

The School of Education

A Legacy of Excellence.

Global Book Hour Celebrates 10th Anniversary, Finds New Ways to Engage Community



PATRICIA GEORGE, GLOBAL BOOK HOUR COORDINATOR

Buffalo State College's Global Book Hour celebrated its 10th anniversary this fall, although in a different, more socially distanced way than anticipated.

Global Book Hour is the brainchild of professor Pixita del Prado Hill and associate professor emerita Kim Truesdell, of the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department, who were inspired during a presentation on global literacy. They envisioned a program that could at once foster literacy development, serve the community, and hone the skills of teacher candidates. Del Prado Hill and Truesdell contacted Wegmans on Amherst Street in Buffalo to see about a partnership and have been working with the grocery chain ever since.

Patricia George, lecturer of elementary education, literacy, and educational leadership, who took over as program coordinator when Truesdell retired, has been instrumental in continuing the work of Global Book Hour, moving the program in new and exciting directions. A decade later, the program has grown in many ways, but its goal remains unchanged: to instill the joys of reading in young children and to provide resources for parents and educators. It also gives Buffalo State's teacher candidates, who facilitate the program, the opportunity to serve in the community and to interact with children and families in a casual, fun environment.

Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, an outdoor curbside pickup event was held Saturday, October 17, on campus to distribute books to caregivers who participate in the program. Before the pandemic, between 12 and 15 families had been attending the sessions. In celebration of a successful 10 years, GBH teacher candidates, alumni and faculty also began recording "read-alouds" of favorite globally-focused children's books, to be posted throughout the year on the Global Book Hour Virtual Read Aloud channel on the School of Education YouTube page.

George also created a YouTube channel called the Global Literacy Channel, to help parents learn many of the GBH literacy strategies and use them at home. The channel continues to grow, with teacher candidates from Buffalo State regularly uploading strategies and techniques for parents.

Global Book Hour has outgrown its local roots, branching into national and international realms. Before the pandemic, GBH initiatives could be found at the Wegmans on Amherst and the Westside Value Laundromat in Buffalo, as well as in Montgomery County and in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with a teacher there who read about the project through an article in the *Reading Teacher* journal. Through an International Professional Development Schools partnership, students from Universidad Mayor in Santiago, Chile also visit Buffalo State and participate and learn about the program and take it back with them.

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SCHOOL of EDUCATION

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Ms. Southard's Virtual Classroom

TEACHER CANDIDATE SHINES IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

As schools around the country were shutting down in the spring, Tara Southard, a graduate student in the master's in childhood education including initial teaching certification (MITC) program, was deep into student teaching. While the pandemic would not stop this last requirement for graduation, Southard knew that the traditional classroom experience she had expected was going to be cut short and she was determined to continue giving the very best to her third-grade students.

Southard, a North Buffalo native, is the type of person who moves well beyond her comfort zone to fully experience a creative life. She obtained a bachelor's degree in theatre from Columbia College, then earned an ESL certification so that she could teach English to children in Taiwan. After returning home to save some money and "do a little soul searching," she traveled to the Amazon in Peru, then to India to become a certified yoga instructor. She returned to Buffalo in pursuit of a teaching

career and a graduate degree from Buffalo State while also waitressing and teaching kids' yoga.

Faced with the move from a physical to virtual classroom, Southard realized that some children do not have constant access to a device and some are not able to meet regularly. Figuring that recorded videos could be a way for all students to participate in activities on their own time, she decided to design her own YouTube page, *Ms. Southard's Virtual Classroom*.

"While there might not be the same amount of learning going on as there would be in school, I think it's more important that the students still feel connected to their teachers and their classmates," Southard said.

Ms. Southard's Virtual Classroom includes several Patricia Polacco read-aloud stories as part of an author study, as well as literacy lessons, and a

read-aloud of the chapter book, *Because of Winn-Dixie*, where students could listen to her reading the story before meeting once a week to discuss in small groups. Students also completed corresponding assignments on their own in Google Classroom. All of the videos are directed toward children ages 6 to 10.

In addition to the literacy videos, Southard also designed home-based science experiments, mindfulness exercises to help students cope with the anxiety and emotional distress of the pandemic, original yoga classes, an Earth Day video, and wrote and performed two beautifully rendered original songs.

"I just hope students feel safe and know that their teachers really care about them," Southard said. "I hope kids will come out of this having learned just how strong they are, and how adaptable, resilient, and creative humans can be."

Visit Ms. Southard's Virtual Classroom at www.youtube.com/channel/UCKO4vcb8UxNt5AqxO585tjw/videos

Garas Receives President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student

Christine Garas received the 2020 President's Medal for Outstanding Graduate Student and delivered the graduate student address during the graduate commencement ceremony. Garas earned a master of science in education in the literacy specialist (birth–grade 12) program. She distinguished herself throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies at Buffalo State through her pursuit of excellence, unmatched devotion to education and literacy-related service, and success as a leader at the local and national levels. Garas conducted research focused on the use of music as a tool for second language instruction, among other topics, and presented her results at four national and seven local conferences, including

multiple presentations at the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) Conference. She was awarded the 2019 Emerging Leader Award by NAPDS. Garas embraced international professional growth experiences by participating in International Professional Development Schools (IPDS) trips to Santiago, Chile, and Torremaggiore, Italy, to widen her knowledge of teaching strategies. She has served in a variety of leadership positions on campus, including as president of the college's chapter of the Student Council for Exceptional Children, vice president of Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society in education, co-leader and facilitator of the edTPA Jump Start program, graduate student



representative on the Teacher Educational Council, and graduate assistant in the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department and the Professional Development Schools Consortium.

Akter Receives SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence



Rakia Akter received the 2020 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence. She completed her bachelor of science degree in childhood education (grades 1–6) in social studies while participating in research, international experiences, and social justice initiatives. Highly motivated, she continually challenges herself and was accepted into Buffalo State's 4+1 pathway to begin her master's degree in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages).

Akter possesses an innate curiosity that has driven her to build an understanding of pedagogy through study and research. After working with Burmese children as a substitute teacher aide at Elmwood Village Charter School, she was inspired to join

the Myanmar study-away program sponsored by the Creative Studies Department. She conducted an analysis of classroom engagement techniques at a partner school in Yangon, Myanmar, and presented her findings at Buffalo State's Professional Development Schools Conference and Student Research and Creativity Conference, as well as the 2019 National Association for Professional Development Schools Conference. Later, she earned an undergraduate summer research fellowship to identify strategies to support the education of Burmese immigrants. Because of her expertise and commitment to the refugee community of Buffalo, Akter was named an International Professional Development Schools (IPDS) student ambassador and a social justice fellow for the Sophia's Legacy conference, sponsored by Buffalo State's Anne Frank Project and School of Education.

The annual Celebration of Community Engagement recognizes students, faculty, staff, and community partners who make a difference locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally, through civic and community engagement initiatives.

CUMMINGS AND TODORO RECEIVE RECIPROCAL PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Mary Cummings of the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department and **Andrea Todoro**, principal of West Buffalo Charter School, have forged a strong relationship and regular communication regarding the changing needs of students, in particular language-learners who need specialized instruction and extra time with focused attention. In her courses, Cummings has provided a service-learning component that broadens her students' experiences and strengthens their understanding of the community. The support of Buffalo State's teacher candidates provides children at West Buffalo Charter School with one-to-one attention, critical to their language development and success in school.

SHANDOMO RECEIVES LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AWARD

As a faculty member in the Elementary Education, Literacy, and Educational Leadership Department, **Hibajene Shandomo** has developed opportunities for her students to engage in meaningful and life-changing service-learning experiences. Her ongoing participation and contributions to the local and international community throughout her career merit recognition. The partnerships she has forged have benefitted children, families, communities, classroom teachers, and building leaders. Through her teaching, scholarship, and service, she has made significant contributions that have deepened and expanded Buffalo State's role as an urban-engaged campus.

Monaco and Husband Publish COVID Kids Book



In an effort to help children deal with the pandemic, Nanci Monaco, associate professor of elementary education, literacy, and educational leadership and a child psychologist, along with her husband, neuropsychologist Mark Schachter, wrote a

book, *Covid Kids: Joy's Story of Coping in a Difficult Time* (available on Amazon). They also developed covidkidsbook.net, a website for parents that stresses how important it is to use this moment to teach important life lessons.

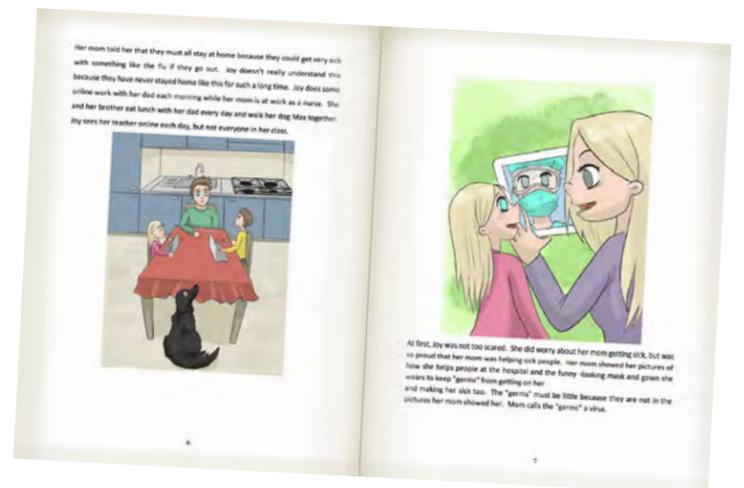
All of the issues explored in the *Covid Kids* book are based on the authors' research with actual young children. Their main focus is to provide a prompt to get young children to talk about some of the things they are not sure of, such as wearing masks, social distancing, staying away from grandparents, and repetitive hand washing. The book depicts a little

girl who is worried about her mom getting exposed to the virus through her job as a nurse. Research shows that young children can more easily talk about a fictional character's story than about their own experiences.

"If we merely ask children to talk about how they are doing, they may reflexively say 'fine.' If we have them read someone else's story and then talk about the characters in the book, what they are worried about, and what they are doing to cope, it prompts them to reflect on the story line, then relate it to their own experiences," Monaco said. "Many of the materials on the market are simply questions and answers for parents about the pandemic. Having a story that systematically explores common fears can be quite beneficial, helping children disclose their concerns."

Monaco is the anti-bullying training coordinator for Buffalo State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), a New

York State child abuse and neglect training provider, and a 2012 Anne Frank fellow, conducting research on resiliency after trauma through the Buffalo State Resilience Project. Since 9/11, she has been actively involved in researching psychological trauma following disasters, assisting families displaced by tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. The Covid Kids project is part of her sabbatical on trauma and resilience; interest in the book has been international, national, and statewide.



FACULTY NEWS

Del Prado Hill Receives SUNY Chancellor's Award



Pixita del Prado Hill, professor of elementary education, literacy, and educational leadership, received the 2019–20 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Faculty Service. Del Prado Hill has demonstrated a passionate commitment to the advancement of

clinically rich practice through the cultivation and enrichment of school-university partnerships. Since 2012, she has been the creative force behind the expansion of the Professional Development Schools (PDS) Consortium, innovating a yearly thematic strand of value to the advancement of social justice in schools and communities. The recent focus on "Engaged Partnership" led to formal study, school-based action research, and improved student engagement strategies in classrooms, which is exemplified in the book *Doing PDS: Stories and Strategies from Successful Clinically Rich Practice* (2018, Information Age Publishing). In 2019, she organized and inspired the faculty to develop the "Resilience Project," a deliberative scholarly and service-oriented effort to focus on trauma-invested practice and building resilience. She includes service-learning in all of her major courses and in 2016 was recognized for her outstanding commitment to service-learning with the Buffalo State Volunteer and Service-Learning Reciprocal Partnership Award. Her insight, vision, hard work, and peerless ability to plan, implement, and measure the impact of this important work has propelled the PDS model to national and global prominence.

Hunter Receives President's Award



Jevon Hunter, Woods-Beals Endowed Chair in Urban Education and associate professor in the School of Education, received the 2019–20 President's Award for Excellence as an Undergraduate Research Mentor. Hunter has developed an exceptional record of encouraging

and supporting student research and scholarship across campus. His role as a mentor evolves as he works with students over time, from introducing them to a subject to coaching them through exhaustive work to connecting them to their chosen career fields. He has mentored undergraduates representing multiple disciplines, collectively yielding many presentations at local, regional, and national conferences. Hunter's work with undergraduates focuses on the intersection between discipline-specific literacy and technology, as well as social justice education efforts. His unique research efforts have even involved high school students whom he recruits to Buffalo State and then supports, advocating a "grow your own" model of undergraduate research. In addition to his tireless dedication to students, Hunter has provided research and expertise at the highest academic level, advancing the overall knowledge and outlook of the School of Education, especially in developing curricula within a diverse population. He is approachable for students and colleagues, and he offers a positive perspective and graciousness that inspire others.

Maheady Named SUNY Distinguished Professor



Lawrence Maheady, professor and Horace Mann Endowed Chair of Exceptional Education, was named a SUNY Distinguished Professor.

Students, faculty, practitioners, and teachers across the nation benefit from his research, which is related to evidence-based practice, improving education and student learning, educational reform, teacher preparation, designing practice, and teaching strategies. A nationally and internationally known teacher-scholar, Maheady has contributed to over 90 peer-reviewed journal articles, 12 book chapters, and three books; presented his work at over 200 conferences; and conducted more than 300 staff development sessions in 29 states. His newest book is *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms* (2019, Routledge and the Council for Exceptional Children). He contributes to the Wing Institute, founded in 2004 and named after Ernie Wing, an outstanding educator and child advocate who was an early champion of evidence-based education and quality services for children with special needs. Maheady is also a consultant for the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR Center), helping states and institutions of higher education reform their teacher and leader preparation programs. Maheady's vita is replete with examples that speak to the number and breadth of editorial and advisory boards, committees, and task forces on which he serves for the greater good.



LETTER FROM THE DEAN Dr. Wendy A. Paterson, '75, '76 Dean, School of Education

Each generation faces at least one great challenge to the human experience.

For today's great-grandparents, World War II led to their worthy title as "The Greatest Generation," a moniker earned because they faced and overcame the many obstacles presented in six long years of war, followed by a happy ten years of recovery during the 1950s. For my generation, the war in Vietnam, the struggle for Civil Rights and human dignity, and a new call to arms to fight climate devastation led us into the streets where social upheaval and protest signaled a turning point for the country and the world. Since that time, however, with the exception of the Millennium scare, there has been relative peace and a sense of empowerment brought about by computer technology's astronomical growth. While there continue to be global conflicts (as ever in human history), the last 50 years has been relatively calm for humanity in general. Enter 2020 and a global pandemic.

Over the past few months—which to many have felt like years instead of days—even the most resilient and resourceful educators have been presented with challenges we never dreamed we would face, let alone overcome, coupled with our own personal fear of the devastation of this silent enemy. The transition from in-person to remote, technologically mediated classrooms was difficult and messy. "What will happen to our children?" I was asked over and over by the news media. "Do you think that remote learning is the same as face-to-face classrooms?" Early in the pandemic, answers were a matter of speculation. I spoke about the remarkable resilience of children and the innovative resourcefulness of teachers. I assured them that, "Children don't have a pause button. Learning will continue with or without us. The trick will be to assure that our children grow and develop WITH our help."

In the months after the early shutdowns, there was never a more graphic demonstration of the skill and power of teaching. Parents became our true classroom partners. Google Classroom became more than a cartoon representation of "fun" learning activities. And student teachers began to stretch their imaginations. Whereas anxious principals and superintendents across New York State responded

to the crisis differently, those who did not shut out the possibilities of doubling their teaching workforce by accepting student-teachers began to be rewarded for that faith. Everywhere in our partner schools, we witnessed innovation and creativity. New learning modalities opened across the globe, rusty computer skills were "upgraded," and new respect for the teaching profession grew everywhere.

Kudos to the student-teaching supervisors and field experience faculty for their fierce advocacy and tireless devotion to high-quality clinical practice, no matter where the classroom—online or in physical space. True mentorship does not depend on the place, only the spirit of persistence and grace passed on to the student by the mentor. In that we are truly prospering. We are so grateful for all who have who agreed to continue working with their student-teachers and methods of teaching candidates. Their sacrifice of time is even more precious while they try to teach remotely and home-school their own children.

Our PDS has affirmed partnerships with area schools by providing top-quality professional development and continuing to co-construct this new reality together. We have been both physically and virtually present, never allowing social distancing to become "mission distancing."

We mobilized all the creative resources Buffalo State College could muster. We developed "School Away from School," our continuously evolving curation site for learning resources, a true gift for struggling parents who are learning the home-schooling adventure for the first time, and a place where all partners could share their brilliant ideas for opening an entire world of online instruction. The site remains active and growing.

As we await the much-desired end of this crisis, we will continue the 150-year tradition of preparing excellent educators. I have been so impressed with the work Buffalo State teacher candidates and our faculty are doing this semester. They continue to amaze us with inventiveness, insight, and flexibility. Reports from grateful teachers echo the sentiments of the student-teachers who write passionately about their newfound connections with students and families co-constructed in a world closed for "old" business but open and hungry for innovation!

School of Education Creates *School Away from School* Website for Families and Educators

In response to the pandemic and sudden changes faced by schools and families, the School of Education developed a new website to suggest selected online learning websites and useful ideas for families managing home schooling, as well as practicing educators seeking inspiration.

School Away from School is designed as a resource for parents, guardians, and anyone else caring for and educating children. Relying on the direct expertise, experiences, and recommendations of campus faculty, staff, students, and school partners, as well as from parents, community members, and readers, the dean's office team reviews the many resources available and offers the most inspiring, quality, helpful links, and information in one, easy-to-navigate place.

While Buffalo State plays a role in "growing" teachers for schools, the Teacher Education Unit is tireless

in its dedication to lifelong learning in all forms.

"American ingenuity is being tested daily, and each and every one of us is forced to rise to the challenge. Through each rise and fall, Buffalo State continues to partner with all members of our community in learning and teaching," said Wendy Paterson, dean of the School of Education. "Teaching and learning take place even when we don't plan it. It can fairly be said that parents are our first, and often our best, teachers."

The website's content, which continues to develop and grow weekly, is organized into several main sections. *Insights* provides advice and examples from teachers, home-based educators, and experts. *Resources*, the most visited category, includes countless websites, activities, and materials for learning from home. The websites are organized by topic (e.g., Literacy & Language, Science &



Discovery, Mindfulness & Movement) and sub-topic (Grammar, Phonics, etc.) and most links lead to free resources. The *Paths* section is helpful for caregivers who are new to home-based education or are struggling to gain control of each days unfolding. It features sample schedules and ideas for creating daily rhythms.

"The Internet can be a dangerous place, but it can also be the ticket to worlds that offer unimaginable fascination for children. *School Away from School* was created to help caregivers navigate those worlds without fear," said Paterson.



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2021-22

The Dudes Read Aloud

In response to the COVID-19 quarantine, and in an effort to engage students and humanize remote learning, Eve Everette, assistant director of the Anne Frank Project and student in the master's in childhood education including initial teaching certification program, created *Dudes Read Aloud*, an interactive online read-aloud YouTube channel, in collaboration with her creative partner, EmmaClaire Brightlyn, an international theatre artist, voice-over actor, and fight director. The pair became "Best Dudes" after meeting in graduate school at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

"After our lives had been digitized for a few weeks in spring, I found myself pacing my living room thinking about children who may not have access to books or someone to read to them," said Everette. "I was disappointed in the poor quality of those I found online. Many were too gimmicky, lacked personal engagement, and a creative, educational structure."

The *Dudes Read Aloud* videos are influenced by performance theatre arts. Play is at the foundation of the creative process, and the educational content is structured with a focus on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, which Eve studied in EDU 612: Developing Literacy Through Literature, taught by Wendy Paterson, dean of the School of Education.

"I consider teaching a performance and the classroom a stage. In professional performance, play is witnessed as engagement and transformation between



actors and the audience. Play allows space to explore, channel instinct, and focus. It offers a constructive release of tension and plenty of learning opportunities. We want to replicate this creative flow for digital learning," said Everette.

The read-aloud characters ("The Dudes") guide students through three stages: an engaging introduction that maps out prompts and questions for the story; the read-aloud of the book; and activities that cover three of the Multiple Intelligences. The Dude characters talk to the audience to encourage participation, just as teachers would in a classroom. The Dudes seek to hold the student's attention, build empathy, and spark a love for reading.

"We hope that the connection decreases social isolation for students while life remains on pause," said Everette.

To visit the channel, go to YouTube and search "The Dudes Read Aloud."