Juanita Williams is an administrative specialist at the Sumter County Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), a mother, grandmother and a spokeswoman for the Step Up. Step Out! program. Juanita walks at Dillon Park or at the “Y” in Sumter, where she also takes aerobics classes. “Walking clears my mind and gives me a different perspective on life — a calmer perspective. I wish everyone would walk.” Step Up. Step Out! is a project to get people in Sumter County, especially women, to exercise more. It is sponsored by the University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center, Sumter County Department of Recreation and Parks and Sumter County Active Lifestyles.

“Walking is wonderful! Everyone should do it!” These words of encouragement come from Juanita Williams, who has discovered the health benefits of taking regular walks. “Walking helps with weight control, it gives me a healthier perspective and it helps relieve stress” says Juanita. “I can be stressed out at the beginning of my walk, and before long, I am more relaxed.”