**A** **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE EXCEPTIONAL WORK OF THE AUNTIE KAREN FOUNDATION TO EMPOWER, ENLIGHTEN, AND EDUCATE THROUGH THE ARTS.

Whereas, it is altogether fitting and proper that the members of the South Carolina General Assembly should pause in their deliberations to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of the Auntie Karen Foundation to celebrate the arts and use them to teach young people life skills; and

Whereas, founded in October 2001 as a global eleemosynary organization certified by the State of South Carolina, the Auntie Karen Foundation seeks to create and implement a series of reproducible community outreach programs that teach through the arts; and

Whereas, founder and chief executive officer Karen Alexander served as a first‑grade teacher at James B. Edwards Elementary School for six years and then in a corporate position with Xerox Corporation for eleven years before she left to pursue her passion to educate using the arts as a medium through a variety of community programs; and

Whereas, the foundation’s Annual Young Entrepreneur’s Conference, held on the campus of Benedict College, brings together youth from across the region, ranging in age from seven to twenty‑two, to foster economic empowerment; and

Whereas, since 2003, the Artpreneur/Technopreneur Classes have been sponsored by the foundation to inspire a new generation of business leaders through arts and technology; and

Whereas, the Auntie Karen Foundation formed Hugs from Carolina in partnership with City Light Coalition, Inc., and Auntie Karen, Inc., to spread hugs to survivors of Hurricane Katrina, using the antics of a hand puppet named Olivia the Octopus; and

Whereas, Gordon’s Garden Program teaches children about healthy living skills and habits through an original Auntie Karen character: an overweight, purple Jamaican yam; and

Whereas, in its twelfth year, the Legends of…Programs pay tribute to the contributions of African Americans to the arts during Black History Month in a variety of celebrations, culminating in The Legends of…Concert Series and Silent Auction at the Koger Center in Columbia on February 20, 2015. This year’s concert will feature musician Chaka Khan; and

Whereas, the members of the South Carolina General Assembly are grateful for the exemplary work of the Auntie Karen Foundation to inspire young people to achieve through the medium of the visual and performing arts. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

That the members of the South Carolina General Assembly, by this resolution, recognize and honor the exceptional work of the Auntie Karen Foundation to empower, enlighten, and educate through the arts.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Karen Alexander.

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