

Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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Students Compete in the Georgia Southern University Business Innovation Group's Third Annual 3 Day Startup

FEBRUARY 29, 2016



"My Guardian Angel" team moves on to FastPitch competition in Savannah after pitching their business idea during Georgia Southern University Business Innovation Group's 3 Day Startup.

"My Guardian Angel," a business idea that could help save children's lives, was selected by judges to move on to the FastPitch competition in Savannah, Georgia, during the third annual [3 Day Startup](#) (3DS) held Feb. 19-21.

3DS, hosted at Georgia Southern by the University's [Business Innovation Group \(BIG\)](#), is a world-renowned program that creates a living entrepreneurship laboratory bringing together individuals from various backgrounds and provides students with the tools they need to start successful companies.

"My Guardian Angel" is a device in a pad that goes in a child's car seat and can alert a distracted or busy parent from forgetting their child in a vehicle. This safety device detects weight in car seats and sets off an alarm on the parent's key fob if they walk 30 feet away. The pad can be transferred from a baby seat to toddler seat, and is durable, washable and potentially customizable.

The team consists of six members including founder Layne Livingston, Quinton Boyd, Thomas Carter, John Jones, Jeovannti McKoy and Joseph Watt. Livingston delivered the team's pitch, acting as a distracted parent juggling many tasks at once to demonstrate how the invention would work.

"What a weekend! This program and the students just keep getting better," said Suzanne Hallman, Georgia Southern business advisor. "The amount of effort the participants put into the ideas and presentations over one weekend is awe-inspiring."

This intensive weekend event was filled with activity including workshops, business idea generation, customer engagement sessions and pitching the ideas to the judges. "My Guardian Angel" will move on to represent Georgia Southern at the FastPitch competition March 4.

FastPitch is hosted by The Creative Coast and gives entrepreneurs three minutes to pitch their innovative venture and be assessed by local community leaders, academics and investors. Coaching and Feedback is provided before, during, and after to better prepare you, your idea, and your presentation of that idea. For more information or to get your tickets to show your support please visit <https://www.thecreativecoast.org/programs/fastpitch/>.

Due to the success and quality of the students who participated in 3DS, judges also selected two other teams to go on to compete at FastPitch. Along with "My Guardian Angel," the teams "Chapter Ease" and "LFG" will also represent Georgia Southern during the competition.

"I've attended all three years, and this was the best year so far," said Allen Muldrew, Downtown Statesboro Development Authority director. "The Business Innovation Group's 3 Day Startup program is a great asset to Georgia Southern and our community. It's nice to see such a great launching pad for our future entrepreneurs."

Other business ideas pitched this year were:

- Eagle Track – an analytical database management system for the military
- Chapter Ease – Greek life chapter management system
- Park Plots – connecting people to solve parking issues for big venues
- eBugg – revolutionized smart shopping cart
- LFG – gamer matching based on personality

The Georgia Southern University BIG prides itself on its commitment to empower and equip entrepreneurs. 3DS is an example of the commitments BIG makes to create more businesses and

jobs in order to sustain the economy. For more information, contact Suzanne Hallman, business advisor, at shallman@georgiasouthern.edu, or visit georgiasouthern.3daystartup.org.

Author and designer James Farmer to visit Averitt Center

FEBRUARY 29, 2016



James Farmer, popular designer, author and master of the finer things will serve as the 2016 Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecturer on Sunday, March 6, at 3 p.m. Farmer will speak about Southern gardens at the Averitt Center for the Arts in Statesboro. A light reception and book-signing will follow the lecture. All proceeds from the event will benefit the new garden projects at Botanic Garden at Georgia Southern University.

Farmer is the author of the Wall Street Journal best-selling garden book, *A Time To Plant* and other books including *Sip and Savor: Drinks for Party and Porch*, *Porch Living*, *Wreaths For All Seasons*, *A Time To Cook: Dishes from My Southern Sideboard*, *Dinner on the Grounds: Southern Suppers and Soirees*, and *A Time to Celebrate: Let Us Keep the Feast*.

Born and raised in the South, James is a professional garden, floral and interior designer, cook, author and lifestyle expert. James is editor-at-large for *Southern Living* and a frequent guest on television and radio shows. A skilled and entertaining speaker, he is truly a young and fresh voice for his generation. Whether he's teaching how to plan the perfect summer picnic, using everyday items to create exquisite tabletops, creating gorgeous flower arrangements and wreaths, or making his grandmother's skillet peach pie, Farmer masterfully guides his audience through the art of elegant garden living.

The event is a joint project of the Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Foundation, Bulloch County Historical Society, Averitt Center for the Arts, Write Place, and Botanic Garden at Georgia Southern University.

Tickets are available at the Averitt Center box office. Admission is \$10.

Young Alumnus to direct mainstage play, "Twelfth Night"

FEBRUARY 29, 2016



Gage Crook stands on the set of "Twelfth Night," the Georgia Southern Theatre and Performance Program's spring mainstage play.

If you'd met Gage Crook four years ago, you would have met an aspiring pediatric orthopedic surgeon. The young man developed a hip problem earlier in life, and was encouraged by his family to enter the medical field using his health as inspiration. Crook spent much of his freshman year in lectures and labs, but he began to realize the stage interested him more than the microscope.

Crook was "bitten by the theatre bug" early on in high school, but hadn't considered the field his main area of study until arriving at college. After spending time in the Georgia Southern theatre program, however, he began to find his true calling.

"Medicine was my family's dream," said Crook, "not mine."

Throughout his time at the University, Crook acted, directed and helped behind the scenes with many school plays. His professors inspired and encouraged him, and he quickly developed a passion for turning text into a "living, breathing thing."

"Directing is the best drug I've ever found," he said.

Crook quickly became a stage manager for the department, and by his junior year, he became the season production stage manager. This duty entails serving as a mentor and adviser to the other student stage managers.

"A stage manager is at every rehearsal, writes down all blocking, cues, prop and costume notes, sends out daily rehearsal reports, coordinates costume fittings with actors, and calls the light, sound, media and set cues in the production," said Lisa Abbott, associate professor of theatre. "They are one of the most crucial and often unsung heroes of theatre."

Crook's peers selected him to be the director for the student production of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged," and he was even nominated for a directing intensive award for his direction of a ten-minute play at the regional Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF).

"Gage was an excellent student in our directing course, completed an advanced directing class that is held at the invitation of the professor, and has pursued directing opportunities in the community," said Sarah McCarroll, Ph.D., assistant professor of costume design and theatre history. "There's an obvious commitment to getting practice in his craft."

In addition to his successes as season production stage manager and his recognition at KCACTF, Crook has been recognized for directing a show for the Averitt Stars at the Averitt Center for the Arts' Emma Kelly Theatre and has served other roles such as properties designer, actor and assistant director. When the opportunity to direct a full-length Shakespearean play arose, Crook was instantly nominated for this role.

"His passion for directing and his pursuit of his goals has been reflected in the work he has been doing not only here on campus but in our community as well," said Abbott. "Gage has certainly earned this opportunity and we constantly look for ways to give our students the opportunity to work in the area of their passion. One of the strengths of our program is that we help our students practice their art and build their resumes on and off stage."

Though Crook graduated in December, Abbott noted he was chosen to direct the mainstage play as a student, which has only happened one other time in her eight years at Georgia Southern.

A play of this magnitude undoubtedly comes with challenges, and Crook says he is up for the task.

"This is a huge undertaking for me because it is both the largest show and the first full-length Shakespearean play I have directed," he said. "Dealing with a cast this large and also taking on the staging of a Shakespearean comedy takes a huge amount of work and preparation on my part, but I'm very excited to be taking on such a large endeavor!"

"Twelfth Night" is a classic Shakespearean comedy centered around love and mistaken identities. The play follows lovesick Orsino as he sends his servant Cesario (who is actually the maiden Viola in disguise) to plead on his behalf for the heart of the indifferent Olivia. Meanwhile, an alliance of servants and hangers-on fight a battle of wits against the high-handedness of the pompous Malvolio.

The show is one of the four mainstage productions of the Theatre and Performance program for the 2015-2016 season that gets full funding, technical and design support. Crook, a self-proclaimed organic director, has been working closely with actors and the stage manager for months, and rehearsals have grown more intensive as the show approaches.

The upcoming production introduces new faces to the Georgia Southern stage with debut performances by Michelle Daly as Viola, Ryan Shell as Orsino, Michael Adedeji as Toby Belch, and Daja Holmes as Olivia. Returning to the stage are audience favorites Whitaker Gardner as Malvolio, and Tori Townes as Feste.

"I want the actors to have an opportunity to discover things themselves," he said. "I don't plan out every detail. I like to see what everyone can bring to the table, mix that with my vision and let everything come together. It's very much about the journey."

After the final performance of "Twelfth Night," Crook plans to move back to his native Oklahoma to look for internships and eventually go on to graduate school to earn a Master of Fine Arts in directing. He looks forward to discovering what the theatre has in store for him in the years to come.

Crook has nothing but standing ovations in his future, and he won't soon forget his roots that helped him to that place.

"I believe in the ability of theatre to impact change," he said. "Students that have graduated before me have left a legacy for us, and I've seen lots of opportunities come up. I would like to think I'm leaving a legacy myself. This department has given me so much, and I'd love to think I've given something back."

"Twelfth Night" opens on Thursday, March 3 and runs through Saturday, March 5 at the University's Performing Arts Center. All shows are family friendly and a great theatre experience for young children. Each of the three performances begins at 7:30 p.m.

Student and youth tickets are \$6. Faculty, staff and community tickets are \$12. For group prices, contact the box office for more information. All seating is general admission.

For more information on the performances, visit <http://class.georgiasouthern.edu/cat/season/>.