

Direct Deposits

The Financial Training Center's e-Newsletter

AVOIDING THE HOLIDAY HANGOVER



So what is the holiday hangover? You use credit cards to do your holiday shopping, promising yourself that you will pay the debt off within two or three months, only to find yourself still paying on those debts six or eight months later. Those items that seemed to be such bargains end up costing you 10-20% more than you thought due to credit card interest.

For many Americans, this debt pattern is repeated year after year. Personal finance experts call this the "holiday hangover." There are times when incurring credit card debt makes sense, but holiday gift buying is not one of them. Using credit cards often leads to impulse spending, overspending, and increased debt.

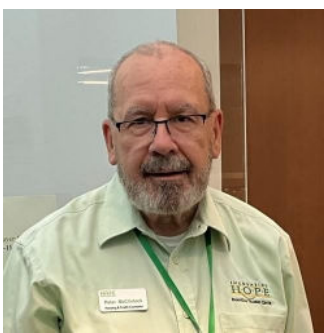
A better approach is to save small amounts of money throughout the year in a special holiday gift fund, make a list of all of the people you would like to give gifts to and how much you can afford to spend on each one. Pay cash, and once the cash is gone, you are done shopping.

If you find it difficult to save money throughout the year, join a Christmas Club, offered by smaller community banks and credit unions. You put so much in every week, or have it deducted from your paycheck, and put into that account. In December, transfer your Christmas Club savings into your regular checking account, and you are ready to go shopping.

ANNOUNCING 2023 STAFF PROMOTIONS



KIM MILLER
*Chief Executive Assistant to the
CEO*



PETER McCLINTOCK
*Customer Success
Manager/EAP*



SYLVIA BROWN
HR Coordinator



PAUL BINION
*Housing and Credit Counseling
Administrator*



KEDYKY (KK) SHERRILL
Project Administrator



WHITNEY BROWN
*Women's Business Center
Program Director*

Hear ye, hear ye. Get your free tax preparation here.



Tax filing season is only a few weeks away. The big name preparers are already running their ads trying to draw you in to get one of those loan advances against your refund. You may not realize it, but you end up paying an average of close to \$400 in fees, not including the fees for getting your money early. Sure, it doesn't come out of your pocket, but it does come out of the money that you would otherwise be receiving. They

don't need your money. You do. Imagine what you could do with that extra money once the refund money is gone. Before you file with any of them, we are here to help and have the best price in town - **FREE**. Like the commercial says, "How free is free?"

At Increasing H.O.P.E, we host the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which provides **FREE** tax preparation services for low to moderate income individuals and families in the Lowcountry. This year marks our 14th straight service year. For the past 13 years, we have helped over 4,000 people receive close to \$6,000,000 in state and federal tax refund dollars, and in the process, close to \$750,000 has been returned to our local community in fee savings.

We will take calls for appointments starting on **January 9th**, and tax preparation will begin on **Monday, January 23rd**. Appointments will be available on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 5PM to 8PM at our location in the Opportunity Center, located at 8570 Rivers Avenue, in North Charleston. Appointments will fill up quickly and walk-ins will not be accepted. Give us a call at 843-225-4343 to schedule your appointment.

Board Member Spotlight - Iordanis Karagiannidis



This finance whiz grew up in the second-largest city in Greece, Thessaloniki. Today Dr. Iordanis Karagiannidis is the Associate Dean for Curriculum, Finance and Outreach for the Tommy & Victoria Baker School of Business at The Citadel as well as an Associate Professor of Finance. He is also very active on the Board of Directors for Increasing H.O.P.E.

In addition to participating on the board, Dr. Karagiannidis serves on the agency's finance and governance committees. "The goal of any board member is to provide proper financial oversight, ensure proper organizational planning, help with fundraising and, in general, make sure Increasing H.O.P.E has adequate resources and people to advance its mission," he says of his role.

Before joining the Citadel in 2011, Dr. Karagiannidis taught finance at Michigan State University and Tulane University. He received his undergraduate degree in business from the University of Macedonia in Greece. From there, he went on to earn an MBA in Finance from Rutgers University and a Ph.D. in Finance from Michigan State University.

What motivates this busy man? "Learning new things, overcoming challenges and solving problems, and

helping others achieve their goals and succeed," he says. In addition to Increasing H.O.P.E, he volunteers at the local Greek Orthodox Church as the chair of the endowment fund committee.

Dr. Karagiannidis has a 10-year-old daughter who lives in the United States. "But the rest of my family lives in Greece," he says. In his free time, he loves watching soccer, reading, and cooking.

Business Client Spotlight - Brandon Rivers Catering

Starting in 2023, we will be featuring one of our Women's Business Center or Business Success Center business clients to help provide exposure for these up and coming entrepreneurs who we are serving.



I started cooking at the age of 11 with my aunt, who is a chef. I worked in the kitchen at the Jewish Community Center every summer, along with my younger brother, until I was about 15 or 16 years old. My first fast-paced, high-volume cooking was in two kosher kitchens; one being meat and the other being dairy.

I also grew up helping my dad grill every weekend, so cooking has always been un and a second instinct for me. I've been an executive chef for the last ten years of my life running hotel restaurants, bars, and a catering business.

I started Brandon Rivers Catering in 2019 and haven't looked back since. At Brandon Rivers Catering, I get a chance to highlight my signature recipes and ideas to the world.

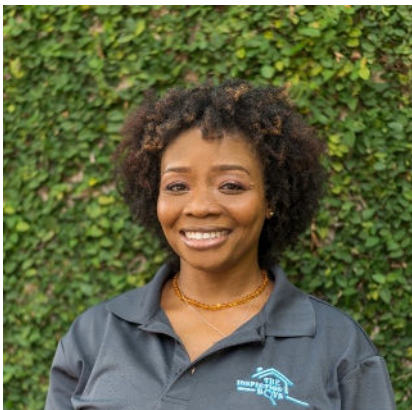
Thank you Increasing H.O.P.E for the motivation, guidance, and continuing support. Increasing H.O.P.E is truly priceless.

Brandon recently catered our office Christmas party, and it was amazing. Thank you Brandon.



The HOPE Testimony Corner

For the staff here at Increasing H.O.P.E, making an impact into the lives of the people who we serve is the most rewarding part of what we do. This section is dedicated to sharing some of the feedback that we have received about the work and impact that we are having in our community, one person, one family, one business at a time. Here is one of those stories.



Kari Chisolm - Inspection Boys of Charleston

I reached out to I-HOPE Women's Business Center in hopes of finding an organization to support me as a sole proprietor business owner. I needed assistance with many aspects of business, including resources to grow and fund my business. A plan was formulated during my initial meeting with Whitney and KK. The plan provided my company and me with what was needed.

From courses to take for educational purposes to connections with individuals who could catapult my business to the next level, I have felt supported since connecting with the I-HOPE Women's Business Center.

I'm glad I found this gem of an organization, and I'm looking forward to continuing to grow my business with their help.

Has Increasing H.O.P.E helped you or your family?

If you have benefited from one of our services, we would love to hear from you. We are collecting success stories that we can share on our website and via social media to inspire others. If you have an encouraging word to share, please take a moment to click the link and fill out the form.

Submit your story here

AmeriCorps seniors needed

We are looking for folks who are over 55 and have a desire to help others in their community. Volunteers will be needed as small business training mentors, workforce and job skills mentors, and to teach financial literacy, and budget coaching. Volunteers will receive on the job training on how to coach clients through the budgeting process. Volunteers may be eligible to receive a small stipend for their time.

If you are interested, or would like more information, please click the link below and send us your information. Orientation is on January 11th. Please contact us by January 4th to register.

Contact us

VITA tax volunteers needed

As our tax program continues to grow, we are seeking volunteers to help greet tax clients and to prepare tax returns. Volunteers must complete the required IRS certification for their respective roles, and should be able to commit to at least one evening a week for three hours. If you are interested in learning more, please click the link below and send us a message.

Contact us

Upcoming Events



Business Entrepreneur Orientation

Thursday, January 12th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Welcome to the Increasing H.O.P.E Business Success Center! Our monthly orientation is a chance for you to get to know us and the services we can offer to you at NO COST! Our mission is to help small business owners and entrepreneurs establish, grow, and sustain their operations, especially for communities of color. We are powered by and are a program of Increasing H.O.P.E Financial Training Center. So bring your ideas and small business questions for an informative hour on how we can help you START & GROW your business!

Register here



Invest in Your Dreams to Start a Business

Lunch & learn

Stephanie Fox, Financial Wellness Leader II

Thursday, January 19th from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



In this course, you'll learn key elements of business and business finance basics to manage your cash flow, explore ways to expand your business, and understand insurance for your business. We'll also provide valuable take-away resources to help you and your business.

Register here



Homebuyer 101

Thursday, January 19th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Purchasing a home may be one of the biggest financial decisions you will ever make, and navigating today's housing market can seem impossible. Homeownership education is the single most effective tool for achieving successful homeownership. Increasing H.O.P.E offers several programs to assist you in preparing for the home buying process.

Register here



dFree

Tuesday January 24th through Tuesday, February 28th
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

dfree™ is not just another financial literacy program that assumes that all people need is information. Dr. DeForest Soaries, Jr. shares a groundbreaking, life-changing approach to financial wellness that views financial bondage as an emotional, spiritual, and psychological problem. The dfree™ movement provides twelve easy, attainable steps.

Register here

[VIEW ALL UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

Support Increasing H.O.P.E



Donate Now

Supporting us means a return on your investment (ROI) in the form of a community that is more financially stable and knows how to grow — meaning less poverty, better credit, and increased economic benefits through homeownership and employment.

[Donate Here](#)

Increasing H.O.P.E | 8570 Rivers Avenue, Suite 120, North Charleston, SC 29406

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