COVID-19 vaccine misinformation and barriers to vaccine access that impact the disability community. The network has developed a statewide awareness campaign based on effective outreach including vaccine resources, the SC Disability Vaccine Access Hotline, and accessible materials such as posters, videos and social media graphics, to provide the disability community with more information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Partners include [AccessAbility](#), [Disability Rights SC](#), the [South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council](#), the [University of South Carolina Center for Disability Resources](#) and [Walton Options](#). **For more information about the network and its campaign, visit SCDisabilityVaccine.org or call the SC Disability Vaccine Access Hotline at 1-800-787-6046.**

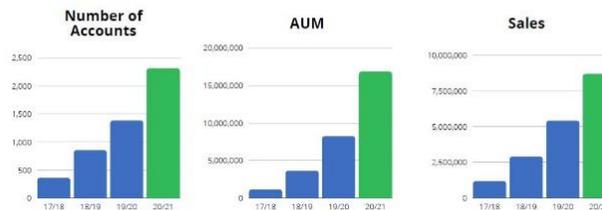
Palmetto Able Saving Program Annual Report

This year, Palmetto Able Saving Program celebrated five years. The purpose of this program is to allow individuals with disabilities to save and invest money without losing eligibility for certain public benefits programs, like Medicaid or SSI. Earnings in your Palmetto ABLE account are not subject to federal or state income tax, so long as you spend them on "Qualified Disability Expenses". According to the annual report the number of accounts from 2017 to 2021 has increased from under 500 to a little over 2,000. Assets Under Management has risen from under \$5,000,000 to over \$15,000,000 and Contributions (Sales) have gone up from \$2,500,000 to a little over \$7,500,000.

Account data as of June 30, 2021



Growth History of the Program



Last year, we completed two webinar sessions on leadership and making change in our communities. In our first session, we focused on:

- Understanding leadership and roles people with disabilities play in being leaders in their communities around South Carolina.
- Developing tools to successfully communicate ideas for creating change in their communities.
- Creating topics or areas for advocacy or self-advocacy in their communities on behalf of people with disabilities

In our second session, we transitioned our focus to:

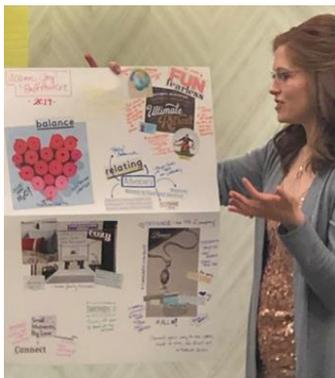
- Encouraging discovery of available resources, tools, and possibilities on a local and national level.
- Discovering their own passion and energy through self-advocacy and advocacy by learning how to use the tools and resources in ways that are meaningful to you

We hope to reconvene Partners in Policymaking® in the Fall of 2022. If you have any comments or suggestions, please let us know. For more information about Partners or the Council, please check out our website at <https://scddc.sc.gov/>

Partners in Policymaking® outlines the foundation for making systemic change by utilizing a shared vision through education, training, and a unified voice. The positive peer interaction strengthens individuals as well as collaborations and partnerships.

Sessions Include:

- **GETTING THE FACTS**
- **USING THE BEST TOOLS**
- **EQUIPPING YOURSELF**
- **MAKING AN IMPACT AND INCREASING AWARENESS**
- **EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES**



Responses from previous graduates

“All of the speakers were amazing! Jim Manning was hilarious!!”

“All of these speakers were so willing to answer questions and had excellent responses!”

A note from the Program Coordinator



As we continue to move forward and grow this program, I want to thank everyone for helping by giving their input through surveys on how they see Partners in Policymaking® moving forward in the future.

Our goal is to hopefully have Partners in Policymaking® running this coming fall, however my team and I will come to a consensus sometime in March. In the meantime, we will be coming up with ideas for virtual events around advocacy and self-advocacy. If you have any ideas feel free to share them via email at william.farris@admin.sc.gov.

We hope that everyone has an awesome new year. Our next newsletter will be out sometime in March.

William “Will” Farris,

“You get what you focus on, so focus on what you want”.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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