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Alumna named Paraprofessional of the Year by Georgia Council for Exceptional Children

JULY 18, 2017



College of Education (COE) graduate Meghan Rosser ('17) was named Paraprofessional of the Year by the Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) on June 9 at the annual IDEAS Conference on St. Simons Island.

This award recognizes a paraprofessional who provides direct services to students with exceptionalities, and who is an outstanding member of the profession with work that reflects significant educational success for students, continued professional development and the highest standards of educational quality.

In addition to Rosser being named Paraprofessional of the Year, student [Meredith Boatright was also named Student Member of the Year](#) at the conference.

Rosser says she was "very surprised" about the award and very humbled to be nominated.

"This award is truly an honor," she said. "Although I do not work with children with disabilities for the accolades, it is nice to have my efforts acknowledged by my peers. This award is a great extension of the honor and privilege I feel every day when I go to work with my students.

Rosser's former professor and advisor Neri Romero, Ph.D., nominated Rosser for the Paraprofessional of the Year award.

"There is nothing 'normal' or 'average' about Mrs. Rosser's performance as a student at Georgia Southern over the last two years," said Romero. "I have 15 years of instruction in the classroom, mostly working with individuals with autism, and her lesson planning and teaching consistently blew me away."

Rosser was near the completion of an undergraduate degree in psychology when she realized her calling. While working as a preschool teacher and completing her bachelor's degree, she discovered that she wanted to work in the special education field.

I loved being with all of my students, but I felt especially drawn to my students with exceptionalities," said Rosser. "There was one little boy with autism that stole my heart in particular. It was that period in my life that I realized my passion for special education."

Rosser began the online Master of Arts in Teaching in special education degree program through Georgia Southern University. While completing her Master's, Rosser accepted a position with Gwinnett County Public Schools to assist in a kindergarten through second grade classroom that was designed for students with mild autism.

"This position enabled me to complete my degree requirements while giving me the invaluable hands-on experience of working with children with exceptionalities and offering [me] the opportunity to become familiar with all the procedural work required in special education," said Rosser.

In this position, Rosser says she met the "most talented teacher," Samantha Sardone.

Sardone, a special education teacher at Alcova Elementary School, served as Rosser's clinical supervisor for the student teaching requirement of her Master's degree. Sardone was very praiseworthy of Rosser, calling her "by far the best colleague I have ever worked with."

"Mrs. Rosser made coming to work every day a joy because of the teamwork we established in our classroom," Sardone added.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. CEC advocates for appropriate governmental policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities and helps professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice.

"The CEC is a distinguished organization that is enabling success for students with disabilities by advocating for these children and helping educators understand how best to assist children with diverse needs," said Rosser.

Rosser completed her Master's in spring 2017 and has accepted a position at North Gwinnett Middle School.

"I am looking forward to working with a new group of students and being a part of the amazing team at this new school," she said.

For more information on COE, visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/COE.