



**UNC
GREENSBORO**

Department of
Community and
Therapeutic Recreation

THE RECREATOR

VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 2 • OCTOBER 2021 •
CELEBRATING OUR STORIES

CELEBRATING OUR STORIES



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AND MUCH MORE!

The first edition of "The Recreator" touched on our new normal and navigating a world that is ever-changing.

In this second edition of "The Recreator," our aim is to highlight our students and alumni. In this issue you will find an update on both the undergraduate and graduate programs, read stories from current students, hear about the patience and determination of students as they juggle their internships during the COVID-19 pandemic, and see what some of our amazing alumni are up to.

We want to thank you for reading and staying involved with our CTR family. Please use the Alumni Update form linked on page 17 to let us know what you are up to!

A WARM WELCOME

by Dr. Stuart Schleien, CTR Department Chair

Welcome to the second issue of “The Recreator,” as we begin the 2021-22 academic year. As I begin my 25th year at UNCG, I have much on my mind. As Department Chair for 22 of the past 24 years, and as part of an exceptional faculty in Community and Therapeutic Recreation and the School of Health and Human Sciences, I also have so much to be excited about and thankful for.

CTR’s mission, “to prepare recreation, park, and leisure services professionals to enhance health, wellness, and quality of life among individuals and communities through excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement,” is one that our faculty and staff embrace wholeheartedly and practice with our students every day. I am proud to be a part of this department, guided by the values of recreation as a basic human need and right of all people; enhancing health, wellness, and quality of life for individuals and communities; supporting human growth and development through opportunities for self-expression, creativity, and self-determination; protecting and equitable access to parks, open space, and other natural resources; and facilitating inclusive communities.



I appreciate and respect how difficult and stressful the past 18 months have been for so many of you and your families. Each month during this sustained pandemic, I discussed with undergraduate and graduate students their personal battles with the virus, some needing to temporarily put your education on hold to return home to care for a parent or grandparent. CTR faculty and staff understand how significantly your life has been disrupted due to this virus. We did everything possible to help you get through this academically while keeping your mental health in mind. We will continue to accommodate you as students, aspiring professionals, colleagues, and friends. This is who we are.

That said, we have much to celebrate. Our student enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels remains healthy. We are currently serving 207 majors across Therapeutic Recreation, and Community Recreation and Event Planning. In the past academic year, 35 graduate students were enrolled in our program, our largest cohort to date. Our 5TH- year Accelerated Master’s Program, directed by Dr. Ben Hickerson, has been a huge success since its inception in 2017. Today, we have admitted 21 extremely competent students into this program.

Joan Sutton, the department's first Clinical Fieldwork Supervisor, continues to provide exemplary leadership to our internship and practicum programs, along with our undergraduate majors CTR Club. She designed and is currently teaching two different 1-credit fieldwork preparation courses for all our students. In the past year, 72 students completed their internships and graduated with their degrees. We established 18 new affiliation agreements with clinical Recreational Therapy sites and 13 new agreements with Community Recreation and Event Planning sites.

And speaking of community engagement, despite the pandemic resulting in much of our coursework moved online this past year, Kimberly Miller spearheaded a series of student-led programs to contribute to the health and quality of life of communities throughout the Piedmont Triad.

These student-run programs included outdoor celebrations, inclusive yoga and crafts programs, dances, and an escape room mystery, just to name a few, and served several hundred citizens.

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A WARM WELCOME- CONTINUED

Drs. Justin Harmon and Ben Hickerson worked with the North Carolina Folk Festival to analyze data concerning spending habits and economic impact, demographic make-up of participants, and developed a better understanding of cultural awareness and the cultural impact of the festival. They are currently working on a community collaboration to further the development, reach, and impact of this festival. Drs. Stuart Schleien and Lindsey Oakes, along with Ginger Walton from the InFocus Advocacy non-profit organization, led a film screening of “The R-Word” that reached nearly 500 people across North America. This documentary discussed the power of words, and the love between siblings with and without a disability, that inspired a movement to eliminate the use of the word “retarded” from our vernacular.

Lastly, it’s been so rewarding to host our Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), a group of 27 extraordinary practitioners, adjunct faculty, and student representatives who recently advised us on curriculum development, university-community collaborations, student/professional mentoring, and national accreditation.

A heartfelt thank you to all our funders who made these awards, scholarships, and fellowships possible and congratulations to all these highly successful students, alumni, and faculty! Thank you all for supporting the Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation here at UNCG. Our successes are due to your ongoing support and friendship. Cheers to a happy, healthy, and successful academic year and fall season.



Visit [UNCG Cares](#), a Division of Student Affairs initiative that seeks to promote a Culture of Care in the UNCG community by instilling care and support. The UNCG Cares program includes:

- Outreach and education for the UNCG community about how to identify a student in need of support
- Workshops for students and staff to encourage bystander intervention and speaking up for others
- A network of campus resources that are available to assist and support students

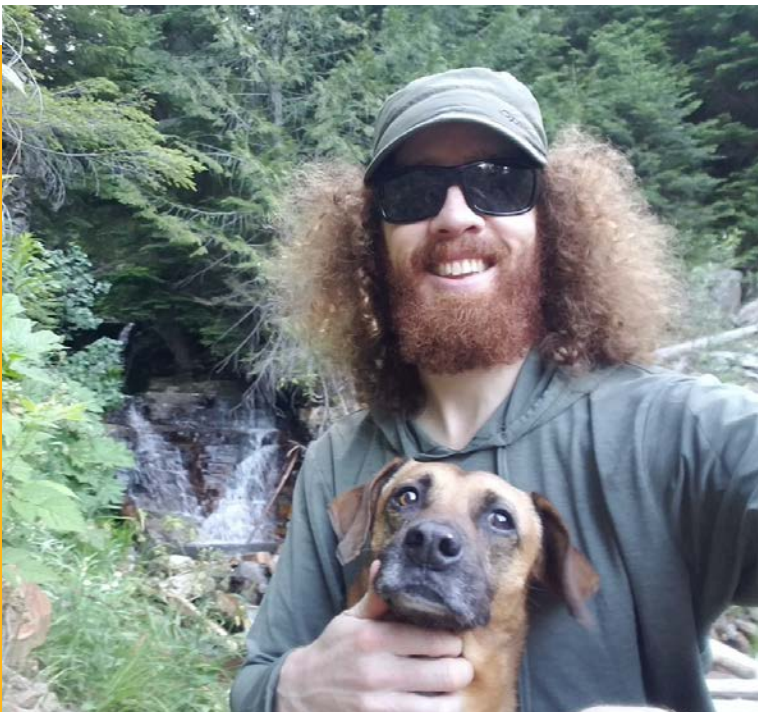
THE PERIPATETIC PROFESSOR - SUMMER 2021

by Dr. Justin Harmon, CTR Faculty

Some people drop names. I drop states. Because I don't want to spend my finite space rattling off all the states I traversed this summer, let's just leave it at the fact that I made it to 25 of them plus D.C., and only two were by plane – all the others were by car, dog in tow. Not bad for a nomad. In another life I would've been a long-haul trucker.

From Maine to the northwest corner of Washington state to the sandy beaches of Southern California and everywhere in between, I logged miles and adventures, hiking in some of the most beautiful and remote places around, seeing concerts in big amphitheaters in metropolises and dive bars in ghost towns, and getting lost in the zone from the rumble of the road – hypnotized by the solitude of the cellphone signal- and internet-free nooks and crannies along the way.

Taking on a cross-country road trip can be a daunting endeavor, though having crossed the nation numerous times in the past, it has become second nature. However, when I'm about to embark on a truly long road trip, I start to question my decision making and rationality, especially about the big chunks of driving that make up the itinerary. The 1,800-mile, 28-hour haul from Illinois (the first stop of my journey, to see my folks) to Idaho in two-and-a-half days comes to mind, as does the 23-hour, 1,550-mile, two-day trip from Montana back to Illinois. The latter was followed up with a short night's sleep and an early return to the road for a six-hour drive to Nashville for a few concerts with a friend. Fortunately, the seven-week journey to the West and back again was padded with enough downtime and leisure to more than balance out the driving days, but still, 9,000 miles is no joke.



Add in the roughly 2,000-mile trip to Maine (crossing off my 50th state) in May before the western voyage, and you would be right to wonder if I am masochistic. It's been enough to test my mettle. Tested and passed, though.

It was in Maine where I watched the movie *Nomadland*. As good as that movie is from start to finish, one scene has been stuck in my mind ever since. A supporting character with terminal cancer, Swankie, is reflecting on her life with the film's protagonist, Fern. Swankie is recalling one of her favorite life experiences as she comes to terms with her impending death: kayaking on the waters of Alaska below the nests of hundreds of swallows on the wall of a cliff. In flight, the birds' reflection is mirrored in the water around her boat, making her feel as if she's flying with them. Swankie says of the memory, "It was just so awesome. It felt like I'd done enough. My life was complete; if I'd died right then, that moment, that would be perfectly fine." Towards the end of the film Swankie sends Fern a cellphone video of the swallows flying, the silhouette of her kayak basking in their presence one last time. Fern smiles and says, "You made it, Swankie."

As I write this, over the 4th of July weekend, I'm in the panhandle of Idaho, a stone's throw from Montana. It's ungodly hot and there is no AC in my cabin, so after my morning hike, I spend the bulk of the early afternoon under a wooden lean-to, reading, waiting for the heat to break. Above me in the wooden ceiling is a hole; in it, a family of swallows. The parents come and go for hours on end, bringing back food for their young. The chicks are quiet until their guardians return, and then there is a chorus of happiness. Hummingbirds flutter by, checking every brightly colored thing for sweetness. Sweat bees get stuck in my hair. Perspiration runs down my arms. The dog lies beside me, breathing deeply, but content, thankful for the occasional cool breeze when it rushes by us.

My dog, Worry, turned 12 on this trip, and I've accepted that we're on the short end of our adventures together. You wouldn't know it to look at her, or by her energy level, but nonetheless she's getting old – but she's got a little Swankie in her.

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THE PERIPATETIC PROFESSOR - CONTINUED

by Dr. Justin Harmon, CTR Faculty

Worry seems happy, and I'm hoping there is still more to come. Until we're told otherwise, we'll continue to make plans for the next adventure. After the last one has come and gone, though, I hope she'll have found her life to have been complete. My years with her surely have been.

When I was a kid, I used to spend several weeks a year out at my grandparents' cabin on the Illinois-Indiana border. My time was spent in unstructured activities and mischief, and it was always serene and rejuvenating. Fast-forward three-plus decades later and I guess that's what I'm still looking for: endless opportunities to wander and explore, marveling in awe and wonder of natural beauty, creating memories, experiences that can't be choreographed because the nectar is in the journey – a belief those little hummingbirds might challenge.

After the heat breaks, around four in the afternoon, we move to the back porch and peer out at Antelope Mountain, a majestic range of rock and pine that both humbles me and makes me feel at peace. After two hours or so of tranquility each afternoon, the dog will eventually look up to me signaling it's time to go walk down to the creek. There's some sniffing to do, and she wants to breath in the scents of our surroundings, enjoying each one as long as she can. On this afternoon, as the swallows fly over us, it's safe to say the dog and I feel pretty darn close to complete.



Pictured: Hikers from the Celebrate the Trail to Recovery Program.

CELEBRATE THE TRAIL TO RECOVERY

Dr. Justin Harmon's "Celebrate the Trail to Recovery" hiking program, founded in 2016 in Greensboro, is a twice-weekly, year-round hiking group for those affected by cancer. To date, more than 65 survivors have participated in this research and service initiative. There have been twelve CTR graduate and eight undergraduate students who have served as hike "guides" since its inception, allowing students to connect theory and practice through this essential support group. As of September 2021, the program has hosted roughly 400 hikes.



GRADUATE UPDATE

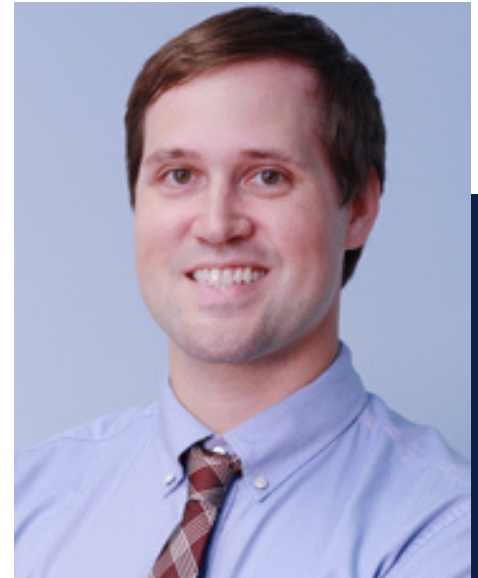
by Dr. Ben Hickerson, CTR Faculty

Greetings former, current, and future Community and Therapeutic Recreation graduate students! We are excited to welcome all of you back to campus for the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year. This fall we have 30 new and returning graduate students who will soon join the field as UNCG-educated professionals.

Our department offers two excellent options for a graduate degree in Community Recreation Management and Therapeutic Recreation. In addition, four years ago we started an Accelerated Master's Program, where undergraduate students can begin their graduate studies during their bachelor's degree program. Undergraduate students take up to 12 credit hours of graduate studies prior to matriculation into the graduate program. These programs are often referred to as a "five-year Master's" and allow advanced undergraduate students to pursue graduate degrees early to further their education and increase their credentials for employment. Since 2017, 21 students have started or completed this program.

This academic year, CTR is employing five Graduate Research Assistants who help faculty with teaching, research, and service responsibilities. Meaghan Conway, Mackenzie Owens, and Hillie Hedgecock are returning from the previous academic year and Kristin Bogner and Kayla Ogle are new additions. Welcome! CTR is always actively looking for arrangements for graduate students to work as Graduate Assistants at community sites. In the past, CTR graduate assistants have worked with Greensboro Parks and Recreation (Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation), High Point Parks and Recreation, Kernersville Parks and Recreation, The Arc of Greensboro, and more! This academic year, graduate students Yasmin Martin and Maddie Ward are working with Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation at Greensboro Parks and Recreation, and The Arc of Greensboro respectively. Please contact us if your site would be interested in employing a highly qualified and motivated graduate student.

We are thankful for all of the wonderful contributions graduate students have made to our program and communities throughout the world. Please share information about our program with colleagues and other interested parties. Also drop us a line to let us know how you are doing and where you have gone since your time at UNCG!

An advertisement for a virtual reality program. It features a woman in a blue jacket wearing a VR headset and holding a controller, while another woman with blonde hair stands next to her, gesturing. The background is a library or office with bookshelves. The text includes the UNC Greensboro logo, the department name, the title 'EXPLORE VIRTUAL REALITY AND PAIN MANAGEMENT', a quote 'Find your meaning here', and the website 'www.uncg.edu/ctr'.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

on Meredith Murray, CTR Graduate Alumna



Meredith graduated in May 2021 with her Master of Science in Parks and Recreation Management with a concentration in Community Recreation Management. She spent her final year at UNCG working with the City of Greensboro to develop an inclusive park.

During her time with the CTR department she found a passion for community recreation, specifically working with parks to ensure spaces are accessible for individuals with disabilities. This fueled her inspiration for her capstone project which involved evaluating 38 city properties. She reached out to Greensboro Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (AIR) for the project and was met with open arms.

When asked what her end hope was for her capstone project, Meredith stated that her aim was to increase awareness in the community about the parks in Greensboro that already offer accessible or inclusive amenities. She hoped to make recommendations to Greensboro Parks and Recreation about how to make some park features more accessible and inclusive, and how to add new features to parks that did not have anything within these guidelines. The information Meredith collected is being used by AIR and has been used to update the *Discover Greensboro* facility guide.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

by Logan Maness, CTR Alumna

Hi everyone!

My name is Logan Maness and I graduated from UNCG in August of 2020. Upon graduation, my experience in the recreation field has been nothing short of amazing. Growing up, I was involved in recreational sports, so I was a strong advocate about recreation being in every community and in every child's life. My father has worked in the recreation field his entire career, so I knew recreation was an option that I would potentially want to choose as my career. I started working in the recreation field with the City of Greensboro in high school and loved it. After a few major changes in my college career, I found myself at UNCG majoring in parks and recreation with a concentration in community recreation and event planning. While being in this major, my knowledge and love for recreation continued to grow. My time at UNCG was coming to an end and I knew it was time to start looking for an internship position. I landed my dream internship with the City of Greensboro's athletic department. I had a wonderful experience throughout the entire course of my internship.

Towards the end, I knew it was time to start looking for jobs. I applied to a couple of places and ended up getting hired by Liberty Parks and Recreation which is a small town right outside of Greensboro.

For the last year at Liberty Parks and Recreation I was the recreation coordinator and within the last month I have been moved up to recreation superintendent. I oversee one full time staff and five part time staff. I am over all sports which consist of baseball, softball, basketball, cheerleading and soccer. I create new programs for individuals of all ages, run our Facebook page and market for all recreation events. I also take care of two parks, which entails two ball fields, three playgrounds, three shelters, and I handle all our park, senior center, and shelter rentals. I manage all upkeep of both parks which include mowing, weed eating, spraying and anything else that needs to be done.

I also get all fields ready for games and I'm in charge of getting concessions together. I just recently started a men's slow pitch adult softball league, where we have six teams, and, in the future, I hope to bring in coed and women's as well. In the winter, which is the recreation departments slow season, I assist the public works department with leaf pickup, meter reading and anything else they may need an extra hand with. So far Liberty has been great. I have grown so much personally and professionally, and I look forward to many more years here in Liberty Parks and Recreation!

Is there any advice you would like to offer to current students or recent graduates?

My advice to current students or recent graduates would be to never stop networking and always be open minded! You never know where life will take you in the recreation world but do everything with love and passion!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

by *Laura Kelly, UNCG CTR Graduate Alumna*

I still remember my acceptance call like it was yesterday. I anxiously picked up the phone and was ecstatic to learn that I was officially accepted into the CTR graduate program at UNCG. I screamed so loud that Dr. Bedini had to take her ear away from the phone. After visiting the campus and meeting the faculty, UNCG instilled a sense of belonging and, even more so, a resounding assurance to provide the direction, education, and purpose I had been yearning for. UNCG and several other universities requested that I retake the GRE because my scores were below the acceptance range. After failing to raise that score a second time, I was overwhelmed with feelings of self-doubt and unsure of the reality of graduate school. Fast forward over ten years later, I am humbled to be writing this article as an alumni award-winner proud to tell my story how CTR built my professional foundation and my ultimate path to entrepreneurship.

UNCG felt like home and the faculty quickly became family. In fact, the CTR faculty is an absolute powerhouse! The education in the classroom equipped me with a greater knowledge and understanding of the profession. I always valued the faculty's ability to recruit top alumni and key professionals across the country to share their experiences in the classroom. Dually noted is the faculty's proven commitment to service outside of the classroom fostering student development, performing award-winning research, professional state and national membership, leadership involvement, and community engagement. The faculty not only showed me what it meant to be a recreational therapist, but how to truly embrace recreational therapy as a career.

I am eternally grateful for my mentor, Dr. Bedini. Her passion, expertise, and invaluable wisdom lit an absolute fire into me. Her mentorship was transformative giving me the confidence to get out of my comfort zone to present at conferences, publish in journals, teach undergraduate courses, and serve on state and national boards; thus, her personal and professional impact was profound and truly instrumental in making me the advocate, leader, and entrepreneur I am today. I am proud to call her an esteemed colleague and friend. I am also forever impacted by the teaching, research, and determination of the late Dr. Buettner. Her legacy remains an empowering beacon in my life and the recreational therapy profession as she pioneered the movement for recreational therapy in older adult settings. I carry her legacy with me every day.

As a new business owner, I find myself outside of my comfort zone again. I left a stable career to start a business from the ground up with ambition and an intuition to fill a void in the industry. While I have received vast support, I have overcome rejections along the way. I endure, learn, and grow from my failures, as well as the systematic failures and challenges within the healthcare and aging industry. Winston Churchill stated "success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

Much like Churchill referenced, I consider myself an enthusiastic disruptor. Although the healthcare and aging community is largely unaware of the service and value of the recreational therapy profession, I aspiringly push forward because I see the unique opportunity for recreational therapy to be a significant change agent.

I built Empower Recreational Therapy to be that change agent. I spent over ten years creating recreational therapy programs at my previous jobs, but felt a greater calling to deliver these essential services on a larger scale. My company mission is to empower adults aged 50+ of all abilities to lead active, purposeful lives through a wellness model that is driven by individualized recreational therapy programming. Inclusion and accessibility are central proponents to the CTR program and therefore resonate within my company mission.

That young woman who answered the phone is still overwhelmed with passionate energy. I continue to be a vocal advocate and hope to empower UNCG students and alumni to push yourself out of your comfort zone. A personal mantra of mine has been the Steve Jobs quote identifying that "the people who are crazy enough to change the world are the ones that do." Although your dreams may be met with failure, seemingly out of reach, or even crazy, I encourage you to go forth with enthusiasm and to be fearless. You will always have the CTR education, faculty, and community guiding and supporting your professional endeavors.



Pictured: CTR Faculty and staff "clapping" for the December 2021 CTR Graduates via Zoom.



Family Photos



Pictured: CTR Club at the Greensboro Grasshoppers baseball game in September.



Pictured: CREP students at their internships (left to right) Matthew Doyle, Courtney Gray & Chan Non, and Carl Brown Jr.



Pictured: Abby Draut, CTR graduate student and Outdoor Adventures Graduate Assistant preparing for an event at Piney Lake.

Pictured: TR students at their internships (left to right) Alyse Ring, Diona Boone, and Abigale Downey.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

by Joan Sutton, MS., CTR Faculty



One of my favorite parts of supervising interns is reading their final internship report. For those of you that don't remember, this report is a final culmination of the entire internship experience. Overall, it's an extensive summary describing an internship site, how a student met their learning objectives, and any special projects a student accomplished over the semester. While I enjoy all sections of these reports, my favorite part is the self-analysis and recommendation section. In this section, students typically reflect on those infamous "Ah-Ha" moments- the ones when classroom theory clicked into practice.

In this final report, many of our students identify how they improved their communication skills, better understand the profession, and stressed the importance of gaining more hands-on experience in the field to help them further their career goals. However, what stands out to me the most was the number of students who stated that they wished the department provided them with more opportunities to gain this type of experience. These types of comments got me thinking- What's stopping them?

One of my personal goals this year is to emphasize to students the importance of volunteering. It's my personal belief that many of our students underestimate the importance of volunteering. When opportunities arise, some student's immediate response is that they are too busy, that it's too much of a time commitment, or it doesn't pay, etc. However, by encouraging students to take advantage of volunteer opportunities to improve skills while helping others, we can better help our students position themselves for a stronger practicum or internship experience.

Whether it's a one-time thing or a few hours a week, volunteering can help students gain relevant work experience. It adds evidence to their resume and refines their soft professional skills (ex. critical thinking, time management, ethical values, etc.). They are helping to improve their overall wellbeing and connect their passion to the field. Additionally, volunteering can expand a person's perception about the field or specific populations, and it allows them to network and better position themselves for future employment/field experience opportunities. It also serves as a way for students to next work with prospective employers and mentors.

Let's be honest. As "employers," we love to see this type of additional experience on resumes because it demonstrates the student has the "drive" and "ambition"- two essential qualities many of us are looking for in new hires. Most importantly, volunteering makes the student a better-qualified entry-level professional.

As we kick off a new school semester, please get in touch with me at jlsutto2@uncg.edu if you or your agency has any upcoming volunteer opportunities. Please, help your CTR department assist students in finding volunteer experiences or for help to set up a volunteer program.



Pictured: Students and their internships (from left to right): Belle Downing, adaptive water skiing, and Jathan Burnette.

UNDERGRADUATE UPDATE

by Kimberly Miller, MS., CTR Faculty and Director of Undergraduate Studies

During the COVID pandemic, our communities have clearly needed safe ways to recreate and a way to feel a sense of community, and now perhaps more so than ever. The recreation field has risen to the occasion with both virtual programs and appropriately socially distanced programming. The flexibility of recreation programmers has come shining through during this difficult time and students in the CTR programming planning class have been significant contributors to that.

The program planning class has continued to work with local agencies to plan, implement, and evaluate programs in the Triad community. There has been a drive-in movie, Challenger Football League end-of-year celebration, virtual programming for special populations, a drive through haunted house and trick-or-treat, spring egg hunt, virtual escape room, dog egg hunt, spring StoryWalk, and spring dance for individuals with disabilities. The need for such programming was clearly demonstrated, for example, when one agency planned for 500 attendees and over 1,000 cars lined up, some waiting for hours to experience the drive through haunted house and trick-or-treat. This semester is no different. We have students planning a fall dance for individuals with disabilities, a drive through trick-or-treat (plus) in downtown Greensboro, and a haunted trail and community appreciation day.

In addition to providing needed recreation outlets for the community, students are walking away with a whole new level of program planning experience. As professionals have found, programming during COVID is no joke, requiring unprecedented flexibility and risk management planning.

As Chamreece Diggs of Greensboro Parks and Recreation told our students, "If you can plan a program during COVID, you can plan a program at any time."

The Department of CTR would like to thank Adaptive and Inclusive Recreation (Greensboro Parks and Recreation), Archdale Parks and Recreation, Burlington Recreation and Parks, Greensboro Parks and Recreation, High Point Parks and Recreation Special Populations Unit, and Kernersville Parks and Recreation for continuing to provide our students with quality learning experiences, even during these difficult times.

STUDENT CTR CLUB

The CTR Student Club encourages participation in career programs offered by CTR. The club promotes professionalism among students, provides opportunities for professional development, creates an awareness of CTR through public relations, and provides opportunities for members to professionally and successfully make contacts in the CTR field.

Membership in the CTR Student Club is free and open to all CTR students - so join today!

Contact the CTR Student Club via email at ctr@uncg.edu and follow us on Instagram for important updates!



[@uncg_ctrclub](https://www.instagram.com/uncg_ctrclub)





MY PATH THROUGH RECREATION THERAPY

Chun Hei (Johnny) Tsui, MS, LRT/CTRS; CTR Graduate Alumnus

I completed my internship at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center with the Inpatient Rehabilitation unit under the supervision of Peggy Cromer. My internship also included a research study in Aquatics Prehabilitation. I was exposed to so many different types of patients with various diagnoses, including but not limited to: traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, automobile accident, burns, joint replacement, strokes, debility, fall related injury, etc.

This excellent experience led me to a Recreational Therapist position at Murdoch Developmental Center, a NC state facility working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral diagnoses. During the two and half years there, I worked with adults with behavioral issues to increase conflict resolution skills, social skills within social settings, physical activities. I utilized outings to practice those skills, aquatics therapy, horticultural aspect in recreation therapy, walking programs, dancing programs, and Special Olympics training. During that time, I was honored to be selected as a scholarship recipient and the first year practitioner award at the Southeast Recreational Therapy Symposium (SRTS).

After some consideration, I wanted to follow my passion in working with an inpatient rehabilitation population. I currently work at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center in Wisconsin within the Community Living Center (CLC). My current caseload are with geriatric Veterans with physical rehab needs. My role in inpatient rehab includes addressing functional leisure skills that can benefit the veteran's recovery during hospital stay. I also address discharge planning, leisure education, and community recreation and leisure resources that can benefit their recovery after discharge. Since COVID-19 I have been effective with my time here at the VA. I have spent more time with technology education to ensure the veterans can utilize their technology for their everyday life. A majority of this training includes setting up video calls with family and friends, using shopping apps to pick up groceries, and downloading a variety of apps for personal leisure.

Professional associations have played a big part of my personal and professional development. I was member of NCRPA, NCRTA, and NRPA. I am currently an ATRA member and member of the Wisconsin Therapeutic Recreation Association (WTRA). I also served as Member at Large, President-elect, and am currently serving as President for 2021-2022 with WTRA. I am thankful to UNCG, my classmates, the professors, and all the others along the way that have contributed to my growth and development.

Let's go G!

Hello everyone, my name is Johnny Tsui, CTR alumni 2016 with the graduate program. I'm thrilled and honored to share my experiences with you on this newsletter. My journey with Therapeutic Recreation began during my undergraduate studies with a CTR minor. I learned much from adjunct instructors, Dr. Stone, Dr. Gladwell, Dr. Bedini and Dr. Schleien. In CTR 314, I participated in Dr. Schleien's Peer Companion Program and later became the Peer Companion Coordinator for four semesters. After a successful minor study, I decided to continue my education with the CTR graduate program in TR.

During my graduate study, I was involved in a community theatre program – Onstage and Inclusive - during an independent study with Dr. Schleien. While completing my graduate degree, I also worked full time at the YMCA in Greensboro as Aquatics Coordinator. This allowed me to use my aquatics skills to work with all types of people, including stroke recovered, people with physical and developmental disability and people with hearing impairment, low vision, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Asperger syndrome.

“The R-Word” Film Screening Across North America



by Dr. Stuart Schleien, Dr. Lindsey Oakes, & Ms. Ginger Walton

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words shall never hurt me.” This adage was once used as a defense against insults and bullying because language yields so much power. For underserved populations, some words can be extremely dangerous and harmful. What is the effect of language on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)? We invited people from across North America to join us for “The R-Word,” a free, interactive, 1-hour film screening event that took place in March 2021 to address this question.

Filmmaker Amanda Lukoff grew up advocating for her sister, Gabrielle, especially when she heard the word “retard(ed).” “The R-Word” unravels the history and lasting effects of this word through the lens of the sibling experience, captivating animation sequences, and self-advocates speaking truth-to-power – ultimately, making the case for why the conversation surrounding people with intellectual and developmental disabilities needs to change.

In partnership with UNCG’s School of Health & Human Sciences, Department of Public Health Education, Office of Comprehensive Transition & Postsecondary Education/Beyond Academics, InFocus Advocacy nonprofit organization, and Department of Health & Human Performance at Texas State University, the

Department of Community and Therapeutic Recreation spearheaded a live screening of the “The R-Word.” This documentary discussed the power of words, and the love between siblings with and without a disability, that inspired a movement.

Dr. Lindsey Oakes from TX State University connected with Amanda Lukoff after viewing a trailer of the film online during Oakes’ doctoral studies at UNCG. After speaking with Lukoff and previewing the film, Oakes, Dr. Stuart Schleien, and Ms. Ginger Walton knew that this film should be shared with a broader audience. Before planning the event, the film went through a second round of vetting. Advocates with and without IDD previewed the film and agreed the film was worth sharing broadly. They also provided initial reactions to the film that proved to be valuable when planning for the panel discussion that immediately followed the film during the live screening event.

Viewers at the screening stuck around for an additional 30 minutes immediately following the film for a thought-provoking Q&A session with an impressive panel of experts, facilitated by Dr. Oakes; a panel comprised of a parent, two sisters who have siblings with a disability, and three self-advocates, along with summary comments by Ms. Ginger Walton, Co-Founder of InFocus Advocacy.

Panelists were selected from a pool of InFocus Advocacy consultants to share the impact of living with a disability, either as an individual or as a family member. Each panelist was asked to reflect on their experience in the community, and especially their feelings stirred by language and use of the word “retarded.” Parents, siblings, and self-advocates described the pain and barriers created by language that overtly or covertly segregates those with a disability. Even in the brief time allotted, these valuable perspectives undoubtedly contributed to a desire for action in the hearts of our 496 participants nationwide. Commit to end the R-word and eliminate hurtful language. Isn’t it time for people with disabilities to become part of the diversity, equity, and inclusion conversation?



GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

by Josh Tucker, Current Graduate Student & High Point City Lake Park Supervisor

I have been with High Point Parks and Recreation since January 2017. My position is Park Supervisor for High Point City Lake Park. High Point City Lake Park is a regional park with lots of amenities and recreation opportunities. There is a passenger train that travels around a section of the park, a carousel, 18 hole miniature golf course, a 350 acre lake, and an 800,000 gallon aquatic facility with two water slides. Needless to say there is a lot of leisure and recreation going on throughout the year.

In 2018 a bond referendum was passed that would see High Point City Lake Park get a 10 million dollar renovation project. The project was to upgrade the pool facilities and renovate the gymnasium into a multipurpose facility. This is where the UNCG CTR Graduate Program comes into play. The renovation project was scheduled to begin in Summer 2020. With the pool scheduled to be closed for two seasons I thought it was a perfect time to return to school and attend the graduate program at UNCG.

Over the past three semesters I can honestly say the parks and recreation graduate program has been very valuable in my position with High Point. During public input meetings and internal discussion on how the renovations will look I have a new perspective. I would say a more inclusive perspective.



The program has expanded my vision to include the surrounding communities of High Point and try to offer as much recreation opportunity as possible. I can say I am very excited to apply my new knowledge and outlook as I move forward in my career in parks and recreation.

RUNNING ACROSS AMERICA

by Maddie Ward, CTR Graduate Student

Hi! My name is Maddie Ward. I am a second-year student in the CTR department and I am from Ashburn, VA. I work for the department as a graduate assistant and I spend my hours with The Arc of Greensboro. Last year I spent my time working in their program arcBARK. acrBARKS is a program that provides vocational training for adults with disabilities through baking dog treats that we then sell. This year I will be working with their inclusive sports teams such as Challenger baseball, cheerleading and flag football.

Over the summer, I participated in the Ulman foundation's 4K for cancer.

A group of 28 young adults and I ran/biked from Baltimore, Maryland to San Francisco, California. Our mission was to raise money and awareness for young adults with cancer.

The team covered around 4500 miles in the 49-day journey and raised over \$160,000 for various treatments and other programs to help these young adults and their families.

On our "rest days" we volunteered at various cancer centers across the country. A normal day on 4k looked like a 5 am wake up call, pack up the camp/host site and depart by 7 am. From there we would take off running or biking, usually 16 miles for runners and 80 for bikers. We would make it to the next host around 6pm, which gave us a lot of time to talk to strangers, pet dogs, see new cities, get ice cream or lay down in a field for a quick nap.

I am so thankful for the opportunity to partake in both of these things and would love to talk to anyone more if there are any other questions about getting involved!





INTERNING DURING COVID-19

by Lauren Bakis, CTR Alumna

My name is Lauren Bakis and my story is about faith, following one's heart, and a true desire to impact the lives of others.

My college journey was not the average four years right out of high school. I spent the first two years of my community college journey trying to take as many pre-requisite classes as possible that would help me get into a program related to the medical field. My parents were adamant on me becoming a physical therapist, but I always knew I wanted to do something more with my life. I applied to five programs before I was beginning to give up hopes of ever graduating from community college when my friends I went to high school with were halfway finished with their bachelor's degrees. I was scrolling through the program catalog CPGC had online and came across the Human Services program, so I reached out to the department chair and we had a meeting. This is where my future began to look up and felt like I was finally on the path God had planned for me all along.

It took me 3½ years to complete my associate's degree with a semester off to figure out a plan. But had I not stuck it out and persevered, I never would have transferred to UNCG and found the Therapeutic Recreation Program where I discovered an even bigger passion for working with individuals with disabilities than I had before.

I felt like God was calling me to continue my education so I took a leap of faith and began my journey to UNCG in the Fall of 2018 where I knew I wanted to challenge myself while living in a new city, making new friends, and making sure I made the best out of my time at UNCG; and I did just that. I attended a career fair where I found Lindley Habilitation and start working one-on-one with individuals with disabilities, and I continued to do so up until Spring of 2020 when COVID-19 sent students off campus and back home. Over that year and a half of working for Lindley, I had the privilege of working with five amazing young women who helped mold my passion into the recreation therapist I will become one day.

COVID-19 did more than just send me home to complete the remainder of my last semester online.

It postponed my internship, which was the last piece of my degree needed to graduate with my degree in Therapeutic Recreation. I waited an entire YEAR to begin my internship but it was so worth the wait. I completed my internship through Carolina's Rehabilitation- Adaptive Sports and Adventure's Program in Charlotte, NC over the Summer 2021 semester. My supervisor, Rebecca Smith, was amazing throughout my entire internship experience. There were days where I wanted to give up but I knew I would be throwing away all my hard work and goals I had previously established. Giving up is not in my nature, especially when it comes to something I love. Mrs. Sutton helped me to stay positive throughout this waiting process and I am so thankful she joined the UNCG family because she was the added support I needed. I am SO proud of myself for how I handled that year of waiting. Most would have given up, but not me. I know without a shadow of doubt that I am destined to become a Recreation Therapist and serve the populations of individuals with disabilities.

My advice to anyone reading this is to never give up on something that is important to you, no matter how hard the journey may seem; persevere, trust the process, and keep pushing forward because once you reach your goals, the feeling at the end of the race you're running is so worth the time, effort, hard work, and dedication you put into yourself. After six years of being in college, I can officially say that I am a graduate of UNCG! Here's to the next step in my future as a Recreation Therapist! GO SPARTANS!

FINDING THE CTR CLUB

by *Hannah Newman, CTR Student & CTR Club Officer*

Hello! My name is Hannah Newman and I am a junior here at UNCG majoring in Recreation and Parks Management with a concentration in Community Recreation and Event Planning. When I first came to UNCG, I was an undecided major who enjoyed events. My academic advisor suggested I take CTR 111 and I fell in love. Since that first course, I declared my major, taken many courses, and over the summer I completed my practicum with the Greensboro Summer Solstice Festival. During my time there, I learned about the behind the scenes of an event planner. I learned about the logistics, rules and regulations, as well as legal procedures.

I learned about the CTR Club late last year during my spring semester and I was so excited to join the club. I wanted to join so I could connect with peers who had similar majors to mine. This is my first year being in the CTR Club and I am also the treasurer. Being a CTR Club Officer has been an amazing experience. The CTR Club offers many wonderful opportunities for students who are interested in the Recreation and Parks Management field. Our first event of the semester was attending a Greensboro Grasshopper baseball game to get to know fellow officers and club members. It was an awesome experience and I am looking forward to our other events.

An upcoming opportunity is our virtual panel on October 14th at 7pm with professionals in the field. This event is open to all students and is a unique experience for CTR major's and non-majors.

Even though this has been my first year in the CTR Club, it has made such a positive impact on my life and I am looking forward to the rest of this semester and year with the club!



UNCG CTR KUDOS

This past year has proven to us that every accomplishment, no matter the size, deserves a little celebration. So, here is a little "kudos" to our CTR family.

Ashley Perry, Lauren Bakis, Anna Jalovec, Kristen Bogner, Lindsay Smith & Mercedes Furr
passed the NCTRC Certification Exam

Jason Capriolo
for obtaining both CPRP and CYSA certification

Lee Blackmon
for obtaining CPRP certification

Dr. Justin Harmon, Dr. Brent Wolfe and Joan Sutton, MS
recognized in the past academic year by UNCG for Faculty Excellence in Research and Creative Activity

Laura Kelly
recognized in the past academic year by UNCG for Faculty Excellence in Research and Creative Activity

Hannah Lanzillotta
recognized as the CTR Graduate Student of the Year

Maurice "Jordan" Barnett
honored as the CTR Undergraduate Student of the Year

Makayla Bullock
was awarded the Department of Defense Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation Scholarship

Scholarship Award Winners for the 2021-2022 academic year
Joy Cabador & Olivia Allen - Grace Blackmore Deely Award
Hillary Hedgecock - Marge Burns Fellowship
Kia Tate - Martha Ann Jesnek
Meaghan Conway, Mackenzie Owens, Hillary Hedgecock - Marie Riley Travel Award
Anna Hamacher - Nancy Burton Hockett Award
Robin Bilodeau - Susan Stout Award
Chris Wrenn - Christopher Harvey Award
Hollis Sherman - Dorothy Davis Award
Lindsay Smith & Belle Downing - Silvio and Gale Bedini Award
Belle Downing & Drew Gehrken - HHS 20/21 Award

Share your accomplishments with us via the [Alumni Update Form!](#)

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

We want to hear from you!

TIMES ARE TOUGH AND MONEY IS TIGHT...

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting everyday life, we thank you for your continued support and wish our CTR family health and peace. Right now, our department faces new challenges. As we adapt to these unprecedented circumstances, we'll continue to serve our CTR community as best we can. While there's a lot of uncertainty, we know that we need to adapt fast to our changing reality. Now, more than ever, our CTR family needs us, and we need you.

To make a gift, click the link below, and search for the area you would like to support!

[**DONATE**](#)

CAN'T DONATE? YOU CAN STILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- Let us know of any positions opening at your agency
- Host an intern
- Nominate someone for the next issue's "Kudos" page

WRITE A PIECE FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER!

Do you have a story to share with your CTR family? Interesting research, relevant topics, or opportunities? We are always looking for new writers and articles, so please let us know!

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

We are so proud of our alumni and we want to stay in touch! Let us know where you are now so we are able to keep an accurate database of our students for future opportunities.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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