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Future Eagles build bright futures in the Division of Continuing Education

JULY 10, 2017



Future Eagles learn about Lego Robotics during a camp offered by the Division of Continuing Education at Georgia Southern.

Future Eagles in the community have the opportunity to learn new skills in areas like science, technology, engineering and math, all while having fun, through the Division of Continuing Education (CE) at Georgia Southern University.

For more than two decades, CE has opened their doors during the summer months to youth interested in having fun and learning. Through the wide variety of summer camps CE offers, youth are offered interactive and exciting opportunities.

"Most of our camps are hands-on STEM programs," said Program Assistant with CE, Mary Thaler, who has more than three years' experience working with campers. "The greatest feeling is seeing the children enjoy the camps and return year after year. These kids get to create ideas in their brains and make them become a reality"

The most popular STEM camp offered is the Lego Robotics Camp, and this year the camp saw more than 80 participants. Lego Robotics is offered every summer in three different levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The beginner classes focus on learning the names of different Lego parts and building skills, while the advanced classes teach the youth actual computer programming and coding to power up their Lego Robotic creations. The computer science program at the University lends programming kits to CE every summer for the children to enjoy and help make this camp possible.

Lucas Mather, a former middle school teacher and Lego Robotics Coach from Metter, Georgia, is currently the lead instructor for the Lego Robotics Camps. He brings a fresh approach and new ideas

to engage the children each summer. Most recently, Mather taught the young Lego Robotics campers how to use the strings from their name badges with Legos to build their own fishing poles. The “fish” were made also of Legos.

Judy Hendrix-Poole, program assistant and assistant to the executive director for CE has more than 15 years of experience working with these camps.

“The children are the best part of working with the camps,” said Hendrix-Poole. “They are excited because they have had a great week, and that really gives me a sense of satisfaction.”

Together, Thaler and Hendrix-Poole serve more than 1,500 youth every summer during the camps and programs hosted by CE.

For more information on the youth summer programs or personal and professional development programs offered by CE, visit the website at academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ce/ or call 912-478-5555.

Georgia Southern receives \$1.3 million grant to bring nurse practitioners to Georgia’s underserved communities

JULY 10, 2017



Georgia Southern University’s School of Nursing received a \$1.3 million federal grant for an Advanced Nursing Education Workforce (ANEW) project that will create innovative academic-practice partnerships to prepare nurse practitioners for service in rural and underserved communities in Southeast Georgia.

The grant will create partnerships between the School of Nursing and five federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in order to increase the number and readiness of family nurse practitioner (FNP) and psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioner (PMHNP) students in Georgia — a state in which 109 of its 159 counties are rural, and 141 of its counties are below the statewide average for doctors per 100,000 residents.

“There is a dire shortage of primary care physicians in Georgia, particularly for people living in rural and impoverished communities,” said Ursula A. Pritham, Ph.D., WHNP-BC, FNP-BC, SANE, associate professor and graduate program director in the School of Nursing. “FNPs and PMHNPs can help fill the gap. The ANEW grant will increase the number of training locations at FQHCs available to Georgia Southern nurse practitioner students and thus increase program capacity. Educating the next generation of nurse practitioners for success in primary care in rural and health professional shortage areas will improve recruitment and retention of primary care providers at FQHCs and improve the health and well-being of uninsured and other vulnerable populations.”

The ANEW project will also provide paid traineeships to nurse practitioner students, many of whom would otherwise not be able to afford graduate school costs. Pritham says these traineeships will benefit the FQHCs as well as the students who learn there.

“ANEW will create a pipeline from nurse practitioner students to nurse practitioner employees in those settings,” she said. “Such a partnership will assist FQHCs in their ability to access and hire additional primary care providers, particularly Georgia Southern graduates familiar with their practice setting, culture and processes, without an extensive start-up period.”

The FQHCs are located throughout Southeast Georgia:

- East Georgia Healthcare Center, which will include its 10 satellite clinics throughout the region
- Christ Community Health Services in Augusta, Georgia
- J.C. Lewis Primary Health Care Center in Savannah, Georgia
- Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care in Savannah
- Appling Healthcare System/Southern Peaches in Baxley, Georgia

In addition to providing primary care in fixed facilities, East Georgia Healthcare Center offers a mobile unit to reach patients closer to home. J.C. Lewis Primary Health Care Center and Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care also provide psychiatric-mental health and behavioral health services, in addition to primary care services.

The grant is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce, Division of Nursing and Public Health. Pritham served as the ANEW grant principal investigator/director, along with co-authors Kathryn Hoehn Anderson, Ph.D., ARNP, PMHCNS-BC, LMFT, professor and director of the Center for Nursing Scholarship & Research, and Lee Broxton, scholarship and research specialist at the Center for Nursing Scholarship & Research.