During 2014, key events and relationships were facilitated, including two economic development meetings in Atlanta that involved all eight Archway communities, UGA Public Service units, state agencies, and private companies. Additionally, relationships with new UGA partners, such as the College of Engineering, College of Pharmacy, and the Office of Institutional Diversity, have led to exciting new connections and projects for our communities.

In the past year, Archway has helped communities continue to build and grow leadership programs for adults and youth, and to train trainers in the communities in order to sustain the programs. With Archway’s help, communities have modernized classrooms and launched initiatives to improve reading proficiency and increase programs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. In partnership with its communities, Archway has emphasized the concept of a “healthy workforce” through wellness and fitness-based projects.

None of this is done in a vacuum. In addition to UGA resources, Archway has tapped into other higher education systems, including representatives from 14 of the 31 University System of Georgia institutions and 11 of 24 representatives form the Technical College System of Georgia.

As a unit of the Office of Public Service and Outreach unit at UGA, Archway plays a critical role in enhancing economic development throughout the state while providing teaching and learning opportunities for UGA faculty and students.

I couldn’t be prouder of what we are accomplishing through all of our Public Service and Outreach units. Together, they help to create jobs and prosperity, develop leaders and address key challenges. There is much to celebrate as we reflect on the growth of this program since its inception in 2005, and I anticipate even more great things to come from our Archway Partnerships in the future.
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<th>COLLABORATED WITH</th>
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<td>14 OF 31 COLLEGES IN THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OF GEORGIA</td>
<td>11 OF 24 COLLEGES IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA</td>
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<th>OVER</th>
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<td>FUND</td>
<td>18 GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS REPRESENTING 10 COLLEGES</td>
<td>54 FUNDING PARTNERS</td>
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Funded 10 COLLEGES
I sat in on four executive meetings and it was surprisingly fascinating to watch these groups of professionals in their communities build connections and real progress at the local level. It was the dedication that impressed me the most and gave me the best sense of the enormous scope of Archway here in Georgia and what it really does in these places. I haven’t seen another university program anywhere that embeds itself so strongly and in so many ways in communities. I’m glad that, for a summer, I could contribute in some small way to any of the places I visited.

Erin Mazzei
MFA, Lamar Dodd School of Art

On one level, working with the Archway Partnership allows me to connect what I study in my public administration classes to the real world. My experience at Archway has exposed me to real-time economic and community development issues that have motivated me to search for holistic solutions. It has also significantly informed my research interest and helped me facilitate class discussions.

At a time when public institutions and land-grant universities in particular are being forced to show the value of their efforts, Archway’s engagement philosophy utilizes a bottom-up approach to economic and community development, making it more sustainable and conducive to success. The process of engaging in locally identified issues departs from dictating typecast solutions to unique community issues.

It is not a boast or mere flattery when I say that my year and a half at UGA would have been a dull, vapid, and pedestrian experience if it hadn’t been spent working at Archway.

Taha Hameduddin
MPA, School of Public and International Affairs

Through Archway, I’ve been blessed with the opportunity to initiate conversations with administrators and teachers from all around the state of Georgia about pedagogical reform, technology integration, and student engagement. Also, the position allows me to move beyond initial conversations and work one-on-one with educators and administrators to impact learning.

It’s inspiring to see administrators and teachers work so faithfully to create unique, engaging opportunities for students. Being around that effort is infectious. Not only do I get to interact with these innovators, but I get to see my ideas play out in the classroom. Also, I get a unique opportunity to become a bridge between the schools around the state and the resources of UGA.

Lenie George
PhD, College of Education

I learned that Archway communities in Georgia are just as varied within and compared to each other, but the unifying characteristics of the people trying to enact change were the same. I’ve never seen a sort of small government work on an intimate level and I learned an incredible amount. The challenges being faced by Archway affiliates were unique and multi-faceted, from language barriers and cultural differences, to money allocation struggles augmented by the desire to do right fighting with the desire for economic growth. Yet still they were derived from the need and belief that things can always get better.

Archway believes in a better life for the members of its community, and the different ways that its partners and employees were working to enact change were what took away the most form my experience working with the program. That situations are unique and in order to find ways for betterment, an organization needs to be involved at the intimate level. Archway works within communities as a member, not a visitor.

Georgia Rhodes
MFA, Lamar Dodd School of Art

Archway has provided me the opportunity to see the real world application of things I had previously only learned about in class. I have been able to practice my skills in a supportive environment where I can see how policies affect real-life operations. Archway provides an invaluable practical component to my education that has made me appreciate the importance of service even more.

Rosanna Cruz
PhD, Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
Better Gateways
For nearly a year, the Community Branding & Beautification Issue Work Group worked with students from UGA’s College of Environment and Design (cED) to design a signage plan for the City of Metter. The final designs, proposed by Emily Hunt and Andrew Bailey, resulted in a modern rendition of the original signposts erected following World War II, as well as a comprehensive planting plan for the site. The project included proposals for way-finding signage to be placed throughout historic downtown Metter to tie in with the new gateway signage. All signs feature the town’s slogan “Everything’s better in Metter,” along with the dogwood flower, which recalls both Guido Gardens and Metter’s historic tree-lined boulevards. The goal of this signage is to draw tourists from the I-16 interchange into downtown Metter.

Better Websites
The City of Metter, Candler County, and the Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce worked with UGA Department of English undergraduate students from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences to analyze the community’s web presence. Students from Dr. Elizabeth Davis’ spring 2014 Writing for the Web and Technical Writing Classes made content recommendations for a web portal to serve as a world-wide gateway to the City, County, and Chamber. They also developed a strategy for managing various social media outlets. The community slogan, “Everything’s Better in Metter,” was integrated throughout their recommendations.

Better Parks
In an effort to revitalize a neighborhood park that had been installed 40 years ago by the local Jaycee Club, the City of Metter engaged UGA’s cED Intern Nate Dittman to suggest a refreshed design. Working with graduate assistant Emily Hunt, Dittman conducted a playground design charrette to facilitate public engagement in park revitalization. The charrette resulted in a design that featured a new, larger play structure, a covered pavilion, and a dedicated green space for free play of all kinds. To help fund the new play structure, members of the Recreation Issue Work Group applied for a community-built playground grant. The application was successful and the City of Metter Jaycee Park was awarded $15,000 from KaBOOM! and Dr. Pepper/Snapple to be used toward the purchase of a new play structure. Construction of the playground and refurbishment of the remainder of the park is slated for Spring 2015.

Better Exercise
The Metter Moves concept was created by blending several focus areas: Community Beautification & Branding, Recreation, and Health & Wellness. The initial project involved the cohesive mapping and promotion of several existing walking trails within the City of Metter. Three trails—Downtown, Historic, and Bloomin’—were included and key features and attractions on each route were identified.

Katie Wargo, Master of Public Health student, created promotional materials for residents and visitors to increase awareness of no-cost exercise opportunities in the community, as well, a needs assessment for improvements to existing routes, classes, and programs is a stated goal.

Better Education
With a graduation rate of 82%, the Candler County School District exceeds its regional peers. Still, district leadership engaged Archway to assist with improvement initiatives to further their commitment to excellence in education in three key areas: Fine Arts, Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE), and Educational Acceleration. In 2014, the District focused on Charter System Conversion and School Based Telemedicine Clinic funding. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math education (STEM) implementation grant research and industry connections for high school students were also targeted.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Through a community-wide listening session and strategic visioning by the Executive Committee, leadership development rose to the top tier of local needs. A citizen-driven issue work group, facilitated by faculty from the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, crafted an eight-month program, Leadership Grady, designed to encourage personal leadership skill sets, engage emerging leaders, and build a sustainable model to address community challenges. The program graduated 12 class members in 2014.

Class members created a Web-based platform, Take Action! Grady, to connect volunteers with non-profit organizations in the community. Take Action! Grady, links citizens, agencies, organizations, and community leaders with volunteer resources and information to make a positive difference in the community. It seeks to build strong, healthy, and engaged communities by connecting volunteers, of all ages, with opportunities to serve through creative and effective projects, programs, and partnerships.

BARBER PARK REVITALIZATION PLAN

Given that Grady County ranks high among Georgia counties in obesity, the Archway Partnership Community Health and Wellness issue work group identified weight and chronic disease as a top priority. Group members targeted physical fitness and exercise as a key strategy to combat obesity.

Students from the UGA College of Environment and Design (CED) met with the “vision group” to create a list of improvements to Barber Park. The renovation plan included a splash pad, new T-ball fields, beautification and shade trees, playgrounds, a fitness trail, and other amenities to enhance outdoor recreational opportunities in Grady County. In the summer of 2014, UGA CED graduate assistant, Craig Biesecker, refined the plan to include a new administration building, multi-purpose gymnasium, archery range, and additional activity areas. Grady County has already begun work on the new archery range in partnership with the Grady County 4-H program.

GEORGIA TREND MAGAZINE “FOUR FOR THE FUTURE” AWARD

Georgia Trend magazine, in conjunction with UGA’s Office of Public Service & Outreach, published a special feature on UGA’s “Four for the Future” cities. The selected cities were recognized for their collaboration efforts, leadership, and innovation in their communities. The purpose of “Four for the Future” is to acknowledge communities and regions that have worked across the public-private sectors and non-profit boundaries on challenging issues that will lead to an improved quality of life.

Cairo and Grady County were selected as one of the “Four for the Future” communities this year for collaboration between the Archway Partnership, the private sector, education, health care, and government to address workforce development, community health and wellness, and revitalization of downtown Cairo. The award brought the community to the attention of Georgia Trend’s 50,000 readers.

EDUCATION/BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS FLOURISH

Stakeholders from K-12, higher education, business and industry, media, local government, state agencies, the public library, hospital/health care providers, and citizens came together to form an unprecedented regional partnership to address local education and workforce development issues in southwest Georgia. Building on the 2013 achievements of obtaining charter status and being awarded a College and Career Academy designation, Cairo High School was able to secure additional grant funding to the school. In 2014, they received a Charter School Implementation Grant for $375,000 to be used for school-wide technology upgrades. Their College and Career Academy status enables them to apply for several CTAE Construction Related Equipment Grants in the next two years.

GRADY COUNTY GEMS: TOUR OF HOMES & HERITAGE

UGA Lamar Dodd School of Art student Brittany Roberts assisted the Grady County Historical Society in creating their 2014 Tour of Homes and Heritage brochure. The tour features 10 sites including historic and modern homes, plantation properties, a historic church, and the Grady County Museum & History Center. In addition to promoting the tour, the brochure will be utilized as a marketing tool for downtown Cairo and an economic development tool for the Chamber of Commerce.
GET HEALTHY HABERSHAM

The Health Work Group has continued to partner with UGA’s College of Public Health (CPH) to promote wellness programs and battle childhood obesity. Dr. Marsha Davis, Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement, and Cassandra Oliver Thurston, a PhD research assistant from the Department of Health Promotion & Behavior, have assisted with the collection of community health data, walkability and bike-ability assessments, and community-asset mapping. Most recently, the CPH helped establish a website to promote greater health awareness and participation. The Website was created by the CPH and is available to Habersham residents at: www.gethealthyhabersham.com.

HABERSHAM ARCHWAY ADDS NEW COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In September, Georgia Power and Habersham Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) joined the Habersham Archway Partnership as Executive Committee participants. Committee members warmly welcomed the new members, noting their long history and deep roots in the community. Both companies share origins in Habersham County and committee members expressed the importance of that long standing partnership moving forward.

MOUNT AIRY SCHOOLHOUSE HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Graduate students from UGA’s College of Environment and Design and the Lamar Dodd School of Art have maintained a presence in Habersham during the year, as they worked on various phases of the Mount Airy Schoolhouse Preservation Plan. College of Environment and Design students prepared both an historic preservation plan and an environmental landscape and design plan, while an art student crafted an interior design plan. The city of Mount Airy plans to implement all three design phases, converting the historic schoolhouse into city offices, community-meeting space, and possible retail space. The idea is to restore the building to its original glory and again establish it as the center of the community.

ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN

In partnership with the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, approximately 40 UGA students participated in designing an advertising and public relations campaign for Habersham County. The students were divided into four teams. Each team then created advertising plans and logo concepts promoting the community. The overall process involved multiple interactions, including focus groups and community visits. The project concluded as the various plans and concepts were presented to the Executive Committee in December.

NATURAL BOUNTIES

Habersham’s Executive Committee sought UGA assistance in creating two community brochures. “Hidden Gems of Habersham” highlights little known area venues, and the “Community Agriculture Guide” features highlights locally grown commodities, descriptively identifying types of farms and farmers markets. A team of students from Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication (Grady) and Lamar Dodd School of Art (LDSA)—James Cochran, MPR, Grady; Jake Green, Graphic Design, LDSA; Luke Underwood, MPA, Photography—worked together to create the brochures.
GROWING HARTWELL TOGETHER
In partnership with the City of Hartwell and the Hartwell Downtown Development Authority, Archway helped facilitate the community input process for Hartwell’s “Growing Hartwell Together” downtown visioning initiative. Nearly 100 diverse stakeholders participated and shared their ideas for how to enhance downtown Hartwell through public meetings and focus groups. These meetings and focus groups have had a positive ripple effect. Many community members, who were involved in the visioning process, have become downtown task forces members.

DISCOVERY DAWGS
Hart County Middle School (HCMS) engineering and technology teacher Kelly Gaines and her students are teaming up with UGA College of Education instructor Gretchen Thomas and undergraduates in her service-learning course to collaborate on STEM projects. HCMS students will benefit from personalized support from their Discovery Coaches, who will challenge them to think in new ways about their projects, and UGA students will learn through teaching and sharing their experiences with others. Both groups will gain valuable experience as they collaborate, learn, and work together.

WHERE WE PLAY ALL-INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND
An Archway planning committee has engaged approximately 300 community members in providing input for an all-inclusive community playground. The next stages will include a playground-naming contest, a playground-input booth at Hartwell’s Pre-Fourth Celebration, and a design charrette, facilitated by graduate students from UGA’s College of Environment and Design, to gather ideas from children and adults. The project recently received its first grant funds, and committee members and design students are continuing to develop this project.

COLLEGE & CAREER ACADEMY PLANNING
Archway has worked together with Hart County Schools, Athens Technical College, and community stakeholders over the past several years to facilitate ongoing conversations regarding planning for a College & Career Academy, including visits to other facilities. Plans are coming together with Hart County Schools’ approval by the Georgia Board of Education as a charter system, and with significant community and industry support. Archway is proud to serve as an ongoing community partner and resource for this critical workforce development effort. In December, the charter system was awarded a $2.11 million grant to implement their plan.

BRING YOUR OWN TECHNOLOGY (BYOT) IN HART COUNTY SCHOOLS
Dr. TJ Kopcha, College of Education faculty member, was awarded a Public Service and Outreach Faculty Fellowship to spend an entire semester working in Archway communities on various technology-related curriculum needs. His doctoral student, Lenie George, has spent the last year and a half working with Hart County High School on a pilot to introduce Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT). The program familiarizes schools with technology potential and encourages the development of professional learning communities, so teachers can learn from one another.

Kopcha and George are presently working with 5th grade teachers at Hartwell Elementary School to implement BYOT at the elementary level. They are also assisting Hart County Middle School teachers with strategies for incorporating technology into classroom learning.
PULASKI COUNTY HOSTS TEEN MAZE

The Pulaski County Family Connection and the Archway Partnership hosted the second “Teen Maze” on April 3, 2014, at Hawkinsville High School. Taylor Regional Hospital’s Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan and the 2015 Family Connection Annual Plan both sought to increase collaboration between community partners and youth and improve conditions for children and families in Pulaski County.

The Teen Maze provided over 600 students, grades 7-11, the chance to experience the consequences of engaging in risky behaviors in a safe, educational environment. Teens were shown the real life repercussions of drinking and driving, engaging in unprotected sex, and participating in criminal activities, to help them make better decisions when confronted with difficult choices in the future. Participation in the event was envisioned to encourage completion of high school while decreasing the rate of teenage pregnancies. More than 200 community volunteers spoke with students and families regarding life decisions.

LIFE LEAGUE CELEBRATES ITS THIRD YEAR, AND TRAVELS TO UGA

The LIFE League (formerly Hawkinsville Hoops) began its third summer season on May 31. Through the LIFE league, teens learn how to prepare for the future, they are taught life skills, and they learn good sportsmanship. This year, the League added two new partners: the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and UGA’s Office of Institutional Diversity (OID). With the assistance of OID’s Randolph Carter, the LIFE league played its championship game on the UGA campus at the Ramsey Center on July 16. This gave organizers a chance to expose the students to opportunities in higher education. More than 40 minority students from Hawkinsville and Pulaski County LIFE league spent a day at the University of Georgia touring the campus, talking with admissions advisers, eating in a dining hall, meeting athletes, and playing basketball.

COMMUNITY HOSTS “RIGHT BITE” COOKING CLASSES

During the first half of 2014, Archway Partnership teamed with Taylor Regional Hospital and Houston County Extension Agent Rebecca Creasy to offer the “Right Bite” series of cooking classes at Taylor Regional Hospital in Hawkinsville. The Right Bite Diabetes Cooking School is a fun way to learn how to enjoy delicious food prepared with less fat, sugar, and sodium.

UGA RUSSELL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS LIBRARY ARCHIVES OCMULGEE RIVER HISTORY

Archivists Christian Lopez and Callie Holmes from the Special Collections Library were in Hawkinsville last February to record the oral history of the Ocmulgee River for the First Person Project, an ongoing effort to capture the history of Georgia. Pulaski County’s Archway Partnership is playing a significant role in developing tourism and appreciation for the Ocmulgee River. The work done by the library will be permanently archived in Athens and be available to the community to help enrich the experience of visitors to the area. The group was joined by Peter Frey, a digital image specialist from UGA’s Office of Public Affairs.

NEW YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DEBUTS

Twenty-five high school students will make up the inaugural class of Youth Leadership Academy (YLA). For the first time, facilitators from Pulaski Tomorrow will share their experience with young people, assist them on a journey to develop leadership skills, and examine community issues. The YLA is a collaborative effort of Pulaski Tomorrow, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Archway Partnership. The entire class is funded from donations by local businesses and organizations.
STUDENTS LEARN TO REDUCE RISK EARLY

The new Charter School, which will open in August 2015, agreed to partner with Archway and the Southwest Georgia Children’s Alliance to develop a comprehensive K-12 personal awareness/education program to reduce risky behaviors. Working with the local exploratory committee, the College of Public Health and the College of Family and Consumer Sciences have agreed to assist in identifying and evaluating resources that complement and build a foundation for various life skills. A key component to the success of this project is parental involvement, a requirement for all Charter School attendees. These efforts to reduce risky behaviors are being undertaken to address poor health indicator standards such as STIs, teen pregnancy, and mortality, which are prevalent in many rural communities.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING

Customer Service training for middle management and frontline employees had been identified as an issue in Sumter County. Working with the Chamber of Commerce and the local Small Business Development Center, a new Maximum Service Series was piloted in Sumter County. The five-week class covered topics such as defining good customer service, managing difficult customers, utilizing technology, and implementing a customer service plan concluded in late February with 27 graduates.

GMA RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN

The City of Americus, working with Danny Bivins at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, began, in July 2014, to create a vision: a short-term work program and long-term goals to maximize the use of their historic downtown and retail corridor along US Hwy 280. This process is expected to take six to eight months and will build on current successes, incorporate related studies previously done through the Archway Partnership, and build a consensus among the community. Town hall meetings, focus groups, individual interviews, and surveys will gather information and community concerns redevelopment of Americus’ retail core.

ADVANCING SUMTER

The first cohort of Advancing Sumter graduated 18 individuals in April 2014. Since graduation, this cohort has experienced much success including the following: two promotions, two appointments to local boards, two are furthering their leadership skills with acceptance into additional leadership programs, and one has taken a new job. This 12-week, curriculum-based community leadership development program was facilitated by peers in the community that participated in a Train the Trainer course taught by UGA’s J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership in the spring of 2013. This, now annual, program will receive on-going support from the Train the Trainer groups and the first class of Advancing Sumter alumni.
**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

**PRIORITY AREAS**

Tourism, Housing, Transportation, Economic & Community Development and Education/Social Issues

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**EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

Archway Partnership has worked with the Washington County Board of Education on two initiatives. Representatives from the UGA College of Education’s Learning, Technology, and Design Program collaborated with local technology experts and teachers on Technology Planning for the Classroom to develop learning tools for the classroom using interactive technology by integrating iPads and Kindles for the primary and elementary schools. Doctoral student, Lenie George, and his professor, Dr. TJ Kopcha, are continuing to work with Washington County on other technology enhancements within the system to enhance learning and assist teachers in instruction.

In addition, the Washington County Archway Partnership is assisting in developing the five-year System Improvement Plan for the Washington County Board of Education. Stakeholder groups have worked through facilitated planning sessions to determine the role of public education in the life of Washington County students and in the community. The groups have also assisted the Board to develop their goals and objectives for the future of the system.

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**DEVELOPING YOUNG LEADERS**

Each year, Archway Partnership serves a large role in the planning and implementation of the Washington County Youth Leadership Program (WCYLP). WCYLP achieved great success in 2014 due in part to new and emerging partnerships for the program. Partnerships with the Georgia College & State University Leadership Certificate Program and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development enhanced the programming function and experience for participants, who visited Fanning’s Leadership Lab. Participants also made presentations to local leaders and other attendees at their graduation ceremony in April. All 24 participants graduated from the 2014 program—12 students from Brentwood School and 12 students from Washington County High School.

For the second year, the Washington County Archway Partnership co-led a Teen Maze for high school sophomores and juniors. It was held in March at the Boys and Girls Club of the CSRA-Washington County Club. Approximately 220 students were in attendance and had an opportunity to learn about consequences related to drinking and driving and sexual behavior. Some 76% of students reported learning information that they previously had not known about and 77% indicated that it would change their behavior in terms of sexual activity.

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**TOURISM AS ECONOMIC DRIVER**

Washington County continues to target tourism with a multi-faceted approach. The Washington County Historical Society developed a Historic Walking Tour of downtown Sandersville with the help of Georgia College Theater students and a student from UGA’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication. Writing a script from scratch, narrating an audio, and gathering visual images for a video resulted in a self-guided historic walking tour for visitors to and residents of Sandersville. The tour starts at a local historic landmark and museum and guides participants through downtown.

In another example, the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and the Airport Authority initiated a plan to recruit travelers for the Masters Golf Tournament to Washington County through the county’s airport and newly constructed airport terminal. Utilizing a marketing plan developed in 2013 by Terry College of Business MBA student Chris Maher, authority members developed a recruitment letter and list of amenities to attract individuals in hopes of having them park and ride to Augusta or simply park and enjoy the county’s amenities.

Washington County has long recognized the unique asset that the county holds in Georgia Highway 15. To enhance tourism and economic development traffic, Washington County has poised itself as a leader in developing a multi-county group of communities and stakeholders to promote this thoroughfare under the Georgia Highway 15 Coalition. Representatives have worked to develop a cooperative and active group of communities. Two coalition kickoff meetings have been held to gather interest and project a path forward. Rosanna Cruz, a PR doctoral student, along with Chris Maher and Matt Maskiewicz, MBA students, are creating a strategic plan to guide the coalition.
LIBRARY RENOVATIONS
In 2013, the Northwest Georgia Regional Library asked the Archway Partnership for assistance to design a Workforce Development Center in the Dalton library, which would utilize existing resources and amenities to create a bright learning space. In response, Thom Houser, the Associate Director and Interior Design Chair of the Lamar Dodd School of Art, traveled to Dalton to meet with library staff and tour the room contemplated for the redesign. In February 2014, Professor Houser returned to Dalton to share the final plans with Linda Floyd, Northwest Georgia Regional Library Director, and Library Board Chair, Tangela Johnson. Dr. Houser’s plans were presented to an anonymous donor who matched a State approved allocation of $100,000. Construction on the project began in summer 2014. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the new facility in September 2014.

BOOK ACCESS EFFORTS
After a University of Georgia focus group indicated that a lack of book access was impacting area children’s ability to read on grade level, the community sprung into action. Through generous donations from civic groups, the Archway Partnership was able to place over 18 Book Nooks, or children’s bookshelves placed in waiting areas, in the community. In addition, Readers to Leaders (R2L) hosted summer “Power Lunches” at USDA free lunch sites where it gave away books to children. The work group infused book giveaways into many other local initiatives, impressing the importance of reading on children and families. In all, R2L gave away over 4,000 books in 2014 and plans to bolster its efforts in the future.

SATURDAY ACADEMY
After research and local dialogue revealed many kindergarteners were ill prepared for the rigors of school, the Archway Partnership hosted a pilot project of 30 families with children between the ages of three and five for a six-week Saturday school readiness experiment. Community partners worked to host parent/education classes, parent-child interactive classes, and family/fun time. Volunteers devoted 357 hours to help serve breakfast and lunch, lead classes, and assist with check-in. A total of fifteen organizations collaborated on the program.

An evaluation of the pilot by researchers from the University of Georgia, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, and the University of West Georgia indicated participants experienced significant gains in school-readiness skills, oral vocabulary, and an improvement of the home literacy environment. Over 80% of participants were Spanish speaking only. All information was in a bilingual format. After the program, parents reported that they desire more classes; they read more with their children; and they have a better understanding of child development. In a collaborative effort, Dalton State College expanded the program in October in Catoosa County. In spring 2015, Dalton State College and Dalton Public Schools plan to host the second iteration of the event.

DESIGN, ENGINEERING, AND MANUFACTURING CAMP
In June 2014, 77 middle school students attended the fourth annual Design, Engineering, and Manufacturing (DEM) Camp at the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy. The free camp sparks interest in manufacturing among local youth and shows the range of jobs and skills in modern manufacturing, particularly the floorcovering industry. Students built and designed wooden cars, created their own carpet designs, built a full-scale hovercraft, used design software to create projects, toured local floorcovering plants, and participated in team-building activities. DEM Camp, a product of Archway’s Higher Education Issue Work Group sessions in 2011, grows each year.

EARLY EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT ZONE
In July, Archway First Five committee members collaborated with multiple local organizations to host a Georgia Early Education Empowerment Zone committee visit to Whitfield County. In September, Whitfield County was selected as the E3Z award winner. This status will bring $1.2 million (over three years) into the Dalton-Whitfield community for early education purposes and will be shared with four neighboring counties: Catoosa, Murray, Gilmer, and Gordon. The selected zones will promote early education system reform initiatives.

PHOTOGRAPHY EFFORTS
In summer 2014, UGA photography intern student Georgia Rhodes spent time with the Dalton Whitfield Archway Partnership taking pictures to showcase the diversity of daily life for children under the age of five in Dalton-Whitfield County. Georgia’s images have been used throughout the community to create awareness for the issues that young children face. In November, the Leadership Dalton Whitfield class will continue to explore this topic, utilizing Georgia’s work as a template to follow.
Archway Partnership

Georgia Center, Suite 193
Athens, Georgia 30602
www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu
706-542-1098
apartner@uga.edu

ARCHWAY PARTNERSHIP

Mel Garber, Director
Sue Chapman, Operations Coordinator
Angel Jackson, Operations Coordinator
Sharon Liggett, Operations Coordinator
Sara Hand, Program Coordinator (not pictured)
ARCHWAY PROFESSIONALS

Betsy McGriff, Candler County
Sharon Liggett, Grady County
Rick Story, Habersham County
Ilka McConnell, Hart County
Michelle Elliott, Pulaski County
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Kim David, Washington County
Melissa Lu, Whitfield County