



# Communication Sciences and Disorders Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2022  
Volume 1, Issue 1

## A BI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

### Valdosta-Lowndes Literacy Project Ceremony

The Valdosta State University Speech-Language Hearing Clinic began the Valdosta-Lowndes Literacy Project in the fall of 2019 with financial support from the Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia and the Albany Valley.

On January 26, 2022, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was hosted at the home of the Valdosta-Lowndes Literacy Project, the Boys and Girls Club of Valdosta. Valdosta mayor Scott James was in attendance, and proclaimed January 26<sup>th</sup> as Valdosta-Lowndes Literacy Day.

The event was held at the Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce. Valdosta City Schools Superintendent Dr. Todd Carson, representatives from the Boys and Girls Club, students and faculty in our department, as well as members and trustees of the Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia were also present at the event.



Associate Professor Dr. Matthew Carter said, “We have been trying to get this off the ground for two years, but the pandemic forced us to shift our resources. After much groundwork, we are finally ready to get it started. This program is an expansion of the literacy screenings and testing that we do for the school systems. It is certainly important to identify those who are struggling with learning to read and that is what we hope to accomplish with our screening. However, simply knowing who is struggling and who is not doesn’t solve anyone’s problems. We want to be solutions oriented and we could think of no better way than to roll up our sleeves and to meet our neighbors within the community. This program is very much in line with our philosophy of taking the services to the people where they are instead of asking them to come to us.”

As part of the groundwork, literacy screenings were provided to many children who attend the Boys and Girls Club. Children who did not pass the screenings were recruited to participate in the program. Graduate students will be providing the services during their clinical practicum.

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**NSSLHA Members Volunteer at the Annual Shine-Thru Event**



Undergraduate and graduate students who are members of our university's chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association volunteered at Shine Through hosted by The Bridge Church in Nashville, GA.



Night to Shine, hosted by the Tim Tebow Foundation, is a prom night experience hosted internationally for children with special needs. Churches and communities around the world celebrated Night to Shine a bit differently this year due to COVID-19 pandemic. Parents, caretakers, and children had the option of participating online or in a Shine-Thru parade.



Individuals who participated in the Shine—Thru parade received a gift bag, crown, or tiara. Night to Shine and Shine-Thru is a volunteer-based event. If you would like to find a church near you to participate, visit the Tim Tebow Foundation website.

**2022-2023 NSSLHA at Valdosta State University Officers!**

**Pictured:**

**President:** Sophia Guzman

**Vice president:** Katherine S. Thorton

**Secretary:** Courtney Fuller

**Treasurer:** Lora Glover

**Historian:** Dixie Lascelles



## Grants & Research

### The Dollar General Literacy Grant

"The Dollar General Literacy Foundation has been proud to invest in literacy and education programs in the communities we call home for nearly 30 years," said Denine Torr, executive director of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation and vice president of corporate social responsibility at Dollar General.



Since its inception in 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$200 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 14 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy or continued education."



"As the educational landscape continues to shift, our hope is that these funds will help increase access and resources for students, educators and communities dedicated to reading and learning."

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support initiatives that help others improve their lives through literacy and education.



### SPEAK OUT! Parkinson's Voice Project Grant

Our Valdosta State University Speech and Hearing Clinic was awarded a grant from the Parkinson Voice Project! This grant provides free "SPEAK OUT! & LOUD Crowd training" to our graduate students for individuals seeking skilled speech-language intervention for Parkinson's disease.

The SPEAK OUT! Program typically consists of twelve individual speech therapy sessions.



SPEAK OUT! teaches individuals with Parkinson's to speak with intent using complete speech, voice, and cognitive exercises using a specialized workbook provided by Parkinson's Voice Project. SPEAK OUT! program emphasizes speaking with intent and converts speech from an automatic function to an intentional act.

Once the patient completes the SPEAK OUT! program, daily home practice and ongoing follow-up is necessary for continued success. The LOUD Crowd consists of weekly group sessions where SPEAK OUT!

Exercises are performed and individuals can practice speaking with intent whilst having accountability, education, and support with other participants.

Research is showing that this program may be more effective on dysarthria than the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (Behrman et al., 2020).



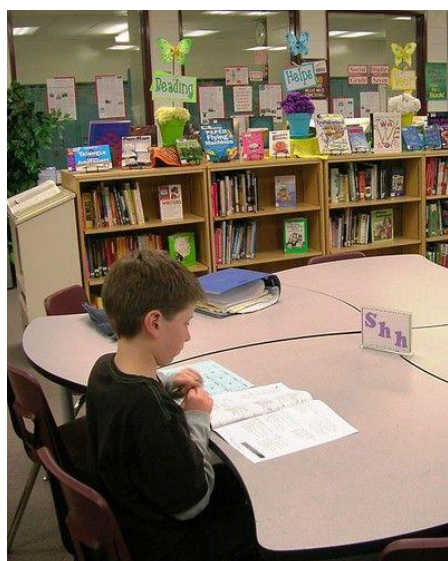
Nationwide, elementary schools are struggling to provide children with the resources that are needed to develop age-appropriate reading skills. To combat this problem on a local level, our department has partnered with a local school system to identify those who are likely to struggle with reading. During the 2021-2022 school year, students from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders were able to screen 845 kindergarten students in the Lowndes County School system.

These children were screened for early warning signs of language and literacy disorders, such as dyslexia, by using a highly reliable and valid screening tool that can predict future reading abilities with high levels of accuracy. The results from the screening tool are used to guide curriculum and to direct individualized instruction.

These efforts were possible based upon generous financial donations from the Scottish-Rite Foundation.

Anyone who would like more information regarding this screening program or the additional efforts that the department is making to combat literacy disorders may contact Matt Carter at [mdcarter@valdosta.edu](mailto:mdcarter@valdosta.edu)

Not only is a valuable service being provided to the hundreds of children who were screened, but over a hundred VSU CSD students were able to participate in this experiential learning opportunity where they were able to practice their craft within a community-based setting.



## **Student Success & Awards**

### **GSHA Student Success Graduate Scholarship Recipient: Farren Smith**

This award recognizes a student who has displayed exceptional scholastic achievement, leadership skills, and professional involvement in research or service at the local or national level. Individuals must be a part-time or full-time student enrolled in a Georgia college or university in a graduate program and member of GSHA.



## **College of Education and Human Services Awards**

**Outstanding Graduate Student:  
Caroline Boutwell**

This award is exemplified by the graduate student who demonstrates a strong record of academic achievement, professional involvement, research experience, and service to the community or university.



*(Pictured: Caroline Boutwell)*

**Outstanding Graduate  
Researcher: Mary Allison  
Moody**

This award is exemplified by the graduate student who demonstrates excellent research skills, characterized by initiative and independence in completing a high-quality research project and the ability to present the results in a professional manner.

**Outstanding Undergraduate  
Student: Carlyn Seese**

This award is exemplified by the undergraduate student who demonstrates a strong record of academic achievement, evidence of leadership potential, and service to the community or university.

**Outstanding Graduate  
Clinician: Susanna Ramirez**

This award is exemplified by the graduate student who demonstrates a strong record of clinical excellence, as noted by independent and creative functioning in both diagnostic and therapeutic situations.

## Initial Program Assessment Award

The SLP.D. Speech-Language Pathology department received recognition by the Valdosta State University Assessment Committee on March 29th, 2022, for its commitment toward conducting meaningful assessment to improve student learning, operations, and services. The SLP.D. program was awarded the title of 'Assessment All Star with the New Unit Award by Michael M. Black, Ed. D. We are immeasurably proud of our SLP.D. program!

## Community Involvement

### LARC Goes to the Symphony!

The Lowndes Advocacy Resource Center consumers go on weekly outings in the community to see what the city of Valdosta has to offer. These outings are both educational and fun for the consumers! Five graduate clinicians who have clients at LARC had the opportunity to spend a Friday morning with their clients at the Valdosta State symphony.



The VSU symphony allowed us to come during their dress rehearsal and explained songs to the audience before each piece. This was a wonderful time of interacting with adults with intellectual disabilities, watching them enjoy the music, and eating a meal with them!

## Students Volunteer at The Canopy

Each semester, students in Dr. Hannibal's Aphasia class complete a Gerontology Interaction Project. This project allows clinicians to work with individuals in assisted living facilities and nursing homes. This semester, students went to The Canopy, a new assisted living facility in Valdosta.



Students who participated in the project worked with individuals in The Canopy's Memory Care unit. Each week, students assisted residents with crafts and activities, as well as administering hearing screenings. Students also had the opportunity to work with the SLP on staff, providing some guided treatment to the residents.



## Upcoming Events

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual Dr. Robert A. Hull Jr. Memorial  
Lecture Series  
October 21, 2022**



“Supporting the Communication of Self-Determination in Autism”  
Presented by Dr. Sylvia Diehl, Ph.D., CCC-SLP

Registration Fee: \$75

\*Please make checks payable to the **VSU**  
**Foundation.**

Registration deadline for lunch orders:  
October 14, 2022

Dr. Robert A. Hull, Jr.'s foresight in academia led him to develop and teach undergraduate and graduate courses at Ball State University and Valdosta State University. In addition to his role as a beloved professor and advisor, Bob was a clinical supervisor, a clinic director, an off-campus placement

Payments can be sent to:  
**Valdosta State University**  
**Communication Sciences and Disorders**  
**Attn: Leola Sharp**  
**1500 N. Patterson Street**  
**Valdosta, GA 31698**

*Register early. Space is limited to the first 150 respondents. All proceeds benefit the Dr. Robert A. Hull Jr. Scholarship Fund.*

coordinator, and the parliamentarian and executive secretary of the university faculty senate. His impact on the SLP profession spanned the country through his service to multiple state and national professional organizations, including being a member of GSHA for 23 years. Dr. Hull will always be remembered for his love for family, VSU, and his students.

## Department Updates

### **Welcome, Mrs. Leola Sharp!**

Mrs. Leola Sharp has graciously accepted her new position as the secretary for the VSU Speech & Hearing Clinic.

Mrs. Sharp is married to her husband of 13 years. She has four children and spends her free time with them, as well as being a great sports mom!



On top of being a wife and mother, Mrs. Sharp is also obtaining a bachelor's degree in Organizational Leadership through Valdosta State University. She currently holds an associate degree in Business Administration. Mrs. Sharp comes to us after spending many years employed with VSU's Foundation.

Let's give her a warm welcome!

### **Introducing: the *NEW* CSD Student Resource Center!**

The previous location of the department office is being repurposed as the new CSD Student Resource Center. This will be a place for all students in the program to utilize for studying and gathering resources for therapy and educational purposes.

In honor of our late department head, Dr. Myers-Jennings, there will be a library containing her most beloved children's book collection as well as literacy materials provided by the RiteCare Center through Dr. Matthew Carter.



### **The Advisory Council of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The Advisory Council of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is composed of stakeholders with a vital interest in the connections between the department and clinical activities and the regional community. The initial name of the Council was the Field Advisory Committee which was changed in January of 2014 to the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council provides informed guidance and advice to aid the department in making continual

programmatic improvements. The Advisory Council consists of members from many sectors of the community including public school personnel, human services volunteers, private practice, parents, past students, and health services. The Advisory Council of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders was established on October 25, 2007. The council meets annually and by consultation as needed.

## Advisory Board Members

**Ms. Shantel Lambert**  
Parent Coordinator



(Pictured: Heather Delaney)

**Ms. Heather Delaney**  
Owner, Azalea Rehab



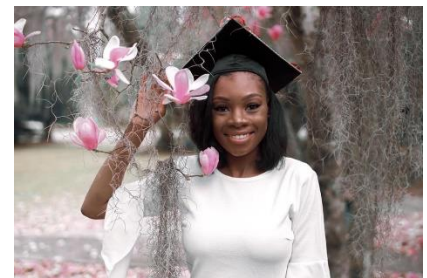
(Pictured: Wayne Neck)

**Mr. Wayne Neck**  
President, Global  
Rehabilitation Services

**Mr. Edgar Vince Clark**  
Marketing Director, Medical  
SLP Collective

**Ms. Ellen Woodard**  
Licensed Clinical Social  
Worker, SGMC

**Ms. Daneesha Edwards**  
Alumni, recent past student



(Pictured: Daneesha Edwards)

## Current Position Openings

### Limited Term Faculty

*Responsibilities:*

Teaching undergraduate and graduate level courses in communication sciences and disorders; supporting student learning; assessing students' performance and providing timely feedback and evaluations; maintaining detailed records of grades and student attendance; completing all compliance training (online) required by VSU; participating in service at the department, college, and university levels.

**APPLY and more details  
about each position at:**

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/human-resources/employment-opportunities.php>

**Find out more information  
about the department at:**

<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/communication-sciences-and-disorders/>

### Lecturer (Clinical Supervisor)

*Responsibilities:*

This position entails providing clinical teaching and supervision on and/or off campus during fall, spring, and summer semesters and engaging in service to the department and college levels. The primary focus of the clinical supervisors is to provide clinical supervision and training to graduate student clinicians.