

Partnership offers **REAL** Skills to high schoolers



Kamerian Moses learned about the Great Promise Partnership this past April, a critical time in her high school career as a rising senior at Cedar Shoals. “As soon as I got the email, I got right on the application process. I was so excited to be accepted into the program.” Now, Moses is gaining experience through an ongoing internship with East Athens Educational Dance Center that began in the summer—an opportunity she otherwise wouldn’t have access to.

The Great Promise Partnership serves communities across the state, including Athens-Clarke County, by providing educational and occupational resources to help local high school students succeed. Moses was one of 24 students who came to the University of Georgia for a GPP Regional Employability And Life (REAL) Skills Day on Oct. 9.

REAL Skills Day engaged participants through goal-setting activities and a Q&A with UGA student leaders. Students also participated in sessions on overcoming adversity, resume building, time management and lessons in leadership.

“UGA continues to bring in real, relevant and radically motivational students to engage with these GPP students,” said Hilda Garrison, regional director for the Great Promise Partnership. “There’s nothing better or more effective than that.”

Forums like REAL Skills Day offer students additional support to complete high school while equipping them with marketable skills for success in higher education and the workforce. These opportunities connect students like Moses with mentors and worksite supervisors to guide and empower them in pursuing their goals.

“We all need professional development—it’s part of everyone’s career,” said Garrison. “Through this training, these students can have that exposure to learn what it takes to succeed in the workplace.”

Since 2017, the university has facilitated opportunities for GPP students, from leadership and skill-training seminars to internships and part-time jobs. Units across campus have participated in the effort, including the College of Education, the Office of Institutional Research and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, among others. This is the first year UGA has hosted a REAL Skills Day event.

When faced with financial or other obstacles, internships and part-time jobs offer students a sense of accomplishment in addition to a paycheck. Courtney Smith, a junior at Clarke Central High School and participant in REAL Skills Day, accepted an internship at the Classic Center through GPP. “My experience has definitely driven me,” she said. “I have been able to work my way up and take on more responsibilities. I’m very proud of myself.”

Those interested in hiring GPP students should contact Garrison at 706-362-7078 or email hilda@gpppartnership.org.

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