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Gardner-Webb Campus Finds Ways to Serve Community While Observing COVID-19 Protocols

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FAITH & SERVICE

Gardner-Webb Campus Finds Ways to Serve Community While Observing COVID-19 Protocols

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 2, 2020



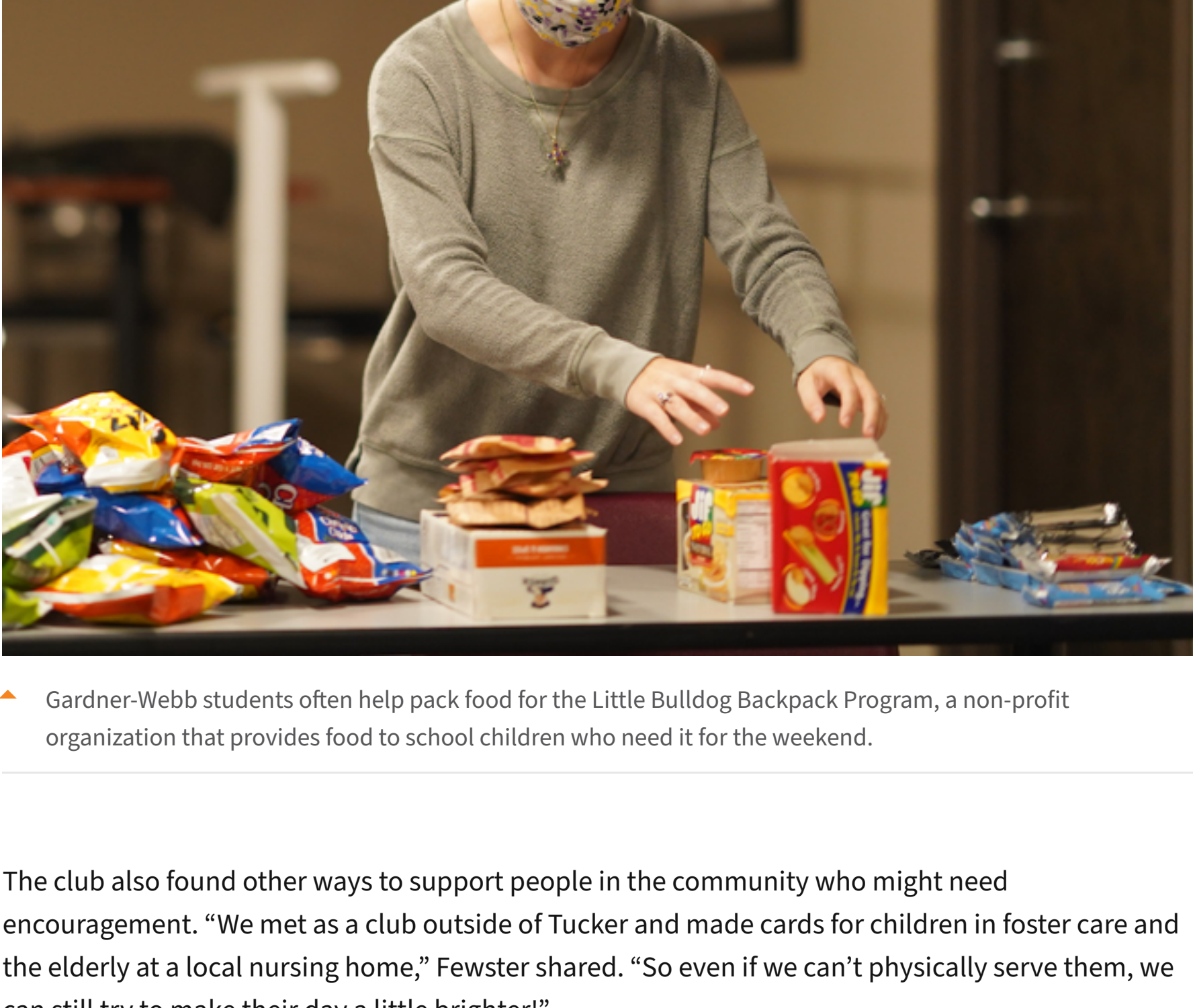
Students, Student-Athletes, Faculty and Staff Participate in Several Service Projects

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—An integral part of life on the Gardner-Webb University campus is serving the community. Although projects look different with everyone wearing face coverings and staying 6 feet apart, faculty, staff, students and athletic teams have participated in several events this semester.

Many opportunities to serve the campus and community have been coordinated by ServeU, a student-led volunteer service organization. The group's president, Makayla Fewster, a senior computer information systems major, is grateful that GWU students participated amidst COVID-19 protocols.

"We have had a wonderful turnout by ServeU members and others this year at all our events, and we are so grateful for the generosity present on this campus," Fewster observed. "We did an outdoor campus cleanup event that allowed everyone to be separated across campus while still contributing to the same cause."

The campus cleanup had between 60 and 70 participants and included members of the football, lacrosse, men's basketball and wrestling teams.



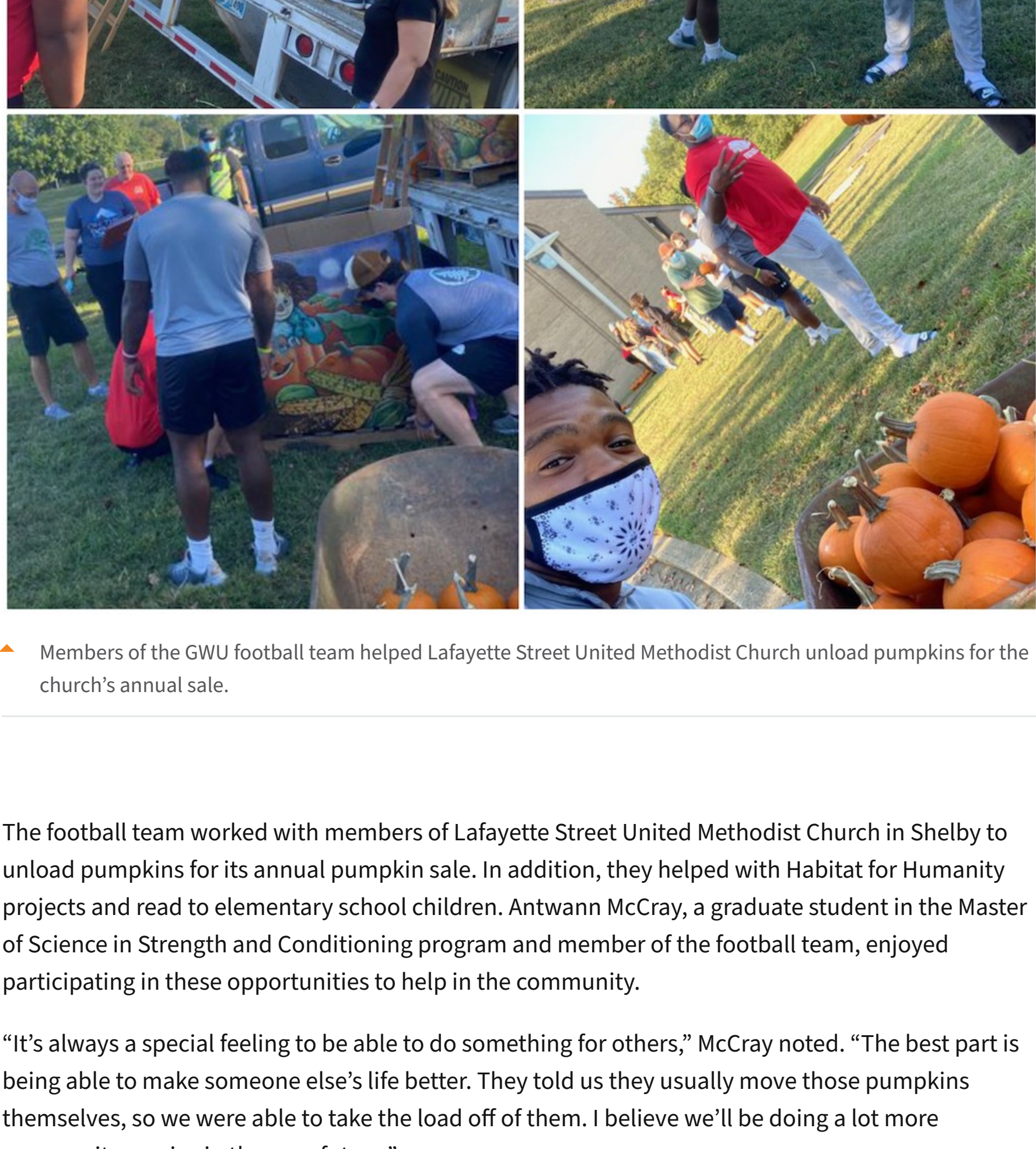
▲ Gardner-Webb students often help pack food for the Little Bulldog Backpack Program, a non-profit organization that provides food to school children who need it for the weekend.

The club also found other ways to support people in the community who might need encouragement. "We met as a club outside of Tucker and made cards for children in foster care and the elderly at a local nursing home," Fewster shared. "So even if we can't physically serve them, we can still try to make their day a little brighter!"

Fewster said she finds joy in helping others. "As a Christian we are told to be like Christ, and one way we can do that is by serving," she affirmed. "Jesus came to serve not to be served, so I believe it is an innate calling to serve others and put their needs in front of our own."

ServeU also sponsored projects on the first Saturday of the month at Rutherford Housing Partnership and on the third Saturday of the month at Shelby Mission Camp. A group of about 14 people attended each work day.

Players, staff and support staff from the Men's Basketball team also participated in a couple of workdays for Rutherford Housing Project. They put a second coat of paint on a house being renovated for a family in need. The team usually does about 10 service projects a year, mostly in the fall semester. The baseball team helped with the Hope Church Food Drive, and the women's basketball team delivered food to a family in need.



▲ Members of the GWU football team helped Lafayette Street United Methodist Church unload pumpkins for the church's annual sale.

The football team worked with members of Lafayette Street United Methodist Church in Shelby to unload pumpkins for its annual pumpkin sale. In addition, they helped with Habitat for Humanity projects and read to elementary school children. Antwonn McCray, a graduate student in the Master of Science in Strength and Conditioning program and member of the football team, enjoyed participating in these opportunities to help in the community.

"It's always a special feeling to be able to do something for others," McCray noted. "The best part is being able to make someone else's life better. They told us they usually move those pumpkins themselves, so we were able to take the load off of them. I believe we'll be doing a lot more community service in the near future."

The lacrosse team participated in a fundraiser for Younglife, which is a non-profit organization that introduces teens to Jesus and helps them grow in their faith. The team also helped with a Dawg Day, an event where potential Gardner-Webb students come to tour campus and learn about what the University can offer them. Emily White, a freshman on the lacrosse team, volunteered for both events. "I think it is important for everyone, especially athletes, to make time to serve others instead of focusing all of your time and energy solely on yourself and your sport," she said. "We were created to serve those around us in order to glorify the Lord. Going into the community to help with organizations such as Younglife—whose purpose is to introduce the Gospel to kids in our county—is doing just that."

White's teammate, Tori Birks, a senior, also feels it is important to give back to the community, serve others and get connected. "I live in this town and since I have been here, the school and the community have served me in many ways," Birks affirmed. "As student-athletes, the community has always supported our events in different ways, so we should give back in the ways that we can. In my personal experience, I have met some really awesome people through volunteering, and it helped me feel like I was part of this community."

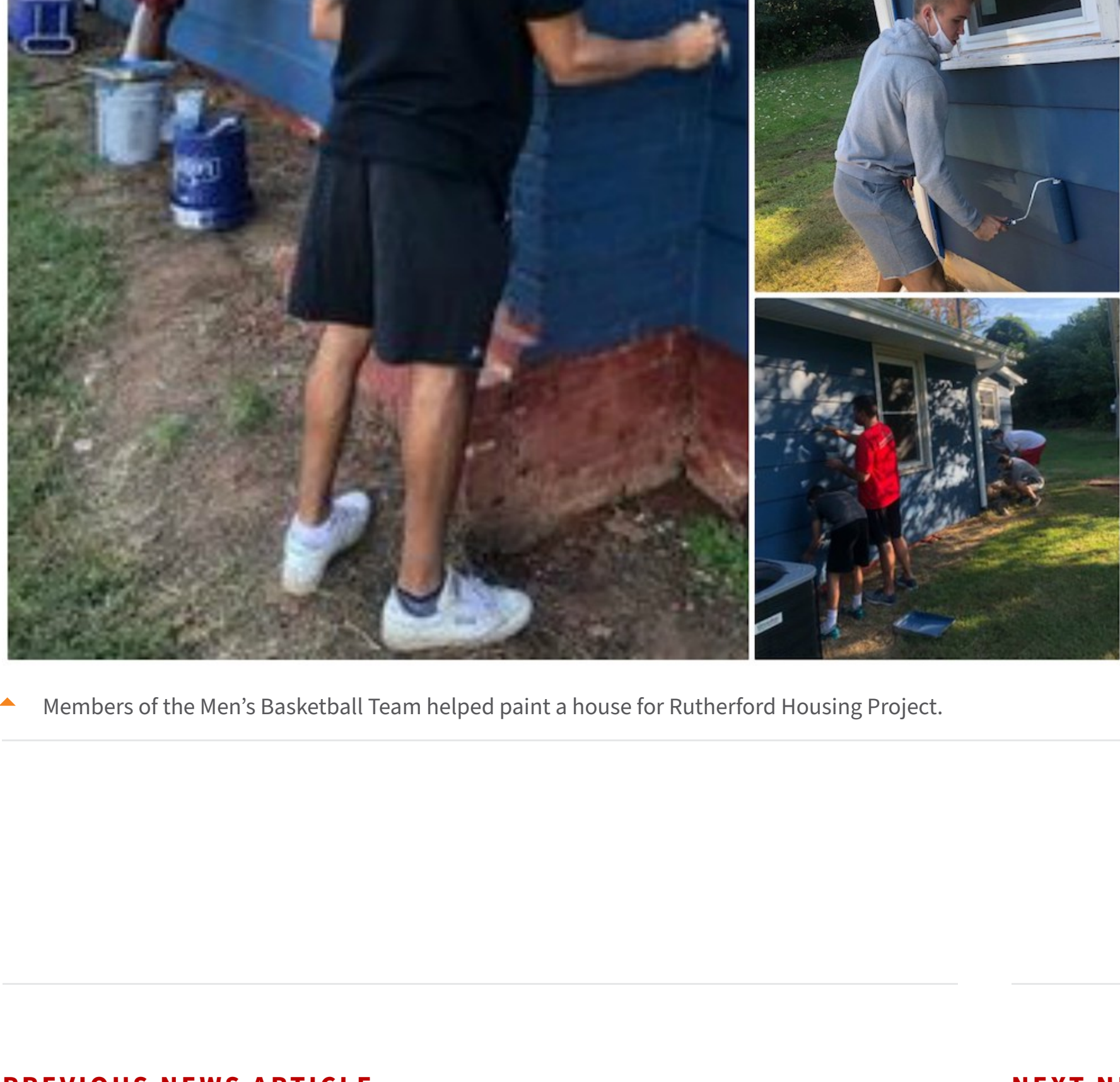
Upcoming ServeU projects

With donations and support from the campus community, ServeU is sponsoring several other projects before the end of the semester:

- Inmate Care Packages for 300 male inmates at a prison in Spartanburg, S.C.
- Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, sponsored internationally by Samaritan's Purse; members of the softball team packed 30 boxes for this project.
- Angel Tree, provides gifts to local children in need.
- Little Bulldog Backpack Program, provides food to local school children.
- Homeless backpacks to be delivered on Christmas day to 100 people in Asheville, N.C.

For more information about helping with these projects, contact Mindy Robinson, coordinator for Community Engagement and Student Ministries, 704.406.3273 or email mrobinson5@gardner-webb.edu.

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▲ Members of the Men's Basketball Team helped paint a house for Rutherford Housing Project.

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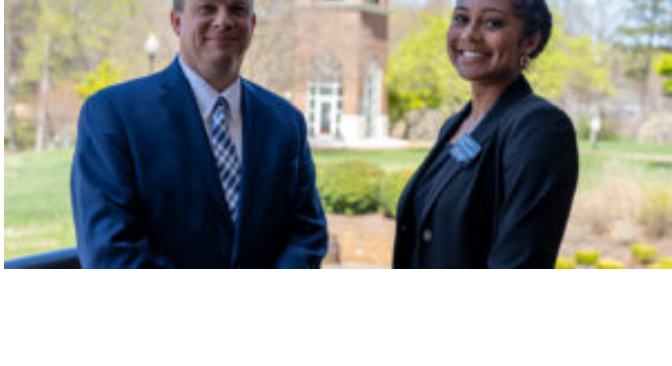


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