

Newsroom

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Middle grades education major begins free reading program

APRIL 6, 2017



Senior middle grades education major Kamaren Walthour is a full-time undergraduate student, mother of two, wife, devoted member of her church, and most recently, the founder of a program called Pop-Up and Read.

A free resource for parents and students in Liberty County, Pop-Up and Read provides a group learning environment for the enhancement of literacy among children ages 3 to 10. Each program session begins with an interactive story. Students then break out into workstations of their choice including reading, writing, science and two craft tables. While students work in small groups at the stations, Walthour works with students individually to focus on their area of greatest need.

"The first time a child comes to Pop-Up and Read, I talk with the parent to find out what the child is struggling with and see what we need to focus on," said Walthour. "I take notes from what I have observed, and I develop a plan for the next session."

Parents are also required to stay and participate in the educational activities.

"I have learned in my classes that parental involvement increases academic success," said Walthour.

During a parent-teacher conference for her four-year-old daughter, Walthour said she was told that her daughter was behind on knowing her letters and numbers and recalling stories.

"I have been working with my daughter since she was 2, so I was shocked," said Walthour. "I know if I am dealing with this that other parents are as well."

This gave Walthour the push she needed to move forward with a project she had been debating for nearly a year. Using knowledge that the middle grades education program has provided her, Walthour created Pop-Up and Read to benefit not only her daughters but the entire community as well. With the assistance of her aunt, Angie Walthour, who is certified in early childhood education, Walthour is constantly thinking of ways to expand and improve her program.

"It's disheartening how many of our children struggle with reading in middle and high school," said Walthour. "That's what made me want to get involved in my community in the first place. I substituted in the middle schools and high schools in Liberty County and saw how many children do not know how to read or are struggling to read and don't have any type of strategies to be able to comprehend what they are reading.

"It is my goal," she added, "that this program increases children's likelihood to become proficient readers."

Walthour says her College of Education professors have been very supportive.

"I made sure that I requested extra information from my reading and language arts education professors," she explained, "and they have been so helpful in giving me the foundation I need to help these kids."

Pop-Up and Read is held every other Thursday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Stafford Pavilion in Liberty County. Following the sessions, Walthour follows up with newsletters that include additional resources and activities to strengthen reading skills.

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April is Research Month at Georgia Southern University

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The Office of Research at Georgia Southern University will host a slew of research events this April, which has been dubbed [Research Month](#) at the University.

Various research events will take place, including the 16th Annual [Research Symposium](#) set for Friday, April 14, at the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Research Symposium is a conference style showcase of student undergraduate and graduate research across multiple disciplines. This event includes speakers and poster and presentation sessions from all academic disciplines.

In past years, the Symposium has existed in different forms, showcasing graduate research efforts; in keeping with the Georgia Southern mission as a comprehensive university with a strong presence of undergraduate research and a reach that extends far beyond Statesboro, students from all disciplines and levels to participate in this event.

On Tuesday, April 11, the Center for Undergraduate Research and Intellectual Opportunities (CURIO) will host its symposium in the Carroll Building. The [CURIO Symposium](#) provides undergraduate students from all major and minor areas of study in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to present their research. Outstanding presentations, performances, and posters in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences, as determined by judges, will be recognized at the Symposium with a monetary award and a student profile on the CLASS website.

The [College of Undergraduate Research \(COUR\) Symposium](#) will take place on Thursday, April 13, in the Nessmith-Lane Building Ballroom from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. All undergraduate research students in the College of Science and Mathematics are invited to present their work. Any research project related to independent research, capstone, experiences, independent study courses, course-related research, or internship experiences is appropriate for this event. Registration is free, but each student must submit a [Poster Session Registration Form](#) by April 6.

In addition to the COUR Symposium, COSM will host other [research activities](#) April 11-14.

The Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT) will host its [Student Research Symposium](#) on Thursday, April 20, in the CEIT Building Atrium from 9-11:30 a.m. The Symposium will showcase undergraduate and graduate student researchers from all disciplines throughout CEIT.

The [Spring 2017 Honors Research Symposium](#) will take place on Friday, April 21 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center Ballroom. The Honors Research Symposium is held annually to showcase research of the honors student community including completed Honors Thesis and Honors Capstone Projects. Graduating seniors present their work during the symposium's panel sessions, and honors students in their freshman, sophomore and junior years have the opportunity to present research in the poster session.

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