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## DDSN Awards the Silver Palmetto for the 2019 Year

City of Rock Hill

And

City of Greenville

(Columbia, S.C.) The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) today awarded City of Rock Hill and City of Greenville the 2019 Silver Palmetto Award. The Silver Palmetto is DDSN's way of recognizing and thanking city and municipal governments in South Carolina for making the lives of people with disabilities a priority in the previous calendar year.

DDSN Commission Chair, Gary Lemel made the presentation today at the annual conference of the Municipal Association of South Carolina's "Hometown Legislative Action Day" in Columbia, SC. City of Rock Hill Mayor John Gettys, Jr. was on hand to receive the award, and City of Greenville Mayor Pro Tem Lillian Flemming was on hand to receive the award.

Rock Hill was recognized for its work with MaxAbilities of York County (The local DSN Board) to plan, fund and develop a "first of its kind" Miracle Field Park in Rock Hill. The park will house 4 miracle fields, a large fully accessible playground with golf and fishing features which allow children with disabilities to play alongside typical children. The park also includes an area for retail use. The park, located adjacent to Winthrop University, is 7 acres in size and will cost in excess of 8 million dollars. The funding will come from the City and will be raised from donors in cooperation with the York County Disabilities Foundation. Ground was broken on the park late last year and it is currently under construction.

Mayor Gettys pointed out at the presentation, "This park is not a statement of where we have been, but where we want to go as a community. It is a statement of what we aspire to be."



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Greenville was recognized for its leadership and support of the fist annual Drumming up Awareness event on Main Street. Also Greenville partnered for a "Thrive Gives Back" event where people with disabilities helped to beautify city greenspaces and show what individuals with disabilities can do to contribute to their communities. Thrive consumers have also been included as "Greenville Greeters" and were awarded the Joel Poinsett award in the Greenville Christmas Parade.

Greenville Mayor Pro Tem Lillian Fleming said the she was very happy to accept the award. "I am so pleased that my city is being honored for its inclusiveness because that is what we strive to do in Greenville," Fleming said.

DDSN Commission Chair Gary Lemel said, "We are grateful to these cities for their leadership to include individuals with disabilities and allowing them to demonstrate their abilities, contribute to their communities through offerings of employment, community involvement, and new friendships."

This is the thirtieth year that DDSN has awarded the Silver Palmetto. This is the first time it has been awarded to Greenville and the first time for Rock Hill.



Jackson, Rock Hill City Council, Diane Dennis Carey, MaxAbilities Board Chair, Alice Davis MaxAbilities Board, Michelle Shaffer Executive Director of MaxAbilities, Gary Lemel, Chair SC DDSN Commission, Kathy Pender, Mayor Pro Tem of Rock Hill, John Gettys, Mayor of Rock Hill





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