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Gardner-Webb Host Social Entrepreneurship Week



Left to right: Jennifer Spencer, Joseph McMillan, Brendan Buttimer Photo by Elizabeth Banfield

by Ellen Laws

Gardner-Webb University spotlighted global issues and featured people who are working to find solutions and change the world at Social Entrepreneurship Week, March 22 to 26.

A series of events were planned to help encourage the Gardner-Webb Community to make a difference in the lives of others who are facing an array of challenges.

"Social Entrepreneurship Week is an effort to educate a new generation of confident and competent problem-solvers at Gardner-Webb University," said Dr. Tom LeGrand, director of the GWU Center for Christian Ethics & Social Responsibility, one of the week's sponsors.

Gardner-Webb faculty, staff and students were invited to attend a forum discussion titled, "What Inspires a Social Entrepreneur?"

Joseph McMillan, is the Founder and President of Junk Matters LLC, an environmentally conscious recycling company. Jennifer Spencer, is a GWU alumni and Founder and Lead Teacher at The Willow Tree School in Boiling Springs, N.C.

"Social entrepreneur is a person who establishes an enterprise with the aim of solving social problems or effecting social change," said Spencer.

Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems. They try to tack major social issues and offer new ideas for wide-scale change.

Missions leader, Jamie Wright, visited GWU to offer several programs for the public during Social Entrepreneurship Week. She talked about missions, ministry, writing and making a difference in the world. She also spoke at the University's Dimensions program on March 25, at the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.

Spencer and McMillan both began their journey as 'ChangeMakers' when they were students. They talked about how their study and research inspired them to make life and career decisions that would make a difference.

On March 26, Kayla Gainey talked about "How a Classroom Creates a Social Entrepreneur" by providing insight on the ways her professors and classes inspired her to further study and create change in the world around her.