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Summer Apprentices Gain Experience at Georgia Museum of Agriculture
TIFTON—From learning to crochet to exploring the intricacies of the print shop, twenty young people had the time of their lives this summer as a part of the Museum Apprentice volunteer program at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Lynn McDonald, the Museum’s Volunteer Coordinator, said the program offers 13-18 year-olds in the Tifton area an opportunity to learn about history, gain work experience, and prepare to take an active role in volunteering at the museum.

First time apprentices were Allie Brooks, Colton Gibbs, Zach Golden, Savannah King, Lindsey O’Quinn, Betsey Rakestraw, Mikayla Robinson, Karmen Tovar, Emily Walker, and Jonathan Webster. Returning for the second year of the program were Sara Auger, Kaycee Aultman, Annabelle Branch, Alana Griffin, Justin Harper, Elizah Huff, Ashley Jensen, Katy Johnson, Michaela Lubbers and Annabelle McEachin.

Each of the students agreed to work four weeks during the summer for a total of 30 hours. They also committed to volunteering throughout the rest of the year, particularly during special events, for a total of 60 hours.

During the summer the apprentices worked side-by-side with historical interpreters to learn details about each of the buildings and areas in the village and dressed in period-appropriate clothing, which they provided themselves. Other activities during the summer included group research on selected topics, communications workshops, and field trips.

The apprentices will be volunteering for several special events in coming weeks beginning with Fall Frolics each Saturday in October, the Veterans Day Celebration on Nov. 9, Cane Grinding on Nov. 16 and 23, Victorian Village by Candlelight on Dec. 8, Wiregrass Christmas on Dec. 14, and North Pole Express on Dec. 19-20.
“They will help with children’s activities, train loading/unloading, historical interpretation, wool dyeing, preparing meals, and cane grinding,” McDonald said. “Some of the apprentices will also provide musical entertainment.”

To be considered for an apprentice’s position, the students completed an application and submitted a letter of recommendation. Each applicant also went through an interview process before being selected. Upon being accepted into the program, students underwent an orientation to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village.

During orientation the apprentices previewed the village with Billy Hayes and learned about artifacts and artifact care from former curator Johnny Johnson. McDonald gave them guidance on working with the public, and Wiregrass Kids Camp Coordinator Kelly Scott provided tips on working with children. Deputy Chris Strickland from the Tift County Sheriff’s Office provided tutorials on drug prevention, and Captain Dennis Reese enlightened the apprentices about the importance of internet safety.

Regarding the summer apprentice work, one parent commented, “It was great that the students were made to sign in and out every day – the basics of every job.”

“By the end of the summer, the apprentices had received instruction and showed dramatic improvement in their communication skills, teamwork, guest interaction, and Georgia history,” McDonald said.

McDonald said she is always looking for quality applicants for the apprentice program. Interested persons can contact her at (229) 391-5223 or e-mail her at lmcdonald@abac.edu.

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