



719 North Main Street • Marion, South Carolina 29571
Telephone: 843.423.1811 • Fax: 843.423.8328
www.marion.k12.sc.us

DR. KANDACE BETHEA
Superintendent

Marion County Adult Education Awarded \$10,000 Grant from Dollar General Literacy Foundation to Launch Family Literacy and Workforce Training Program

[Mullins, SC] – May 22, 2025 – Marion County Adult Education has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to support its new family literacy and workforce development initiative, *Rack and Stack Knowledge*. This grant is part of a historic \$13.2 million investment made by the Foundation in a single day, supporting adult, family, and summer literacy programs across 48 states.

“We are thrilled to receive this funding on our first attempt—and for the maximum award amount,” said **Candyce K. Brooks**, Program Director of Marion County Adult Education. “After nearly two decades with MCAE, I decided to push past the mindset that our small size would be a barrier. With our new workforce program about to launch, the timing felt right—and I’m so glad we took the chance.”

In alignment with the program’s mission to “provide a learning environment that fosters educational opportunities, encourages lifelong learning, and meets changing community needs,” the *Rack and Stack Knowledge* initiative is a collaborative effort with local employers DMA Industries and Maxwood Furniture, Inc. The project will simulate a warehouse and distribution environment to provide hands-on training in distribution and logistics, including forklift and order picker certification.

The grant will specifically enhance family literacy by integrating academic remediation in reading and math with real-world job training. Adult participants will strengthen their skills in a workplace context, preparing them for industry-recognized certifications such as OSHA, FIFO, and more.

But the impact doesn’t stop with parents. While adults participate in the training, their children (ages 5–15) will engage in tutoring and academic enrichment activities with certified teachers. These sessions are designed to boost both academic performance and social-emotional development.

To reinforce the importance of lifelong learning, children will visit the simulated job site to observe their parents in training. In turn, children will also host their parents for classroom “drop-ins,” which may include shared activities like snack time, student-led lessons, guest speakers, family game days, and community service projects.

“I often hear things like, ‘I want a better job, but I don’t have childcare’ or ‘I can’t help my child with this new math,’” said Mrs. Brooks. “This program tackles those barriers head-on by helping both parents and children grow together. I’m proud and humbled that our idea earned one of only four Family Literacy grants awarded in South Carolina.”

The *Rack and Stack Knowledge* program is set to launch in **June 2025**.

“For over 30 years, the Foundation has been investing in literacy and basic education programs in our hometown communities,” said **Denine Torr**, Executive Director of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. “Today’s grant announcement is a celebration of our continued commitment to student and teacher success. We’re honored to support organizations like Marion County Adult Education that are helping individuals and families thrive.”