

# Annual Report 2024

*Navigating The  
Road Less Traveled*



HEALTHY LEARNERS

*A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System*



# The Road *Less Traveled...*

As I reflect on our journey at Healthy Learners, I think about the phrase “**the road less traveled.**” The complete quote by Robert Frost is: “**Two roads diverged in the woods, and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.**” This perfectly captures what the *Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine* started and what Healthy Learners continues to do today. Together, we choose a road less traveled—a path filled with challenges and triumphs, one dedicated to addressing the health needs of children in South Carolina so they can thrive in school and beyond.

In 2024, our mission took us to communities that are often overlooked, where barriers to healthcare seem insurmountable. Yet, it is on these roads that we have found profound purpose and formed meaningful connections. From the tireless work of our local staff who touched over 3,600 lives and our AmeriCorps team who have conducted 44,000 health screenings, to our innovative partnerships with school districts and healthcare partners, we have seen what is possible when compassion meets action.

The impact of our work isn’t just measured in numbers—it’s measured in stories. Stories like Aaron’s, who saw the classroom smart board clearly for the first time after receiving glasses, and Yvette’s, a mother who was relieved when her child’s chronic condition was managed. These moments remind me why we continue down this road, no matter how difficult it may be.

Your partnership is the steady compass that guides us. With your support, we will continue to venture into uncharted territories to reach children and families in need and create opportunities for brighter futures. Every step we take is made possible because of you, and together, we are building a path of hope and change.

As you explore this year’s annual report, I invite you to walk this road with us. Celebrate the milestones we have achieved together and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. This journey may be unconventional, but it is rich with purpose—and it is making all the difference.

*Amy Spitzer*  
Executive Director

“In 2024, Healthy Learners and its staff brought joy and relief to more children in South Carolina than ever before. As a citizen of this state, it **MAKES ME INCREDIBLY HAPPY** to know that these students are unburdened by health barriers to learning and are empowered to become the best learners and people they can be.”

Dillon Chewing, Chair  
HG Wealth Advisors



## Who We Are...

Through the mission, charisma, and values of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Healthy Learners helps children struggling in their education because of unaddressed health barriers to their learning get the healthcare they need to learn and thrive, no matter the obstacle.

## What We Do...

Healthy Learners partners with schools, medical providers, and community organizations to provide services for under-resourced children across South Carolina.

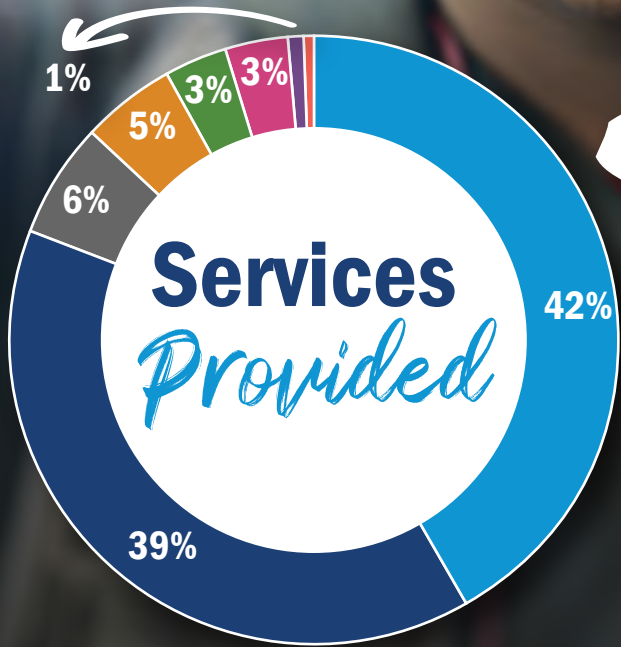
## Why It Matters...

Research shows education is key for children in under-resourced communities, but their success is at risk due to unaddressed healthcare challenges affecting their learning. Healthy Learners was created to tackle these issues and ensure all children receive the healthcare they need to thrive.


# Our Impact In 2024...


“Healthy Learners is **AMAZING!** Whenever my students and I need help, you're always there. When a student needed extensive dental work, you kept me updated with appointment reminders and progress.”  
- Nurse


“This support reduces my stress, allowing me to focus on my health and work without worrying about my children’s care. As a widowed, single parent with health issues, **IT’S INVALUABLE.**”  
- Parent




- Vision
- Dental
- Episodic
- Medication
- Mental Health
- Medicaid/Insurance
- Hearing
- Asthma


**17,843**  
**Services**

**44,235**  
**Health Screenings**

**3,612**  
**Students**

**140,639**  
**Miles Traveled**

**22**  
**School Districts**





# Lowcountry





**Allendale | Bamberg  
Barnwell | Hampton**

In 2024, the Lowcountry team's journey along the road less traveled allowed them to exceed their service goals, reaching 740 students across four counties and delivering 3,016 services—surpassing their original target by 7%.

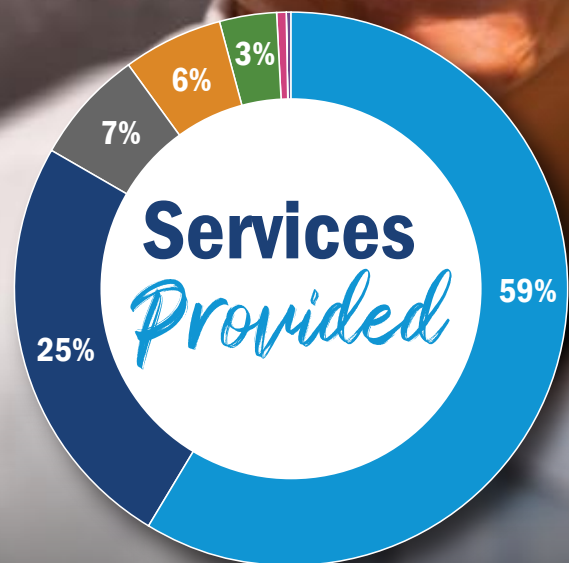
A significant accomplishment for the Lowcountry team was broadening their geographic reach and expanding their staff. Due to school district consolidations, Healthy Learners can now reach all areas of Barnwell County. Although Healthy Learners had already been serving students in Blackville and Williston, this new partnership has enabled them to reach more students struggling academically due to limited access to healthcare resources in their community.

Tiffine Forester joined the Lowcountry team in 2024, leading their student services in Barnwell and Bamberg counties. In Hampton County, Healthy Learners promoted a former AmeriCorps member to become a full-time Student Services Coordinator. Mason Farmer, who grew up in the area, brings invaluable local knowledge and connections.

Looking forward to 2025, the Lowcountry team is committed to continuing to empower students and help them build a life enriched by health, education, and vibrant community connections. A key priority will be expanding their network of providers to better meet student's needs. By further breaking down health barriers, the Lowcountry team aims to ensure all students have the support they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

**3,016**  **10,131**  
**Services** **Health**  
**740**  **33,173**  
**Students** **Miles Traveled**

“You were incredibly friendly and ensured my children made all their appointments. You've shown me that you **TRULY CARE.**” - Parent



● Vision ● Dental ● Episodic ● Mental Health  
● Medication ● Medicaid/Insurance ● Asthma  
● Hearing

# Midlands






**Fairfield | Lexington  
Newberry | Richland**

In 2024, the Midlands team successfully served 1,444 students and provided a total of 5,767 services across the region. The team screened over 10,240 children for vision, hearing, and dental issues. Thanks to these efforts, many families in the Midlands found the support and relief they so urgently needed.

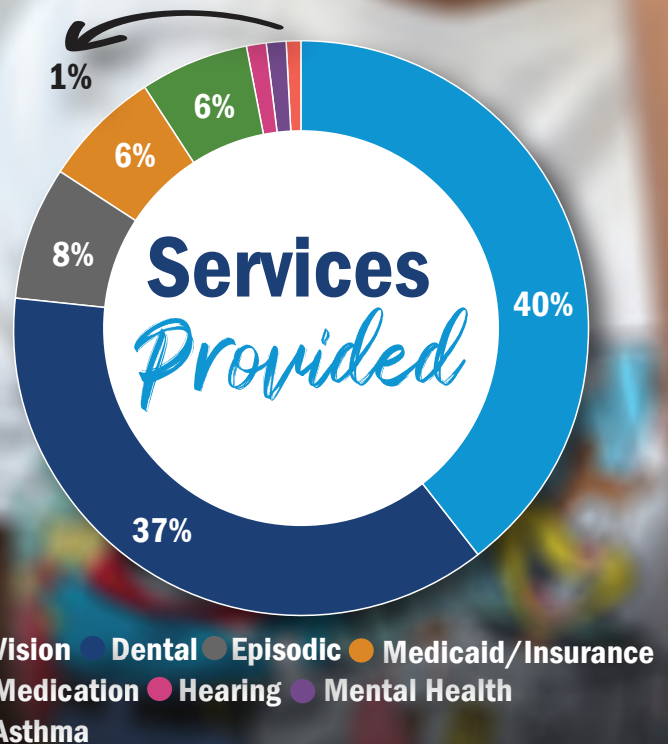
At the beginning of the summer, Healthy Learners welcomed a new Community Manager, Charline Dickerson, to the Midlands team. In addition to serving students in schools, the Midlands team went above and beyond to find ways to serve their community. The team provided over 300 dental hygiene bags across all seven school districts served throughout the Midlands. This initiative helped students maintain proper oral hygiene, which can directly impact their overall health and ability to focus in school. The team also welcomed Terri Lynn Corley, a new Student Services Coordinator—a retired teacher with 29 years of experience.

Hurricane Helene had a devastating impact across the Carolinas on September 27, 2024. In the weeks that followed when many families were without power, water, and other necessities, the Midlands team partnered with Serve and Connect to pack groceries for all those impacted. Healthy Learners purchased and created \$4,000 worth of hygiene kits and boxes of groceries to provide for those in need.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Midlands team is committed to expanding service delivery and increasing health screenings across the region, ensuring every student has the support they need to thrive in life.

**5,767**  **10,240**  
**Services** **Health Screenings**  
 **1,444**  **38,700**  
**Students** **Miles Traveled**

“Your staff members are absolutely wonderful! Both Ms. Jaylen and Ms. Maria are simply amazing, and my grandkids adore them. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!**” - Parent





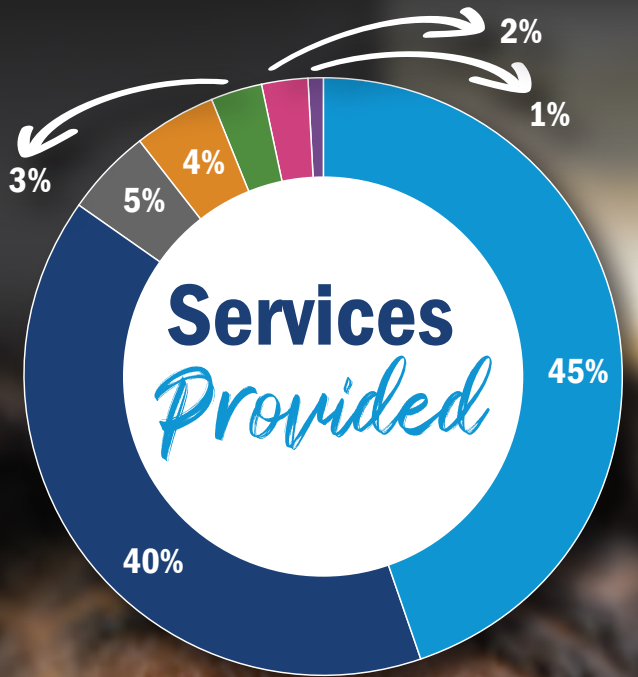
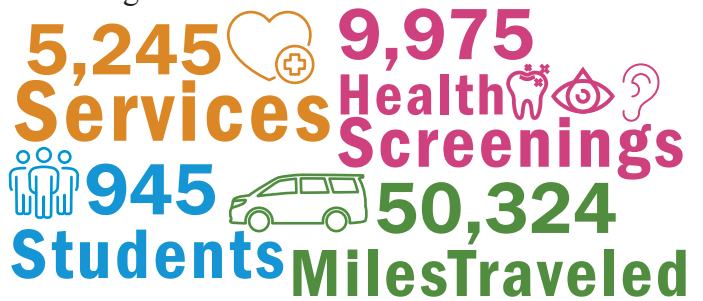


In 2024, Healthy Learners Pee Dee continued to grow its reach and serve more children in diverse communities by expanding into two new school districts: Chesterfield and Darlington counties. This expansion also led to the addition of two new Student Services Coordinators, strengthening the team's capacity to support these areas. These efforts have fostered new partnerships with healthcare providers and community agencies, broadening the network of support available to students and their families.

Through these expansions, Healthy Learners performed 9,975 screenings for vision, hearing, and dental issues. The screenings were vital in identifying health barriers to learning, enabling students to access necessary care, and ultimately improving the ability to address their needs.

Healthy Learners also completed its first full year of service delivery in Marlboro County in 2024, where the organization has received strong support from local schools and the community. Given the region's challenges—such as below-average reading and math proficiency, low graduation rates, and over 58% of children living in single-parent households—Healthy Learners' presence has had a meaningful impact on supporting students in achieving both health and educational success.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Pee Dee team is focused on increasing its outreach in Georgetown by collaborating with school nurses and community members to identify elementary school students in need of health services. This collaborative effort will expand the organization's reach and continue to build on its mission of improving students' overall well-being.



- Dental
- Vision
- Episodic
- Mental Health
- Medication
- Medicaid/Insurance
- Hearing



“Thank you for the replacement glasses for my son. They were delivered directly to his school and MADE A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR HIM IN CLASS!” - Parent

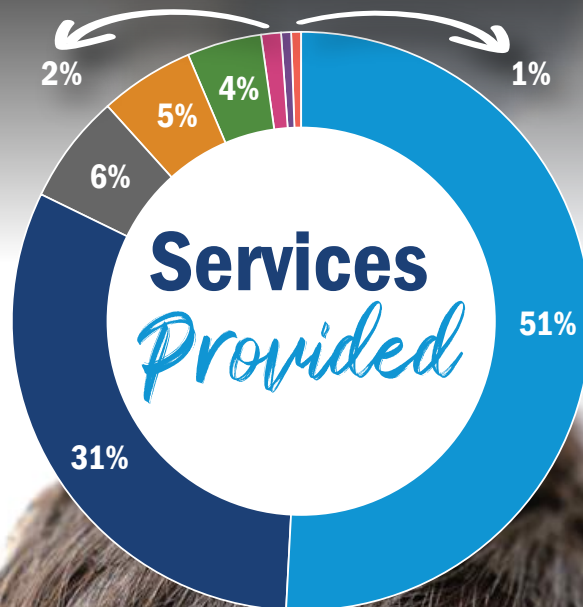




In 2024, the Upstate team demonstrated innovation in their approach to community service, particularly outside the typical service delivery model. Over the summer, the team collaborated with Greenwood District 50 to provide daily lunches to students, helping to serve over 147,000 meals with the district. These meals were crucial for students who, due to limited family resources, would have otherwise gone without lunch during the summer months. By ensuring that students received at least one meal a day, Healthy Learners made a significant difference in their lives during a vulnerable time.

As students returned to school, the team resumed coordinating appointments and health screenings. However, just weeks later, on September 27, 2024, Hurricane Helene struck Greenwood, leaving many families without homes and without power. In response, Healthy Learners Upstate ventured down a challenging path to provide for immediate needs. Healthy Learners distributed water to over 450 individuals and partnered with local restaurant Fat Daddy's to supply hot meals to the community. As the storm's aftermath persisted, the team continued to support the community by collaborating with Greenwood County to distribute Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) and water. Over 8,400 meals were distributed at various sites, including one directly next to their office, ensuring that families had access to essential resources in the wake of the disaster.

Looking ahead to 2025, Healthy Learners Upstate is excited to expand into Abbeville County, where 21% of students are living in poverty. Also on the horizon is the expansion into Spartanburg, Cherokee, and Union counties.

**3,815**  **13,899**  
**Services** **Health**  
**Screenings**  
**482**  **18,442**  
**Students** **Miles Traveled**



 Dental  Vision  Medication  Mental Health  
 Episodic  Hearing  Asthma  Medicaid/Insurance

“I really appreciate the help with scheduling appointments at the right times for check-ups and teeth cleanings. The reminders for these appointments are especially helpful and **MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE FOR ME.**”

- Parent



# Journey In Mental Wellness...

In 2024, Healthy Learners made remarkable progress in promoting mental health for children, reaching key milestones in education, community engagement, and support for students and their families. When surveyed, parents, teachers, school nurses, and staff observed significant improvements in students' behavior both in the classroom and at home, as well as during counseling sessions, reinforcing the impact of the Healthy Learners' efforts.

A highlight of the year was teaching 20 Youth Mental Health First Aid courses across 11 counties in South Carolina, helping to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and equip participants with the tools to better support children. Healthy Learners made important strides in mental health awareness across the region with 295 participants completing the courses.

During Mental Health Awareness Month in May, the initiative "Get Outside and Get Happy" encouraged children to embrace outdoor activities for better mental well-being over the summer. To further empower families, Healthy Learners revamped its Mental Health Toolkit, making it more user-friendly and accessible for both parents and students. In addition, a dedicated group of high school volunteers packed 250 backpacks with valuable resources, which were distributed to Healthy Learners students, providing them with fun ways to prioritize their mental health.

As Healthy Learners looks ahead to 2025, it remains steadfast in its mission to broaden mental health education, foster strong partnerships, and continue making a lasting impact on the well-being of students.

“Mental health is such a **BIG TOPIC** these days, and it's awesome to see more training happening around it. It's so important for people to have the tools and support to talk about it openly.”  
- MHFA Graduate

## Strategic Shift...

In August, Healthy Learners' AmeriCorps members transitioned from coordinating student healthcare appointments to taking on the responsibility of conducting preventative health screenings at schools across South Carolina. This strategic shift allowed Healthy Learners' Student Services Coordinators to dedicate more time to hands-on service, enhancing their ability to reach and support more students in a shorter amount of time. By streamlining operations in this way, Healthy Learners was able to maximize its impact and extend its resources to a greater number of children in need.



**AmeriCorps**



# An Unforgettable Evening...

Healthy Learners' signature fundraising event, Songwriters in the Round, was a tremendous success! Guests enjoyed an unforgettable evening filled with delicious food, refreshing drinks, and live performances from renowned songwriters behind some of the biggest chart-topping hits. These talented artists not only showcased their music but also shared their incredible journeys, making for a truly inspiring night.

With over 500 guests in attendance, Healthy Learners raised \$201,000.00 during two performances. These funds will directly support students in need of healthcare services who are living in poverty across our community.

“It was a perfect **MAGICAL NIGHT!**” - Attendee

## What's All the Buzz...

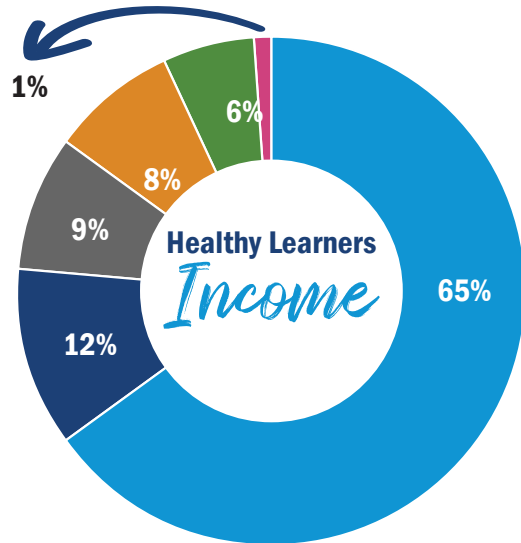
Who knew spelling could be so exciting? In 2024, Healthy Learners hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Adult Spelling Bee, celebrating a decade of friendly competition and fundraising for a great cause. Twenty-six teams competed for orthographic glory, and Healthy Learners raised an impressive \$44,932.32, which will directly help serve students in the Greenwood community.

“The Adult Spelling Bee is always a highlight of the year! The energy in the room, the friendly competition, and knowing we’re making a real difference for children in need—it’s an unforgettable experience. **I CAN’T WAIT TO COME BACK NEXT YEAR!**” - Attendee

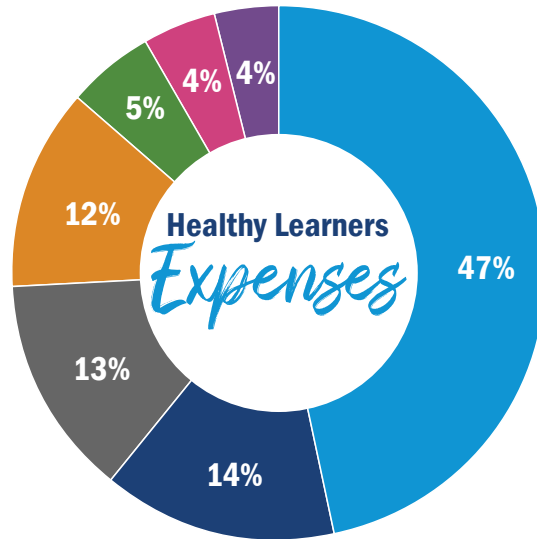




# 2024 Financials



● Grants ● Investment Income ● In Kind ● Events  
● Individual Contributions ● Program Income



● Direct Service Delivery ● Management/General Support  
● Medical Fees (In kind and Direct) ● Fundraising and Marketing  
● Rent, Corporate Expenses and Supplies ● Purchased Services  
● Depreciation

## Walk This Road With Us...

At Healthy Learners, we are dedicated to promoting healthy smiles and happy hearts for every child, ensuring that they receive the care they deserve. Imagine being part of a team that not only transforms lives but also has fun doing it!

## With Our Kiddos...

**Student Health Screening Support | 2-6 Hours | Max Group Size: 5 Volunteers**

Healthy Learners staff screen up to 1,000 students in 2-6 hours for vision, hearing, and dental health challenges at high-need schools. Volunteers help with student flow and data entry while connecting with children.

**Ride Along Buddy | 1-3 Hours | Max Group Size: 1 Volunteer per vehicle**

Join a Healthy Learners staff member for a student's health care appointment. Calm anxieties and make a friend, as many students are first-timers to provider appointments.

## For Our Kiddos...

**Car Wash Party | 1-2 Hours | Max Group Size: 10+ Volunteers | Location Flexible:**

Help our children and staff by washing and detailing Healthy Learners' fleet of vehicles.

**Item Drive:**

Make our children feel loved by donating care packages filled with coloring books, fidget toys, dental kits, snacks, and encouraging notes.

**Mental Health Training | YMHFA Certification | Intro to Mental Health Lunch & Learn**

Learn to identify and respond to youth mental health and substance use challenges. Designed for adults interacting with young people.

To schedule your next volunteer opportunity, contact

Christian Markle, Director of Development | [cmarkle@healthylearners.com](mailto:cmarkle@healthylearners.com) | 803-530-0002





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# HEALTHY LEARNERS

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