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# Gardner-Webb University to Host ‘Everybody Knows Somebody’ 5K on April 1

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Office of University  
Communications

March 22, 2017

*Fifth Annual Event is Part of University’s Commitment to Eating Disorder Awareness & Prevention*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – In an effort to encourage the prevention of eating disorders and body image issues, Gardner-Webb University will host the annual “Everybody Knows Somebody” 5K on Saturday, April 1 at 9 a.m.

Everbody Knows Somebody 5K Race

The National Eating Disorders Awareness (NEDA) week is recognized each year in February. NEDA is a collective effort of volunteers, including health professionals, students and educators, who are committed to raising awareness of the dangers surrounding eating disorders and the importance of early intervention and treatment. NEDA’s recurring theme is “Everybody Knows Somebody.”

As part of the Gardner-Webb events designed to raise awareness about the dangers of eating disorders, a screening of the compelling documentary “THIN” will be presented to students in the Tucker Student Center Time Warner Theatre at 7 p.m. on March 27. The documentary focuses on the lives of four women in Florida who are battling anorexia and bulimia.

Maintaining a healthy approach to exercise is also an important aspect of the week’s focus. The week will end with the annual ‘Everybody Knows Somebody’ 5K. The 3.1-mile, walk/run course tours the Town of Boiling Springs and the Gardner-Webb campus and will be held on Saturday, April 1 at 9 a.m. Proceeds from the race are used to help GWU students receive treatment at residential eating-disorder facilities.

Sophomore music major Sarah Covington (Gastonia, N.C.) is one such student. As a freshman, Covington’s battle with anorexia and over-exercising reached dangerous and destructive levels. She began to seek help at the GWU Counseling Center, where counselor Stephanie Allen eventually realized she would need outside intervention.

“When an individual’s behaviors get to a certain point, you know it’s beyond your ability to care for them at a university,” Allen shared. “I knew what she needed. She didn’t know it yet. And that was the problem. She had to be ready to take that next step. When she finally

got to that point, she realized how severe the disease was.”

Covington said the first step for her was realizing that she had a problem. “It’s incredibly scary and terrifying when you’re in the grips of an eating disorder to accept that it’s a problem that needs to be dealt with,” she reflected. “After a year of extreme self-discovery and developing a lot of positive coping mechanisms, I felt confident enough to come back to school and be successful again.”

Allen and the staff at the counseling center believe Covington is a wonderful example of a student making the right decision in the midst of a very difficult situation. “She is where she is today because she was willing to take a step toward treatment,” Allen offered. “We’re very proud of her for pushing through that.”

To register for the 5K in advance, visit [gardner-webb.edu/everybody-5k](http://gardner-webb.edu/everybody-5k). The cost is \$10 for students, \$15 for GWU faculty and \$20 for all other participants. Registration on the day of the event will begin at 7:30 a.m. To learn more about Sarah Covington’s personal battle with an eating disorder, listen to the WGWG.org interview below.

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*