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Kitty Pruitt earns 2017 Puckett-Merriman Award for fitness

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Kitty Pruitt, senior lecturer of physical activity and dance, was awarded the 2017 [Puckett-Merriman Award](#) at the 30th annual Share the Wealth Physical Education Conference at Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Jan. 26-28.

The award recognizes individuals who share an enthusiasm for learning that embodies the true spirit of the Share the Wealth Conference.

"I was very surprised and honored when I was selected for the Puckett-Merriman Award," said Pruitt. "I appreciate the fact my profession recognizes my enthusiasm for sharing my knowledge with others."

Pruitt, who is in her 25th year at Georgia Southern, earned her bachelor's in recreation and her master's in education from Georgia Southern.

"Physical education is important to me because it provides an opportunity to teach lifetime skills and fitness concepts to students," said Pruitt. "Physical education enhances the quality of life for individuals. My profession carries over into my life and my job at Georgia Southern has been the perfect one for me."

Pruitt and Starla McCollum, Ph.D., professor of physical education, also presented at the conference. Their presentation, "Fitness on the Line," introduced upper elementary, middle and high school teachers to some basic high energy line dances that can be used to promote fitness.

"I wanted to do a presentation about increasing heart rate with line dances," said Pruitt. "I taught several line dances focusing on a different emphasis area that would make the line dances have more cardio benefit. There was also a creative portion of the presentation where the participants created their own higher intensity versions of a dance. Dr. McCollum helped with this presentation by explaining how to take a pulse and record the results so students would be able to track the overall intensity of the combined dances."

More than 500 physical educators participated in the conference sponsored by the Georgia Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (GAHPERD).

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