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Office of University
Communications

March 8, 2019

'Southern Smash' Celebrates Real Beauty and Annual 5K Helps Students Pay for Treatment



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University Counseling Center is sponsoring two events in March to bring awareness to eating disorders and support individuals with these life-threatening illnesses. Both activities are open to the public.

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), a nonprofit that supports individuals and families affected by eating disorders, reports that 20 million women and 10 million men in the United States will suffer from an eating disorder at some point in their lives. While NEDA doesn't list a percentage for the number of college students affected, the organization does have statistics on college athletes. Studies reveal that 35 percent of female and 10 percent of male college athletes were at risk for anorexia nervosa and 58 percent of female and 38 percent of male college athletes were at risk for bulimia nervosa. In addition, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental health concern.

The first event, the “Southern Smash” on March 27 from 2 to 4 p.m. in front of Tucker Student Center, celebrates real beauty and self-love. Participants are invited to demolish body weight scales with sledge hammers to symbolize smashing eating disorders and unrealistic body images.

The next event on March 30 at 9 a.m. is the Seventh Annual Everybody Knows Somebody 5K, co-sponsored by the Physical and Health Education Majors Association. The Counseling Center began sponsoring the 5K in 2013 when counselors realized that some GWU students couldn’t afford the cost of specialized treatment for eating disorders.

“All funds raised are used for students in need of financial assistance to help them receive treatment for an eating disorder, whether that is outpatient, intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization, residential, or inpatient,” explained Stephanie Allen, GWU counselor. “We host this event annually due to the rising number of students we see with an eating disorder on our campus.”

The first 100 participants to register for the 5K will receive a T-shirt. Registration is \$10 for all students, \$15 for faculty and staff and \$20 for other participants. Additional donations will also be accepted online or at registration on the day of the event. Medals will be awarded to male and female winners in their age brackets. Register online at gardner-webb.edu/everybody-5k.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 48 hours prior to the event. Please call 704-406-2155 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

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