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A Small Business' Efforts to Support Mental Health

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Georgetown RISE Internship

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Island Specialties

A Small Business' Efforts to Support Mental Health

Introduction & Thesis

At some point in our lives, we all experience hardships that test our strength and faith. Many call it a “rough patch,” others might say it’s a “hard time.” Donna Anderson, however, has coined this experience as a “Salty Mile,” and it happens to be her new business’ name. Donna Anderson, a Georgetown County native and owner of Island Specialties, has decided to create this business and build it upon her firm beliefs that everyone deserves to have access to mental healthcare. Island Specialties is a “Lowcountry Lifestyle” shop with a mission to operate its storefront by selling sustainably made, locally made, and even USA made products. Salty Mile will be similar to Island Specialties by holding all the same principles to be true; products such as hats, shirts, tumblers, etc., that are sold will be sustainably made while promoting an important message to its consumers about mental health. Last year within Georgetown County, 67% of the community made up the lower-income groups which made access to necessities such as healthcare, harder for these residents to receive (Tidelands Health, 2022). Along with this, mental health was ranked the fifth most important priority to be taken care of; 68% of the community marked it as extremely important and a must to be addressed (Tidelands Health, 2022). The statistics for this county and the relationship it has with healthcare for its community speak for itself; we need to implement change. The mental health crisis is a serious issue in today’s society that requires much attention, research, and problem-solving to help diminish the overall statistics. Looking at Georgetown County, there is a strong need for resources such as school-based learning systems on mental-health, bringing the community together for walks with local businesses and nonprofits, and more businesses reporting on their Corporate Social Responsibility for their sustainability efforts that I will touch upon in the latter sections of my report. With this in mind, as my role as a Graphic Designer/Marketing Assistant for Island

Specialties and Salty Mile, I will be investigating how my designs and branding for this future company will support the business' plan to aid those in need of access to mental healthcare. This report overall will examine the relationship between small businesses, such as Salty Mile, and their role in sustainability within their communities.

This report relates to Goals #3, #8, #11, #12 and #17 outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Goal #8 focuses on Decent Work and Economic Growth, and the target linked to this report is 8.5 stating, “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” (United Nations, 2023). Goal #11 regards Sustainable Cities and Communities, and Target 11.A stating, “Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning” (United Nations, 2023) will be highlighted. Goal #12 is Responsible Consumption and Production, and Target 12.2 “By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources,” is touched upon. Goal #17, Partnerships for the Goals, relates to my research through Target 17.16, which states, “Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries” (United Nations, 2023).

The main focus of this report is on Goal #3, Good Health and Well-Being, and I will specifically be looking at Targets 3.8; “Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all,” and 3.C; “Substantially increase

health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States” (United Nations, 2023). My research will reflect the importance of access to care all around the world as well as employing and maintaining jobs within the Public Health sector. The usage of graphics for the Salty Mile and its relation to the company’s mission to promote mental health will also be studied through data I have gathered personally from residents of the county.

Observations

After further examining the draft of the Georgetown Comprehensive Plan of 2030, I recognized only two factors pertaining to mental health within the county; one within in the “Transportation Element” of the draft states that the Paratransit service would facilitate transportation services for seniors and other citizens that qualify for physical and mental disabilities (Georgetown County, 2023). The other relative element can be found in the “Housing Element” of the draft, and it lays out a plan to make housing more affordable for lower-income residents by creating a proposal comprised of helping residents advance their education, train, prepare for jobs, and a county-implemented short-term housing voucher system to increase income for these families living in poverty (Georgetown County, 2023). While these potential solutions for the county do not directly affect mental health or the betterment thereof, they do, however, play a part in one’s overall well-being.

Globally, mental health is a large issue with very little being done about it. Back in 2013, 45% of countries reported they had mental health policies in place that was planned to increase to 80% by 2020 but had been pushed back to 2030 due to the percentage only rising to 51% almost halfway through the allotted plan (World Health Organization, 2023). It is shown that 1 in 8 people worldwide struggle with a mental health condition, and 71% of those people living with

a mental health condition do not receive treatment. Mental health is also a severely under-resourced issue in the world; only 2% of health budgets worldwide go towards mental health (World Health Organization, 2023). Countries with higher incomes were the leaders in suicide rates despite these countries having greater access to care than lower income countries, and this reveals a greater problem; access is a large problem this crisis faces, but the literacy surrounding mental health is another large problem (World Health Organization, 2023, p. 65-66). Many communities around the world are not educated on mental health and what it can do to an individual. Instead, the stigma surrounding mental health is much greater than the education surrounding mental health. Globally, 970 million people in 2019 were living with mental illnesses; a majority being females who accounted for 52.4% of those affected (World Health Organization, 2023). The top two largest mental illnesses amongst the 970 million people were anxiety disorders (31%), and depressive disorders (28.9%) (World Health Organization, 2023). These illnesses can lead to suicides in our world; almost 46,000 people in 2020 died from suicide. This statistic reflects about 1 person every 11 minutes, and over 75% of the world population's suicide rates come from low-middle-income. Despite low-middle-income countries battling a large suicide rate, high-income countries have the highest suicide rates combined being 10.9 deaths per 100,000 (World Health Organization, 2023). The population that seriously thought about suicide was 12.2 million people, while 3.2 million planned a suicide and 1.2 million attempted a suicide (CDC, 2023). In 2019, the cost on society of attempted suicides was almost \$490 billion due to medical expenses, people having to miss work, and the toll on people's overall quality of life after experiencing this tragedy (CDC, 2023). Nationally, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for college students; about 1,100 students die from suicide on college campuses each year (University of Michigan, 2022). Mental illnesses are mainly caused

and brought on by our environment from childhood through adulthood. Relationships with ourselves, families, communities and our structural influences are factors that relate to mental health, and everyone will experience these dynamics differently over the course of their life (World Health Organization, 2023). Furthermore, the familial influence on mental health can be linked to parental behavior; tough parenting and physical punishments lead to behavioral problems in children and adolescents, but bullying has been confirmed to be the largest root of mental health problems (World Health Organization, 2023). When looking at the COVID-19 crisis that occurred in 2020, the structure that communities had where they were able to engage with each other was destroyed; restrictions caused a severe amount of mental health issues amongst the world due to little to no human interaction, many people not working, and the stress brought on by the restrictions (World Health Organization 20). Other contributors to poor mental health are poor education, violence, risky behavior, and alcohol/substance abuse (World Health Organization, 2023).

In 2021, South Carolina was ranked 43rd in the nation for its minimal access to care, and 34th in the nation for adults with any mental illnesses that did not receive treatment (Mental Health America 14). Along with this, people that had health insurance were still unable to receive mental health care, meaning that insurance is not the issue in this nation, access to mental health care is (Mental Health America 2022). Amongst 10–24-year-olds in South Carolina, ages 18-22 being the typical age group for college students, suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death. In ages 25-34 in South Carolina, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2022). There are approximately 35 mental health facilities In Georgetown County, however, the ratio of 1060 patients to 1 mental health provider is a cause for these places to likely decline their services due to the high volume of patient intake

(Tidelands Health 2022) (Georgetown County School District). Health Care and Social Assistance makes up 15.4% of the employment industry, making it the largest job sector in the county (Data USA, 2021). Knowing our county's Health Care and Social Assistance sector is the largest industry, it is imperative that more policies on health care improvement be discussed as well as continuing to grow this industry due to the development of the county overtime. Poverty is another main stressor that directly correlates to poor mental health, so being that a plan is in place through the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan to try and help those in poverty within Georgetown County, it is a step in the right direction. Within the county, 16.1% of people live in poverty; almost 10,000 people of the approximate 62,000 people in 2020 were living below the poverty line (Data USA, 2021). In 2022, 31% of children in Georgetown County were living in poverty (Tidelands Health, 2022). Poverty leads to the inability to provide basic necessities for one's family, such as food, clothes, and adequate housing essentials such as hot water, electricity, etc., causing stress and leading to the development of mental health illnesses (World Health Organization 2022-2023). It is also harder for those living in poverty to receive access to necessary, quality health care, so seeking cheaper, lower quality "health care" is what these people tend to do (World Health Organization 2022-2023). In 2020, 6,730 of the almost 10,000 people in the county were food insecure. Poverty/food insecurity is shown to increase the likelihood of depression and suicidal thoughts in people whether it be due to the stress of the situation or from nutrient deprivation (McIntyre et al., 2022).

Improving mental health around the world has to start somewhere, and many corporations/businesses have stepped up to contribute to this cause. Maybelline, a large make-up company, started a campaign called, "Maybelline Brave Together." It aimed to support anxiety and depression worldwide and eliminate the stigma around mental health. Storm Reid, an actress

and advocate on many global issues, was signed to the brand to help launch and pursue the campaign (Latana, 2019). Since Maybelline's target audience at the time was women from 14-24 years old, their "Brave Together" website highlighted young women telling their stories on how they overcame mental health struggles (Latana, 2019). Through this effort, the company worked with universities and charities to research mental health, trained their employees in helping people with mental illnesses, and partnered with Crisis Text Line which provided free, 24/7 private counseling through text messages for anyone who was struggling (Latana, 2019).

A company that has branches all around the nation, with one being in Charleston, is Boeing. Boeing is a global aerospace company that produces aircrafts such as airplanes and rockets, and also gives back to communities locally and globally. The company provided a sustainability report for 2022 (based on the 2021 year) and their contribution to communities was astronomical. They contributed \$30 million for communities globally facing racial and social injustices, \$36.5 million to various charities, over \$187 million worth of community investments, and \$18.7 million to support veteran programs (Boeing, 2022). Boeing's effort of giving back to veterans was through celebrating the graduating class of 2021's Adaptive Training Foundation's Military to the Mountains ReDefine Course. This course consisted of veterans with trauma, disabilities, and people of color from different branches that took part in nine-weeks of physical and mental challenges (Boeing 63). The future of Boeing is looking towards expanding aviation workforce knowledge globally. This effort began in 2016 between Boeing and ThinkYoung where Kenyan students would learn STEM skills such as coding, robotics and drones, and building mobile games with the skills they learned from coding. The number of people, ranging from 13-25 years-old, that took part in this course in 2021 was 60, but over the course's whole duration, over 700 teenagers have been trained – 60% being young girls. More schools for

coding were planned to be opened in 2022 in Ethiopia and Rwanda (Boeing, 2022). Boeing even partnered with Clemson University by sponsoring Clemson's Men of Color National Summit. The event aimed to inspire Black and Latino high schoolers to become leaders and mentors of our rising workforce as well as encourage them to receive a college education. The company also created a scholarship for students in STEM programs and collaborated with the Call Me MISTER program which inspires men of color within the college to pursue STEM or manufacturing careers (Boeing, 2022).

Mimi Seabrook, a local, small business in Pawleys Island, is a great example of a small business giving back to its community the same way a large corporation would. This year, Mimi Seabrook is collecting monetary and tangible donations for their "Moms helping Moms" campaign to go towards creating Mother's Day baskets for 26 mothers who have been victims of domestic violence (Mimi Seabrook). A portion of donations received will be donated to the Smith Medical Clinic to honor Palmetto Giving Day. On April 28th, they are having a "Shop for a Cause" event where they will extend their hours, and a portion of profits will go towards other start-up organizations helping domestic violence victims. Their overall mission of this is to raise awareness about domestic violence as well as empower women to come together and end domestic violence (Mimi Seabrook, 2020). Surf the Earth is another local, small business in Pawleys Island that participates in ecotourism including surf lessons, camps, and paddle boarding and kayak tours (Surf the Earth, 2022). While this is not directly giving back to the community, it is a form of helping the community. Ecotourism combines local, environmental conservation with communities and sustainability through traveling (The International Ecotourism Society, 2022). Through ecotourism, a community can come together to experience local ecosystems in a sustainable way, and this promotes Goal #8, Decent Work and Economic

Growth through Target 8.4 which aims to “...decouple economic growth from environmental degradation...” (United Nations, 2023). Overall, ecotourism helps the development of a community through more job opportunities, conserving a community’s culture and environment, and economic benefits (Upadhaya and Tiwari, 2021).

During my time here at Island Specialties, I was asked to create a T-shirt design for a local Pickleball tournament that raises money for a non-profit of the coordinator’s choosing; All4Paws was the team’s choice. All4Paws is a local animal shelter that donates pet food to the Baskerville Ministries Food Bank for families established with a voucher program, educates children in church and school about the responsibilities of having a pet, and they operate a spay/neutering facility out of a recycled shipping container that they refer to as “Clinic in a Can” (All4Paws Animal Rescue, 2022). They are not only helping animals in our community as well as our community itself, but they are also operating sustainably at the same time. It was through this lengthy process of designing and creating the shirt that Ms. Anderson and I found a sustainable company located in Burlington, North Carolina by the name of TS Designs where they source local cotton to create T-shirts that are sustainable and USA Made. Tom Sineath was the founder of this company, and aimed to focus on People, the Planet, and Profits; the Three P’s of Sustainability. Eric Henry, however, is the current CEO and President of the company where they locally source cotton and create eco-friendly brands, that are then sustainably dyed and screen-printed (TS Designs). Since learning about this company, we have decided that in order for our brand, Salty Mile, to be as sustainable as possible, it would greatly benefit our Corporate Social Responsibility—a company’s report on its impact on society—to purchase shirts through them, and sometime in the future, potentially receive screen-printing from them.

Many companies carried in the store use fabrics that are sustainable; a few of which use bamboo. Bamboo is a great, sustainable option for clothing, and it supplies many advantages such as antibacterial properties, moisture-wicking properties, and a soft texture (Waite, 2021). With this, however, the product might not be exactly what the customer is buying into. The companies carried in store use a production process that is called a “Bamboo-Viscose” process. This means the companies take the bamboo fibers, crush them up to form a cellulose compound, then they soak the compound in sodium hydroxide, also known as lye. Carbon disulfide is also added to the mixture, and the viscose product that is created through this is then put into a container with diluted sulfuric acid (Waite, 2021). This is the cheaper of the two manufacturing processes. The mechanically manufactured process does not add any chemicals whatsoever and keeps the advantageous properties of bamboo intact throughout the process. The viscose produced fabrics lose their antibacterial properties in the chemically engineered process, which means that the claims these consumers buy into are not 100% true (Waite, 2021). With this, the attainment of bamboo can be costly on the environment due to the increased carbon footprint from importing bamboo from countries such as China. Because of this, Ms. Anderson and I have decided it is best to go with the “Cotton of the Carolinas” shirt from TS Designs for our Salty Mile T-shirt production. The shirt is slightly more expensive than a normal T-shirt, but it is created with locally sourced cotton from North Carolina, and the shirt features a QR-code that, when scanned, shows the consumer the “Dirt to Shirt” process. This will allow for full transparency with our consumers, so they know exactly what they are buying into along with an increased sustainability effort for the company. In addition, due to the responses on the survey we conducted, in order to increase the appeal of the company, we have decided to do two lines of shirts for the company. One line of shirts will be 100% sustainable using the “Cotton of the

Carolinas” shirt from TS Designs which is made in the USA. The other line will be very slightly less sustainable, but a little more affordable for those who were unsure if they would pay 40-45% more; the shirts will still be sustainable by being made in the USA, just at a lower cost for us, and lower price for consumers.

Literature Review

Mental health has been a tremendous issue in the world since long before the COVID-19 crisis which caused everyone’s health and well-being to worsen. Developed countries are facing the same issues that underdeveloped countries have been experiencing due to the lack of necessary resources; mental health care is disregarded, underfunded, and limited. The treatment gap in some countries is 90%, meaning that only 10% of people with severe mental illnesses in these countries actually receive treatment (World Health Organization, 2023). The supply and demand of mental health care is unbalanced; the number of people with mental health issues highly outweighs the supply of resources available (World Health Organization, 2023). Because of this low supply and high demand issue, the cost of adequate care is expensive and oftentimes unattainable for many. This causes people to seek other options that are closer and cheaper while simultaneously sacrificing the quality of care, causing a never-ending cycle of suffering (World Health Organization, 2023). In 2021, South Carolina was ranked 43rd out of 51 states for having low access to care, but it has since then moved up to 30th in the country (Mental Health America 14). South Carolina was also ranked 46th in the country for youths’ access to care (Mental Health America, 2022), and for mental health workforce availability, South Carolina was ranked 41st (Mental Health America, 2022). These poor rankings in our state show how much change needs to be implemented; access to care needs to increase, cost of care needs to decrease, and our mental health workforce needs to grow and be sustained to help everyone in need. In

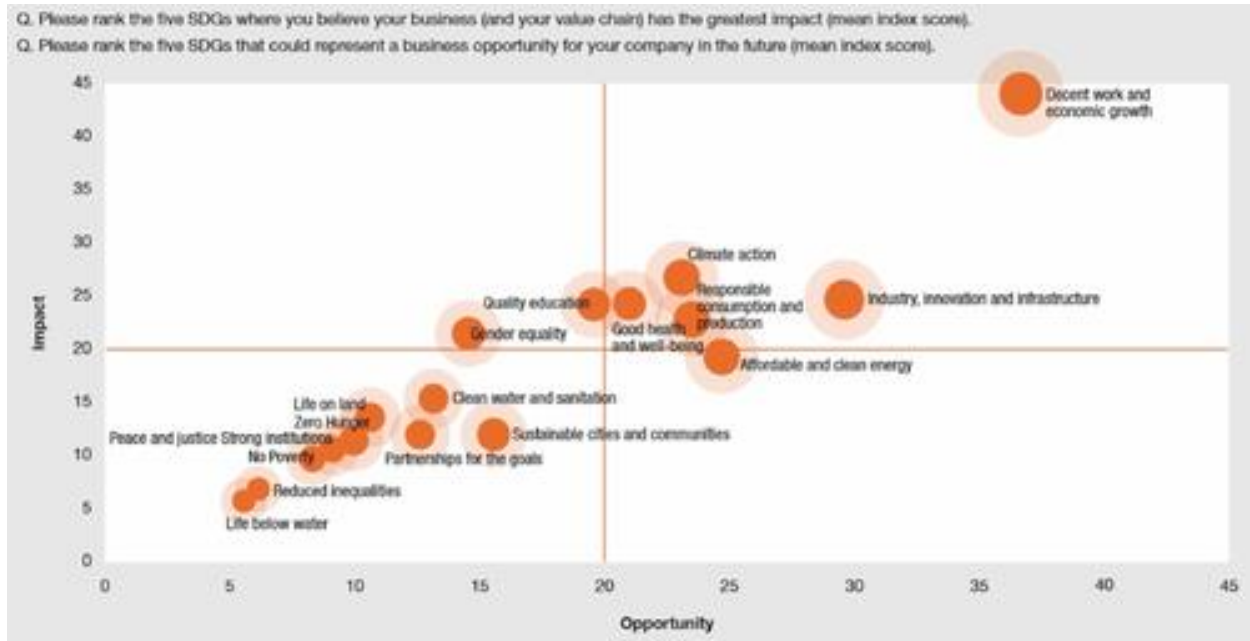
Georgetown County, healthcare services including affordability, proximity, and prevention all received over a four out of five on the measure of importance scale, showing how badly these members of the community want this issue to be resolved (Tidelands Health, 2022). Mental health was rated a 4.45 out of five on the importance scale by 68% of the community, showing how resources are not just wanted by county members, they are *needed* and must become a priority to solve (Tidelands Health, 2022). Within this community and the world, people experience food insecurities, financial hardships, racial and gender inequalities, and many other aspects in their daily lives that worsen their mental health, yet they lack the resources to get better.

My research will show how mental health and mental health care worldwide need to improve and how marketing and graphic design plays a role in telling an important story. With the help of my experience as a graphic designer for a new business, Salty Mile, I have been able to receive feedback from customers and county members about which designs appeal to them the most for a business based on mental health care for all. I also received information from county members about how they feel mental health in their county is overall. Research on small businesses in the community as well as corporations around the world will reflect how sustainability practices and giving back to these company's communities are beneficial to everyone involved, and something that more companies should partake in. Within this report, I will examine the relationship between businesses and sustainability within communities by using Salty Mile as an example of what sustainable measures businesses should take in order to improve their Corporate Social Responsibility. I will also explore Salty Mile's sustainability efforts, its relation to the United Nations Global Compact, and how the business plans to help the community in ways such as hosting a community-wide walk with mental health facilitators as

well as providing a scholarship to a high-school senior, and giving back to local non-profits such as Carolina Human Reinvestment in order to improve the county's overall Good Health and Well-Being (Sustainable Development Goal #3). Having access to mental health care is a basic human right that everyone is entitled to, and it needs to start being treated as such. The answers for improvement are right in front of us; solve the access to mental health care. Until then, implementing communal and school activities in order to educate people on mental health will be a start in order to reach the ultimate end goal.

Literature & Case Studies

Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility/Reporting (CSER) and its linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is an important aspect of companies, especially those with sustainable efforts, to look into. Many profitable companies are known to be active in their CSER reporting, and although there is no concrete evidence to back this, it is clear that companies reporting their CSER is a form of "insurance" to keep the company from being involved in scandals or negativity associated with their business (Lu et al. 2021). Companies, however, oftentimes choose to report only certain SDGs for their CSER that will make them look the best to the consumer which boosts their profits and overall value of their brand (Lu et al. 2021). In Figure 1 below, you can see that many companies were able to apply and reach SDGs "Decent Work and Economic Growth" and "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure," while goals such as "Life Below Water," "Reduced Inequalities," and "No Poverty" were not in the top five SDGs for a majority of the respondents (Lu et al. 2021).



This is an issue within modern day CSER reports where companies will choose the SDGs that make them appeal the best way possible for their consumers, when in reality, they are trying to offset their Corporate Social and Environmental Irresponsibility (CSEI) by fronting their CSER efforts (Lu et. al., 2021). Another way companies can do this is through “Greenwashing,” much like the example stated earlier with the Bamboo Viscose vs. Bamboo Mechanical production processes. Companies will promote their products as environmentally friendly and link their CSER to the SDGs in order to offset their CSEI, which causes consumer manipulation for believing these companies that are telling only half of the truth (Lu et al., 2021).

Nike, for example, is a company that has had much CSER controversy over the years. Accusations of Nike polluting rivers in China and abusing workers in Indonesia were only a few of many ethical issues the company encountered with their CSER (Riddle 4). Nike outsourced products, such as footballs, from lower developed countries like Pakistan, and used children as stitchers for the footballs (Lund-Thomsen and Coe, 2022). When word got out and the Atlanta Agreement was introduced to create a monitoring system for child labor, Nike decided to cut ties

with the company, Saga Sports, in order to better their CSER efforts (Lund-Thomsen and Coe). To counter their CSEI, Nike announced they would outline a set of rules for all football stitchers in the country; the workers had to be registered with hourly pay and performance-based benefits. While this may have appeased the people of the public after hearing how irresponsible and unethical Nike was, there was more to the story. Nike was paying the stitchers more; however, it was nowhere near enough for these workers to provide for their families. And, when the footballs were released to the market and their production numbers were lower than expected, they fired many of the stitchers and let them go without any compensation of work they had already performed (Lund-Thomsen and Coe, 2022). It is apparent that reporting full transparency in a company's CSER is absolutely required in order for one's consumers to be fully aware of what they are buying into. Salty Mile aims to be completely transparent with its future consumers in not only its sustainability efforts, but its mission for people of the world as well.

Boeing, a sustainable company mentioned prior, is a great example of a company that reports on their Corporate Social Responsibility; they publish it on their website every year to be transparent with communities worldwide. Below, the photos of their report show the SDGs that they focused on through all of their efforts within 2021 and 2022. For Goal #3: Good Health and Well-Being, eligible employees were given up 20 days off of work related to child or elder care to relieve stress. Goal #4: Quality Education was shown through the company's continued effort to give underdeveloped countries STEM education. Boeing's employment of women and minority racial/ethnic groups increased in 2021 relating to Goal #5: Gender Equality. The company is focusing on creating renewable energy resources to contribute to Goal #7: Affordable and Clean Energy. For Goal #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Boeing contributed almost 300,000 volunteer hours to 13,957 partners in the community. Related to

Goal #9, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, the company was selected by GE Aviation to take part in flight tests with their “Hybrid electric propulsion system,” which could largely decrease the carbon emissions that our current planes emit. For Goal #10: Reduced Inequalities, Boeing’s Philadelphia branch started the Autism at Work program which brought individuals and college students with autism into the workplace and allowed them to experience what a career in Boeing is like just like any neurotypical person could. Many of the students who take part in the program receive job offers after they graduate. Increases in Boeing’s renewable energy and decreases in their Greenhouse Gas emissions related to Goal #12: Responsible Consumption and Production and Goal #13: Climate Action. The last goal they focused on was Goal #17: Partnerships for the Goals, and Boeing partnered with Australia’s national science agency called CSIRO to launch an almost \$30 million research program that would benefit future aviation sustainability. The listed contributions are seen in the figure below. This represents only a few of the many from the company supporting sustainability and the SDGs (Boeing, 85-86).

Goal	Key SDG Sub-Indicators	Goal	Key SDG Sub-Indicators
 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING Good Health & Well-Being	3.2, 3.3, 3.9	 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	9.1.2, 9.3.1, 9.4.1, 9.5.1, 9.5.2, 9.8.1
 4 QUALITY EDUCATION Quality Education	4.3, 4.4, 4.5	 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES Reduced Inequalities	10.7.2
 5 GENDER EQUALITY Gender Equality	5.5.2	 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION Responsible Consumption & Production	12.2, 12.4, 12.5.1, 12.6.1, 12.7
 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY Affordable & Clean Energy	7.2.1, 7.8.1	 13 CLIMATE ACTION Climate Action	13.1
 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH Decent Work & Economic Growth	8.2, 8.3, 8.4	 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS Partnerships for the Goals	17.16, 17.17

The United Nations Global Compact is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world where their goal is to drive companies to be responsibly sustainable through outlining principles on fair labor, the health of the environment, anti-corruption, and human rights for businesses to adhere to (United Nations Global Compact, 2022). The United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* outlines a policy that reads, “States must protect individual and collective fundamental rights. Companies have a social responsibility to respect human rights. [Companies] Must have a mechanism for victims whose human rights are violated by companies” (Manirabona and Cárdenas, 2019). The basis behind this article is that our modern-day practices of extracting natural resources come at the expense of workers from low developed countries whose human rights are being violated. Nike is an example of this being an issue in the corporate world where they underpaid their workers, hired children for labor, and

fired workers without compensating them for their work completed prior. Implementing the United Nations Global Compact principles into Salty Mile's business practices will greatly benefit the company through our CSER efforts and showing the community that we are a company with good values in place. This, however, would be a great benefit for any business, large or small.

Salty Mile's kickoff event will be a community walk on April 21st that hosts local nonprofits including Healthy Learners, Riverside Behavioral Learning Collaborative, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness located in Charleston along with Karla Adkins, local author of *And She Came Tumbling Down*, and local yoga instructors that will collectively help people find ways to cope with their mental health issues along with being introduced to other methods in the community that they could access when health care is unavailable. The correlation between mental health issues, physical well-being, community, and nature is shown to increase one's overall mental health (Cooley et al., 2021). A case study performed in the United Kingdom showed how community group walks in nature contributed to better overall health for its participants (Cooley et al., 2021). The UK's "Walk to Well-Being" has been a staple in the country for the past 10 years and is hosted by community mental health teams (CMHTs) in green spaces such as parks and countryside areas as well as urban walks in museums and streets in the city (Cooley et al., 2021). The walks were free for participants unless transportation was required elsewhere, and they would be hosted by Occupational Therapists (the facilitators) from February to December for two hours every four days on a weekday (Cooley et al., 2021). After the walk, the participants were told to document in a diary what they found most beneficial about the walk, what they found the least beneficial, and what they took away from the experience. Overall, participants stated that they felt more relaxed, less anxious, they felt more inclined to speak up

about their problems, and socializing with people made them feel calm (Cooley et al., 2021). They also stated that being out in nature made them feel more comfortable being away from the noise of the city and they enjoyed going places they may have never thought to go to beforehand. The members of the group also felt a sense of companionship from the walks and in turn, they were less inclined to seek help from National Health Services and more inclined to go out and find work for themselves (Cooley et al., 2021). Overall, this would be a great addition to the county; going to the Huntington State Park or down to the beach for these walks and bringing therapists/mental health facilitators to lead the walks would greatly benefit the members of our community by giving them a sense of belonging, comfort, and an escape from their day-to-day lives.

Within our younger generations, mental health needs to be talked about more, and these children need to be educated on mental health more. In the survey I conducted, 100% of respondents stated that students should be educated more on mental health. From personal experience, the negative stigma surrounding mental health causes many like myself to feel afraid to ask for help and speak up. It's a hard battle to fight when you feel weak for asking for help but weak for struggling internally as well. That is why implementing school-based mental health education would be beneficial for not only our county, but others worldwide as well. In Canada, a system like this was implemented and aimed at educating younger students on mental health issues, identifying them early on, and how to intervene in order to improve the overall outcome (Weist et al., 2017). The network they established is called "Evergreen," and it taught mental health literacy; "Understanding how to obtain and maintain good mental health; understanding mental disorders and their treatments; decreasing stigma associated with mental disorders; and enhancing help-seeking efficacy," are the four goals of the course (Weist et al., 2017). The

course is designed for 9th and 10th graders nationally, and teachers are educated on how to use the network within one day through trainers within their districts. The overall impact this learning system has had on not only students, but teachers as well, has improved their knowledge of mental health, reduction of stigma, and seeking of help for these individuals (Weist et al., 2017). There were also two companion programs called “Go-To-Educator,” and “Transitions,” that were introduced; the first acted as a support and referral system for students at higher risk for their mental health, and the latter was designed for older students, and it helped students integrate what they learned in the course and translate those teachings into life-skills they could take with them into the real world (Weist et al., 2017). These learning systems have shown to be inexpensive, sustainable for students and teachers, and easily applicable (Weist et al., 2017).

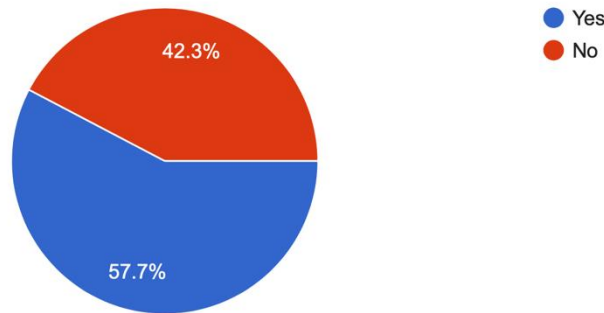
Empirical Evidence

As customers have come and go within the shop, we have asked them to give us their feedback on what logos/designs the company should adhere to, as well as having them take a survey asking multiple questions about mental health in the county. We were able to gather data from 26 customers/locals, and the results are as follows. A majority of the respondents were ages 51-60, making up 34.6% of the participants. Of the respondents, 76.9% were females, and when they were asked, “Have you struggled with any mental illnesses or mentally unhealthy days within the past month,” a surprising 46.2% said no, followed by a tie of 26.9% saying either a solid yes or some days yes, other days no. When looking closer at this data, it was a total of 8 respondents that stated they did not struggle with any mental illnesses or any mentally unhealthy days within the past month; 5 of those 8 being females, and the remaining 3 being males. This was something that had shocked me as a survey conductor due to women being the majority in this case stating that they did not struggle with mentally unhealthy days or mental illnesses

within the past month. The common phenomena that men are “less likely” to struggle with mental health issues is an act to appear stronger, so seeing that women instead of men were the majority on this question, it was shocking. Another shocking find was that 57.7% of respondents stated that they felt as though they had access to mental healthcare facilities, but when it came to rating on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being no access whatsoever, high costs, and no open availability, and 5 being great access, great cost, and open availability), almost the same percentage of respondents answered either a 1 or a 2 for their county’s availability. Knowing the statistics for South Carolina and its overall access rating on mental health care, I was not surprised in the sense that this was the case, but I was rather surprised that approximately the same percentage of people felt that they *did* have access to facilities and then proceeded to rate the access on the lower end of the scale. All of the findings previously mentioned can be viewed in the following charts below:

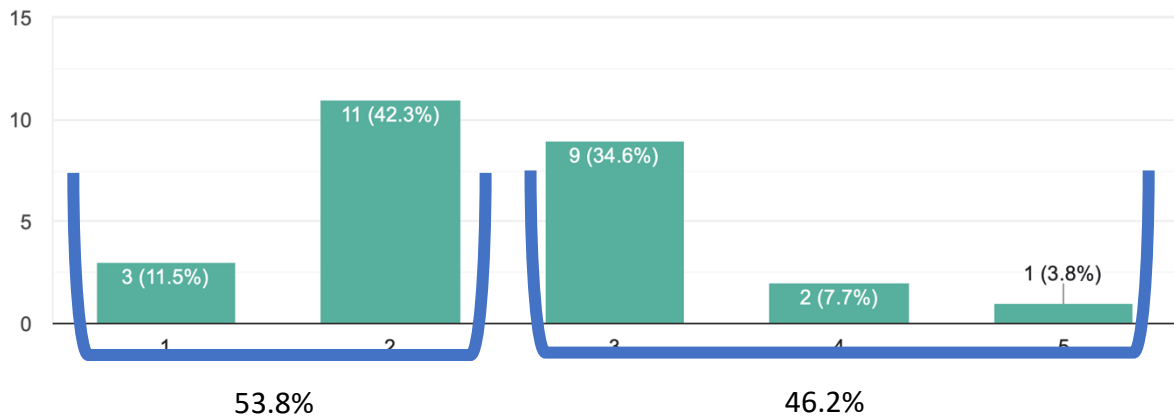
Do you feel as though you have access to mental healthcare facilities in your area?

26 responses



On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the access to mental healthcare professionals (i.e. Psychiatrists, Counselors, Therapists, etc.) in Georgetown County

26 responses

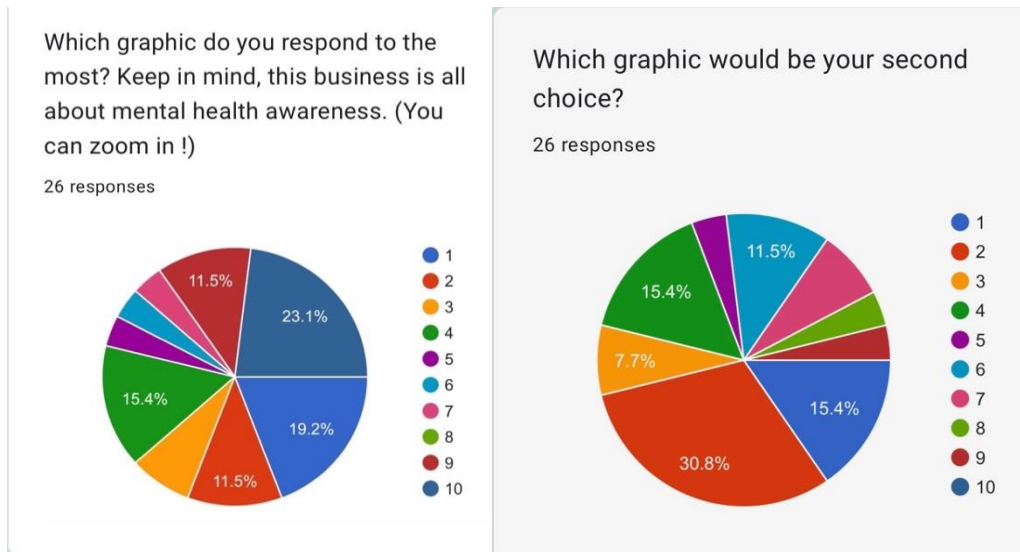


Another question that was asked was if the cost of treatment had affected their access to mental healthcare, and 69.2% had stated no. This may have been an error in my conducting due to the fact that the store is on the pricier end of sales with products such as Free Fly, BOODY, and IBKUL being popular, and expensive brands. Although I posted this survey in Pawleys Island forums on social media, asking locals to take the survey, I feel as though going to places such as food banks would benefit the data in a way that would voice the opinions of all members of the community. The most important question in this case, however, was the question of which

logo/design the respondents felt would best represent the company. This was important because the consumer's opinions matter, especially when this company is going to be built for the people.

Below were the logo options they had to choose from, followed by the results.





The results indicated that graphics numbers 1 and 10 received the highest percentages of first pick. Number 2 received the highest percentage of votes for the second choice, and number 4 tied with number 1 for the second-place position on the second-choice question. Respondents were required to state their reasonings for choosing these graphics and many responses stated the following; “I like the life raft idea because I feel like it can be a symbol of saving you from your salty mile,” “I love the simplicity of the designs and think they best embody the standards of the salty mile!” “Simple- to the point- impactful,” and, “I like the wave and the colors.” The life raft ideas were our main ideas for logos/designs being that, as the first person stated, it would represent saving people from their mental battles, and it would be a very important visual in the company. Number 2 is meant to act as a typographic logo; a logo that shows just the name of the company with a subtle identifier. Respondents were also required to answer whether or not they would purchase a shirt that is 40-45% more expensive, but made in the USA *and* sustainably made, and they were asked at the end if they would be interested in participating in a Salty Mile Walk to raise awareness about mental health as well as learn from local yoga instructors,

therapists, and healthy food vendors about ways to cope with their mental health and well-being. Of all the respondents, 61.5% stated that they would purchase a shirt that is 40-45% marked up while 30.8% responded that they would maybe purchase the shirt. This is why we will have two lines of T-shirts to appeal to all members of the community. Regarding the walk, 25 of 26 respondents answered that they would participate (at the time of the survey, a date was not listed, so there were a few maybes because of not knowing when it would be). Gaining this feedback from customers was important in the development of Salty Mile. We were able to receive necessary answers that will help us move forward with the company's creation.

Recommendations and Conclusions

In an effort to improve the overall health and well-being of the county as well as encourage businesses to report on their sustainability to include community and environmental contributions, I would strongly recommend implementing policies and communal activities to counter the mental health crisis. Healthy Learners, a local organization that helps young children receive what they need health wise in order to succeed in school, is a potential candidate for a program implementation such as the one stated prior in the Case Studies section. Their program, "Youth Mental Health First Aid USA," was created by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, and experts at National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development helped develop the youth program itself (Healthy Learners, 2023). Participants in the course will learn the early warning signs for a vast majority of mental health diagnoses and learn how to counter symptoms an adolescent is experiencing using a five-step action plan (Healthy Learners, 2023). In the program, 96% of participants stated they could identify the signs of a young child experiencing mental distress, and 97% of participants scored over a 97% on a questionnaire that asked questions

regarding what to do in specific situations involving crises or mental health distress (Healthy Learners, 2023). If the program was to expand its curriculum to include education for the students on mental health, it would be a fantastic county-wide implementation for schools. Not only will Salty Mile support this kind of education, but it could also help fund something like this in the future with proceeds.

Another recommendation is to implement community-walks on beaches or parks led by mental health facilitators such as therapists, yoga instructors, psychiatrists, etc. Not only would this create a sense of belonging amongst members of the community, but it will also be an inexpensive option for people needing help to cope with their illnesses. Salty Mile will host one on April 21st, at Island Specialties from 4PM-6PM (the walk will be at 5:30PM) and we will host local nonprofits and small businesses to spread awareness about mental health. This will be the company's first attempt at this, so continuation after April 21st is to be determined due to partnerships with our facilitators. However, hosting one at the end of every month would most likely be the easiest for our facilitators to join in on. Or, Salty Mile could host community-wide walks once every four days as the case study aforementioned had shown, and Salty Mile could either host it by itself, or get a few and not all of its facilitators to join in due to busy schedules. Doing beach walks, beach yoga, Huntington State Park walks, and other mindful activities with the community could greatly solve the problem the county is facing with the mental health crisis. Intervention is necessary for those who struggle, and with this being a no cost option, it could help those of the lower-income bracket since access to health care affects their demographic the most. These two recommendations would relate to Goal #3, Good Health and Well-Being through promoting healthy and inexpensive ways for everyone in the community to receive a form of treatment that they would have access to.

Business recommendations for the county would be to encourage more establishments to partake in CSER reporting. Not only would this greatly benefit businesses due to the proven increase in business that companies participating in CSER have, but it would also encourage businesses to delve deeper into their sustainability practices. As Nike has done before, their methods of “Sustainability” were not as sustainable as they had made themselves out to seem. Also, companies that already practice sustainability might not realize that their efforts could be improved through deeper research and CSER reporting such as the Bamboo Viscose production method that many companies use. This would relate to Goals #8, and #11 through promoting Decent Work and Economic Growth for businesses as well as encouraging Sustainable Cities and Communities through this effort. Goal #17 is another important aspect that, through my research, would greatly benefit the small business community. As we get closer to our Salty Mile Walk, we have partnered with many organizations and nonprofits that will help us spread our message and awareness about mental health, and promoting these services will aid our mission through Partnerships for the Goals. Businesses partnering with businesses and nonprofits can improve the sustainability of our community by working together towards a greater end goal.

Overall, in order for Georgetown County to continue on the path towards sustainability, it is imperative that change is made to move in the right direction. Encouraging businesses to report on CSER as well as implementing the SDGs and working with other local businesses could be of benefit to the county on the business side. Without change, however, the county will continue to suffer greatly from the negative impacts that mental health causes, and with the little to no access and minimal education on mental health, nothing will ever get better. Salty Mile will continue its sustainable business efforts moving forward in its production, and as time goes on, profits will be donated to local non-profits such as Carolina Human Reinvestment, to help the

community as well as advocate for mental health through facilitated walks in the county. “You never know what someone is going through,” is true. Mental health is a silent killer, and as time goes on with little to no change, our people will continue to suffer.



Salty Mile Walk: April 21st, 2023



Leigha Schaefer-Ortega with Salty Mile table set-up

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