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January 12, 2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— A Gardner-Webb University mission team will host a Zumba Fitness® Party fundraiser on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Shelby City Park gymnasium to raise support for its trip to Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m., and the event will last from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. No previous Zumba® experience is necessary, though participants must be at least 12 years old. The community is encouraged to attend.

Licensed Zumba® instructor Lindsay Bridges will lead two one-hour sessions with a half-hour break in between. During the break, the mission team will give a brief presentation about their planned involvement with New Life Deaf Ministry in Tegucigalpa. Door prizes will also be drawn and free refreshments will be available throughout the event. The event will be interpreted in American Sign Language.

New Life Deaf Ministry's mission is to reach the Honduran Deaf community with the love of Jesus Christ through evangelism, education, and equipping leaders. The Gardner-Webb team will offer support for New Life's ongoing ministry projects, primarily with Happy Hands Christian School for Deaf Children. Planned activities include classroom assistance and training for teachers and Deaf leaders, and possibly a Vacation Bible School for the students.

Gardner-Webb's team consists of both deaf and hearing Gardner-Webb students, faculty and staff. The team leaders are Robert Moore, an American Sign Language instructor, and Rachel Buck, a disability specialist with GWU's Noel Program for Students with Disabilities. The trip is scheduled for March 10-17.

"I'm excited this event will bring the community together, doing something fun and healthy for a great cause," said Buck. "Many of the dance steps in Zumba® have salsa or merengue roots, so we're hoping this gets people excited about supporting a people group in Central America."

Statistically, less than 1% of Deaf people in Honduras graduate from high school. As the only accredited school for Deaf children in Honduras, New Life Deaf Ministry's Happy Hands Christian School is pioneering the way for Deaf education. More information is available at nldm.org.

For more information about the fundraiser or trip, contact Rachel Buck at 704-406-4272 or rbuck@gardner-webb.edu, or search "Zumba Fitness Party Fundraiser" on Facebook.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, balances conviction with compassion, and inspires in students a love of learning, service, and leadership.