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Planning for better health in Georgia requires collaborative model

MARCH 17, 2008

According to the United Health Foundation's 2007 survey, created in partnership with the American Public Health Association, Georgia ranks 40 out of 50 states in the health of its citizens. That ranking that has remained relatively constant for two decades.

What are Georgians doing about that? Not enough. At the local, regional, and state levels, we have a plan for building roads, a plan for improving education, a plan for regulating business, a plan for ensuring employment, *but there is no plan for systematically improving the health of Georgia's citizens.*

'Letting good health happen' just doesn't work," says Sandra Handwerk, coordinator of the Albany, Ga.-based Southwest Georgia Community-based Health Initiative (SWGCHI), a program of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health. 'Georgia needs to plan for good health in the same way we plan for infrastructure. Citizens need to work together to gain access to better health.'

Handwerk leads an effort she believes is an incredible opportunity, not only for southwest Georgia, but for the entire state. As coordinator of the Southwest Georgia Community-based Health Initiative, she is working with the local citizens, with nonprofit organizations, with local public health officials, and with faculty from the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University to develop a plan shaped and framed by citizens to systematically improve the health of the region.

'The real health experts are the people who live here,' says Handwerk. 'The first step in our process is to gather information from vital statistics, surveys, anything that's been done. We'll look at the strengths of the health system, where we can work to improve it, and what processes we can put in place to make our health systems better. Then we'll take what we find out to the people of southwest Georgia.'

That's just the beginning. The SWGCHI is a two-year process that begins with gathering information. Public health officials and faculty researchers from the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health will meet with focus groups, conduct surveys, and examine data to determine the major healthcare issues, then develop an action plan by the end of year one.

'In the second year we will work to implement our action plan and find out if it is effective,' said Handwerk. 'This important part of the process is driven by the community. With the potential to see major improvement in the health of the community, the people of Albany have real motivation to move forward.'

This initiative brings together a unique combination of people," says Handwerk. 'Having experts from the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health involved is like having a major consulting company at your disposal. In southwest Georgia you cannot buy this kind of expertise. It doesn't exist in any one place.'

At the completion of the second year, the SWGCHI expects to have a model for health planning that can be applied to improve the health status of any community in Georgia. The model will bring together nonprofit organizations, public health officials, medical practitioners, citizens, and public health educators to plan and implement the model.

'The work we are doing now has the potential to improve the health of all Georgians,' says Handwerk. 'This may be the effort that takes our health ranking from number 40 to number one.'

Dallas Brass will play at PAC on April 5

MARCH 17, 2008

One of America's most versatile musical ensembles is coming to the Performing Arts Center (PAC) at Georgia Southern University.

The Dallas Brass will perform in concert at the PAC on Saturday, April 5, at 7:30 p.m.

The group has established a unique blend of traditional brass instruments with a complement of drums and percussion, creating an entity of extraordinary range. Its family friendly performances feature a blend of classical masterpieces, Dixieland, swing, Broadway, Hollywood and patriotic music.

'Our ideal audience has a range in ages from 5 to 95,' said Michael Levine, the Dallas Brass founder and trombonist. 'Our goal is to entertain and enrich by playing great music, while showing our audience how much we enjoy what we do.'

Tickets for the Dallas Brass are \$30 per person for the general public. Georgia Southern faculty, staff and students will receive a \$5 discount for each ticket.

In addition, if any tickets are available 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the performance, any Georgia Southern student with a valid University I.D. can purchase one ticket for \$10.

The Dallas Brass was founded in 1983. Since then, the group has played all over the U.S., including performances in Carnegie Hall in New York City and the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and toured Europe and Asia.

In addition, the Dallas Brass played for former Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush and appeared with numerous orchestras, including the Cincinnati Pops, the New York Pops and the Philadelphia Pops.

Along the way, the Dallas Brass has released six recordings: 'Debut,' 'Dallas Brass II,' 'A Merry Christmas with Brass,' 'Windborne,' 'Nutcracker' and 'American Musical Journey.'

The PAC is located on the Georgia Southern campus at the corner of Chandler Road and Plant Drive. The box office is open every Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. The box office is also open one hour prior to the start of each performance.

To purchase tickets or obtain additional information, call (912) 486-7999 or toll free (866) PAC-ARTS, or visit the PAC Web site at <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/pac> .

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers more than 120 degree programs serving nearly 17,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu

Andrews will visit Georgia Southern University for Distinguished Lecture in Mathematics

MARCH 17, 2008

The world's leading expert on the theory of integer partitions will deliver the 2008 Distinguished Lecture in Mathematics at Georgia Southern University.

George Andrews will speak on Tuesday, April 1, at 6 p.m. in Room 1004 of the College of Information Technology Building.

'Euler and the beginning of the theory of partitions' will be the theme of the lecture, which is sponsored by the Allen E. Paulson College of Science and Technology and the Department of Mathematical Sciences.

Andrews is an Evan Pugh Professor of Mathematics at Pennsylvania State University, the president-elect of the American Mathematical Society, and the current Polya Lecturer for the Mathematical Association of America.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Andrews has authored eight books and more than 250 papers on mathematics.

His books include 'Number Theory,' 'The Theory of Partitions,' 'Special Functions' with Richard Askey and Ranjan Roy, 'Integer Partitions' with Kimmo Eriksson, and 'Ramanujan's Lost Notebook, Part I' with Bruce Berndt. 'Ramanujan's Lost Notebook, Part II,' another collaboration between Andrews and Berndt, will be published in 2008.

Andrews, who earned his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania, was a Fulbright Scholar and a Guggenheim Fellow.

The Distinguished Lecture in Mathematics at Georgia Southern is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <http://math.georgiasouthern.edu/math/seminar> or call (912) 681-5390.

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Support the Wildlife Education Center: Enjoy "Rations for Raptors" on April 7

MARCH 17, 2008

Campus and community are invited to enjoy 'Rations for Raptors,' an evening for food, fun, and family-oriented activities at Georgia Southern University's Center for Wildlife Education, on Monday, April 7, from 5 to 7 p.m. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center and the Wildlife Education Center.

'Admission to the event is free,' said the Center's Education Coordinator Krista Weatherford, 'but a Tex-Mex buffet dinner prepared by the University's Hotel and Restaurant Program will be available at a cost of \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. We encourage everyone to come for dinner and to enjoy the festive atmosphere and activities.'

In addition to a campfire and mariachi music to create a festive atmosphere, the evening will include piata stations for children beginning at 6 p.m. Many of the birds from the Raptor Center will be on display along the walkway, and members of the staff will hand-walk raptors and reptiles for visitors' enjoyment.

The Tex-Mex buffet will be available on a dine-in or take-out basis. The menu includes:

- Appetizers: Tex-Mex Meatballs, Potato Skins, and a Taco-Nacho Bar
- Entrees: Stuffed Pork, Lemon-herb Chicken, Texas-style Chili, and Cheese Enchiladas
- Side Dishes: Hot five-bean dish, Southwestern Rice and Cheese, Macaroni and Cheese, Dill Pepper Coleslaw, Stuffed Zucchini
- Dessert: Empanadas

For more information about 'Rations for Raptors,' call the Center for Wildlife Education at 912-681-0831.

– See more at: <http://news.georgiasouthern.edu/pressrelease.php?id=1339#sthash.nO7QjoCS.dpuf>