OUR GARDEN GROWS
New Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden educates and inspires new generations of nature lovers

INNOVATING THE WORKFORCE PIPELINE
Carl Vinson Institute of Government is helping Georgia communities create a strong employee base for high demand careers

RETAINING STUDENTS, BUILDING LEADERS
One high school sees a spike in graduation rates after adding J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development program into its curriculum
The Magazine of UGA Public Service and Outreach

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Photo by Shannah Montgomery

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More Walnut Grove High School students are engaged in school—and graduating

From bees to business, sausage to success, UGA helps small business grow
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

When I became President, I envisioned a university that would be more and do more for the citizens of Georgia and beyond, expanding the boundaries of human understanding and improving our quality of life.

At the University of Georgia, we are proud to be the state’s land-grant and sea-grant institution, and we make that mission a catalyst for action.

Each year, our students complete over 500,000 hours of service, supporting causes ranging from health care to food insecurity. Our faculty and staff help to create hundreds of new businesses that employ thousands of people. We develop leaders in government, communities, schools, and nonprofit organizations.

Whether in large urban areas or tiny rural towns, the University of Georgia is working to solve the problems that matter most to our communities.

That is our commitment.

JERE W. MOREHEAD
PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

As the state’s land-grant and sea-grant institution, the University of Georgia has a responsibility to serve the state, sharing expertise and knowledge that strengthen communities and help all Georgians prosper.

For UGA Public Service and Outreach, that responsibility is our mission and one we carry out from Georgia’s mountains to her marshes, in small towns from Clarkesville to Cairo.

Whether it’s through our Small Business Development Center helping launch new businesses that create new jobs, or the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development working with Georgia’s K-12 schools to incorporate leadership skills into their core curriculum, we connect the university’s resources to solve challenges and create new opportunities for people in their communities.

Our mission fuels our outreach programs to do more, to reach higher, to make lives better.

In this annual publication, we share with you some of our best work from the previous year.

I hope you will enjoy reading the 2019 Outreach magazine.

JENNIFER L. FRUM
VICE PRESIDENT, PUBLIC SERVICE AND OUTREACH

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www.outreach.uga.edu

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Women’s Leadership Academy Expands to Rome

The J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development has expanded a women’s leadership program that has been successful in southeast Georgia to northwest Georgia this fall, with support from Georgia Power.

The Lynda Brannen Williamson Foundation (LBWF) in Statesboro launched its women’s leadership academy in 2013 to prepare young women in southeast Georgia for career and community leadership roles. Since its inception, 64 women in southeast Georgia have graduated from the LBWF Leadership Academy, and a fifth class began in Statesboro this fall. The academy looks at servant leadership through a woman’s lens, examining topics such as personal leadership, communication and conflict, strategies for effective leadership and multigenerational leadership. Classes also meet with local and state leaders and “pay it forward” through a community service project such as a women’s career day or a mentoring program for high school girls.

Georgia Power works closely with the state to support education programs that benefit our high school students who are developing new skills and evaluating career paths, but offer Georgia employers an opportunity to address the critical need of recruiting, develop the next generation of workforce talent, and invest in their communities.

The J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development has created a toolkit website, www.gaworkforce.org. The website includes additional resources for schools and businesses that are establishing or expanding high-quality workforce, internship and apprenticeship programs.

Fresh Faces Visit New Places on the Great Commitments Student Tour of Georgia

Twenty-five University of Georgia undergraduate students got a firsthand look at how UGA is making a difference in Georgia communities during the inaugural Great Commitments Student Tour of Georgia over spring break.

Sponsored by the Office of UGA President Jere Morehead and coordinated by both UGA Public Service and Outreach and UGA Student Affairs, a primary goal of the new tour was to help students better understand the land-grant and sea-grant missions of the university and how the University of Georgia fulfills those missions by helping to create stronger, healthier and more secure communities.

From the mountains to the coast, the students saw examples of ways that UGA boosts local and statewide economies and improves the quality of life for Georgians. Stops on the tour included agricultural and nature-based destinations at Janner Farms and Okefenokee Swamp, the state Capitol in Atlanta, economic hubs at Pinewood Studios and Gulfstream Aerospace, a local Archway Partnership community in Pulaski County, and important social landmarks at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Together, the destinations gave the students an overarching view of the complex and unique landscape of Georgia, and the important role that UGA plays throughout the state.

“I have lived in Georgia my whole life, and I thought I knew my state, but it wasn’t until the Student Tour of Georgia that I fully grasped just how awesome and innovative Georgia is and what a pivotal role UGA plays in this,” said Kathleen Reynolds, a finance and marketing major from Johns Creek.
Angela Wheeler, Vinson Institute cartographer, and Kiisa Wiegand, GDOT business analyst examine proof versions of the state map.

OLD-SCHOOL MAPS STILL HELPING Modern-day Travelers

Even with sophisticated GPS systems, many Georgians still like the look and feel of a crisply folded state road map, veined with red and blue highways.

For the past two decades, the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) have collaborated to produce the official state road map every two years, making it available in many government offices, visitors and welcome centers, and rest stops along Georgia interstates.

“While there is still a demand [for maps],” said GDOT Business Analyst Kiisa Wiegand. “They’re really interesting. They show changes in geography, how the road system changes over time, and they give users a more accurate sense of direction.”

The latest map was issued in January, after a year-long review and revisions by Vinson Institute cartographers and GDOT graphic designers.

GDOT printed nearly one million copies of the 2019-20 map, which included 200 revisions from the previous version. The updated edition includes new color coding that depicts coastal water depths rendered by Vinson Institute Cartographer Angela Wheeler, artistic representations of state symbols created by Wiegand and municipalities that have formed since the last map— Peachtree Corners, South Fulton and Stonecrest—among other changes.

The new entrance will be the main gateway to the garden from the parking lots above. The C. Burke Day Jr. Memorial Walkway will lead to an overlook that provides a glimpse of the new Center for Art and Nature, the Alice Hand Callaway Visitor Center & Conservatory, and the Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden.

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State Botanical Garden

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efforts.
Lange had attended a Disaster and Emergency Preparedness class during a training conference presented by the Vinson Institute in partnership with the Association County Commissioners of Georgia.
The class inspired him to dust off the existing Harris County disaster response plan, update it, and prioritize response and recovery needs.
On March 3, a tornado ripped through Harris County, damaging homes and leveling thousands of trees. The county was prepared, Harris County Manager Randall Dowling said.
I think that the response was smoother
since the country had a recent update to its operation plan," Dowling said.
A newly completed park, where the tornado had flattened most of the trees, became the county’s storm debris drop-off site for cleanup crews and the public. A few weeks later, county employees met with commissioners to review their response to the emergency, to discuss what worked, and what they can do better. They used that information to further update the county’s disaster response plan.
The daylong Disaster and Emergency Preparedness class is designed to help county leaders learn how planning can improve disaster response, explore their roles and responsibilities, and offer practical guidance on post-disaster action steps, said Mara Shaw, leadership development program manager at the Vinson Institute.
"At the end of the day, (Lange) commented about how much he had learned about his role in an emergency situation and the homework he needed to do when he got back to Harris County," Shaw said. "Then, he put his learning into action. That’s the way it’s supposed to work." ■

UGA Student Designs Plans
FOR A MOULTREE-COLQUITT COUNTY WELCOME CENTER

A UGA graduate student is creating designs for a vacant storefront on the Moultrie square that will serve as the city’s official welcome center.
Yisheng Fang, a graduate student in interior design at the UGA Lamar Dodd School of Art and a graduate assistant for the UGA Archway Partnership, is drawing the plans for the space, formally a Citi-Trends retail store. The newly renovated space will serve as a cultural communication center for Moultrie so that more people can know about the city. The building also will house offices and possibly a co-working space for small businesses.
The Archway Partnership is a unit of Public Service and Outreach at UGA. It connects Georgia communities to students and faculty from the university, who can help address critical community-identified needs.
Colquitt County was where Archway started back in 2005 and is one of 13 communities across the state served by the Archway Partnership. ■

Leadership Institute Helps Macon Businesses Grow
By Charlie Bauder
An entrepreneurial leadership curriculum developed by the University of Georgia is helping several Macon business owners lead their businesses to new heights.
In 2018, New Town Macon—a nonprofit organization focused on economic and cultural development in downtown Macon—contracted the UGA J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development about developing a program that would blend leadership and entrepreneurial skills development for current and aspiring business owners in downtown Macon.
“We have a small business loan program, and a lot of people that we help finance never have taken a business loan before,” said Bethany Rogers, director of business and real estate development for New Town Macon. “They often need some coaching to get them across the finish line, so we were trying to figure out a way to offer that in a group setting. After bringing our ideas to the Fanning Institute, we saw the need to also include leadership and personal development as part of the program.”
Building on New Town Macon’s program vision, Fanning Institute faculty designed the curriculum for the New Town Macon Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy and facilitated the initial class in fall 2018.
“We developed a unique curriculum that impacts leadership development as a core component to successful entrepreneurship,” said Brandt Walker, a public service associate at the Fanning Institute. “We first asked participants to focus on themselves as a person, a leader and a business owner in order to set them up for success in developing their business plan.”
Over the course of four sessions, participants focused on developing leadership skills critical to working with others to grow their business, while also learning more about business plan development and other entrepreneurial skills.
“Having Brandy’s expertise in curriculum design and presentation added tremendous value to the program,” Rogers said. “Her work made the curriculum much more digestible for the participants and much more dynamic.”
The academy helped me identify weaknesses and get people on board to help me in those areas.
— Megan Carson
Scott Mitchell, owner of Travis Jean Emporium, an art gallery and gift shop in Macon, credits the academy with helping him grow his business and expand his leadership role in the community.
“Before going into the academy, I decided that this year I was going to step back and not do some things like outside committees,” Mitchell said. “Instead, the academy showed me that I need to step up more.”
As a result, Mitchell joined the Chamber of Commerce board and is the incoming chairperson of Main Street Macon, which he said also opened doors for his business.
“I had 15 months of straight (revenue) increase from the previous year until June 2019,” Mitchell said.
Megan Carson, owner of Sparks Yoga in Macon, also developed her business ownership skills through the academy.
“From a leadership perspective, I was having a hard time delegating and leading my business as much as I should be,” Carson said. “The academy helped me create a more concrete vision and mission and take charge of my business more.”
Evaluating her business following the academy, Carson identified a need to restructure her membership plans and since doing that, membership in the yoga studio has increased significantly, she said.
According to Mitchell and Carson, the academy also strengthened the relationships between business owners in downtown Macon.
“The connections have been very helpful by learning that I have not been alone in these struggles,” Carson said. “I have these connections now that I can reach out to and talk to. We’re all in this together.” ■
Held Accountable
NONVIOLENT OFFENDERS GET SECOND CHANCES—AND THE STATE SAVES MONEY—THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY COURT PROGRAMS
By Scott Michaux

Jody Merrill had been sitting in the Gilmer County Detention Center for four months, awaiting trial on a felony DUI charge, when he was offered an opportunity.

Merrill could remain in jail, or have his case referred to a local accountability court for nonviolent charges stemming from drug, alcohol or mental health issues. Instead of going to prison, Merrill would be sentenced to a structured 24-month program specifically designed to treat those issues while still allowing clients to lead productive lives outside of prison.

The retired Air Force master sergeant, who had been arrested four times in the past six years, jumped at the chance to be released into the local accountability court specifically for veterans.

“My current position, I have employees who all learn differently. It’s up to me as a leader to provide them with the necessary learning tools that will enable them to perform their job tasks to the best of their ability.”
— Sara Myers, Hawkinsville city manager

I thought it was great. Whatever you put into this program is what you’ll get out of it. You’ve got to want it and work for it. It’s like any sport. I feel like I came out of this program as a champion.”

A study by Wes Clarke, senior public service associate at the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government, showed the accountability courts save the state $38.2 million a year. In addition, Clarke found that accountability court program graduates had a recidivism rate of 40 percent—less than half the rate for non-program participants.

The programs aren’t easy. Offenders have strict curfews, regular mandatory drug testing, court appearances, 360 hours of community service, counseling and work requirements. Participants without high school diplomas must complete GED requirements.

The first felony drug court in Georgia was established with a federal grant in 1994 in Bibb County. The state’s first DUI courts appeared in 2002 in Chatham, Hall and Clarke counties.

Currently there are 160 accountability courts covering all 95 judicial circuits in the state. The programs now include Pulaski drug, DUI, mental health, family treatment and veterans’ courts, as well as juvenile drug and mental health courts.

Merrill graduated in 26 months. Ever since, he’s served as a mentor to other veterans in the program.

“We have had an influx of younger people. People of multiple races and genders are now filling up leadership positions that have seemed unattainable in the past. By having people that may approach problems differently, we are able to be presented with multiple solutions to problems rather than the same old tried solutions.”

One of the first priorities of the Pulaski County Archway Partnership was to identify new and emerging leaders in the community.

Today, just nine years after the Pulaski Tomorrow Leadership Program began, women are holding top leadership positions in the county for the first time.

“Pulaski Tomorrow has provided a doorway for a diverse group of people to obtain leadership positions within our community.”
— Shelly Berryhill

One of the first priorities of the Pulaski County Archway Partnership was to identify new and emerging leaders in the community.

“Pulaski Tomorrow has provided a doorway for a diverse group of people to obtain leadership positions within our community,” said Shelly Berryhill, executive committee chair of the Pulaski County Archway Partnership and Hawkinsville city commissioner. “We have had an influx of younger people. People of multiple races and genders are now filling up leadership positions that have seemed unobtainable in the past. By having people that may approach problems differently, we are able to be presented with multiple solutions to problems rather than the same old tried solutions.”

Twenty-one adults participated in Pulaski Tomorrow in 2010. Since then, more than 100 Pulaski adults and about 150 youth participants have graduated from the program.

“My current role as plant manager requires that I manage and lead all types of people,” said Ruiz, who worked for Hollingsworth & Vose for almost 15 years before becoming plant manager. “I often recall the experience from Pulaski Tomorrow as I handle various situations.”

Myers worked in administration in healthcare before she became Pulaski county clerk in 2011 and later city manager. In that larger role, it was important for her to understand that individuals don’t all learn the same way.

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Merrill graduated in 26 months. Ever since, he’s served as a mentor to other veterans in the program.

“This gives them an opportunity to get sober, do jobs, to be responsible and to have some chance at a life,” said Chief Judge Brenda S. Weaver, who currently serves as the chair for the Council of Accountability Court Judges in Georgia. “That’s the key. If we can keep someone in a stable home environment and they’re working, those individuals are less likely to offend again.”

Jody Merrill (right) was facing a felony DUI charge when Chris Holt, coordinator of the Appalachian District’s veterans court, approached him about the program. Merrill graduated in 2016 and now mentors other veterans.

Chief Judge Brenda Weaver addresses participants in the Appalachian District’s accountability court program for veterans. Weaver was an early proponent of such programs; UGA research shows that they saved the state $38 million in 2017.
Fulfilling Educational Potential One Zoodle at a Time

By Aaron Cox
Photography by Shannah Montgomery

Cal Holten, 5, wears a metal colander as a helmet as he marches through the Dig and Grow area of the Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden. Nearby, other 3 to 6-year-olds rummage through the lush vegetable garden looking for basil, zucchini, okra or whatever else that catches their eyes.

“I’ve never picked basil before,” Maggie Jacobsen, 6, says, as the children smell the sweet fragrance the herb leaves on their fingers.

While it may look like chaos, this Thursday morning at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia is part of an organized program to introduce very young children to nature. The 2.5-acre children’s garden was designed with education at the forefront, and the Garden Earth Explorers program helps fulfill that mission. Thursday mornings, the program is geared to children ages 3-6. On either Saturday, it is suited for ages 7-10. On either day of the week, the 45-minute, interactive class has quickly become a favorite of parents and kids.

“We came yesterday to play with their cousins and we just loved it and the kids wanted to come back again,” says Erin York, whose daughters Vera, 7; Hattie, 3, and Birdie, 2, are in the class. “It’s amazing to have this space for kids to be creative and do things like cooking in the garden. It’s wonderful.”

During today’s lesson, the children learn about some of the vegetables growing in the Dig and Grow area, and how to use them to make a meal.

They collect tomatoes, zucchini and basil leaves.

While some of them linger at the water pump, becoming as wet as the greens they’re washing, others begin creating zoodles, a pasta substitute that is made by twisting a zucchini through a special slicer to produce noodle-sized strands.

“It’s just like you’re sharpening a really big pencil,” Ellen Klinger, an education specialist at the garden, says as she shaves down the leaves.

Finally, all the ingredients are brought together to reveal the finished product—a zoodle pasta topped with pesto sauce and diced tomatoes. Some eye it suspiciously. A daring few stretch the long zoodles above their heads and lower them into their mouths.

Vera York turns back to her mother after giving the dish a small taste.

“I only ate the zoodles,” she admits. “But they were good.”

The number of visitors to the State Botanical Garden has increased by a third since the opening of the Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden, named for a charter member of the board of advisors who launched its fundraising campaign with a $1 million gift.

“This is hands-on experience,” says Cora Keber, director of education at the State Botanical Garden. “Instead of learning about a plant in a text book, you are getting the opportunity to make those observations yourself and connect not only in an intellectual way, but also kind of in an emotional way.”

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“It’s creating ambassadors for green spaces,” Keber says. “They’re connecting with the conserves that our land provides. By having these places and creating these ambassadors, they become the people that protect the space later.”
The Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden was intentionally designed to allow children to learn about nature in their own way—through play and hands-on interactions. Every section of the garden was created to inspire a sense of adventure and nurture a love of the environment. The Georgia Plaza showcases the vast diversity of the state’s geography in the form of granite walls and flowing streams that are meant to be touched. The Waterways flow through a pitcher plant bog and end in a pond brimming with aquatic plant and animal life. The Pollinator Plaza is made up of misting mushrooms, spinning flower cups, climbable ladybugs, and rolling grass hills, all showcasing the symbiotic relationship between plants and insects. Navigating the Over, Under, Through section takes children over rope bridges, down slides, past real, touchable fossils, through a Georgia cave, and underground with the roots of the plant beds. Those same plant beds make up the Dig and Grow section, an area where kids learn about fruits and vegetables by watering, picking and even cooking the freshly grown ingredients. A tunnel through the “bones” of an old chestnut tree leads visitors to the Forest Play section, a space where children can channel their inner squirrel, both in the trees and on the ground.

When Eric Shaffer worked at the Leisey Shell Pit in the 1990s, the remaining fossils from a major archeological find of the 1980s were so abundant employees were allowed to collect them as long as they were never sold. Over 10 years, Shaffer collected teeth, bone shards and animal shells from prehistoric times. Last year, he and his wife, Loretta Lee, a long-time garden supporter, donated his entire collection to the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. His real fossils were the centerpiece of the fossil wall and sand pit in the children’s garden and the remaining hundreds of smaller fossils are now used in children’s programming at the garden.
UGA Food Programs Benefit Those Most Vulnerable

By Kelly Simmons
Photography by Shannah Montgomery

Students at Clarke County middle schools work with fresh food every day, growing vegetables in their school gardens and learning how to prepare meals with their harvest.

But some of them don’t have enough to eat at home.

To address that issue, two of the schools—Hilsman and Coile—created food pantries with assistance from AmeriCorps VISTAs (Volunteers in Service to America) at UGA.

“We wanted to increase access to fresh produce, but also make sure that kids are getting fed, that parents have food in their pantry,” said Katie Stanhope, a VISTA with the Office of Service-Learning (OSL) last year, who oversaw the garden nutrition program at Hilsman.

Since 2012, UGA students have been at the forefront of addressing food insecurity in some of Athens-Clarke County’s most vulnerable communities.

“Students at Clarke Middle School harvest collard greens from the school garden. Those and other vegetables are sold at the school’s weekly produce market or given to students.”

— Katie Stanhope
VISTA with Office of Service-Learning

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— Katie Stanhope
VISTA with Office of Service-Learning
JIM WARNER, an OSL VISTA at Burney-Harris-Lyons Middle School, ran a food reclamation program to collect and redistribute uneaten fruit during lunch. Much of the food is given back out during lunch; whatever is left over is bagged and used during after-school programs or for students who need an extra snack during the day. Collections last year exceeded 3,500 lbs. of food, which kept that food out of landfills and back into kids. “When it started, teachers asked me, ‘How are you going to get rid of all of that?’ Now they ask, ‘Who’s NOT getting a bag of food today?’ They all know the food is getting re-distributed and that lets me know it’s working.”

Campus Kitchen at UGA, run through the OSL, now serves more than 800 individuals, most of them grandparents raising grandchildren as identified by the Athens Community Council on Aging. Students involved in Campus Kitchens collect unused food from local restaurants and stores, as well as seasonal vegetables from the student-run UGArden, and repurpose it into prepared, family-size meals for their clients. Families also receive a grocery bag of food.

The middle schools use grants from grocery stores, donations, and cash raised by selling fresh produce provided by UGArden to stock their food pantries. Stanhope spent the beginning of the year slowly stocking the pantry, which is available to students and families in the Hilsman community and is open after school and on some weekends.

As in all Clarke County schools, Hilsman and Coile students receive free breakfast and lunch at school each day, thanks to a provision from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for counties with high rates of poverty.

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Coile’s food pantry is specifically created for students who are on the waiting list for the Food Bank at Northeast Georgia’s Food2Kids Program, which only has the capacity to serve 15 students at any one time.

Farmer said response to the school programs has been positive because they do not single out specific students. “It reduces stigma, there are lots of positives,” she said. “We’ve seen an increase in meal participation.”

Katie Stanhope helps stock the pantry at Hilsman Middle School.

One option is the Kitchen Garden Corps Summer Camp, which has been run at Clarke Middle School for the past five years through the OSL and Grow It Know It program. Students from any of the CCSD middle schools can work in the school garden and farm, harvest food, plan menus and prepare weekly lunches for community members.

Grow It Know It operates throughout the school year in all Clarke County Middle Schools. Last year Russell Middle School in Barrow County adopted Grow It Know It and offered a summer program this year at the Winder Housing Authority. That program also is run by an AmeriCorps VISTA hired through the OSL.

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“The you can’t have a school garden by yourself. It really takes a village; you need expert knowledge, materials, construction, all the support you can get.”

— Alyssa Flanders, teacher, Russell Middle School in Barrow County
GEORGIA ASTER
Symphyotrichum georgianum, is found in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, but with fewer than 15 populations in each state.

DWARF SUMAC
Rhus micrantha, is an endangered shrub, now found in only a few populations in North Carolina, Virginia and Georgia in Elbert and Rockdale counties.

HAIRY RATTLEWEED
Baptisia arachnifera, is an endangered perennial now only found in two Georgia counties, Brantley and Wayne.

SMOOTH CONEFLOWER
Echinacea laevigata, is an endangered plant found in scattered locations in South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia, and only in one county in Georgia—Stephens County, where there are 10 populations, four of which were reintroduced by the State Botanical Garden.

PONDBERRY
Lindera melissifolia, is an endangered shrub found in the coastal plain of Georgia, as well as in Alabama, the Carolinas, Mississippi, Missouri and Arkansas. The populations in Georgia have only male plants, which means they cannot set fruit and produce seeds.

GEORGIA ROCKCRESS
Arabis georgiana, is a threatened perennial with only 28 populations left along rocky slopes in Alabama and Georgia. Seven populations exist in Georgia in Chattahoochee, Clay, Floyd, Gordon, Harris and Muscogee counties.

ROYAL CATCHFLY
Silene regia, is an endangered perennial. Only one population remains — in Dade County, Georgia.

CANBY’S DROPWORT
Oxypolis canbyi, is an endangered perennial that is found in the coastal plain of Georgia, the Carolinas, Maryland and Delaware. Only 15 known populations exist in Georgia, in Burke, Dooly, Jenkins, Lee and Screven counties.

GEORGIA TRILLIUM
Trillium georgianum, is a newly identified species found naturally just in Whitfield County, Georgia. It has been re-introduced to a nature preserve in Floyd County, but deer challenge its survival.

SANDHILL ROSEMARY
Ceratolea ericoides, is a threatened evergreen shrub found throughout the southeast and in 11 Georgia counties; Bryan, Candler, Charlton, Emanuel, Glynn, Pierce, Richmond, Tattnall, Toombs, Wayne and Wheeler.

For more information on imperiled native plants and how to become a sponsor, go to botgarden.uga.edu/georgia-endangered-plant-species or contact Debby Frederes at Deborah.frederes@uga.edu or 706-542-6150.
Last December, the trainees attended a four-day training that was modeled after the Georgia Certified Landscape Professional program, developed by UGA Cooperative Extension’s Center for Urban Agriculture. They heard from guest speakers with expertise in green infrastructure and landscaping, and attended a field trip to the UGA Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens where they practiced planting trees and installing irrigation systems. The experience is exposing them to green industry careers and preparing them for employment and advancement through skills development and professional certification.

Through the traineeship, 22-year-old Jason Smith secured a job with Victory Gardens, a professional landscaping company in Savannah that focuses on installing ecologically sound landscapes.

Savannah lost a lot of trees in Hurricanes Matthew and Irma.

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant is helping restore the lost greenspace in order to decrease flood risk and beautify barren space, while training Savannah residents in landscape design and infrastructure improvements.

“Green Infrastructure to Green Jobs,” funded by the Southeast Sustainable Communities Fund, will create urban tree nurseries in low-lying, flood-prone neighborhoods in the city.

“We’ve been looking at how much Savannah’s urban tree nursery had been lost over the decades,” said Nick Deffley, sustainability director for the City of Savannah and lead on the project. “We were losing a lot of trees to development, some were just getting old, and we had two hurricanes in the last three years that took a toll as well.”

The hurricanes—Matthew in October 2016 and Irma in September 2017—caused significant damage to Savannah’s tree canopy, with Hurricane Matthew costing over $1 million in tree debris removal and unknown losses in water storage from mature trees. The City of Savannah owns over 350 flood-prone Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) lots that are underutilized community assets. As coastal Georgia experiences extremes in weather, municipal governments are looking to green infrastructure, such as tree canopies, to improve their resilience to major storm events.

Deffley is working with a team of experts, including land-use and resiliency specialists at UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, to engage the members of the community in the project, helping them understand their risks and recognize the benefits of implementing green infrastructure, such as tree canopies.

Since the project launched in 2018, more than 500 trees have been planted at three urban tree nurseries by trainees in the Landscape Management Apprenticeship Program, an innovative workforce development program that trains residents in arbor care, plant identification, installation and maintenance.

The trainees involved in the program were recruited through two events hosted by the City of Savannah and WorkSource Coastal, a federally funded program designed to assist coastal residents in job training and career placement.

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— Nick Deffley
Sustainability director, City of Savannah

\"The whole intent is to not only introduce all of these folks to potential employers in this field, but it’s to really do everything we can to get them placed in jobs that are much more sustaining.\"
“Every skill that I learn with Nick, I apply them here every day,” says Smith, who has an associate degree in graphic design from Briarcliffe College in New York. “This job incorporates design in outdoor work. I love nature. I love the color green. It’s a pathway for me to express myself while working.”

At the end of the year-long trainee program, Smith and four other participants will take a two-part landscape management certification test that includes a hands-on and a written component. To help them prepare, they are assisting with community beautification projects that require them to apply the landscaping knowledge that they are gaining through the program.

They spent most of the spring and summer helping with a project that involved clearing several overgrown FEMA lots on 52nd Street near Mills B. Lane. The area has long been a concern for residents because of illegal dumping. Now that the site is cleared, the city can more easily access and regularly maintain the area, which will eventually be planted with native flowering shrubs.

“We’re out here three days a week, and every day people ask, ‘what are you guys doing?’” says Robert Hartwell, who is participating in the landscaping program. “People need to know about this stuff, you know? It starts with the community.”

Hartwell is taking steps towards starting his own landscaping business, first forming an LLC (limited liability company), then buying a pickup truck and landscaping tools.

“You know what’s so good about this program. It teaches you all the steps,” he says.

Deffley hopes the project encourages the trainees and people in the community to be a little more engaged in nature and understand the true benefit of trees.

“Encouraging them to provide feedback, share ideas and having them help implement the projects. I think that’s how we start that longer term buy-in,” says Deffley.

Additional project partners include the Savannah Tree Foundation, Victory Gardens, Work Source Georgia and the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission. The Kendeda Fund is also providing support for the initiative.
A Tale of Two Cities
(which are now one)

HOW A LONG-TERM UGA RELATIONSHIP HELPED REVITALIZE A UNIFIED CITY

By Roger Nielsen
Photography by Shannah Montgomery

A dilapidated 19th-century hotel in downtown McRae-Helena is being restored to house a restaurant, sports bar and tasting room. The town pharmacy, Ryals Drug Store, was renovated and an urgent medical care center moved into an empty storefront. A flower shop opened nearby.

The city government is negotiating with the owner of an historic theater to have it donated to the city for community space.

Former retail space was redeveloped as loft apartments.

The downtown transformation began after McRae and Helena, contiguous cities situated at a rail crossroads in Telfair County, were merged in 2014.

The merger, facilitated by the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government, was the first between two cities in almost 100 years.

McRae native Liz McLean graduated from UGA in 2013 and returned home, first taking a part-time job as a city clerk and later editor of the local newspaper, the Telfair Enterprise. In 2015, McLean was named city manager with oversight of the new development.

She now lives in one of the downtown lofts.

“The apartment redevelopment has been what’s spurred the development in this block,” McLean said.

That’s just one example of the renewal that’s taken root since the two cities merged. A new generation of government leaders like McLean and McRae-Helena Mayor Mike Young challenged the community to take a more innovative approach to problem-solving.

They began paying more attention to downtown redevelopment, and that inspired businesses and private citizens to do the same.

“The merger opened people’s eyes that everyday problems can have creative solutions,” McLean said. “The private investment is part of the transformation. The city is investing in downtown, and in doing so, I think we are encouraging private investment.”
In addition to five new loft apartments and the urgent care center, a new barbecue restaurant opened downtown. A historic home on the edge of downtown was repurposed to house Holly Diana Floral, and Ryals has expanded its inventory to include clothing and home goods, McLean said.

Unlike city-county consolidations, no state law governs city mergers, said Ted Baggett, Vinson Institute associate director. And the technical complexities are considerable.

“Y ou’ve got two different revenue streams, two different sets of ordinance codes—all kinds of differences between two cities on things like alcohol regulations, rates of taxation and zoning requirements,” he said. “There’s no legal framework for city-to-city consolidation in Georgia, and there’s no precedent.”

Despite the obstacles, the cities officially united on Jan. 1, 2015, with a celebratory swearing-in ceremony at 12:01 a.m. Five months later, McLean became city manager, but the groundwork for the city’s rebirth had already been laid. In 2014, the city completed a streetscape project to beautify a block in what had been the city center of McRae. Supported by federal transportation enhancement funds administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the city hired a contractor to renovate sidewalks and install brick pavers, decorative lighting and a new crosswalk.

“I think that it has widened the scope of what people think will be possible here and paved the way for bigger ideas for our downtown.”

— Liz McLean, city manager for McRae-Helena

The streetscape project motivated one property owner to start fixing up his buildings, and that encouraged others. So far, nine buildings in that block have been completely renovated or had significant facade improvements, McLean said. “When public funds are spent on beautification projects, it tells residents and property owners that our community is worth investing in,” she said.

McLean continued to pursue revitalization projects, and in 2018 the city was selected for the Downtown Renaissance Fellows program managed by the Vinson Institute with the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Cities Foundation and UGA’s College of Environment and Design (CED).

The fellowship is a 12-week summer internship that pairs CED landscape architecture students with Georgia cities to work on downtown improvement projects. Renaissance Fellows Rachael Shields and Elizabeth Solomon developed designs and technical recommendations for additional streetscape work, historic building renovations, wayfinding and signage. Their ideas for adding greenery using low-maintenance plantings are being incorporated into a second GDOT-funded streetscape project, McLean said.

“The Fellows Program was a great way to help community leaders and business owners get involved with the idea of downtown revitalization and see what the potential for our community is,” she said. “I think that it has widened the scope of what people think will be possible here and paved the way for bigger ideas for our downtown.”

The Renaissance Fellows also provided design ideas for the old Telfair Hotel, the 19th-century Helena landmark being renovated by a private developer.

Local businessman Russell Cravey had bought the old hotel at a rail junction next to the original Helena train station, and planned to tear it down. He was encouraged by the community and the revitalization taking place to instead restore the building with its ornate brickwork and lobby ceilings.

When it is complete, Cravey wants to create a tasting room where visitors can sample beers, wine and distilled beverages made throughout the state.

“All of those companies have their own outlets, but there’s no single place where you can go and try everything that Georgia produces,” Cravey said. “I could put everything in one place and promote those products across the state.”

Now, McLean is striving to get approval to establish two opportunity zones—one for each of the two separate downtown districts in the combined city—to further encourage redevelopment. Despite the recent loss of Husqvarna, which employed 1,000 people, city leaders are optimistic about the future.

“It’s hard for a lot of people to see sometimes,” City Councilman James McLaughlin said, “but we’re moving in the right direction.”
Their Blue Blood Saves Lives

NOW UGA IS HELPING TO SAVE THEM

By Emily Kenworthy
Photography by Shannah Montgomery and Emily Kenworthy

P acemakers, prosthetic implants, antibiotics, in fact every medicine or medical device approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, depend on the horseshoe crab.

A protein in the blue blood of the crab is used to test medicine and medical devices for bacteria before they are used on humans, saving millions of people from infection.

But to get the blood, the horseshoe crabs must be harvested and bled. Though they are returned to the ocean, studies have shown that some die and females are unable to produce as many offspring. Scientists are working on a synthetic version of the protein.

Until they create it, marine researchers like those at UGA are exploring ways to protect the species from decline.

UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant is working with a pharmaceutical company to farm the horseshoe crabs in their natural habitats on Jekyll Island, as a way to maintain the blood supply without depleting the horseshoe crab population.

"It’s a semi-natural environment in the fact that it’s tidally influenced, full of marine life and it would be similar to what they might experience out in the wild," says Bryan Fluech, associate director of Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant.

Fluech and marine resource specialist Lisa Gentit worked with Kepley Biosystems Inc., based in North Carolina, to construct four 5-by-15 foot holding pens to house the horseshoe crabs in a saltwater influenced tidal pond, established in cooperation with the Jekyll Island Authority and the UGA 4-H Tidelands Nature Center on Jekyll Island.

The site was ideal for the study because it was easy to access and because the environmental conditions in the pond are comparable to Georgia’s estuaries, where horseshoe crabs are commonly found.

Over the course of the six-month project, Fluech and Gentit monitored water quality and conducted routine health assessments of the crabs to assess their responses to being in the enclosures.

"Think about humans," Fluech says. "We give blood and if we’re not careful we can get woozy and it can affect our health. The same can be true of horseshoe crabs. In addition to drawing their blood, we are also taking them out of their natural environment, hauling them to a bleeding center and returning them to their home hours or days later.”

Current methods of harvesting crabs often involve removing and transporting them, sometimes hundreds of miles from their natural habitat, to bleeding facilities where almost a third of their blood is extracted before they are returned to the wild.
The stress of removing them from their natural environment, collecting the blood, then releasing them without feeding or providing further care can have negative impacts on their health. “If we can keep the crabs healthy, instead of bleeding the crabs once a year for about 30% of their blood, maybe, through careful husbandry, we could bleed them multiple times a year for a smaller percentage of their blood,” says Kristen Dellinger, a research scientist at Kepley and principal investigator on the horseshoe crab project.

Dellinger said several studies have explored sustainable harvesting methods, but none have taken the approach of housing them in environments that are similar to their natural habitat.

“There have been some attempts to raise horseshoe crabs in captivity for bleeding purposes, but, to my knowledge, those studies were done in closed tanks and the horseshoe crabs were given a fixed diet,” Dellinger says. “We’re curious whether this is what caused their survival.

The project, funded by the National Science Foundation Small Business Innovation Research grant, involved conducting periodic bleeding and monitoring of 40 tagged horseshoe crabs that were kept in the enclosures at the research site on Jekyll Island.

The horseshoe crab’s blood contains a compound called LAL, or limulus amebocyte lysate, which causes blood to clot around deadly endotoxins, trapping them and keeping them from spreading. Thanks to this special compound, millions of patients are protected from bacterial contaminants each year.

Unfortunately, the widespread use of LAL comes at a cost to the hundreds of thousands of wild horseshoe crabs that are harvested annually for their blood.

In the outdoor, submerged enclosures on Jekyll Island, the crabs had access to natural food on the bottom of the pond and they experienced tidal rhythms as well as day and night cycles, all of which are things they experience in the wild. “In a perfect world, you’d satisfy the global needs of LAL with diet, care and appropriate breeding from a captive population that can continue to flourish as well as provide a service to the medical industry,” Dellinger says.

In addition to looking at the environmental conditions, the research team tested different bleeding methods in an effort to optimize the way the blood is collected with the ultimate goal of using less blood. Some studies have shown that the bleeding process can impact the spawning patterns of female horseshoe crabs, with some spawning less frequently or not at all. Findings such as this are alarming not only when it comes to maintaining healthy horseshoe crab populations, but also for other animals that depend on the crabs for survival.

Threatened shorebirds like the red knot rely on horseshoe crab eggs for essential nutrition during their annual migration. They time their migration to arrive during spawning season so they can feast on the eggs that fuel their annual flight to nesting grounds in the Arctic.

Because of their benefits to humans as well as their ecological significance, it’s in everyone’s best interest to keep a healthy population of crabs, Dellinger said.

During the six-month project, Fluech collaborated with university partners on a number of initiatives connected to the study, with the goal of spreading awareness about the project and the environmental importance of horseshoe crabs.

Fluech is working with Dawn Zenkert, coordinator of the UGA 4-H Tidelands Nature Center, to incorporate information about the project into educational activities at the center.

“We’ve been able to stop there and share information about the project with students and campers,” Zenkert says. “It has been great just being able to talk about it with visitors. Last week we had a couple visiting from Canada who learned about it.”

Campers kayaking in the tidelands pond as well as those who passed by the site on their way to the salt marsh routinely stopped to talk with Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant interns Cole Wilder and Ivy Spratling, who assisted with the project over the summer. These interactions allowed Wilder and Spratling not only to gain experience in research and experimental design, but also to cultivate their informal education skills.

“We’ve been able to have value added because of the connections we have here with our community partners,” Fluech says. “Regardless of the intended outcomes of this project, from a public service perspective we’re successfully advancing knowledge of the industry and supporting efforts to preserve horseshoe crab populations.”
Just northwest of Atlanta, Cherokee County boasts a well-educated population. More than 90 percent of its residents 25 and older graduated from high school. More than a third have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Yet 78 percent of the employed residents commute outside Cherokee County—some as far as Hall and Clayton counties.

That commute causes multiple problems. Residents find themselves sacrificing quality of life for hours in traffic, while the county faces an influx of new residents but a daily drain in talent. If the workforce in Cherokee County didn’t match the jobs local industries were looking to fill—or the jobs they hope to draw in—the local economy would be in trouble.

“They recognized that if they were going to achieve their economic development goals they were going to have to win at their talent goals,” said Greg Wilson, a public service assistant at UGA’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government. “Keeping jobs and attracting new jobs in years to come.”

In 2016, the Cherokee Office of Economic Development formed the Cherokee Workforce Collaborative (CWC) and partnered with the Vinson Institute to develop a strategic plan for workforce development. The collaboration brought together community members representing industry, education and other critical partners from economic and workforce development to evaluate labor market and education data to address the talent gaps and workforce challenges.

This past summer, 13 Cherokee high school students worked in paid internships for local businesses, gaining valuable experience and opening up a pipeline to post-graduation employment.

INNOVATING GEORGIA’S Workforce Pipeline

By Scott Michaux
Photography by Shannah Montgomery and Cherokee Office of Economic Development
Guided by Wilson and supported by David Tanner and Mercy Montgomery from the Vinson Institute, the CWC began creating a road map to identify workforce needs and strengthen its ability to recruit and retain jobs. The plan that evolved identified four priorities for improving its workforce pipeline: internships, innovative career preparation, business and education alliances, and sustaining momentum.

Within two years, Cherokee has already started hitting all the marks by using the plan that the Vinson Institute helped the CWC create as “a strategic blueprint.”

“They pointed us in a measurable direction making sure we’re using the data and putting it into the community with a specific strategy,” said Matt Martin, president of the Cherokee Office of Economic Development. “Every group was just doing their own thing before. All good work, but now I feel like everybody is in the room sharing their great ideas and working together on it. I can’t wait to see what happens next and where it goes from here.”

Workforce development is not just an issue from here. “We’re having to prove that even though we’re outside Atlanta, it’s still a good location.”

CWC Chair Aaron Ingram says communication between the business community and the local schools has greatly improved because they recognize they have the same objective.

“The Cherokee Workforce Collaborative works to match career pathways with Cherokee’s high-demand jobs,” said Ingram, president of NeoMed Inc., a medical device company in Woodstock. “These community-based partnerships protect against disconnects between education and industry and help solve future workforce challenges.”

Martin, Ingrahm and Shawna Mercer, who was hired to manage CWC programs in 2018, say the internship programs are the biggest success to date. Thirteen rising high school juniors and seniors were offered paid internships this past summer at a variety of businesses, including Alma Coffee, a farm-to-cup coffee roasting company with locations in Canton and Woodstock, and Roytec Industries, an electrical wire harness and assembly manufacturer in Woodstock.

“The company asked Black, who has experience coding, to stay on beyond the six-week internship to work on a project to further develop UAC’s platform,” Ingram said.

“After years of driving, I wanted to find a job closer to home,” said Fernandez, who returned to the expo this March as an employer. “I came to the Cherokee Career Expo last year and found my dream job.”

Cherokee County’s progress in creating workforce building blocks bodes well for the growing county’s future. “It’s a long game,” Wilson said. “They’re already having some wins now after three years, but if they keep this focus on talent for decades they’re really going to be a shining star in Georgia and even across the southeast.”
In 2015-16, 64 teacher-nominated students made up the first Student Steering Committee, receiving leadership training and working with the school administration to develop ideas for school improvement. “Topics included understanding leadership, goal setting and conflict management,” says Fanning Public Service Associate Lauren Healey, who helped customize the Fanning curriculum to focus on issues most relevant to the high school students. “We also teach the students about servant leadership and strategic planning to help them strengthen the school environment.”

Working with the administration, members of the steering committee have introduced new events that help motivate and reward Walnut Grove High School students:

- Warrior Day is an end-of-the-year festival to celebrate a successful school year;
- The “Everyday Warriors” project includes students, sometimes 80 to 100 a week, that are nominated by teachers and recognized for being role models;
- “Warriors Leading Warriors” is a peer mentor program.

AS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INCREASES, GRADUATION RATES RISE

Walton County high school is seeing increased student involvement and higher graduation rates since adopting a University of Georgia youth leadership program into its curriculum. In 2015, Walnut Grove High School in Loganville implemented the Youth Leadership in Action curriculum, designed by the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at UGA. So far, 300 students have completed the curriculum, and many have gone on to serve on committees and boards that help make decisions for the school.

Since the leadership curriculum was adopted by the school, graduation rates have risen from 78.3% (2013-14) to 86.2% (2016-17), which is well above the state average of 81.6%.

“The program empowers students to facilitate their own goals and develops them as leaders among their classmates,” says Walnut Grove High School Principal Sean Callahan. “We have seen school climate improve, students stay in school, become more involved and take ownership of their school, which all lead to achievement.”

So far, 23 schools in Georgia have incorporated the Youth Leadership in Action curriculum into their instructional time. Fourteen are elementary schools, six are middle schools, six are high schools and three are middle schools.

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— Kris Cofie, Walnut Grove High School senior

“Learning about my personality type and how I handle situations as a leader has helped me at work, where I am a night leader. It helps me lead others at work to get things done more effectively.”

— Kris Cofie, Walnut Grove High School senior

Students engage in team-building exercises as part of their leadership skills development.
Composed of students that have served on the steering committee, the board works with the school to implement the committee’s ideas and receives additional leadership training to help them further develop in areas like project planning, goal setting and communication.

Exposing children to leadership skills training early in their development provides numerous benefits for the children and the communities, Healey said.

“Teaching children about leadership at a young age prepares them for success socially and educationally as they mature,” Healey says. “In addition, cultivating regular leadership programs in a school setting creates a culture within the student body of ownership, leadership and accountability that benefits the students, the school and the community.”

Serving on the steering committee and steering board is a way for students to set an example and leave a legacy, said Reese Baker, a Walnut Grove High School senior.

“We are role models for other students,” Baker says. “They ask us about the committee, and it gives them something to strive for. My sister will come here next year, so I can’t wait to come back and see the results of what we’ve worked on.”

Lessons learned as a committee member also help outside of the classroom, said Walnut Grove High School senior Kris Cofie.

“Learning about my personality type and how I handle situations as a leader has helped me at work, where I am a night leader,” Cofie says. “It helps me lead others at work to get things done more effectively.”

School administrators in Colquitt County, which began implementing the elementary school leadership curriculum into its English/Language Arts classes in 2015, have seen a noticeable difference in students’ behavior, said Marni Kirkland, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction for Colquitt County Schools.

“Injecting the Youth Leadership in Action curriculum into the classroom has positively impacted behavior and classroom climate,” Kirkland says. “The hands-on and collaborative nature of the leadership activities have really benefited the students.”

The feedback from schools using the curriculum confirms its value, Fanning Institute Director Matt Bishop said.

“At every grade level, teachers are seeing more engaged students that recognize their schools as communities and want to help lead those communities,” Bishop says. “Walnut Grove already is reaping the benefits of the program by graduating more of its students.”

“Education should be about teaching students to be productive, work with others and impact their environment. We couldn’t do this without the Fanning Institute. Together, we have created something that fits our school and our goals.”

— Sean Callahan, Walnut Grove High School Principal
A University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach unit, the SBDC has 17 regional offices located throughout the state. Over the last five years, the SBDC has helped start 1,741 new businesses, helped create 13,849 jobs and raised $885 million in loans and equity financing for clients.

The Small Business Development Center at UGA grew out of a relationship between William C. Flewellen Jr., then dean of the UGA College of Business Administration, and Reed Powell, dean of California State Polytechnic University’s School of Business, in 1975 when both men were on the advisory board for the U.S Small Business Administration (SBA).

Flewellen said at the time: “I was amazed at how little the SBA people and this group [of small business people] knew about collegiate business schools, and I was amazed at how little I knew about the SBA.”

He and Powell began talking about the idea of a small business development center in every state. In 1976, the SBA named UGA one of eight universities in the country to pilot an SBDC.

With the blessing of then-UGA President Fred Davison and support from the Georgia General Assembly, the University System Board of Regents put the UGA College of Business Administration in charge of creating the SBDC. State lawmakers also passed a resolution that allowed them to help fund the center directly.

When the SBDC celebrated its 40th year in 2017, consultants had assisted more than 530,000 entrepreneurs and small business owners.

“Over these past 40 years our mission really hasn’t changed,” SBDC Director Allan Adams said. “What has changed is that, like many of our clients, we have become more efficient and more targeted in our approach to the market.”

In addition to one-on-one consulting services, which are offered at no direct cost to clients, the SBDC also offers courses at a minimal cost for entrepreneurs looking to start a business and for small business owners who want to grow. Specialty courses include digital marketing and exporting, and programs about hiring, providing benefits and working with state and federal government agencies.

Ted Dennard discovered his fascination with bees as a child. Later he began raising them and harvesting their honey. In 2002, he and three employees ran his wholesale Savannah Bee Company from a small building on Oakland Island.

A friend opened a store in Savannah and sold Dennard’s honey. His business increased as other retail stores stocked his products. Retail sales began to exceed the wholesale business.

But Dennard was more interested in the bees and honey than the business. He didn’t understand cash flow. He turned to the Savannah office of the UGA Small Business Development Center (SBDC). A consultant met with Dennard, helped him build his brand and create an e-commerce platform, and helped him understand business and develop a strategy for success.

She also helped Dennard secure an interest-free loan to open a storefront in downtown Savannah. Since then, the business has thrived.

The Savannah Bee Company now has about 160 employees in its retail and wholesale operations. Savannah Bee Company stores are in 11 cities in seven states, with products also sold through hundreds of retailers across the country and online. In addition to honey, its products now include skin care and beauty products, candles, books, t-shirts and mead.

He credits the SBDC, from which he still seeks advice, with much of his success.

“I understand business now because of the SBDC,” Dennard says, as he walks through a garden with beehives, pear trees, mulberry bushes and flower boxes next to his warehouse/store on Wilmington Island in Savannah. “I understand business now because of the SBDC.”
SBDC CLIENT SUCCESS OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS:

- **New Businesses Started**: 1,741
- **New Jobs Created**: 13,849
- **Capital Raised Through Loans & Equity Financing**: $885M
- **Total Sales**: $9.7B

WHAT WE DO:

The UGA SBDC’s mission is to enhance the economic well-being of Georgians by providing a wide range of educational services for small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

In 2018, the UGA SBDC consulted with 4,091 clients and conducted training programs attended by 2,971 Georgians.

Hugh Hardy Jr. launched Carroll’s Sausage & Country Store in Sycamore in 2001. He now has stores in Ashburn and Sylvester, and his gross sales have increased from about $250,000 to well over $6 million.

SBDC consultants in Albany helped Hardy find sites for his business, develop a business plan and put together a low interest loan application that resulted in a $1 million to develop a former manufacturing facility into a store.

"I’m the sausage maker," Hardy said. "To have these guys on board to help with the bank, it was a tremendous help."

John and Pat Curry, former newspaper employees in Athens, launched Buona Caffe Artisan Roasted Coffee after John attended an SBDC SmartStart class in 2011. The Currys already were roasting coffee at home. The Augusta SBDC helped them develop a business plan, make financial projections and pull together documents for an SBA-guaranteed loan to purchase equipment and make improvements to their first building, a 1,500-square-foot 1930s cottage in the Augusta historic district.

In June 2012, Buona Caffe moved into a new location, grew to a staff of seven and was named by Fodor’s Travel as one of America’s top 15 indie coffee shops. They finished 2013 with a 100 percent increase in revenues over the previous year.

In Athens, the SBDC also is working with Envision Athens, a partnership between community and government leaders to create a 20-year strategy for economic development. The organization is based on the idea of government and community working together, making comprehensive community planning more insightful, intuitive and inclusive.

The SBDC worked with Envision to host a training program in February for local business owners who want to grow and for entrepreneurs looking to launch a business. About 30 participants attended the event, supported by Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community development; Enlightened Media, the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Northeast Georgia Business Alliance. Participants learned about starting a business, writing a business plan and managing cash flow.

Wesley Chenoweth, who owns Grizzly Delivery LLC, a transportation service for people and packages, knew he needed support to make his business a success, but felt lost as a minority, start-up business.

"The SBDC event was like a breath of fresh air," he said. "Entrepreneurs from all walks of life and industries were together, engaging, encouraging and uplifting each other," Chenoweth said. "I left with a feeling of inclusion within my community and a clear path to success for my business."

OUTREACH:

Other programs have included women and minorities business expos, an introduction to federal contracting, the art and science of hiring, and how to do business with UGA.

Christina Ernst, who owns VIP Southern Tours, reached out to the SBDC for help in 2013 when she launched a North Georgia Wine tour. Her company was profitable in the first year of operations and she was named 2014 Entrepreneur of the Year by the White County Chamber of Commerce.

“The advice the SBDC provided me was very helpful,” Ernst said. “They advised me on funding for vehicles, and with that knowledge I was able to structure the rest of my business.”

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Established businesses receiving long-term UGA SBDC assistance.
EXPERIENCE AS A PSO STUDENT SCHOLAR AND INTERNSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF SERVICE-LEARNING LED ALUMNUS INTO A PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER

Sarah Jackson

By Leah Moss

After Sarah Jackson took her first service-learning course at the University of Georgia, she was hooked. Ten years later, she’s made a career out of service, community engagement and nonprofit partnerships.

“Through my geography major, I became involved in a bunch of service-learning courses, and I got to really apply what I was learning in the classroom into the real world in a practical sense,” said Jackson, who earned a bachelor’s degree in geography with a minor in Spanish from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. “It gave me confidence, new skills.”

Service-learning courses inspired Jackson to become a Public Service and Outreach (PSO) Student Scholar, a year-long program that introduces students to UGA’s land- and sea-grant mission. During the spring, scholars complete an individual internship with a PSO unit that most corresponds with their academic and professional goals.

Jackson interned with the Office of Service-Learning (OSL). In true service-learning nature, Jackson wasn’t just sitting at a desk. Along with another student, Jackson pioneered Campus Kitchen at UGA (CKUGA), UGA’s student-led, hunger relief organization.

At CKUGA, volunteers collect surplus food from grocery stores and the university’s student farm, UGArden, prepare meals, and package food in bags to deliver to people at risk of hunger.

“We partnered with the Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA) to identify clients and found out that over 70% in the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program were food insecure,” said Jackson. “It just seemed like a really big gap and something where we could really make a difference.”

After graduating in 2011, Jackson stayed at UGA and turned her internship into a full-time coordinator position. Within four years, CKUGA grew to more than 400 volunteers and helped reduce food insecurity among ACCA clients by 30%.

“During her time at UGA, Sarah created meaningful, impactful, lasting change. She was able to develop herself as a leader and hone her skills in community partnership management and program evaluation,” said Shannon Wilder, director of the Office of Service-Learning.

After earning a Master of Public Administration Administration from the School of Public and International Affairs in 2013, Jackson’s journey to combat food insecurity led her to the Georgia Food Bank Association, which helps coordinate the efforts of Georgia’s seven regional food banks. As director of strategic initiatives, Jackson facilitated partnerships, secured sponsorships and created campaigns. It wasn’t long though until she found herself in a daunting new position: coordinating statewide responses during national disasters.

“Hurricane Michael was devastating to southwest Georgia, which had just been hit with tornadoes the year before. The agricultural damage was huge, and that’s the foundation of our economy,” Jackson said. “When people think recovery, they think six months after. No. It takes years just to go through all the cases.”

During Hurricane Michael, Jackson served as the point of contact between volunteer relief organizations in Georgia and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS). When a community partnerships manager position opened up at GEMA this year, Jackson’s role was reversed—she’s now the one helping to coordinate response efforts with volunteer groups.

When storms aren’t brewing, Jackson will be traveling throughout rural Georgia to build infrastructure and create strong nonprofit partnerships. That way, when storms strike, communities are better equipped to deal with the damages.

“My experience in service-learning is what made me who I am today and I’m so grateful for that,” said Jackson. “I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing without it.”

The Public Service and Outreach Student Scholars program provides the opportunity for a select group of undergraduate students to explore and engage with the University of Georgia’s public service and outreach mission. Supported by the Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach (PSO), and administered through the Office of Service-Learning, this year-long program is intended to provide deeper understanding of PSO’s purpose, breadth, and depth through experiential learning opportunities within Public Service and Outreach units. The program also helps students link their public service experiences with their career and educational goals, and create a community of student scholars who understand the role of public service in Georgia and more broadly. The program was first established in spring 2011 with 10 students.
Faculty Fellows offer tenure-track and tenured professors an opportunity to pursue their research through a unit of UGA Public Service and Outreach. The PSO Vice President provides $15,000 to a fellow’s home department, to be spent as the department head deems appropriate. Applications for the fellowships are accepted in March and can be found at outreach.uga.edu/programs/pso-fellowship-program.

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FOCUS ON THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING, SHORELINE STABILITY AND HEALTH CONCERNS IN RURAL GEORGIA

James C. Anderson II, in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, created mentor leadership training materials for the State Botanical Garden’s Learning by Leading™ program. The program starts with freshmen bringing them into the garden to complete a series of leadership development activities and completing service projects. Eventually, students develop signature projects, connect with mentors, and apprentice or intern at the garden.

Projects vary. Students in the education department designed activities for volunteers to use to engage visitors at Alice H. Richards Children’s Garden, including dressing up as birds and creating bird nests. Upon completion, students will have a vast experiential learning transcript—and feel more prepared to pursue science careers.

“I think he’s able to use his focus and leadership abilities in ways he hadn’t thought of before—it leverages him to be an even better faculty member,” said Leslie Edgar, department head of the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication Department, where Anderson works.

Jennifer Gay, in the College of Public Health, worked with Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant to study the impact of volunteer litter cleanups and other ways coastal environments contribute to healthy lifestyles. Together with Kerry Smith, water quality program coordinator for Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant, Gay targeted the Golden Isles community. Smith has strong connections to the volunteer community through partnerships with conservation organizations like Keep Golden Isles Beautiful and the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, which host volunteer cleanups throughout the year. During the study, volunteers wear heart rate monitors and accelerometers that track frequency, intensity and duration of cleanups, as well as step counts over a one- to two-week period.

After analyzing the data, the researchers plan to develop educational outreach materials designed to engage people, who are aren’t as active or involved in litter debris cleanups, as a way to get them involved in physical activity and environmental stewardship.

“I always joke that it’s exercise with a purpose,” said Sharon Hindery, a participant in the study. “I go out and I pull a bag or two of trash off the marsh or the side of the road, and I look back at it and I feel better.”

S. Sonny Kim, in the College of Engineering, worked with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to look beneath the surface of roadways and assess their condition beyond what the naked eye can see. The information can then be used to advise government agencies.

Using funding provided by PSO to his academic department, Kim upgraded the device used to study roadways, the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), and installed it on a truck, effectively increasing the speed at which he can measure roadways from 3 MPH to 65 MPH. He and his team spent the past year monitoring ten different one-mile sections of highway in Athens-Clarke County.

Through his collaboration with the Vinson Institute, Kim was able to input his roadway data into the institute’s Geographic Information System (GIS), creating an interactive map that allows users to select a section of road and see its current and predicted future state.

“What Sonny’s technology and expertise allows for is brilliant imaging of those assets and to be able to use that information in a way that they can then determine where [government agencies] need to invest their money,” said Stephen Durham, associate professor and assistant dean for Student Success & Outreach at the College of Engineering.

For more than 200 years the University of Georgia has worked throughout the state to create communities with educated citizens, strong civic and business leaders, good infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and amenities that help provide a positive quality of life, all key to attracting new companies and jobs.

UGA continues to be uniquely positioned to boost the economic vitality of the state and increase prosperity for all Georgians.

IT STARTS WITH GEORGIA.

itstartswith.uga.edu

$823.4M ANNUAL OUTREACH IMPACT
1,741 NEW BUSINESSES CREATED*
13,849 NEW JOBS CREATED*

*in the last five years
A gift will endow one internship a year. Foundation (Dorothea Smith’s family’s committed money from the Patrick Family on Skidaway Island, Smiths to UGA from their home in Ohio, met as students at UGA.

Dorothy Porterfield, extension education director at the UGA Marine Extension and Education Commission for the Coast into an opportunity for a student. Students supported by the Patrick Family Foundation Funded for the Smith Family Marine Summer Internship will have an opportunity to engage in a broad range of activities at the UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant facilities on Skidaway Island. They can help care for the animals on display at the UGA Aquarium, will have the opportunity to research specific behavioral and physical characteristics of several marine species, can shadow marine science researchers in the field and lab, learn about shellfish research, and perhaps apply their knowledge of marine science concepts in the design and execution of a research project.

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It was at the reunion of the Mohrton Senior High Class of 1961 that Pete Sayecki, John Tucker and John Carlson began to discuss a way to make a meaningful contribution to the community that provided support and nurtured them during their formative years.

"What was ingrained in me is that people in Colquitt County take care of each other," said Sayecki, who graduated from UGA in 1965 with a bachelor’s degree in economics and went on to a successful career in Educational Publishing at The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Sayecki and his childhood friends, including Jimmy Jones and Patrick McConkey, founded the Mohrton-Colquitt County Alumni Scholarship Fund, designated for an academically talented student from Colquitt County High School. Using a dollar-for-dollar match from the UGA Foundation, the group has raised over a million dollars for Georgia Commitment Scholarships for students to attend the University of Georgia. The money will allow the UGA Foundation to award $700,000 annually for students from Colquitt County High School every year in perpetuity.

The garden staff will prepare a series of plant displays and a pedestrian loop for Georgia Power, other utility right-of-ways, and native plant and bird displays. The $50,000 gift will help pay for the way into a native prairie.
James B. Miller Jr.'s $350,000 gift to the State Botanical Garden of Georgia in 1984 was the first private funding the garden ever received, and it forever changed the trajectory of the board of advisors.

"It was symbolic, it set the tone for the whole board to be able to succeed, and it made an incredible difference to the garden," said Susan Duncan, who helped establish the board in the early 1980s.

Since then, Miller—a charter member of the garden's board of advisors—has remained active and involved, giving generously both personally and through programs. Allgood has served as a member of the advisory board's strategic direction. The Fanning Institute's mission is to strengthen communities through leadership development, training and education.

The advisory board helps guide the strategic direction of the Fanning Institute. Through advancement and guidance, the board helps the institute fulfill its mission to strengthen communities and organizations through leadership development, training and education.

Through this initiative, the Fanning Institute will provide support to communities across Georgia that aspire to begin, restart or revamp their current community leadership programs. Allgood has served as a member of the institute's advisory board since its creation in 2014 on up until the advisory board chair fell since fall 2016.

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The Callaway Foundation has given more than $5.8 million to the State Botanical Garden for capital improvements that have enhanced visitors’ experiences. Those included initial funding for the garden’s headquarters, the Callaway Administration Building, in 1973. The Callaway Foundation also funded the Callaway Conservatory, and it will include an elevator to greatly improve access for visitors in wheelchairs, pushing strollers or who have difficulty maneuvering stairs.

Based in LaGrange, Georgia, the Callaway Foundation is a private foundation with origins that can be traced to the early 1900s and Fuller E. Callaway Sr.’s concerns for the health, education and welfare of the people in the community where he lived. Since that time, the foundation has made contributions for religious, educational and charitable purposes to schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, libraries, recreational facilities and downtowns.

The Callaway Foundation, Inc. received the 2019 Donor Impact Award in recognition of its longitudinal support of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, including a $1 million award in October 2018 to help fund a new visitor entrance. The new entrance will be the official gateway to the garden from the parking lots to the Alice Hand Callaway Visitor Center and Conservatory, and it will include an elevator to greatly improve access for visitors in wheelchairs, pushing strollers or who have difficulty maneuvering stairs.

Donors giving $100 or more in fiscal year 2019 are recognized, unless anonymity is requested. We have made every effort to ensure accuracy; however, if we have made an error or if biographical information has changed, please let us know by contacting the Office of the Vice President for Public Service and Outreach at (706) 542-9831.

Dr. Carol Heath Winthrop and Mr. Robert Winthrop II
Winthrop Foundation of Athens Georgia
Mr. Kenneth Wolf
Mrs. Sandra Wolf
Woodforest National Bank
Mr. Thomas S. Woodroof
Woodruff Memorial Charitable Trust
Ms. Laura E. Woolston
Ms. Beth Wray
Mr. and Mrs. B. Nell Young
Mr. Gresham Young
Dr. Walter L. Young, Jr. and Ms. Patti Steve Young
Ms. Gail Younts
YourCause, LLC
Ms. Patricia Zaghi
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UGA would not be what we are today without supporters like you who believe in the land-grant and sea-grant mission of the University of Georgia.

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