

SERVING *Lexington*

OPERATING BEHIND THE SCENES IN FAMILIAR ROLES, THERE ARE WORKING CITIZENS WITHIN THE LEXINGTON COMMUNITY WHO STRIVE TO IMPROVE OTHERS' LIVES BY FULFILLING THEIR OWN JOBS' EXPECTATIONS. ALTHOUGH THE JOURNEYS THAT PLACED THEM WITHIN THOSE POSITIONS ARE AS UNIQUE AS OF EACH OF THESE INDIVIDUALS, THEIR DAILY OBJECTIVE IS SINGULAR: TO SINCERELY AND PASSIONATELY SERVE THE LOCAL PEOPLE THEY MEET.

by Marilyn Thomas

CHRIS HARRIS

"I have always been fascinated with cars," says Chris Harris, "I treat everybody's vehicle like it's my personal vehicle." Chris was a manager and driver for Pee Wee's and K&B Towing for years and recently became the owner of K&B Towing.

His career in the auto industry began in the late 1990s when he started working in local body shops. "I like to take something that's kind of old and work on it and make it look brand-new," he explains. "That was just a passion of mine."

In one of the businesses where he worked, towing services were offered, and Mr. Harris would occasionally "jump in the truck with the guys" to retrieve a vehicle. Eventually, after "some older gentlemen that I worked with showed me different tech-

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niques," his position evolved into towing full-time.

"I do it because there're a lot of nice people out here that you come in contact with every day," says Mr. Harris. "I talk to them a little bit and try to make them have a better, positive outlook on the situation."





An usher in his church, Mr. Harris “hates to see people taken advantage of” and often acts as a “mediator” between the repair shop and the customer. He also has a special place in his heart for the next generation and, in his vocation, encounters a lot of young drivers. “The younger teens, they get in an accident,” he explains. “I talk to them and tell them, ‘Thank God you’re still here with us. God’s got a plan for your life.’”

Originally from Gilbert, Mr. Harris says that Lexington is “a great community to be in ... I don’t think I could do this job in another place or another city. It wouldn’t be the same because once you start dealing with the people from Lexington, it’s almost like a family-oriented thing.”

GRETCHEN McCABE

When Gretchen McCabe answered a classified ad for a dental assistant’s position in a Rockville, Maryland, newspaper, she had no idea that accepting the job would develop into a life-long career path. After working there for about four years, she planned a two-week visit with her sister, who lived in Columbia, “and I’ve been here ever since, just because it was a really nice

area,” says Ms. McCabe.

“In 1988,” she explains, “I began to work for Dr. Barney Austin on Main Street. He was the second dentist in Lexington proper. Dr. Jon Smith - who I work for now - bought the practice so that’s how I became an employee at Southern Shores Dental for 30 years as of April 4, 2018.” She adds, “That’s kind of highly unusual for anyone to stay in a dental practice for that length of time.”

“It gives me a good feeling knowing how many people I have helped while I’ve been here,” says Ms. McCabe. “My main thing

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is my patients,” and she has derived personal fulfillment from “being able to help people that come in here petrified, and I can put them at ease somehow. My patients know stuff about me; I know stuff about them, like family. I just have a way of talking with them that relaxes them.”

At the end of June, Ms. McCabe officially retired from her position in the dental field. “I’m going to really, really miss the patients a lot,” she says. “That’s going to be the hardest part of retiring.”

“I’ve worked my whole life since I was 15 years old,” she adds, “so I just need to find who I am.” Her future plans involve enjoying the company of her 25-year boyfriend; cultivating her flower garden; spending quality time with her pets, which include a turtle, fish, and three dogs and four cats that were adopted from shelters; and donating more platelets to the Red Cross, a service she has provided since 1993.

CHRIS MCCARTNEY

“There are two sides to my job,” says Chris McCartney, a United Parcel Service (UPS) package car driver who delivers within the Lexington and Chapin communities. “I’m either bringing somebody work or I’m bringing somebody presents ... It’s fun bringing people presents because they get excited.”

Originally from Irmo, Mr. McCartney now lives in Chapin, but, he says, “I’ve met so many great people in Lexington, just in my short time working there I actually like communicating with my customers and talking to them. Slowly, but surely, when you see somebody every day, you get to know them ... on a first-name basis.”

Ten years ago, Mr. McCartney took a part-time job at the UPS hub while he was studying for a degree in physical education at the University of South Carolina. For six years, he sorted packages for UPS, even after he accepted a teaching position at Airport High School.