CED Grad Presents to Archway Executive Committee

On Wednesday, September 5, UGA Masters of Landscape Architecture graduate Rachel Johnson presented her finalized renderings of Lakeshore Park and Threadmill Lake to the Archway Partnership Executive Committee. Rachel’s presentation to the Executive Committee reflected almost a year’s worth of collaboration between UGA College of Environment and Design (CED) students and community partners as they worked to make these properties more accessible and enjoyable to the public. In addition to the requested work on the projects, Rachel demonstrated how a trail system could be implemented linking several local parks and green spaces, including Brookwood Park, Threadmill Lake, Lakeshore Park, and Al Rollins Park. Rachel also highlighted ways to connect to Brookwood Elementary, a neighboring school that can benefit from the improvements.

The Executive Committee was very interested in the projects both from a community amenity standpoint and from a storm water infrastructure perspective. Over the next month, the committee will explore implementation logistics and feasibility with community partners.

For press coverage of the Lakeshore Park project, view the links below:

Dalton-Whitfield Convenes Task Force to Explore Arts & Culture Opportunities

On Wednesday, August 29, Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership Executive Committee member Linda Blackman convened local stakeholders to discuss the possibility of forming an Arts and Culture Council Task Force. Linda called the meeting at the behest of the Archway Partnership Executive Committee following a presentation by UGA Masters in Public Administration student Megan Miller about successful arts and culture councils. Megan’s research revealed that most successful organizations focus on using arts and culture as an economic development tool. Megan urged the Executive Committee to consider forming a task force to explore the need for, goals of, and the sustainability of an arts and culture council more closely.

Linda invited Megan Miller to the meeting to share her research with this small team. Following Megan’s presentation, participants discussed some of the ideas in the presentation and agreed unanimously that they are dedicated to the arts and culture in this community and that arts are underutilized as an economic development tool. The group agreed to reconvene in the next two to three weeks to further discuss how arts and culture can have a game-changer impact on the Dalton-Whitfield community with the help of the University of Georgia.
Megan Miller is currently exploring the economic impacts that different art activities have on their communities which will be a very helpful resource to this task force.

**Researchers from UGA Explore Parent Engagement Opportunities**

In 2010 and 2011, the K-12 Issue Work Group identified disconnected families as a major hurdle to education progress in the Dalton-Whitfield community. The group discussed the need to reconsider the role of the family in education as education evolves and family compositions change, and stated that it was “no longer appropriate for the family to simply drop their child off at the school house door.”

As a result of those discussions and evolving work in the field of literacy in the community, the Archway Partnership brought UGA College of Education faculty Dr. JoBeth Allen and Ph.D. student Roberta Gardner to the Dalton-Whitfield community. Dr. Allen is a professor of language and literacy education with extensive experience and publications in family and parent engagement. Ms. Gardner is a former early learning librarian pursing her advanced degree in the Department of Language and Literacy Education.

Over the next several months, Dr. Allen and Ms. Gardner will work with the Dalton-Whitfield education systems to determine high impact ways to bolster student success with parent engagement in a limited-resource environment. Dr. Allen and Ms. Gardner kicked off their work on August 27-28, when Dalton Public Schools and Whitfield County Schools provided them with tours of the existing literacy program and interviews and panels with many engaged in public outreach and parent engagement work within the school systems. The school districts also jointly hosted the UGA researchers on a community bus tour so they could get a feel for the neighborhoods in which many students live.

Dr. Allen and Ms. Gardner will continue to collaborate with education and community members to refine the scope of their work. They plan to return to Dalton on October 23 to work with school personnel at a Leadership Academy co-hosted by the school systems.

Following their August visit, Dr. Allen wrote a letter to the editor of the Dalton Daily Citizen that can be viewed at the following link: [http://archwaypartnership.uga.edu/news/whitfield-news/letter-congratulations-offered-for-schools%e2%80%99-literacy-instruction/](http://archwaypartnership.uga.edu/news/whitfield-news/letter-congratulations-offered-for-schools%e2%80%99-literacy-instruction/).