

Friends of the New Hanover County Arboretum

Celebrate

Black-owned Businesses

Friends of the New Hanover County Arboretum celebrates Black-owned businesses. [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

Arboretum celebrates Black-owned businesses



Carolyn Thomas

February is Black History Month, and we think there is no better time to celebrate the achievements of Black Americans and honor the African American culture than by celebrating Black-Owned Businesses at the New Hanover County Arboretum during this month and all year long. Businesses ranging from home health, health and beauty, restaurants, businesses services and more are only a small portion of the fabric that make up Black-owned businesses in New Hanover County.

Cooperative Extension at the New Hanover County Arboretum provides a great

platform to help serve the needs of local entrepreneurs. Initially, Cooperative Extension was created by the need to bring research-based knowledge to assist the lives and livelihoods of farmers, families and other supply chain businesses associated with the agricultural community over 100 years ago. The Smith-Lever Act was put into law by Congress in 1914 to inform people about current developments in agriculture, home economics, public policy/government, leadership, 4-H, economic development, and many other related subjects. In 2021 New Hanover County, our setting may not have many farming-related businesses, but entrepreneurs have many of the same needs as in the early 1900's. Extension can help Black-Owned Businesses by keeping them informed and current about research-based solutions and provide support

to help their companies grow.

It has been an honor to get to know some of these amazing entrepreneurs. Folks who own their business and work long hours to succeed, folks who work second jobs to support their dream of one day becoming self-sufficient. By supporting local Black-Owned Businesses, we help fight for economic equality; we show support for our communities' hard-working business owners; and we get to partake of products and services unique to our locale.

Local businesses are essential to our economy. Have you ever considered that unique makeup of local businesses is what gives Wilmington its vibe? That vibe is partially woven with local Black Owned Businesses. Businesses such as candles, soaps, lotions, soul food and contemporary cuisine, copy services, marketing services, clothing and more help make up the fabric of our

business community. Not only do these business owners provide products or services, but they also care about and are passionate about the wellbeing of our community to help invest in and create a better future for all.

As we become more urban and technologically advanced, Cooperative Extension is continuing its mission of helping North Carolinians (and all of us in New Hanover County) use research-based knowledge to improve the quality of our lives and businesses. Cooperative Extension serves area residents and businesses by providing access to the resources and expertise of NC State University and NC A&T State University. Programs here locally include: Family & Consumer Sciences, Consumer and Commercial Horticulture, 4-H Youth Development, Therapeutic Horticulture, Natural Resources and more.

We are so thankful for all the decisions that were made over 100 years ago to allow us to celebrate diversity and inclusion along with the ability to disseminate research-based education today. Please enjoy discovering more about local Black-Owned Businesses in the Gathering Garden at the Arboretum and support them as you are able, today and every day or visit our website at <https://thefriends.wildapricot.org/> to see a business listing.

The Arboretum is free and open every day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Carolyn Thomas is President of the Friends of the New Hanover County Arboretum located at 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. If you know of other Black-owned businesses that would like to be celebrated on the website, reach her at friendsofthenharboretum@gmail.com.