Paris Owens, AVP Northeast Florida Practice Administrator, Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville appointed to First Coast Blessings in a Backpack Advisory Board

JACKSONVILLE, FL – The First Coast Chapter of Blessings in a Backpack, the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to providing weekend nutrition to children, has announced the selection of three new professionals to our 2023-2026 Advisory Board. Charmaine Crockett, CSX Transportation; Paris Owens, Nemours Children's Health, Jacksonville; and Shivam Shah, UPenn Wharton School of Business. They join 14 seasoned leaders — across logistics, banking, technology, finance, sports management, education, and more, that form our First Coast Blessings Chapter Advisory Board.

“We select our Board of Advisors very deliberately for depth and breadth of experience, mission commitment, and a range of unique and valuable professional and personal factors. We are thrilled that these three exceptional leaders have joined our team and we are confident they will add tremendous range to our outreach in the years to come,” said Wyatt Haynes, First Coast Blessings Board Chair.

“I’m elated to join First Coast Blessings in a Backpack advisory board. Growing up poor, many days food was in short supply, so this is a true connection to the purpose for me. Nemours’ vision is to create the healthiest generation of children, to do this, we must address the social, economic, and demographic factors that also impact health, said Owens.”

Charmaine Crockett, CSX Transportation

Charmaine brings years of financial, leadership, and managerial expertise as CSX Transportation Billings Supervisor, as well as a strong personal investment to community issues. In 2021, Charmaine and two other CSX fellows were selected to join the National African American Women’s Leadership Institute, and after reading Vice President Kamala Harris's comments regarding a visit to Jacksonville and her positive experience with Blessings, they choose Blessings as their NAAWLI community outreach project. Through this work, she received firsthand knowledge of the needs in our community and how Blessings worked directly to address them.

"I couldn't be more excited to join the Blessings advisory board at this critical juncture. I've long admired their commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable children in our community and that's especially been the case during the extraordinary disruptions of the pandemic.” Charmaine Crockett continues, "There's so much important work to be done on addressing the nutritional needs of children that depend on their food schools and I'm thrilled to roll up my sleeves and get to work.”

Paris Owens, Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville

Paris Owens is the Assistant Vice President, Northeast Florida Practice Administrator for Nemours Children’s Health, Jacksonville. He has been in the hospital operations field for over 18 years and has a strong understanding of what it takes to ensure that the highest quality of care is maintained in all aspects of hospital operations. Paris has a master’s degree in business administration and has worked at several hospitals and medical offices throughout his career. He is well-versed in hospital and ambulatory clinics day to day operations. Paris is a leader and mentor, with a commitment to ensuring his team succeeds. He is passionate about developing and implementing new strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the hospital. Paris is passionate about providing the best patient care experience and works tirelessly to ensure that all patients are receiving the best care possible. Paris is also deeply committed to ensuring that all hospital staff works in a safe and efficient environment. He is always looking for ways to improve operations and is a strong advocate for patient safety. He is a highly organized and detail-oriented individual, with a passion for providing excellent patient care.

“I’m elated to join First Coast Blessings in a Backpack advisory board. Growing up poor, many days food was in short supply, so this is a true connection to the purpose for me. Nemours’ vision is to create the healthiest generation of children, to do this, we must address the social, economic, and demographic factors that also impact health. Food insecurity is one of those factors and Blessings has been instrumental in addressing the issue. Because of my life’s journey, I understand how important it is to give back to my community and I look forward to committing time and effort in hopes of enhancing the great work already being done.”

Shivam Shah, The Wharton School of Business

Shivam is currently a student at the Wharton School studying urban education and finance. His journey to Blessings began while a student at Nease High School where he volunteered with the Blessings Souper Bowl event team. At Wharton, he has researched a scalable solution for food inequity with Professor Greg Goldman in the Urban Studies Department and has interned at a food inequity nonprofit. Additionally, he serves in leadership capacities across many clubs and serves as the Wharton Class Chair.

“I volunteer with Blessings because I know this mission can and does make a genuine impact on children's lives. I have seen it happen. My commitment as an Advisory Board member is to use my professional skills and personal experience to improve and expand operations to provide additional Blessings’ weekend meals for children struggling with hunger.”

About First Coast Blessings in a Backpack

Blessings in a Backpack is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to providing weekend nutrition to children, with more than 1,100 programs in 46 U.S. states. Our Mission is to mobilize communities, individuals, and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry. In 2022, Blessings provided more than 3 million hunger-free weekends to kids facing hunger. Here on the First Coast, we nourish 5500 children each week by partnering directly with 46 public schools in 3 counties. We will provide nearly 200,000 Hunger Free Weekends this school year.

For more information contact Chapter Director Susan W. Evans:

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