Blessings in a Backpack

Feeding the Hungry:
The Jason Dufner Charitable Foundation and Auburn University Bring Blessings in a Backpack to Lee County
Blessings in a Back Pack Program - a partnership between the Jason Dufner Charitable Foundation and the student-led, Campus Kitchens Project at Auburn University. This program currently provides needy kids at Yarbrough and Carver Elementary schools with food to eat over the weekend.

Beyond Auburn is published by Auburn University twice per year as a joint project of the Office of the Vice President for University Outreach and the Office of Communications and Marketing.

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Auburn University’s mission is defined by its land-grant traditions of service and access. The university serves the citizens of the state through its outreach programs to help them meet their educational needs. The challenges of today’s economy are stressing our communities, businesses, and families greatly, which is why Auburn’s outreach programs and resources are needed like never before. That is also why our current strategic planning sessions around the state are so important to help us develop new programs and determine where the needs are greatest.

In expanding Auburn’s reach to areas of greatest need, the university will draw heavily upon the new instructional and outreach technologies available. A great example is the broadband technology initiative in University Outreach and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System along with other partners on campus and across the state. In 2010, the U.S. Department of Commerce awarded Auburn University Outreach $4.6 million to expand the availability of broadband technology in Alabama’s rural libraries and public schools. Overall, the initiative has deployed more than 1,180 new computer workstations and replaced nearly 1,640 more at 115 rural libraries and 47 public schools in 63 of the 67 counties across Alabama.

Too many Alabamians are without broadband Internet access and the learning resources it provides. This broadband technology project is closing the technological gap and opening doors for thousands of students and adults. As a result, smaller libraries’ public computing facilities have more computers accessible to job seekers and broadband services have been improved in underserved areas of the state to bridge the “digital divide” between low-income rural areas and wealthy urban areas.

We will continue to expand the great partnerships with K-12 schools that we have already established. In addition, we are actively building collaborations with other institutions, both here and abroad, to improve quality of life and extend educational opportunities to all.

Auburn will maintain the view of outreach and continuing education as engagement that provides important value-added services and extends the Auburn brand to agencies, corporations, major foundations, etc. Well-executed outreach and continuing education can greatly expand our impact as an institution.

War Eagle!

JAY GOGUE
PRESIDENT
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
I often hear “we have to focus; we can’t address every issue and be all things to all people.” This, of course, is an appropriate caution against spreading program resources so thin that impact is diminished. However, as a land-grant, state university with a mission to serve the public as a whole, where do you draw that line? What communities will be ignored; which of the pervasive issues facing our state shall we fail to address?

One of the nation’s leading outreach and engagement scholars, Hiram E. Fitzgerald, says we should be taking just the opposite approach. Fitzgerald is Michigan State University’s associate provost for University Outreach and Engagement and current president of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, a national higher education coalition dedicated to advancing outreach scholarship and civic engagement. Fitzgerald recently visited Auburn as keynote speaker for our Outreach Scholarship Symposium.

In his rousing speech before a capacity audience of Auburn faculty, students, and area community partners, Fitzgerald challenged us to look at issues holistically and respond collectively. “Today’s biggest issues are interconnected; we cannot hope to be effective in solving the challenges facing society if we only address one facet of a problem at a time,” he stressed. “What improvements we make incrementally will revert quickly to the norm as soon as we move our attention to another issue.” According to Fitzgerald, to tackle these problems head on, and for real progress to take hold, universities will have to fully engage their campuses and leverage strategic partnerships in the community. As “publish or perish” was long the accepted reality in higher education, Fitzgerald says today it is more “partner or perish” for universities.

Civic partnerships are key to amplifying the impact of university engagement. In Fitzgerald’s Handbook of Engaged Scholarship, he observes that truly engaged faculty recognize that outreach scholarship is founded on an underpinning of mutual respect and recognition that community knowledge is valid and that sustainability is an integral part of the partnership agenda. I am pleased to say that this ethic is alive and well at Auburn University.

However, we can always do more to strengthen our community and institutional partnerships, improve our practice of outreach, and better assess the impact of our engagement. Our SACS reaffirmation efforts over the last year and our campus-wide strategic planning process are extremely important to us in defining areas of improvement for outreach as well as identifying new opportunities for meaningful engagement. We have to seek ways for all faculty to be fully engaged, not just those affiliated with the various outreach units on campus. As we like to say at Auburn, we need to be “ALL IN.”

Significantly, Auburn’s Handbook criteria allow faculty engagement to be documented and counted for consideration in tenure and promotion. University Outreach, as well as many of Auburn’s academic units, offers grants and other project support for faculty engagement. Our Outreach Scholarship Symposium provides faculty a venue for dialogue and networking. Finally, the university has many, many existing partnerships and community collaborations which offer the potential for expanding engagement statewide, and even globally. The tools for engagement are all here for our use.

I believe we should be looking broadly for solutions to community issues. We can mount an “ALL IN” effort by engaging our scholarship comprehensively in outreach. To that great purpose, I encourage you to join us and your faculty colleagues in making a difference!

War Eagle,

ROYRICKERS COOK
ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY OUTREACH
AUBURN UNIVERSITY
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Outreach News
Auburn University students have partnered with PGA and former Auburn golfer Jason Dufner and his wife, Amanda, to feed hungry children in Lee County, Ala.

The Dufners chose hunger as one of their foundation’s major causes and discovered Blessings in a Backpack, a national program that targets childhood hunger.

“Amanda is involved in the Tour Wives Association on the PGA Tour,” said Jason Dufner. “One of the programs they work with a good deal around the different cities is the Blessings in a Backpack organization. Knowing that we have nothing like this in Lee County, Amanda felt it would be a great fit for the foundation we started in 2010.”

The couple pledged three years of funding to offer the program at Yarbrough Elementary School in Auburn and Carver Primary School in Opelika. Each week throughout the school year, children who otherwise may not have food to eat over the weekend are sent home with a bag of food on Friday afternoons. Teachers discreetly place the food bags into pre-selected students’ backpacks.

“The thing that’s really great about it is that you get to work with kids. With our foundation, we want to focus more on kids and their needs, specifically in Lee County, because it’s where we live,” Dufner said. “We have two schools up and going now in Lee County and are looking forward to adding many of the schools in the area. I’d
love to see all the elementary schools here in Lee County be taken care of, all the kids here be taken care of, and then maybe expand to some of the other counties around us and get the program as big as we can here in East Alabama.”

To implement the program in Auburn, volunteers were needed to pack the 274 bags of food at the Auburn Walmart, the local project grocery partner, and deliver them to the schools on Thursday afternoons. That’s where Auburn University’s chapter of the national organization Campus Kitchens and University Outreach’s Office of Public Service came into the picture.

“I don’t think people realize that right here in Lee County, beyond our little section of Auburn University, there are people who really need help,” said Campus Kitchen at Auburn University president Emily Scammell. “Having Auburn students connect with the community in that way is really awesome.”

Campus Kitchen at Auburn University, a two-year-old campus organization, is a hunger-fighting initiative led
by students. Through a partnership with Chartwells and Sodexo, the organization repurposes food from campus dining facilities that would otherwise be thrown away into new meals that are then served to the hungry in the Auburn-Opelika community. Each week, they serve about 225 meals at locations throughout Lee County.

Scammell said the group was thrilled to be asked to assist with the Blessings in a Backpack project because it is another way to actively do good in the community.

“We want to raise awareness about hunger in the community, but also show that Auburn is very proactive in fighting hunger,” she said. Our main goal is to get students involved in doing something good for their community – showing leadership and taking initiative.”

To learn more about Blessings in a Backpack and Campus Kitchen at Auburn University or to get involved, find them on Facebook at “The Campus Kitchen at Auburn University,” go to www.auburn.edu/auinvolve or contact Jennifer Commander in University Outreach at jlc0053@auburn.edu.
When students returned to their classes at Auburn University in January, the Auburn University Environmental Awareness Organization began a campaign that, if successful, will generate a projected $350,000 in public funds annually for campus green infrastructure projects. The Green Investment campaign will include the creation of a new campus funding program.

With the Student Green Investment program, Auburn will invest in experimental environmental conservation and research projects that will bring new green innovations to the campus. Students, faculty, and staff will be invited to submit proposals to this fund throughout the year for projects which they will design and develop themselves for the campus. The disbursement of the Green Investment Fund will be overseen by a campus committee with a required student-majority vote for all funding decisions. Examples of potential projects for funding include the creation of a cross-campus bike and car-sharing program, the establishment of feasible connections between local farmers and campus dining services, and new construction projects that center on sustainable, eco-conscious design principles.

The first year of operation for the program will be supported through student investment. At approximately five dollars per semester, these investments would be lower than any fee or charge currently incurred by Auburn students. Additionally, due to the design of the Student Green Investment program, students would be able to actively decide how their money is best spent for Auburn.

Student groups at three other Alabama campuses are operating Sustainable Investment campaigns concurrently with AU EAO, including groups at the University of Alabama, UAB, and UAH. All groups are members of the Coalition of Alabama Students for the Environment, an eight-campus coalition united to support Alabama’s economy and environment through sustainable policy change and infrastructure development.

Students, citizens, and organizations interested in exploring ways they can support AU EAO should contact Daniel Martinez at daniel.martinez@auburn.edu.
State’s Online Encyclopedia Benefits Students, Parents and Librarians

Homework assignments bring children and parents to the Pike Road Branch Library of the Montgomery City-County Public Library. Frequently they are looking for a picture of the state bird, flower, nut, and other state symbols. It is a scenario that is repeated in libraries across the state.

“Students come in for their fourth-grade history projects and plop down at a computer to start a Google search,” said Matt Williams, a librarian at the Pike Road Branch Library. “They might spend an hour or two trying to find information. When our roving reference staff notices that happening, we run over to those kids and parents and tell them about the Encyclopedia of Alabama.”

“They come back needing information on such topics as American Indian tribes living in Alabama or the major events of the Civil Rights movement,” said Williams. “Black History Month is another time when I send a lot of students to EOA.”

The Encyclopedia of Alabama (www.EncyclopediaofAlabama.org) is a free, online reference resource with more than 1,400 articles on the state’s history, culture, and environment. New content is added monthly. EOA is provided as a service to the state by Auburn University Outreach, the Alabama State Department of Education, and the University of Alabama. Additional funding also has been provided recently by Vulcan Materials Company, The Daniel Foundation of Alabama, Alabama Power Company, Alabama Humanities Foundation, and Hill Crest Foundation. In 2012, more than 860,000 visitors used the site.
Williams said he likes the fact that EOA's Quick Facts page provides a wealth of information that is usually required for reports on the state. It has photographs and information about the official state flower, insect, mammal, highest point, water area, and much more.

“It also lists the state’s previous capitals, the date that the Alabama Territory became a state, and the fact that Alabama doesn’t have an official state nickname,” he said.

Williams learned about EOA at a training session the Montgomery City-County Public Library provides to its staff to introduce them to available resources and how to use them.

Williams shared his enthusiasm for EOA in a blog post at the beginning of the school year. He pointed out that the site contains in-depth articles on Alabama history, geography, literature, and many other topics.

“The history page breaks the state’s long history up into nine periods with articles about major events and people from each era,” he wrote. “The geography and environment page tells the history of each city, town, and county in the state. The arts and literature page discusses Alabama’s literary heritage by genre with links to articles on major authors and poets.”

“If you or your student needs information about Alabama, your search should begin and, most likely, end at the Encyclopedia of Alabama,” said Williams.

### Alabama Quick Facts

**Territorial periods:** 1798, Mississippi Territory created (included land that became Alabama); 1817, Alabama Territory created

**Date of statehood:** December 14, 1819 (22nd state)

**Origin of name:** The state is named after the Alabama Indian tribe that inhabited western Alabama and eastern Mississippi until the early nineteenth century.

**Capital:** Montgomery, since 1847

**Other capitals:** St. Stephens (territorial, 1817-1819), Huntsville (1819), Cahaba (1820-1825), Tuscaloosa (1826-1846)

**Population:** estimated 4,779,736 (2010 U.S. Census Bureau estimate)

**Land area:** 52,423 square miles

**Water area:** 1,673 square miles

**Highest point:** Cheaha Mountain (2,407 feet above sea level)

**Lowest point:** sea level where Alabama meets the Gulf of Mexico

**Motto:** “Audemus jura nostra defendere”; translation: “We Dare Maintain Our Rights”

**State Creed:** The official creed of Alabama was originally created for the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and was written by Mrs. H. P. Thetford of Birmingham. It was officially adopted by the state legislature in 1953.

> I believe in Alabama, a state dedicated to a faith in God and the enlightenment of mankind; to a democracy that safeguards the liberties of each citizen and to the conservation of her youth, her ideals, and her soil. I believe it is my duty to obey her laws, to respect her flag and to be alert to her needs and generous in my efforts to foster her advancement within the statehood of the world.

**Nickname:** Alabama does not have an official nickname, but is often referred to as the “Heart of Dixie.” It has also been called the “Cotton State” and the “Yellowhammer State.”

**Current governor:** Robert Bentley

**Electoral votes:** 9

**Representation in Congress:** 2 senators; 7 representatives

http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/QuickFacts.jsp
Statewide Summit Explores Role of Community Colleges in Civic Engagement

Educators from around the state participated in a day-long summit exploring the unique role of two-year colleges in promoting positive change in Alabama communities. The conference was sponsored by the Alabama Poverty Project, Auburn University’s outreach division, the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, and the David Mathews Center for Civic Life.

The program, titled “Engaging Alabama Communities Through Two-Year Colleges: Real Learning, Real Change,” focused on the important relationship between two-year colleges and the communities they serve. Sessions explored model programs offered by Alabama community colleges addressing health concerns, educational attainment, disaster response, and youth leadership. Speakers included Mark Heinrich, chancellor of the Alabama Community College System; Mary Elizabeth Tyler Boucebc, community-based learning coordinator at Georgia Perimeter College; and Bernie Ronan, organizer of the Democracy Commitment and associate vice chancellor for public affairs at Maricopa Community College.

“This learning exchange is designed to highlight unique civic and community engagement programs and projects that are being sponsored by faculty, administrators, and students at two-year colleges in Alabama,” said Chris McCauley, executive director of the David Mathews Center.

“By bringing together numerous presenters, speakers, and participants from across the state, the Mathews Center, APP, and Auburn University hope to learn from these partners and develop long-term sustainable working relationships.”

Kristina Scott, executive director of the Alabama Poverty Project, said, “Two-year schools are called ‘community’ colleges for a great reason - they are valued members of their communities.”

Fellow co-sponsor, Ralph Foster, director of Auburn University’s Office of Public Service, added “Two-year colleges are so well integrated into the life of their communities that these institutions are very responsive to public needs.”

The conference, which stresses collaboration among educational and civic partners, is itself a product of a statewide partnership. “Collaborating with Auburn, the Alabama Community College System, and the David Mathews Center allows us to use our organizations’ respective strengths and create a better experience for the conference participants,” said Scott.

The Summit on Civic Engagement and Alabama’s Two-Year Colleges was hosted on the campus of Jefferson State Community College at its Shelby-Hoover campus.
For many small towns, the grocery store is more than just a place to stop and buy groceries. It is often the center of action and a gathering place for town members to hang out and see everyone. That was definitely the case for Cordova, Ala. Everything changed when the grocery store, the town’s main hub, was wiped out during the tornadoes of April 2011, along with the city hall, police station, the People’s Bank and the old Tallulah Bankhead hotel, amounting to almost 90 percent of the town’s civic infrastructure.

An EF-3 tornado and an EF-4 tornado produced winds up to 140 miles per hour April 25, 2011, which devastated the town of Cordova, in Walker County. The tornado outbreak of April 25-28 is among the most deadly in United States history.

Auburn University faculty members Paul Holley and Josh Emig lead the Master of Integrated Design and Construction Program in designing new buildings for Cordova that would reunite the town and replace more than just the destroyed buildings.

Holley is the Aderholdt Professor in the McWhorter School of Building Science, within Auburn’s College of Architecture, Design, and Construction and co-director of the Master of Integrated Design and Construction Program. Assistant Professor Josh Emig is co-director of Auburn’s Integrated Design and Construction Program, a collaboration between the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture and the McWhorter School of Building Science.

The project received support from an Auburn University 2012 Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grant awarded to Emig and Holley. Their proposal, “Integrated Design and Construction Outreach: Cordova, Ala., Long-Term Recovery,” addressed the critical need served by important public buildings.

The work built on the previous projects of professors Cheryl Morgan and Jocelyn Zanzot, which began looking for a way to rebuild Cordova almost immediately following the storms. Auburn’s Urban Studio worked as part of a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team in the creation of the recovery plan.

Although the work seemed daunting, the professors and students involved were motivated to help the town rebuild. Beth Stukes, chair of the long-term recovery
committee in Cordova, said, “the possibility of rebuilding for the future and creating an oasis of community is in reach with the efforts of the professors and students” working on this project.

Student Julian Vida explained, “Being a native of Alabama and having witnessed the destruction of the storms of April 27, 2011, this project is more important to me than any other design project I have been assigned in my education.”

The studio was divided into four teams, each in charge of one building including a new city hall, fire station, grocery store, and downtown developments, such as a library. Not only were they designing a building, but they also were working on alternative business plans for the companies involved.

Vida and his team worked on a design that would create a personal connection with the citizens of Cordova. About the designs, he said, “I hope I can provide the city and its citizens with a library design that they will embrace as their own and not provide a design that can be put anywhere.”

Students brought innovation to their designs by looking at the most cost-effective and efficient ways to construct buildings. Emig said he hoped the plans would find ways to redevelop small-town, downtown areas, which often are overlooked as strip malls and big box stores that are less expensive to build and develop.

The details of the planning done by the group included creating a vibrant downtown area with family-friendly parks for activities, as well as room for economic development. The citizens of Cordova have been involved from the beginning and offered valuable input during the creation of this recovery plan, noted Morgan.

The entire project was a collaborative effort with construction management, building design, architecture, community planning, and landscape architecture. The students in this phase got to use cutting-edge digital tools of the industry. Emig said all this work brings the progressive thinking of big firms to small towns.

Stukes said, “The students that professors Emig and Zanzot have brought to Cordova are an invaluable resource. Fresh consideration and an unbiased vision will prove to be the gate to our future.”

An important message, according to Zanzot, is to not forget small towns like Cordova. While larger cities have gotten more media attention and funding, small towns still need help.

However, the work, while difficult, has been rewarding. Vida noted, “A good surprise has been the overall spirit, dedication, and forward-thinking goals of the citizens of Cordova. It has allowed us to move forward in our efforts knowing that we have the support of the city in our endeavors to provide them designs that will truly help their city.”

Zanzot hopes to continue working with Cordova as long as it is necessary. Recovery is a long-term process, and the work will need to continue long beyond the summer.

For more information on the Master of Integrated Design and Construction program, go to www.cadc.auburn.edu/midc.
Auburn University Center for Governmental Services Names Barth a Senior Fellow

Auburn University’s Center for Governmental Services, a unit within University Outreach, has named James Barth a senior fellow. The CGS Fellows program recognizes experienced practitioners, academicians, and researchers for their significant contributions to excellence in government.

In announcing the award, Don-Terry Veal, director of the Center for Governmental Services, stressed the role and importance of the fellowship.

“CGS Fellows utilize their expertise to engage in research or funding opportunities that will enhance the quality of public policy for the state of Alabama,” said Veal. “Requirements for CGS Fellow status include experience, prominence, and recognized contributions in public affairs.”

Barth is the Lowder Eminent Scholar in Finance at Auburn University and a senior fellow at the Milken Institute. His research focuses on financial institutions and capital markets, both domestic and global, with special emphasis on regulatory issues. Recently, he served as leader of an international team advising the People’s Bank of China on banking reform. Barth was an appointee of presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush as chief economist of the Office of Thrift Supervision and previously the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.


More recently he participated as the luncheon keynote speaker for the Forum on Restoring the Global Economy, held by CGS at the Omni Hotel at CNN Center in Atlanta.

Requirements for Fellow status include extensive experience, prominence, and recognized contributions in public affairs. Additional factors considered include academic qualifications, reputation, and contributions and achievements to public affairs nationally or internationally and demonstrated characteristics as a public affairs thinker, author, and/or entrepreneur.

As a primary component of the senior fellow recognition, Barth will work with CGS to develop state-of-the-state concepts for the state of Alabama, and will focus research efforts within the state as well as for international initiatives.
Alabamians Benefit from ECDI and Extension Broadband Training

After developing nine training modules on multiple aspects of broadband, including e-home, e-commerce, and e-workforce, the Economic and Community Development Institute at Auburn University is partnering with county Extension coordinators to bring broadband training to every county in Alabama. The modules tout the social and economic benefits of broadband, familiarizing participants with the practical uses of the Internet and Internet security.

The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce and is intended to boost the use of broadband technology among Alabamians to enable participation in the global, digital economy.

“Broadband is now a core infrastructure. Communities without reliable high-speed internet access cannot compete in the 21st century economy,” said Joe Sumners, ECDI director.

“Broadband also can greatly improve people’s lives at home, at work, and at school. Things like distance education and telemedicine bring many new opportunities for citizens in the rural parts of our state,” Sumners added.

Not only is broadband essential to accessing the economy, many basic services are now only available online, including applications for work and government assistance. Internet aptitude is increasingly needed to function in daily life. At a recent broadband training in Bibb County, county Extension coordinator Matt Hartzell helped 11 local seniors register for nutrition vouchers, which can only be done online.

The broadband project is especially geared toward reaching underserved rural populations, who often lack access to and experience using the Internet. “Most of the people who understand the benefits of broadband already use it,” Hartzell pointed out. “With this program, we’re hoping to reach the have-nots. Especially when it comes to workforce opportunities.”

Thus far, many participants have hailed from an older generation and require basic computer training alongside Internet training. “Extension agents look to meet real needs,” noted Dennis Evans, community development specialist at ECDI. “Many times, seniors just want to be able to see a picture of their grandkids or connect with their families and friends online.”

In Colbert County, county Extension coordinator Danny McWilliams partnered with a local assisted living facility, where 90 percent of training attendees had never turned on a computer. McWilliams started with the basics, and soon everyone in the class had an email address and was emailing him once a week. The seniors were interested in connecting with family online, but also in monitoring their bank accounts, paying bills, and using search engines. One participant who loves the Rose Bowl parade had heard there was a similar flower parade in Sweden and was stunned when a Google search returned plenty of photographs of the Swedish floats. “It’s opened up a whole new world to them,” McWilliams said. “And that’s really the goal.”
Office of Professional and Continuing Education Offers Computer Training Courses to Business and Industry

In 2010, Auburn University’s Office of Professional and Continuing Education began offering a variety of computer training courses targeted to meet the needs of local business and industry workers. As the technical needs of the local workforce began to change due to the growth in manufacturing in the region, OPCE identified technical and computer training as an opportunity to address the need for technically proficient workers in the area. To meet this objective, the office invested in an 18-station laptop computer lab, which can be transported to various locations to conduct instructor-led, classroom-based computer training. To date, OPCE has provided training for more than 150 participants in these classes.

The courses offered range from introductory and intermediate Microsoft Office applications to advanced Adobe design and production applications. Also, included in the computer training offerings are courses on project management software (Microsoft Project) and accounting/bookkeeping software (QuickBooks). In addition to these standard offerings, a new series of security and ethical hacking courses will be piloted later in 2013. Future plans call for exploring the possibility of becoming a certified Microsoft and Adobe training provider, which would allow OPCE to offer industry certifications in these respective areas. Lastly, while not specifically a computer software course, OPCE also offers a course in project management as a part of its technical training offerings several times a year.

In addition to open enrollment courses on these topics, several business and industry groups in the region have contracted OPCE to provide private training courses for their employees. These highly customized courses meet a specific training need of the employees of these organizations, such as advanced Microsoft Excel or one-on-one Microsoft Access training. There are multiple benefits to this type of training arrangement, such as reduced out-of-pocket cost per trainee, instruction tailored to meet the specific needs of the employee group, and programs scheduled at the most convenient time for the participants. The clients who have taken this approach to training represent a variety of industries, ranging from CPA firms, to healthcare centers, to heavy industrial manufacturing.

The computer training programs that OPCE offers are taught by skilled trainers, who have extensive expertise in the topics they teach. Having experienced instructors lends great credibility to the programs being offered and allows the participants to leave with a deeper understanding of the software application and with the ability to apply the skills they have learned to the real-world situations.

According to OPCE associate director, John Freeze, “One of the missions of Auburn University and the Office of Professional and Continuing Education is to provide educational offerings to the people and communities of Alabama. By providing computer training programs, we are helping fulfill this mission by educating the local workforce, which ultimately promotes growth and economic development in the region.”

For more information on OPCE’s computer training programs, please visit www.auburn.edu/computertraining or call (334) 844-5100.
The annual Outreach Scholarship Symposium, focusing on faculty engagement, scholarship, and outreach project development and showcase was held in February. Michigan State University’s Associate Provost for University Outreach and Engagement Hiram Fitzgerald was the keynote speaker. Fitzgerald is the current president of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium, a national higher education coalition dedicated to advancing outreach scholarship and civic engagement. Auburn University is a founding board member of the consortium.

“We are thrilled to host a program that promotes community and campus bridge-building and information-sharing,” said Chippewa Thomas, director of Faculty Engagement. The recipients of this year’s Competitive Outreach Scholarship grants were announced during the last symposium luncheon.
Engagement in the Office of University Outreach at Auburn. “We are particularly honored to have such a committed national leader address attendees this year.”

In addition to his role as associate provost for one of America’s leading university engagement divisions, Fitzgerald is also University Distinguished Professor in the Department of Psychology at Michigan State. He serves as a member of the Executive Committee of the Council on Engagement and Outreach of the Association for Public and Land-Grant Universities, a member of the board of directors of Transformative Regional Engagement Networks, and a member of the Academy for Community Engagement Scholarship task force.

The symposium also featured a presentation by Jon Mason, director of Serve Alabama and the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Volunteer Service. He has been in this position since January 2011, after being appointed by Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley. The two-day program included a number of faculty presentations, poster sessions, and plenaries on documenting outreach projects.

2013 Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grants

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<td>Salisa C. Westrick (Harrison School of Pharmacy)</td>
<td>Medicare Part D Plan Selection Assistance for Seniors in Alabama</td>
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<td>Norbert Wilson, Michelle R. Worosz, Conner Bailey, Claire Zizza, Jocelyn Zanzot</td>
<td>Macon—a Movable Feast: A Celebration of Food and Health in Macon County, Alabama</td>
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<td>(College of Agriculture, College of Human Sciences, and College of Architecture, Design and Construction)</td>
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<td>Wi-Suk Kwon, Veena Chattaraman (College of Human Sciences)</td>
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via outreach scholarship and preparing outreach dossiers for tenure and promotion review. Concurrent sessions highlighted outreach exemplars and projects that have received extramural funding, as well as funding support through the Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grant Program. This year’s recipient of the Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach, Cheryl Morgan, served as a plenary facilitator and provided reflections on her own outreach scholarship in the Urban Studio.
The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University (OLLI at Auburn) offers academic programming and social activities for older adults in the community. OLLI believes that the “use it or lose it” principle applies to both the body and mind and has expanded course offerings to include health and wellness courses in addition to academic classes in a variety of areas including science, history, music, art, civic affairs, and much more.

To encourage individuals to age well, OLLI has partnered with agencies and organizations in the area to encourage mind and body fitness through participation in wellness fairs and sessions about topics that impact older adults. During the past 12 months, OLLI at Auburn has partnered with several groups including the Lee-Russell Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging, AARP of Alabama, the Opelika SportsPlex, EAMC Senior Living and HealthPlus Fitness Center, Monarch Estates, Arbor Springs Rehabilitation Center, and the City of Auburn Parks and Recreation Department.

“Helping the older adult have a full and enriching lifelong learning experience has always been important to our program. As our program matures, we are finding more opportunities to share successful aging and learning techniques with our members,” explained Mary Burkhart, OLLI executive director. For more than 20 years, OLLI at Auburn has established strong relationships not only with Auburn University programs and departments but also with organizations in the city and the state.

In the fall, OLLI offered a class session in which representatives of AARP of Alabama visited the OLLI Current Economics Topics course to discuss issues related to Social Security and Medicare. Anne Hails, associate state director for community outreach at AARP Alabama, and Gwendolyn Lipscomb, a retired nurse with more than 45 years of experience in health

"Helping the older adult have a full and enriching lifelong learning experience has always been important to our program. As our program matures, we are finding more opportunities to share successful aging and learning techniques with our members”

– Mary Burkhart, OLLI executive director
service care and delivery systems, presented information from the Heritage Foundation and the Brookings Institution. “It is always a great experience to meet with OLLI members. Gwendolyn and I enjoyed the stimulating conversations we had with the OLLI students,” said Hails.

Through participation in wellness events and health fairs sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging, OLLI at Auburn has been able to broaden the spectrum of older adults who participate in OLLI activities. “Several times during the year, we partner with OLLI to introduce older adults in our community to lifelong learning. OLLI is an excellent program, and I am glad we work together,” said Maria Davis, long-term care ombudsman for Lee-Russell Council of Governments, Area Agency on Aging.

In the past year, OLLI at Auburn has provided helpful information about brain fitness at these fairs and wellness events. According to Linda Shook, OLLI associate director, “Using OLLI volunteers, OLLI has a presence at local fairs and meetings. These members can give peer-to-peer insight to other older adults, sharing with them the importance of staying healthy in mind and body.” Since the OLLI mission is to support education, having a presence at these events is quite natural. “We all know to exercise our body to experience good health. Now we are urged to exercise our brain,” she added. “Classes offered by OLLI at Auburn provide this opportunity. The brain exercises found in these classes will help seniors live an independent, normal life.”

Researchers find brain exercise, such as gaining new information from a concentrated effort, will delay dementia and lessen or relieve cognitive decline, preventing the plaque and tangles on the brain, damage caused by Alzheimer’s disease. Partnering with the Area Agency on Aging and Arbor Springs Rehabilitation Center, OLLI members who were students in the “Not for Sissies: Aging in America” course were able to participate in a dementia simulation demonstration. This interactive program allowed OLLI members
to experience the symptoms of dementia. “When we had the opportunity to partner with OLLI at Auburn we knew this could be positive experience for us and for the OLLI students,” said Suzy McHaney, clinical liaison for Arbors Springs Rehabilitation Center.

Chronic illnesses, physical setbacks, or forms of depression are common to those 65 or older. The process of aging in itself can depress people. Many seniors expect to get “hardening of the arteries” and dementia, an unnecessary acceptance, but a real concern. Losing a spouse, family members, or friends is a debilitating and extremely stressful experience. Being actively involved can help ease the impact of these events. OLLI at Auburn members and staff join with other organizations to share the good news of lifelong learning. “I enjoy the interaction I have when I meet new people and have the chance to talk about OLLI and healthy living,” said Emily Kling, OLLI at Auburn membership committee chair. “Our committee members are always ready to represent OLLI and to encourage others to join us.”

OLLI at Auburn is Auburn University’s program for older adults that features academic, not-for-credit programming. In addition to academic courses, OLLI at Auburn offers social events, lectures and special workshops, and brown bag lunch programs. You don’t need a college degree to participate. OLLI at Auburn is open to all interested people, to anyone who loves to learn. For information about OLLI at Auburn, contact Shook by email at OLLI@auburn.edu or go to www.olliatauburn.org.
Kimberly Smith, a doctoral student in Auburn University’s Department of Curriculum and Teaching in the College of Education, is conducting literacy research in Senegal as a Fulbright-Hays fellow.

Smith earned more than $27,000 in funding and is working with Senegalese educators to evaluate students’ oral vocabulary development in French and Wolof, a local language spoken by nearly 40 percent of the country’s population, and to promote French literacy skills necessary for academic and career success.

A native of Brewton, Ala., Smith has been working in the West African republic since the start of the 2012-13 academic year.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Program provides funding for students interested in conducting research in foreign language and international studies for a period of six months to one year.

Smith, who also conducted teacher training in South Africa, Kenya, and Malawi in the last decade, said she hopes to develop instruments and practices that can help educators better connect with children in complex second language settings and considers it a privilege to participate in teacher training on a national level in Senegal.

“Senegal is not unlike many countries around the world where young children speak one language at home, but arrive at school having to learn to read and to write in a formal language that is not their mother tongue,” said Smith, who is pursuing a doctorate in reading education. “I believe strong literacy skills are essential in providing students with the base to learn in all subject areas.”

Smith’s work has received the full support of Auburn University’s Office of Outreach, which provided books and other resources for use in the schools. Her fellowship has enabled her to work closely with U.S. Embassy personnel and others who she said have helped her obtain a larger view of educational work from a global development perspective.

While Smith’s travels have taken her to France and Iraq, she said she remains devoted to serving the needs of students in impoverished settings.

A survey released by the Center for Universal Education at Brookings revealed that approximately 61 million children of primary school age in sub-Saharan Africa – one in two – will reach adolescence lacking the ability to read, write, or perform basic mathematics.

In Senegal, 7 percent of children who begin receiving formal education earn the equivalency of a high school diploma.

“The realities are staggering,” Smith said. “For this part of the world, a good level of education means having choices regarding one’s future, which can lead to economic opportunities.”
For centuries, farmers have operated largely at the mercy of nature’s fickle temperament, whether this was expressed as a late freeze, a prolonged drought or a scorching temperature spike.

Now, a growing number of them are pushing back, thanks to what climate researchers have learned about El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), recurrent and normal temperature variations in a large swath of the eastern Pacific Ocean that influence climate conditions in the U.S. Southeast.

Jesse Scott of Malvern, Ala., is among the growing number of producers using climate forecasts based on what scientists have learned about ENSO.

“I usually plant around 100 acres of dryland corn every year,” Scott said, “but from 2006 to 2011, we had really bad rain-fed corn yields.”

This hard reality prompted Scott to reduce his dryland corn acreage from about 100 to 20 acres. But after learning about climate forecasting a couple of years ago at a meeting sponsored by the Southeast Climate Consortium and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Scott changed his mind.

Based on 2012 climate forecasts, Scott planted 95 acres of corn — a decision he said he has never regretted. His 2012 yields averaged 90 bushels an acre. His crop also happened to fetch a high price, making the decision even better, he recalled.

Brandon Dillard, a regional agronomy agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, compares the progress made in climate forecasting to what happened with fertilizer adoption during the last century. A few early forerunners like Scott bought into it, posted significant gains and, in the process, inspired other producers to embrace forecasting.

Also, much like fertilizer adoption, the more farmers buy into it and the more scientists study and build on what they learn, the more refined and useful climate forecasting becomes, said Dillard, one of several Extension educators at the forefront of efforts to help farmers benefit from these new insights.

“We’ve made some progress,” Zierden said, speaking at the 14th annual Wiregrass Cotton Expo Feb. 15 in Dothan. “We’re getting a handle on the predictability of seasonal rainfall and temperature.

“It’s not everything we need to know, but we’re making progress.”

One point driven home to Zierden and other scientists in the last couple of decades is how much drier the month of May has become. “While June rain hasn’t changed that much, May rains have declined to an average of about 2 inches — half of what was expected 25 years ago,” he said.

Scientists have gained other insights from a close study of the ENSO pattern, which, when not in a neutral phase, is expressed either as an El Niño or La Niña phase.

Warmer surface water temperatures in the Pacific are associated with the El Niño pattern and typically contribute to wetter- and cooler-than-normal winters.
and springs in the Southeast. Cooler water surface temperatures with the La Niña effect are typically followed by winter and spring climate patterns much warmer and drier than normal, Zierden said.

Research has demonstrated that corn and wheat yields are affected by these phases, which become more pronounced closer to the Gulf Coast.

“Curiously, when we have El Niño — rainy or stormy winters — we actually get reduced corn yields across the Southeast, while the warmer, drier winters and springs associated with La Niña bring higher corn yields,” Zierden said.

Climate researchers were initially stumped by these findings until follow-up discussions with Extension specialists and agents cleared up the confusion.

“We finally figured out what was happening,” Zierden said. “Given enough water, especially with irrigation, the warmer temperatures and increased sunshine early in the season — May and April [during La Niña] — get corn off to a good start.”

On the other hand, in the cloudy, rainy conditions associated with El Niño, corn starts off slowly, he said.

At Auburn University, Brenda Ortiz, an Alabama Extension specialist and assistant professor in the Department of Agronomy and Soils, cautions that these connections should be studied on a county-by-county basis.

Sorting out how these patterns play out with cotton initially proved challenging. Then a series of crop simulation models developed by researchers at the University of Florida and the University of Georgia shed some much-needed light on the problem, Zierden said.

The models revealed that early planting dates under the neutral phase — which happen to be the current and forecasted ENSO phase for spring and early summer 2013 — decrease the chances for low yields and also enhance the prospects for high yields. On the other hand, late planting dates produce exactly the opposite: an increased chance of low yields and reduced opportunities for high yields.

“Putting all this together — and with the understanding that I’m neither an Extension specialist nor an agronomist — I think it demonstrates that planting early, getting a stand established and taking advantage of existing soil moisture from winter and early spring rainfall better equips the crop to withstand the dry periods that follow in May and June,” Zierden said.

Ortiz also has been at the forefront of efforts to acquaint Alabama producers with the merits of climate forecasting. While underscoring that these techniques are no panacea, they provide farmers with an added layer of protection, she said.

“Farmers have to understand that when we speak of climate forecasting, we’re talking about probability, not an ironclad guarantee,” she said.

“On the other hand, when you think back to the serious drought from 1953 to 1954 when farmers had little information and few, if any, tools, we’re better prepared than we’ve ever been.”
Constance Hendricks, the Charles W. Barkley Endowed Professor in the Auburn University School of Nursing, received the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award during the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Breakfast at The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center.

The National Forum for Black Public Administrators East Central Chapter issues the award annually at the breakfast it sponsors with Auburn’s Office of the Vice President for University Outreach and Access and Community Initiatives in the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs.

The recipient of the award is an individual who has achieved extraordinary success in community service by demonstrating an unselfish commitment to the needs of the community. The individual should have demonstrated professionalism and leadership achievement in the arena of community involvement and reflect the mission of the life of King with a positive attitude of socioeconomic change through such avenues as an active church life, involvement in civic groups, and the display of an attitude of non-violent, social, and economic change.

In nominating Hendricks, Royrickers Cook, vice president for University Outreach at Auburn, noted her initiatives with community health and minority and rural health issues as major factors that warrant recognition.

“As a native of historic Selma, Ala., being selected to receive the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award is a humbling honor,” said Hendricks. “My parents taught me that ‘to whom much is given, much is required.’ It is that mantra that guides my life. Many persons invested their time and finances for me to excel; it is my obligation and responsibility to do for others to empower them to excel.”

Hendricks held faculty positions at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Tuskegee University before coming to Auburn in 1987. She left in 1996 and spent time at the University of South Carolina, Southern University and A&M College, and Hampton University, before returning to Auburn in 2007.

Lately, Hendricks has been working with a multidisciplinary team to explore collaborative research and outreach opportunities in Malawi, Africa. Fall 2012 marked the first time nursing students made the voyage with Hendricks, where they joined students from the University of Malawi Kamuzu College of Nursing in providing care to an orphanage run by the 100K Foundation and people in rural Malawian communities.

Shirley Sherrod, author of “Courage to Hope: How I Stood up to the Politics of Fear,” was the keynote speaker at the scholarship breakfast. The National Forum for Black Public Administrators also awarded three scholarships to local students during the event.
College of Human Sciences Gives Its Students View of New York Like No Other

The International Quality of Life Awards/New York Study Tour, offered exclusively to students in Auburn University’s College of Human Sciences, is unlike any other trip to the Big Apple.

The four-day trip included taking in a Broadway show and visiting some of New York’s main attractions – the 9/11 Memorial, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Chelsea Market and Meatpacking District. But when the study tour was created in 2011, it was intended to offer sites no one could see on their own. For 14 students and four faculty members in 2012, that meant the New York Stock Exchange, a fashion house, some of New York’s boutique hotels, and the Sesame Street Workshop.

The tour culminates with the annual International Quality of Life Awards at the United Nations. This year the honorees were: Alastair Summerlee, president of the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, as the IQLA Laureate; and Jimmy and Chris Pursell of Sylacauga, Ala., owners of Pursell Farms and FarmLinks, as the Lifetime Achievement Award recipients.

Susanne Sturdivant, a senior in hotel and restaurant management, had been to New York before, but admitted the study tour was “a whole different experience because everything that we saw on this trip was nothing like what I saw on the last trip, so it was like going for the first time.”

The New York Stock Exchange was a new experience for everybody, because it is not open to the general public. Auburn students not only got inside the historic Wall Street landmark, but also witnessed the ringing of the opening bell from the trading room floor.

Sara Gardner, a senior in apparel merchandising, design, and production, was anticipating the visit to Kay Unger New York, a high-end fashion line, until she realized there was much more to gain from the tour than simply seeing one’s own major.

“Even though we did only visit one fashion-related place, I was able to meet some different alumni and ask them questions about jobs,” said Gardner. “I thought that was definitely a bonus of the trip.”

As director of sales for Thompson Hotels, Auburn alumna Katy Law provided students with a look inside the Gild Hall, a luxury chic hotel near Wall Street. She recently left Design Hotels for Thompson Hotels, but was able to give students access to the Standard Hotel, a Design Hotels property. Law even hosted a lunch at another Design Hotels property, Hotel Americano in Chelsea’s art district.

Auburn alumna Christie Carlisle, who is designing evening wear for Kay Unger, said she appreciated the opportunity to open up the doors of the high-end fashion house to Auburn students as a way of giving back to the university.

“This was the most incredible experience I’ve done through Auburn University, by far,” boasted Kristin Wallace, a senior in nutrition, dietetics, and hospitality management. “I had no idea what to expect, so everything we did went above and beyond my expectations.”
Soaring with BraveHearts

Both Auburn and Opelika offer various activities year-round for residents. From outdoor movie events to downtown art walks, it would seem there is something for everyone. Yet, one woman noticed something was missing. Angie Colvin Burque, an associate clinical professor in the Social Work Program in the College of Liberal Arts, noticed something that most others hadn’t—the need for more opportunities for young adults diagnosed with moderate to severe disabilities. Thus, Expressions of a BraveHeart Fine Arts Program, more commonly known as BraveHearts, was born.

BraveHearts was started in 2010 and gives these teens a chance to engage in art, music, and dance classes. The classes are held at the Opelika Sportsplex every second and fourth Monday during the spring and fall from 5:30 to 7 p.m. The class has two teachers, at least one of which has experience with special needs youth. This is a unique program because each participant is guaranteed a primary coach, an Auburn student volunteer, who serves as a buddy to provide whatever degree of assistance is needed.
“BraveHearts is the intersection of a few different experiences and a collection of observations,” Burque said.

Burque attributes being a social work professor and having a history of social work practice experiences to the development and implementation of the program.

“A key part of social work is about doing and helping those who are underserved and most vulnerable in society,” Burque said. “I see kids with disabilities being very much in that element.”

Burque also has a personal reason she wanted the program to come to fruition. Burque said she has been blessed with two children, one of whom has a disability, and she noticed there was a need for a program like BraveHearts.

“I’ve gone through the experiences of what they are able to have access to and what they’re able to participate in,” Burque said. “I was thinking in the back of my head that there needs to be a really safe and fun place for this population to grow and thrive.”

Burque is also a believer of offering students experiences to prepare them for their futures. “I’m a strong advocate of [the principle] that if you’re teaching students how to be helpers they need real-life experiences with real-life people.” Each participant has an Auburn University student who serves as an individual coach and buddy during each class. Being a coach and buddy is open to anyone who is interested, not just social work or special education majors.

“You can’t go through life and not experience every person who is out there,” Burque said. “There is value to every person and you have to be open to understanding a population that’s different than you are.”

Daniela Werner, an assistant professor in the Social Work Program, said, “Everybody gets something out if it. My Auburn students always say they learn so much. It’s equally a learning experience for them.”

The coaches are taught to look for change and growth in much smaller quantities. “We tell our students, ‘don’t make any assumptions.’ Just because one of these participants is nonverbal doesn’t mean they aren’t taking in what’s happening,” said Burque. “There is value in everything we do. If a child doesn’t even go into the class there is value in sitting there with his or her coach in the quiet room. They’re still making friendships.”

Burque and Werner agree this is the ultimate way for people to reach out in their own backyard. “This program fits so well at Auburn University because this is part of our mission as a university, to go out and serve our community,” Werner said.

The program serves not only as a place for the kids, but also a place for the parents to connect with others. Werner describes it as a support and growth network.

“One of my favorite things is seeing how our Auburn students change throughout the semester and how attached they get to the club students,” Werner said. “Seeing the parents take pictures of their kids having an awesome time is rewarding.”

Future plans involve creating a template from BraveHearts that Burque and Werner can take to other areas. “We want it to be a development thing for the volunteers,” Burque said. “We want them to grow, and we want the kids to grow.”
Student Organization Serves Children’s Miracle Network

The Auburn University Dance Marathon, a student-run, nonprofit organization, sponsored its annual dance marathon on February 2. AUDM is a year-round fundraising effort, which culminates with the 12-hour Dance Marathon benefiting the Children’s Miracle Network. CMN is a nonprofit organization that raises funds to provide uncompensated healthcare for children in need and their families.

Lamar Assumes New Responsibilities

Jay Lamar, formerly of the Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, was recently appointed director of Special Programs in Academic Affairs. In her new role, Lamar will oversee the “Auburn Speaks” initiative as well as a variety of outreach projects through the Office of Undergraduate Studies, the University Libraries and other collaborations.

Campus Food Pantry Now Open

Campus Food Pantry, an initiative to aid Auburn University students struggling with food insecurity, is now open. Campus Food Pantry is located in the Student Center and provides non-perishable food items to any currently enrolled Auburn student. For additional information or to access Campus Food Pantry, contact Katherine Hettinger at keh0018@auburn.edu or 844-1423, or Tim King at tak0003@auburn.edu or 844-4978.

OLLI at Auburn Associate Director Leads Opening Session at National OLLI Conference

Linda Shook, associate director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University was invited to present the opening session at the OLLI National Conference at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colo. Shook’s session, Hot Topics in Curriculum, was attended by more than 150 conference delegates. “Linda’s session was praised as exceptional by those who attended. She deserves double-thanks for managing such a critical session,” said Fran Myers, OLLI National Resource Center director of conferences.

Richard Robinson, president of the OLLI at Auburn board of directors, also attended the three-day conference. Robinson gave an overview of “It’s All Greek to Me: Auburn University Theatre Production of Lysistrata,” a dramatic partnership between OLLI members and the Auburn University Theatre Department’s faculty and staff. The conference, held every 18 months, is only open to representatives from the 115 Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes located in all 50 states.

ECDI Awards 14 Rural Alabama Initiative Grants

Auburn’s Economic and Community Development Institute recently awarded 14 Rural Alabama Initiative grants to projects focused on leadership development, workforce development, rural tourism, and youth education. Created to stimulate community and economic development in rural Alabama, the RIA provides small grants to County Extension offices across Alabama to fund a range of development projects.
Designed and implemented by Extension agents, the projects address each county’s specific needs and goals and are grounded in local expertise and resources. Funded by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, RAI grants are developed and administered by the Economic and Community Development Institute at Auburn University.

Since launching in 2007, RAI has provided $1.3 million to fund 148 development projects statewide. Many of the projects have centered on growing leaders and promoting civic engagement, strengthening the community partnerships that are vital to development, especially in underserved areas.

**Day Receives Award for Outstanding Student Contributions to Service-Learning and Higher Education**

Auburn University junior Mary Afton Day was recently honored with the 2013 Award for Outstanding Student Contributions to Service-Learning and Higher Education from the Gulf-South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education.

The honor is given to an undergraduate student who has demonstrated extraordinary public or community service efforts while attending an institution of higher education. Day received a plaque and a monetary award of $500 in recognition of her accomplishments.

A Community and Civic Engagement and Living Democracy Fellow in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, Day is majoring in public administration with a minor in community and civic engagement. She also is president of the Community and Civic Engagement Student Club.

“Mary Afton takes advantage of every opportunity to become involved and connected,” said Mark Wilson, director of Civic Learning Initiatives in the College of Liberal Arts. “All of these activities and accomplishments are important, and they represent the kind of excellence required for building a stronger, democratic, just society. Mary Afton’s work in the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University embodies the kind of relationship-building and development of trust and understanding required for the kind of society we all want to live in.”

**All in All Pink**

To promote breast cancer awareness on campus, the vice president for University Outreach, in collaboration with the Office of Public Service and the Kappa Chi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., hosted the second annual All In, All Pink event on Oct. 19, 2012, on the Auburn University Green Space. The event was tremendously successful, as hundreds of students, faculty, and staff participated in the days’ events. The program included inspirational speeches from Augusta Haygood, Melanie Knause, and Alveta Reese as well as a few uplifting musical selections performed by the Auburn University Gospel Choir. Representatives from the Auburn University School of Nursing, Auburn University Healthy Tigers, Auburn University Relay for Life, American Cancer Society, Joy to Life Foundation, The Breast Cancer Research Foundation of Alabama, and the Harold A. Franklin Society also participated in the event.
Office of Public Service Sponsors Volunteer Fair

The Office of Public Service hosted the annual spring volunteer fair on Jan. 17, 2013. During the fair, which kicked off King Week activities, hundreds of students mingled with representatives from nonprofit agencies from the community and university.

The fair provided the volunteer-based organizations a forum to share their missions and service opportunities with Auburn students, faculty, and staff. This year, more than 25 agencies set up displays and distributed information.

Students attending the event gained valuable information about nonprofit organizations in need of their skills, while faculty and staff inquired about incorporating service and outreach into their existing courses.

Volunteer Fairs are held at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. For more information, visit auburnserves.com

Florida Campus Compact Executive Director Addresses Partners Luncheon

Community agencies and nonprofit service organizations from around the East Alabama area were recognized recently at a community partner luncheon organized by the Community and Civic Engagement Initiative in the College of Liberal Arts. University Outreach’s Office of Public Service co-sponsored the event. Florida Campus Compact executive director DeeDee Rasmussen was the keynote speaker.

The appreciation luncheon, which was held on Feb. 8 at the Auburn Alumni Center, recognized individuals and organizations not only for their direct service to the community but also their collaboration with faculty and students. Community partners provide unique opportunities for service-learning, community-based research, and internships, helping to fulfill the university’s land-grant mission of outreach and community engagement.

DeeDee Rasmussen is currently serving as the executive director of Florida Campus Compact, which is part of the national organization dedicated to helping colleges and universities increase and maintain community partnerships. Before assuming the directorship of Florida Campus Compact, Rasmussen served in the executive branch of Florida’s government as the director of cabinet affairs for then-treasurer, now U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson.

Ngumbi Selected as Commitment Mentor

Esther Ngumbi was selected as a Clinton Global Initiative University commitment mentor for 2013. Ngumbi served as a mentor during the sixth annual Clinton Global University meeting which was held April 5-7 at Washington University in St. Louis. The meeting brings together approximately 1,000 students from around the world for working sessions, skills sessions and a large-scale service project.

As a commitment mentor, Ngumbi facilitated discussions, shared resources and built networks among her assigned group of 50 students. She also helped the participants craft their personal plans to address challenges on their campuses, in their local communities or around the world. Ngumbi received her PhD in entomology under Prof. Henry Fadamiro. She is currently a post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology.

A group from Auburn High School’s “Girls Rock” attended sessions of the 2013 Outreach Scholarship Symposium.
University Outreach Assistant Vice President Appointed to Key Posts

Royrickers Cook, who leads Auburn’s University Outreach division, recently was elected chair of the board of directors of the Black Belt Community Foundation. The BBCF is a nonprofit foundation that offers grants and networking opportunities to service organizations meeting key needs in the 12-county region of west Alabama known as the Black Belt. Founded in 2005 with the idea that those living and working in the Black Belt best knew the area’s challenges and opportunities, the Black Belt Community Foundation actively puts needed resources into the region to make a lasting impact. Cook was also recently elected to the board of directors of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association. UPCEA is an international professional organization for higher education outreach and lifelong learning faculty and specialists. UPCEA, the largest and most influential association of its type, has members in every state and several countries worldwide. It sponsors several conferences annually, as well as a number of professional communities of practices, journals, and other resources.

Photos from Black Belt Community Foundation 2012 Community Associates’ Retreat, Rick Cook, BBCF Board Chairperson Elect
House United Building Project
May 5-11, 2013, Lee County, AL

Volunteers from the University of Alabama will team up with volunteers from Auburn University to build a house.

For additional information and application visit, www.auburn.edu/houseunited or contact Joyce Thomas-Vinson, thomaj5@auburn.edu, (334)844-5117.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
Outreach K12 Reaching Out Globally

Auburn’s K12 Outreach Develops International Relationships

Since the adoption of the university strategic plan there has been an increased focus on international programming throughout the campus. In particular, University Outreach has extended its focus of community engagement to include international engagement.

Outreach K12 Coordinator Christiana Russell was recently invited to Koblenz, Germany to speak at an international consortium on K12 Education and the African Diaspora in Germany. The conference was hosted by the board of directors of the African Leadership Group in Koblenz. The African Leadership group is a nonprofit organization comprised of African pastors based in Germany, Belgium, and Italy, as well as German educational and community leaders.

The primary goal of the leadership group is to address the issues that concern Africans living in Europe, particularly Germany and Belgium. Countries such as Germany have seen a significant increase in the population of Africans that move to Germany from African countries that were colonized by the Germans in the late 1800s. The Africans living in Germany are referred to as Afro-Germans.
The focus of this conference was to discuss some of the main issues affecting the new millennium generation of Afro-Germans in regard to educational needs and acculturation. “We need to reach out to the global community of educators and researchers to help address some of the educational issues facing our youth, because our community is much like any other community,” said Elder P. Martin, director of the African Leadership Group.

“This conference was a great opportunity and has opened up the dialogue with great potential for partnership and collaborative efforts with Auburn University K12 Outreach and the African community in Europe,” said Russell. “Additionally, it falls in line with the Africa Initiative sponsored by University Outreach and the Office of Multicultural Affairs.”
Learn more about Auburn University Outreach and read additional issues of Beyond Auburn Magazine.