



Archway Partnership
THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Dalton-Whitfield



The Archway Partnership, a unit of the Office of Public Service and Outreach, was launched in 2005 to extend access to higher education resources across the state and address critical community-identified needs. Archway networks with all 17 University of Georgia colleges and schools and other higher education institutions to provide expertise to specific community issues. The Archway Partnership is structured to benefit community partners through collaborative projects that address local priorities and the institutions through the enhancement of teaching, research and service. In 2009, Dalton-Whitfield became the eighth Archway Partnership community in Georgia.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

"We started the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership at a time when our community was being hit extremely hard by the Great Recession. Although so much of what was happening to our world was out of our control, Archway gave us a vehicle to do something positive to improve our community. We benefited from having access to the vast resources of the University System of Georgia. The University System gave its students a real world laboratory where they could obtain practical experience. Through those tough times we did the best we could, working in partnership, to assist economic development, education, and our environment (quality of life)."

Rick Hooper

Co-Chair, 2009 - 2013

"Archway has provided the framework for community members to discuss critical issues and begin to formulate ideas to resolve these issues. Archway was the 'objective' partner we needed and it brought the resources of UGA to our community. The idea that we have easy and direct access to the faculty and students is truly astounding.

A key function of Archway is bringing various community stakeholders together, in a non-threatening atmosphere, to work together for the betterment of the entire community. Everyone tried to set their separate agendas aside and said, "How do we get this done?" We have all benefited greatly from Archway's efforts to address the critical development needs across the community. As we move forward, I look forward to a continued dialogue so that we may be well prepared for a successful and bright future."

Lynn Laughter

Co-Chair, 2013 - 2015

FROM THE ARCHWAY PROFESSIONAL

On a rainy morning in April, I opened my inbox to find an invitation. The Young Professionals of Northwest Georgia (YPONG) were planning a group hike on the trails behind Dalton State College the next day, followed by a happy hour at Chili's. Would I like to come? Just in case, they attached the map of the trails to the e-vite. If I couldn't make it to the hike, they provided links that connected me to their subscriber list and a litany of other activities, including a Creative Arts Guild Happy Hour, several socials, service opportunities, and planning for summer Screen on the Green events. I felt great pride and joy when I saw that email come across my screen because I knew that the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership had been a catalyst in making these things happen.

Since the Archway Partnership started in Dalton-Whitfield County in 2009, hundreds of citizens have poured their hearts into making

things a reality like YPONG, the trail system behind Dalton State College, Readers-to-Leaders, Book Nooks, designation as an Early Education Empowerment Zone, and the library's new Learning and Technology Training Center. Make no mistake: these successes would not have happened without hard work, both locally and from the support of the University of Georgia and other University System of Georgia resources.

Our success has not been without challenges; however, we identified those challenges, we wrestled with some hard things, and did not give up. We need to celebrate our successes, and we should not take lightly what we have accomplished.

I see the fruits of your perseverance all around: the dramatically reduced unemployment rate; the new awareness in the faith community of the needs of our students; the enhanced engagement of Dalton State College in our community; the



Local leadership reinforcing their support of community-wide literacy at the 2015 Book Blast.

business community's revived interest in social issues . . . the list goes on and on.

Perhaps the most important outcome of your efforts is the new generation of leaders that are beginning to take seats at your table. Would these people have come out of the woodwork on their own? Perhaps; but where would they have started? Would there even be a table, or would they have had to build their own? Because of your efforts, tomorrow's leaders are starting ahead of the game. In the Chamber of Commerce copy room, there is a famous Theodore Roosevelt quote attached to the wall. Many times I have walked by it and taken

heart, and I hope you will stop by, read it, and do the same.

In my mind you are the strong men and women in Roosevelt's "arena." You have served your community and my generation well. Thank you!

Melissa Lu, J.D.
Archway Professional



BACKGROUND & PRIORITIES

Dalton-Whitfield was the Archway Partnership's eighth community. Located in Northwest Georgia between Atlanta and Chattanooga, Tennessee, Dalton is known as the "floorcoving capital of the world". During the first meetings where working with the Archway Partnership was discussed, citizens immediately showed a commitment to maintaining the area's unique charm through a variety of economic and community growth initiatives. The Archway Partnership worked in tandem with these initiatives to provide a process for the establishment of a vision and provide higher education resources to support the attainment of goals and objectives.

On August 31, 2009, a community-wide listening session was held at the Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center. Approximately 300 citizens gathered to discuss issues, trends, and forces affecting the community.

From their discussions, the

listening session revealed three significant issues impacting the community: economy, education, and the environment (quality of life). The economic downturn had not spared Dalton businesses, but citizens were optimistic about the potential for growth and diversification. Over the next few months, efforts focused on prioritizing community needs and identifying higher education resources to address those needs.

Shortly thereafter, an Archway Partnership Executive Committee was formed; members included residents and representatives from city and county governments, school systems, business and industry, local higher education institutions, Chamber of Commerce, health care, the local newspaper, and the Joint Development Authority.

In 2010, the Executive Committee created a vision statement and focused their efforts on the three priority areas that locally came to be known as CommunitE³.

VISION: Dalton-Whitfield County will be the economic engine of Northwest Georgia, internationally recognized for its innovative business environment, its commitment to high-quality educational opportunities, and its stewardship of the abundant natural resources with which our community has been entrusted.

CommunitE³



ECONOMY

The Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership understands that focusing on entrepreneurship and innovation are keys to success for their community and continued growth. The Executive Committee hopes to ensure successful, sustainable industries while developing a diverse, forward-thinking economy.



EDUCATION

Education-based issues are a large part of the Dalton-Whitfield County Executive Committee's work plan and overall goals. Specifically, the goals are to support Dalton State College in becoming a premier four-year institution, develop a model environment for technical

education and learning, and increase educational expectations by bolstering community engagement and understanding across the birth-to-work continuum.



ENVIRONMENT

Dalton-Whitfield County wants to enhance their quality of life through a vibrant downtown that provides entertainment, recreation and shopping options for all ages. Moreover, to facilitate a growing economy, the community understands the importance of a transportation infrastructure, that meets the economic and personal needs of residents. The community would also like expanded green-ways, parks and trails, transformational arts and cultural opportunities, and an enhanced the Market Street area.



Community members attend the visioning roll-out event in 2010.



ECONOMY

University Resources Assist in Bolstering the Economy

The Dalton-Whitfield Archway Executive Committee garnered higher education resources to bolster the local economy. MBA students, faculty and recent graduates from UGA's Terry College of Business identified ways to develop and sustain a qualified workforce that will strengthen existing industries and allow the region to further diversify its economic base. A graduate student from the UGA Institute for Nonprofit Organizations assisted with the research and design of an online small business resource center for the region.

Community Members Recognize Entrepreneurial Spirit

As Dalton-Whitfield is known as an innovation hotspot, the Archway Economy Work Group members developed an inventory of the many

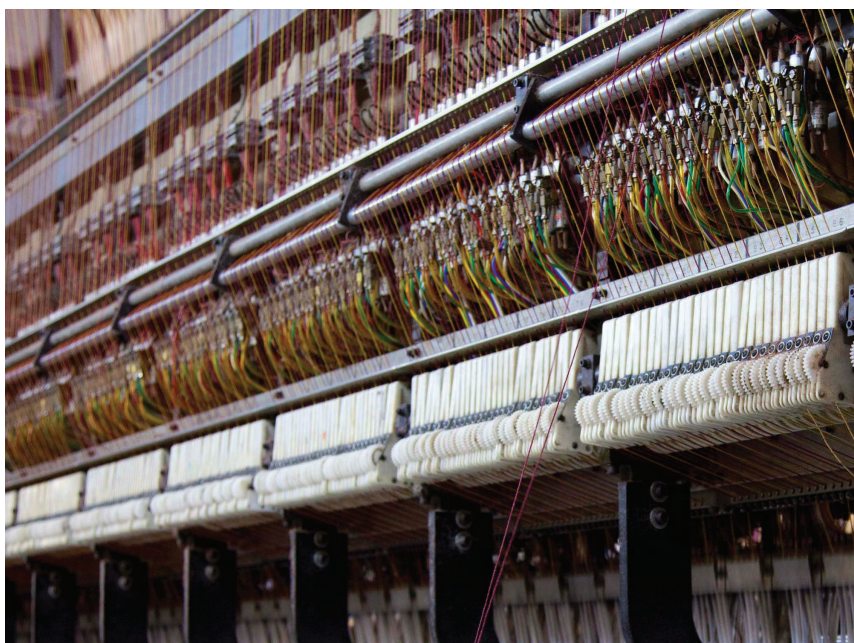
innovations currently happening in the community. Representatives from the Work Group also gathered information from local entrepreneurs on additional community supports needed to enhance innovation.

Young Professionals Invest in Dalton's Future

The Executive Committee recognized the link between a strong local economy and the presence of young professionals, and formed a Young Professional Steering Committee to help guide the CommunitE³ visioning effort. The Archway Partnership and many of the organizations represented on the Archway Partnership Executive Committee co-sponsored an event featuring Rebecca Ryan called "Creating a Greater Dalton: Rebecca Ryan Shares Strategies for Attracting and Retaining Young Professionals." Rebecca Ryan is the author of *Live First, Work Second: Getting Inside*



Young professionals attend the Rebecca Ryan event in 2011.



the Head of the Next Generation and consults nationally on attracting and retaining the next generation of creative workers.

Following her formal presentation, Ryan facilitated a breakout session of approximately 100 area young professionals in which participants were challenged to take an active role in community and economic development. Following that event, the Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority began hosting a series of meetings with those interested in revitalizing a young professional organization. The newly elected president of the young professional organization shared the group's progress, including its value statement and leadership structure, with organizations across the community. The Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership Executive Committee invited a young professional liaison to participate in its monthly meetings and pledged its support to the efforts of the young professional organization.

UGA Graduate Students Create Economic Development Profile

Three UGA Public Administration graduate students created a detailed community data profile which was used as an economic development tool. The profile

became the foundation for the Joint Development Authority's website and continues to be updated and shared with business and industry prospects.

Work Group Considers Business Incubator

The Archway Diverse, Forward-Thinking Economy Issue Work Group unanimously recommended that the community explore the possibility of creating more jobs and raising the standard of living for all residents through a business incubator. As a result, the Archway Partnership collaborated with Georgia Institute of Technology on the feasibility and community-readiness for a business incubator.

In January 2013, members of the community gathered to hear the results of the assessment for a potential business incubator in the area. A team of researchers presented information from Georgia Tech's Enterprise Innovation Institute. The Joint Development Authority continued to work with community members to determine follow-up steps, which included partnering with Archway to create a new online resource for small businesses, develop a new brand focused on innovation, create an online dashboard of community data, and start an angel investor network.



Local families take part in the
Saturday Academy.



EDUCATION

Community Leaders Make Commitment to Literacy; Readers to Leaders (R2L) Created

The Archway Partnership hosted a public meeting at which the City of Dalton, Whitfield County, Dalton Public Schools, Whitfield County Public Schools, and the Chamber of Commerce joined forces to invest in public education with the goal of getting every student reading on grade level by 3rd grade. Three weeks after the announcement, the Archway Education work group hosted a community literacy celebration at the Mack Gaston Community Center. At the event, the group unveiled the official name of the initiative: “Readers to Leaders” or “R2L.” Local community partners worked with Archway and United Way to secure an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer to work with the local library and staff future Readers to Leaders events.

The University of Georgia deployed resources in support of the R2L initiative. UGA College of Education faculty and a graduate student worked with the local education systems to determine high-impact, research-based ways to bolster student success with parent engagement in a limited-resource environment. UGA Education faculty and graduate students, from the Learning, Design and Technology program, helped the community explore how to enhance internet access for low-income families.

The University of Georgia Extension and local WIC office partnered to employ a nutrition educator to lead the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program—designed to teach low income families with young children how to make easy, nutritious, and affordable meals.



Community members accepting the “Four for the Future” Award.

First 5 Committee Begins Collaboration

The First 5 Committee was formed in 2013. First 5’s vision was to prepare children—birth to age five—for success in school and life. This coalition aimed to support healthy prenatal awareness and early childhood development by (1) engaging the community in prenatal to pre-K issues including the importance of emergent literacy, school readiness, and healthy lifestyle choices, (2) empowering and providing all young children in the community with the best start in life by building parent and educator capacity, and (3) enhancing collaboration among

organizations to maximize resources for the betterment of the children and community. A number of literacy and brain development programs and activities have resulted.

Dalton-Whitfield Is Awarded “Four for the Future Award”

Members of the Archway Executive Committee and the Readers to Leaders local literacy initiative team received the “Four for the Future Award” in 2013. The award was presented by Georgia Trend magazine for the tremendous work being done in the Dalton-Whitfield community in the area of literacy.

Design, Engineering & Manufacturing Camp Kicks Off

Every summer, family members and local stakeholders gather at the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy to celebrate the graduation of Design, Engineering, and Manufacturing (DEM) Camp participants. The DEM Camp began in the summer of 2011 as an initiative of the Archway Partnership Higher Education Issue Work Group and is hosted by local sponsors as an opportunity to demonstrate possible career paths for the middle school students. The camp has sparked interest in manufacturing among local youth and demonstrated the range of jobs and skills in modern manufacturing, particularly the floor-covering industry. Students can build and design wooden cars, create their own carpet designs, build a full-scale hovercraft, use design software to create projects, tour local floor-covering plants, and participate in team-building activities as part of the camp. Over the years, student participation in the camp has risen from 28 students to 100 students in 2015.

Library Renovates to Enhance Workforce Development

The Northwest Georgia Regional

Library asked the Archway Partnership to assist with the creation of a workforce development center in the Dalton library. The Associate Director and Interior Design Chair of the Lamar Dodd School of Art at UGA traveled to Dalton to meet with library staff. The professor later returned to Dalton to share interior design options with the Northwest Georgia Regional Library Director and the library board. Funding was received to implement the chosen design, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the new facility in September 2014. The Learning and Technology Training Center is used for classes, tutoring, a computer lab and collaborative workspace.

Education Archway Professional Hired

On June 1, 2013, Dr. Katherine “Katy” Green was hired as the Archway Education Professional (a joint appointment between Archway and the UGA College of Education). In her position, Green focused on birth-to-five programs and activities in Dalton-Whitfield County. As a means to workforce development, community leaders in Dalton-Whitfield County committed to the goal of getting every student reading at grade level by the third grade and a number



Education Professional, Dr. Katy Green, works with a student during a literacy event.

of initiatives are under way to help the community reach that goal. One of these initiatives emphasizes the role of early brain development and literacy, leading to the creation of this position to assist in identifying and addressing community needs related to parent capacity and school readiness.

Northwest Georgia Healthy Babies

As part of their birth to five education initiatives, the community identified

the need for greater connectivity and availability of health resources for expectant mothers and newborn babies. The community sees a connection between healthy babies and thriving students and worked to include health care issues as part of their bigger educational efforts. After years of local collaboration, the community announced an exciting partnership between the Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership, Hamilton Health Care Center, Associates in Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Whitfield County

Health Department. The program is called Northwest Georgia Healthy Babies and is aimed at reaching pregnant women who do not have adequate prenatal care.

Efforts Provide Increased Access to Books

Through generous donations from community and civic groups, the Archway Partnership was able to place over 18 Book Nooks, bookshelves placed in locally accessible areas for children and families, in the community. In addition, Readers to Leaders 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, Readers to Leaders gave away over 4,000 books in 2014 and plans to bolster its efforts in the future.

Saturday Academy Is Initiated

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 during the spring of 2014. Community partners worked to host parent

education classes, parent-child interactive classes and family/fun time. Volunteers devoted 357 hours to help serve meals, lead classes and assist with check-in. A total of 15 organizations collaborated on the program. An evaluation of the pilot by researchers from UGA, 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. Dalton State College faculty and students were engaged in these efforts and are continuing to provide similar opportunities.

Community is Designated as an Early Education Empowerment Zone

In September 2014, Whitfield County was selected as an E3Z award winner. This status brought \$1.2 million over three years into the 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.



A master plan for Lakeshore Park was completed by UGA College of Environment & Design students over the years.



ENVIRONMENT

Community Makes Progress with Greenways, Parks, and Trails

In the CommunitE³ visioning process, Dalton-Whitfield residents emphasized the importance of greenways, parks and trails to their quality of life. Students from UGA's College of Environment and Design developed concepts for numerous projects, including downtown Varnell, a community rain garden; recreation facilities, urban and rural farmers markets, the Crown Mill Village and Park, Market Street, Prater's Mill local interstate exits, storm water management and stream-bank restoration, and walking trails. Many plans have been implemented, and others have been used in successful grant applications and attainment.

City Hosts Grand Opening for Mount Rachel Hiking Trail

On August 21, 2013, the City of Dalton hosted a grand opening for

the new Mount Rachel Hiking Trail, a 1.6-mile walking-and-biking trail that originates just outside of downtown Dalton. In 2010, the city manager solicited the support of the Archway Partnership Executive Committee in applying for grants that were ultimately obtained and utilized to construct the trail. In 2011, the City of Dalton worked with graduate assistants and interns in UGA's College of Environment and Design to create concepts for the trail.

Potential Redesign of the Market Street Area is Presented

Market Street is a major gateway from the interstate into downtown Dalton. The area hosts several hotels, restaurants and an outlet mall. In an effort to revitalize the Market Street area and make it more inviting to visitors, UGA College of Environment and Design students prepared conceptual drawings of improvements including

sidewalks, parking areas and overall beautification of the gateway.

In addition, students researched and illustrated a design plan for the use of available land that connects Market Street to Dug Gap Road near the interchange. The students' plans included: (1) improving the landscaping of the existing Market Street development to include more green space and make it more attractive to shoppers; (2) incorporating a boulevard that connects the outlet mall to the old shopping center and building residential housing, walking trails and parks in the area for either young professionals or retirees; and (3) linking the area to Dug Gap Road and thereby improving access and connectivity to nearby neighborhoods and another interchange.

Arts & Cultural Assets are Inventoried

More than 50 community members interested in enhancing local arts and culture opportunities met through an Archway issue work group to discuss how they could accomplish mutual goals. Through their leadership and direction, a comprehensive inventory of arts and cultural opportunities was compiled. In addition, a UGA public administration graduate student

conducted a study on successful arts and culture councils and the use of grants and cultural opportunities to enhance economic development.

Meet Me Downtown Becomes City Slogan

Dalton State College School of Business students created, conducted and analyzed two surveys related to downtown development. One survey of 450 local consumers inquired about what they would like to see downtown, and the other survey of 25 downtown property and business owners asked about the problems they faced and their visions for downtown improvements. In addition, UGA Terry College of Business marketing students gathered research on a wide array of downtown redevelopment strategies including specific types of businesses that can be successful and financially feasible. The students identified how similar communities recruited those businesses, studied how successful non-chain businesses can be sustained; and identified obstacles to recruitment (i.e. zoning restrictions and operational policies).

Using this research and other information from the Department of Community Affairs, the Vibrant Downtown issue work group made recommendations to the City of



**UGA CED summer interns
working in Dalton.**

Dalton and the Dalton Downtown Development Authority (DDDA). As a result of these recommendations, the DDDA adopted a new slogan "Meet Me Downtown." The DDDA reported increased interest in downtown properties by potential business owners, increased utilization of the Freight Depot as an event site, the creation of a marketing brochure for the new downtown walking trails and an enhanced town/gown relationship between Dalton State College students and downtown Dalton merchants.

Photography Project Showcases Diversity Awareness

A UGA photography student from the Lamar Dodd School of Art compiled images across the community to showcase the vast diversity of daily life for children under the age of five. These images have been shown to a variety of audiences to create awareness for the broad array of issues that face children due to their socio-economic circumstances.

TESTIMONIALS

"The Archway Partnership arrived in Dalton/Whitfield County at an opportune time to begin a strategic conversation by bringing all vested community partners to the table. The discussions, debate and planning that have happened because of Archway have been instrumental in seeing our community not only begin recovery from the devastating economic downturn, but chart a strategic direction for the future. It's been my pleasure to work as part of the executive committee under the exceptional leadership of Melissa Lu and see the realization that the education of our citizens is a key component in the future success of our community."

Dr. Jim Hawkins,
Superintendent, Dalton Public Schools

"Archway has been a valuable organizational tool for bringing local and university resources together to support our community's

educational goals for our students. The Archway Professional worked collaboratively with us to provide opportunities for literacy enrichment for all Whitfield County children. Our community has benefited greatly from having Archway in Whitfield County."

Judy Gilreath,
Superintendent, Whitfield County Schools

"From the beginning, the Archway Partnership in Dalton has brought people together to evaluate and create potential approaches to a wide variety of issues. The interaction with students and staff from the University System, in partnership with community volunteers, has produced many enlightened and innovative approaches to solving long standing community problems."

Don Cope
Co-Chair, 2013 - 2015

"This project has provided me the rare opportunity to apply the skills I've learned in the classroom to help solve a critical problem the flooring industry is facing. And because these projects usually involve multiple stakeholders, I'm able to draw on lots of different perspectives and insights to have a complete picture of the problem."

Charles C. Simpson

Archway Graduate Assistant and MBA student, University of Georgia's Terry College of Business

"I learned that Archway communities in Georgia are just as varied within and compared to each other, but the uniting 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 I took away the most from 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 Professional

Melissa Lu

Education Professional

Katherine Green

Operations Coordinators

Sue Chapman

Angel Jackson

Administrative Assistants

Pat Holloway

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