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National Mentoring Month: GPP Mentors Matter!



Do you ever have nightmares where you show up for work in the wrong clothes? Delete an important email from your boss? Sleep through your alarm on your first day of work? For some GPP students, these nightmares really happen! But with mentors, students work through these challenges and more.

In an outstanding partnership, the Rotary Club of Swainsboro has stepped up to mentor GPP students from Swainsboro High School and the Emanuel County Institute. Pictured above are Rotarians (back row) Wade Johnson (***Durden Bank***), Casen Devan (***Swainsboro Supply***), Guy Singletary (***Emanuel County Administrator***) and (front row) Ken Warnock (***CEO of the Swainsboro-Emanuel County Chamber of Commerce and local GPP Champion***), and Zac Frye (***Durden Bank***.)

If you know Rotarians, you know their motto might as well be, ***GO BIG OR GO HOME!*** Take the December Student Service Luncheon they participated in for Emanuel County GPP students. Students were invited to lunch for leadership activities and recognition of their success at school and work. Mentors, supervisors and employers were all on hand to participate in this celebration of student workers.

After lunch, graciously donated by **Ware's BBQ**, student teams were challenged to build a mini golf course from donated food items. After 30 minutes of design and building, Rotarians judged the student creations. The courses were judged 'Prettiest', 'Hardest' and 'Most Functional'. The food used to create the courses was donated by

Walmart; in turn it was delivered to **Weekend Blessings**, an Emanuel County Backpack Ministry. Students received awards and goodie bags from local businesses, such as **Citizens Bank**, **Durden Bank**, and **Southeastern Technical College**.

GPP is proud to recognize mentors from around the state. To become a mentor, contact a GPP Regional Coordinator, listed at the end of this newsletter.



(Left) GPP students from Emanuel County work together to design a mini golf course with donated food. Mentors tested their designs in the judging phase of the competition!



(Below) Emanuel County GPP students in a trust exercise with their mentors. No mentors were harmed in the making of this photograph!



When in Rome... ...make it *REAL**!

(*Regional Employability And Life Skills Day)



Students from Chattooga County High School are joined by others from



Joseph Goble, Advanced Digital Cable, and
student participants at REAL Skills Day

Any parent or teacher knows how hard it is to keep a roomful of 70 teenagers off their phones and eager to learn 'boring' topics like budgeting and labor markets. But that's what happened at the January 17th REAL Skills Day at Georgia Northwestern Technical College in Rome. REAL Skills Days - **Regional Employability and Life Skills Days** - are underway across the state, bringing leadership, life skills and camaraderie to GPP students.

Students learned survival skills to make sure the rent, car payments and tuition is covered each month (remember beanie weenies and sloppy joes?!) Team building helped students practice networking and think about future career opportunities.

Students left feeling empowered to stay strong and pay attention to career and education paths for the future. They had new tools to stay hopeful and plan ahead, even in the face of obstacles. "It was a blast!" said Adairsville HS student Junior Holder. Cayden Jennings from Cass HS noted, "REAL Skills was a great opportunity for us students learn what to expect after high school."

Jan Lanier, Dean of Student Success for Georgia Northwestern Technical College, reported that, "The session was awesome! The students brought amazing energy to the event, and the speakers connected with the youth throughout the day." Ms. Lanier loved the opportunity to host students at her campus, and she hopes to recruit some of them for training after high school.

Brian Cooksey, Shaw Industries Director of Workforce Development/GPP Board Member, and Elyse Davis, Northwest Georgia Manager for Community and Economic Development for Georgia Power, engaged with students throughout the day. Ms. Davis said, "I'm the lucky one, to be a part of the amazing group of students from Northwest Georgia. While students may face challenges and need more resources, they amazed me with their excitement and hope about the future." Ms. Davis loves the mentoring component of GPP, adding that "Every student can use a mentor or another caring adult in their lives who can truly make a difference."

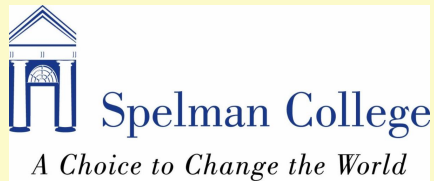
Janet Queen, GPP Regional Coordinator for NW Georgia, summed up the day: "We had a chance to plant a few seeds about life, careers and education that students can dig up to face the highs and lows of adulthood." If you're interested in having a REAL Skills Day in your area contact your GPP Regional Coordinator.



Students have fun during lunch at the Northwest Georgia REAL Skills Day in January



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Success for Atlanta Students

What better way to introduce high school students to the heart and soul of a college than finding them work on campus? That's what's happened with Aramark at Spelman College, Great Promise Partnership and Atlanta Public Schools (APS).



Aramark at Spelman Student workers (L-R) Deyouncio Blackmon, Romecia Thomas, Cobii Gay and Jamari Weaver

Spotlight: New GPP Industry Partnerships

Teresa Mitchell, Human Resources Generalist (R), leads



a tour of the inner workings of **Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort**. Ms. Mitchell showcased jobs in management, finance, retail, culinary arts and facilities.

The Industry Tour was sponsored by the Career Technical & Agriculture Education Office of the DeKalb County School District. On the tour were high school students from around the county, Work-Based Learning Coordinators and GPP Regional Coordinator Ann Shirra.



APS Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinators Dana Johnson at Coretta Scott King Leadership Academy for Girls, Dr. Bruce Williams at BEST Academy for boys, and David Turner at Frederick Douglass High School have been outstanding partners. They help students prep for interviews, overcome transportation issues, and learn to communicate with their supervisors. Challenges the students have learned to navigate include:

- adjusting work duties to address a fish allergy,
- requesting more weekend hours,
- asking to become a barista, and
- working to swap work days when spring sports began.

Dr. Williams, WBL Coordinator for five young men at Spelman says, "I've known these young men since 6th grade. It has been wonderful to see how they've grown in GPP. I talk with them weekly to help them think through decision-making and other challenges they face in balancing work and school."

Aramark at Spelman General Manager Michael Hopson is happy to fill entry level positions with GPP students. His full-time staff have enjoyed helping students succeed on their first jobs.

With over 300,000 employees worldwide, Aramark offers tremendous career opportunities in universities, sports arenas, hospitals, senior living and other facilities. GPP is exploring opportunities with Aramark in over 20 cities and towns in Georgia.



GPP Regional Coordinator Devaki Gordon (fourth from left above) joined a tour of *Nine Line Apparel* in Savannah. Sponsored by the Georgia Manufacturing Alliance, the group toured the Veteran owned and operated apparel business, learning about the vision and plans of this award winning entrepreneur, Tyler Merritt.



Ann Shirra, Metro Atlanta GPP Coordinator (Below left) and Laura Gomez, Business Services Recruiter of the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), learn about employer needs at a recent *Employers in the Know Summit*. Businesses learned about recruitment strategies in a tight labor market, including hiring high school students through Great Promise Partnership.



Leaping Forward with the Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill

GPP Executive Director Lori Heemann and Regional Coordinators Ann Shirra and Janet Queen saw this bounty of vegetables when they visited the Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill this fall. Last month, the [U.S. Forest Service](#) (USFS) recognized the partnership that created the [Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill](#) in Atlanta with the 2019 Chief's Award.

As the largest public food forest in the United States, the 7 acre Urban Food Forest provides healthy produce, nuts and herbs in a neighborhood that lacks access to food. Great Promise Partnership is proud to be a new partner in this award winning initiative, thanks to Soisette Lumpkin, Executive Director of the FRIENDS of the Urban Food Forest at Browns Mill. We will work together in 2020 to explore ways high school students can engage in this outstanding effort.



Great Promise Partnership's **Leadership Day** **at the Capitol**



February 13, 2020

**Ask your GPP Regional Coordinator
for more information**



Great Promise Partnership's Leadership Day at the Capitol is an opportunity to excite and engage GPP youth in leadership and civics. After a morning focused on leadership, youth will spend time at the state capitol visiting with legislators to learn about the legislative process. Students can also visit the Capitol Museum, take a Georgia Capitol iPhone Tour, and complete a Capitol activity booklet. For registration and more information, contact your GPP Regional Coordinator listed below.

[Click here for registration form](#)

Need More Info?



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