The Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce recently announced their Small Business of the Year recipient for 2015 - Aiken Active Seniors.

The award announcement was made during the Greater Aiken Chamber’s 98th annual awards dinner banquet on January 22, 2016 in Aiken, South Carolina.

Reflecting on her recent Greater Aiken Chamber award, Karen Poteat, Aiken Active Seniors owner, had the following thoughts to share:

“I still can’t believe that Aiken Active Seniors was named Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce's 2015 Small Business of the Year after just 3 years in business! What I am 100% sure about though is the fact that this would never have happened without the expert guidance that I have received from our local SCORE chapter.

“When I opened my business in 2013, the volunteers of Aiken’s SCORE chapter immediately offered their assistance. Being new to the business community, I wasn’t even aware of the SCORE program nor did I realize how much I needed their help. Several members were eager to learn more about my business concept because of its community impact so they invited me to speak at one of their meetings. As a result, several mentors came together to form my board and they have been my rock ever since.

“I could write for days about all of the help, support, and encouragement that I have personally received from not only my board - Kevin McCarthy, John Rogers, Pegi Flahault, Jack St.Clair and Geri Barborek- but the entire Aiken SCORE Chapter itself. What is most amazing to me, though, is that they do this for everyone who needs them! Every time I turn around they are holding a class here, then a class in North Augusta. They form board after board. They hold mentoring sessions at the drop of a hat. They meet regularly to learn how to better help small businesses. They even help other SCORE Chapters improve so that they can better serve their communities. They spend countless amounts of time making sure local businesses don’t just receive the guidance they need, but they also ensure small businesses are recognized for their efforts through contests and awards. And after all of that, they ask, "What else can we do to help?"

“I felt compelled to let SCORE National know what an amazing group of mentors you have in Aiken, SC. I know that they were just named the Best SCORE Chapter in SC and that was truly deserved. Your organization is a blessing to so many around the country! I am so happy that I was was blessed to have Aiken SCORE by my side through my journey.”

Aiken Active Seniors has the support of many members of the Aiken community, including the local Chapter of SCORE, a group of dedicated people with business experience that is offered at no expense to local small businesses. In 2015, Aiken Active Seniors also received the American Small Business Championship Award from SCORE. Visit www.greateraiken.score.org, if you would like to learn more about Aiken Active Seniors and how SCORE helped.

The local SCORE Chapter currently has 34 volunteers who serve as mentors and coaches to small businesses and entrepreneurs working to improve their business and ideas. SCORE is federally charted as a non-profit, all-volunteer arm of the U.S. Small Business Administration. For more information visit: www.greateraiken.score.org.