



Adult daycare gives relief

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Written by [Kelly Marshall Fuller](#)

Patients at Georgetown Active Day Center didn't know they were getting an invitation this week to the S.C. State House. During the week dedicated to Adult Day Care, the local celebration involved state and local officials, as well as helpers from Regency Hospice and local volunteers.

Rep. Carl Anderson told the crowd at the center that they are invited to Columbia, when the General Assembly reconvenes. It's been at least four years since the bus has been loaded for a day in Columbia, said center employee Annette Reed. "I didn't know about it before," Reed said. "It's a very good thing for them. Some have never been to the State House before."

The local legislative delegation provides the transportation for the trip, Reed said. The patients get a standing ovation and recognition from the General Assembly.

This week's activities and field trips are meant to bring attention to the services of adult day care, said administrator Donna Ardito. The centers sprinkled throughout Horry and Georgetown counties survive on some federal funding and local grants.

Patients at Oasis Adult Day Center have celebrated the week with a hat day, a special picnic and other activities, said Director Mazie Graham. "Adult day care centers are important, because they give the caregivers a life and get the participants out in the community," Graham said. "They enjoy coming, and it gives the family a break."

The funding for the centers is getting lower, while the number of patients needing the care increases,

according to officials with the National Adult Day Care Association. According to a report released by the association, at least 3,400 centers nationwide are caring for about 150,000 patients. About 78 percent of the adult day care centers are nonprofit, the association said.

Medicaid pays a large portion fees for service and third party payers, as well donations and grants. The center in Georgetown, and others, offer hot lunches, field trips and activities. The patients got a visit from Sweetie the clown, who let some patients pat her fuzzy green hair. Sweetie also danced and made balloon hats for several hours.

Rep. Vida Miller, County Councilwoman Leona Miller, City Councilwoman Peggy Wayne and the Rev. Herman Ford Jr. visited the center this week. Several proclamations from the city, county and state were read to the patients at the center. "This week was meant to emphasize the services," Ardito said. "We try to keep them out of nursing homes and hospitals. They get to stay at home as long as their families can care for them."