

Newsroom

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Georgia Southern University

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Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

[Home](#) > [Press Releases](#) > Georgia Southern University to Award 2011 High Flying Schools at National Conference

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FEBRUARY 9, 2011

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Georgia Southern University will honor five schools as High Flying Schools for 2011 based on academic achievement and commitment to community collaboration and citizenship. The schools will be recognized at the 22nd annual National Youth-At-Risk Conference at 8:45 a.m. Monday, March 7, at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, Ga.

High Flying Schools are highly diverse and have at least 50 percent of students living at or below poverty level. Winners are selected for showing outstanding academic achievement, collaboration with the local community, democratic education programs and a focus on citizenship development. In addition to L.M Smith, The 2011 national winners are L.M. Smith Middle School, Birmingham, Ala.; Pauline Jones Elementary School, Fayetteville, N.C.; McKinley Elementary School, Newark, N.J.; Parkland Magnet High School, Winston Salem, N.C.; and Wilkinson County Middle School, Irwinton, Ga.

"We started the High Flying Schools competition to showcase the high-performing, high-poverty schools that are overcoming the odds in spite of challenging conditions," said Dan Rea, the National Youth-At-Risk Conference co-chairperson. "These schools go beyond pursuit of academic excellence to inspire students to become active participants in their community — not merely passive recipients."

Schools are self-nominated for the nationwide competition and five are selected for the honor each year. Winning schools receive a \$1,000 travel honorarium and paid conference registration/lodging for two in Savannah. This year's event, themed "Successful Programs for Empowering Youth: Overcoming Poverty, Violence and Failure," will provide practical strategies for improving achievement, building children's character, encouraging creativity and individuality and overcoming communication barriers often faced in schools with at-risk children.

The Savannah-based conference is the nation's most comprehensive event in relation to achievement and success for at-risk youth. It addresses a wide variety of risk factors — such as academic failure, lack of motivation, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, drug problems, teenage pregnancy and unstable homes — which can affect youth of all races and levels of socioeconomic status. More information is available at www.nationalyouthatrisk.com or for registration call toll free, 1-855-478-5551.

[< Previous](#)

[Next >](#)



Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

[Home](#) > [Press Releases](#) > Georgia Southern University Hosts North American Tour of STOMP

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The North American tour of the international stage hit STOMP will perform in Georgia Southern University's Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 8.

The award-winning presentation features a cast of talented performers who blend rhythm and dance with music from unexpected instruments into a creative, irresistible show. With roots in "brusking" — street performing — STOMP transforms everyday noises into theatre by manipulating the properties of sound. Without dialogue, characters guide audience members on a journey in discovering the rhythm of life and, at times, invite them to join in.

Performing Arts Center Director Albert Pertalion said Georgia Southern worked for three years to land placement on the STOMP tour, but this wasn't his first experience with the impressive troupe. He witnessed the powerful performance first-hand on Broadway several years ago.

"Using everything imaginable, except regular percussion instruments, the STOMP cast creates music, excitement, dance and acrobatics out of nearly anything," Pertalion said. "The show engages the audience in ways totally new to the musical form. It redefines creativity as entertainment and on top of that, it is very funny."

Created by Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas, STOMP first premiered at London's Bloomsbury Theatre in 1991. Within three years it had played to capacity audiences around the world and received an Olivier Award for "Best Choreography" as well as Obie and Drama Desk awards. It has since been featured in IMAX and earned many other awards and designations, including Entertainment Weekly's list of "New Classics: The 50 Best Plays and Musicals from 1983-2008."

View clips and experience the rhythm at www.stomponline.com.

STOMP's performance at Georgia Southern was made possible by Sea Island Bank. The tickets are \$10 for students and \$45 for general admission. To purchase, visit or call the Box Office at 912-478-7999 or go to <http://ceps.georgiasouthern.edu/pac/pacseries.html>.

[< Previous](#)

[Next >](#)

