UGA MBA Graduate Counsels Community on How to Attract Students to High Need Career Areas

Over the summer, University of Georgia Masters in Business Administration graduate Jeffrey Fletcher worked under the direction of the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership Higher Education Issue Work Group to examine how the Dalton-Whitfield Community can interest students in technical education and careers. As part of his research, Jeff interviewed many key stakeholders in the community. He then drew from his interviews, his education, and his personal experience as a small business owner and classroom teacher to reframe the question for the community. Jeff emphasized that students are smart and have lots of access to information; hence, if we simply try to push industry’s agenda on them, they are unlikely to be receptive. However, Jeff noted students may naturally choose some of the high need educational and career paths if we work to create student engagement without pushing (in other words, create demand); make available educational pathways with very clear destinations; provide students with education opportunities that provide them with career choices as their interests and goals change; and minimize transitions over the summer and after graduation.

Jeff presented his work to a room full of community, industry, and education leaders in August.

Prenatal to Pre-K Issue Work Group Explores Solution to Nutrition Education Problem

On September 1, 2011, University of Georgia Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Coordinator Gail Hanula visited Dalton-Whitfield to speak to the Archway Prenatal to Pre-K Issue Work Group about EFNEP and its applicability in the community. EFNEP is a federally funded program that is delivered at the state level through Cooperative Extension. Traditionally, the program places an EFNEP paraprofessional in the community under the direction of a Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent. The EFNEP paraprofessional then teaches classes to low income families with small children centered on healthy eating. The program emphasizes cheap, easy meals that take 15 minutes or less to prepare. The paraprofessional works with existing organizations to deliver the classes/lessons at social service sites.

At the meeting, Gail Hanula explained that there are some logistical hurdles to getting an EFNEP paraprofessional here, including the fact that Whitfield County no longer has a Family and Consumer Sciences agent due to state budget cuts. The state Cooperative Extension staff is currently considering alternatives to the traditional set-up and will be in touch with the community soon regarding this program.

Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority Utilizes Work of University of Georgia Student in Constructing Small Business Website
Over the past year, the Dalton-Whitfield Diverse, Forward Thinking Economy Work Group has discussed how we as a community can better assist area innovators and entrepreneurs. The group has discussed many options, including implementing both virtual and traditional incubators.

At the group’s August meeting, Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority (JDA) Senior Project Manager Alex Stall presented a website that the JDA is currently developing to support small business owners. Alex explained at the meeting that University of Georgia Non-Profit Administration Masters Student Jimbo Graves has assisted him with the development of the website. In addition, Alex noted that he has requested future help from the University of Georgia in the development of a logo for the website.

Group members made several suggestions on information that the website should include. Alex promised to incorporate many of those suggestions into future phases of the project.