



## That's a Wrap

*August typically brings one thought to mind ... It's back to school time and, yikes, how can I enjoy the last bit of summer? Schools are finalizing their schedules, faculties, and plans for the new school year. Families and students are collecting supplies and wondering what the new school year will bring. At CAP, even though all of our programs have different financial beginnings and ends of years, we can all agree that August is the starting point for the work we do with students and educators, the time to begin implementing everything so carefully planned.*

*August is also the time when we wrap up our summer activities. Every program has had a very active summer, and the stories in this newsletter only begin to describe all of the hard work and fun we have had this summer.*

*Take some time to ask your colleagues in other programs how their summer has gone and how summer differs from the school year. I also usually ask if they had a chance to get away for a bit. Savor the sweet scent of summer, take a break in a creek, explore new places, and maybe make some new friends.*

- Jim Beeler,  
Executive Director - College Access Partnerships

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## **Employee Spotlight:**

Let's get to know **Doug Thompson**, GEAR UP Interim Associate Director!

**1. How long have you worked with CAP?** *This is actually an interesting question with respect to my history within the organization. While I was hired by Corinne and Jim, back then they were the Associate Director and Director of GEAR UP, as an Assistant Director of GEAR UP in July of 2019, most folks may not realize that I was actually working with GEAR UP since 2015.*

*In my previous role at the Discovery Place Education Studio my team and I served as professional development providers for GEAR UP 1.0 which began my journey of working with Appalachian State University and our various district partners. While my resume may show four years of GEAR UP service, I've been supporting the academic needs of this project for 8 years. In my best grandpa voice, "When I started here everything looked and felt different, the College Access Partnerships team was a lot smaller than it is today."*



*Doug Thompson, GEAR UP Interim Associate Director*

**2. What's your favorite book/movie/album/song? Pick one and explain why.** *I've always been a fan of movies. I love the art associated with film, combining writing, acting, music, and photography. Paul Newman has inspired my love for film and the trilogy of Cool Hand Luke, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid and The Sting (these three films are in no way connected in the concept of a trilogy) has always held a special place in my life. Cool Hand Luke highlights how to live your life the way you choose, buck the system, pushing the boundaries, and refusing to accept societal expectations. Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid tells the story of friends sticking together through thick and thin as they navigate the wild west. The Sting tells us the story of how the "little guy" can overcome obstacles and work with others to take down the oppressive "big guy". While many of these characters reflect the concept of an outlaw or people living outside of the societal norm, I appreciate their desire to live a life they consider to be free and full of passion and excitement.*

**3. What would your perfect/ideal day look like?** *It's difficult to nail down a perfect day for me. A perfect day could look like me hanging with my kids at the beach teaching them how to ride a boogie board followed up with a seafood dinner on the intercoastal waterway. Another version could be my family hiking in the mountains, sitting around a campfire eating hotdogs, and roasting marshmallows. I think my closest experience to a perfect day though would be four years ago in San Francisco. My wife and I arrived in the city before the NCCEP conference. We walked nearly 10-12 miles exploring the city, eventually stumbling between two people's yards pushing through trees and bushes to suddenly find ourselves on Baker Beach and staring at the Golden Gate Bridge. We walked the beach and took all the tourist photographs we could capture. That night we found an amazing neighborhood restaurant, Pacific Cafe with a two-hour wait, the restaurant provided free wine while you wait! We were absolutely famished and intoxicated all of which led to an amazing meal with calamari steak and grilled snapper, just as close as I can remember to a perfect day. Full of exploration, new sites, awe and wonder and finished with delicious wine and seafood!*

**4. What's something you'd like to do that you've never done?** *I've had a lot of great experiences in a lot of fun places around the globe but I think I'm now becoming more interested in pushing myself and my perception of fear. Lately, I've been considering skydiving because I have a fear of heights or swimming with sharks due to my innate fear of deep water and what lurks below. I'm warming up to the idea of embracing the paralyzing fear that strikes all of us in different ways and rather than live with it, embrace it and challenge it. See how it shapes my perception of the world and my personal mindset.*

## Employee Spotlight:

Let's get to know Molly Riddle, College Advising Corps Assistant Program Director!

**1. How long have you worked with CAP?** I technically started at CAP 3 years ago when I became a CAC adviser. I was at Mitchell High for 2020-2022 and then became Assistant Program Director in June of 2022. I have been in this role for a year now! I have an Environmental Studies degree from Brevard College so this is definitely not what I expected to be doing but I LOVED being an adviser. When I got the opportunity to train new advisers and talk them through similar situations that I went through it just seemed like a no brainer. During an end of year reflection with them a few months ago I told them that after being a supervisor for a year I feel like a completely different person. This job has changed me in a lot of ways and I learn something new everyday! Getting to work with them (and Gloria of course) is the best part of this job.



Molly Riddle and her husband working on their house while living on coffee

**2. What's your favorite book/movie/album/song? Pick one and explain why.** I love Southern Appalachian Fiction. Silas House, Barbara Kingsolver, and Lee Smith are three of my favorite authors. If I had to pick just one I would probably choose Oral History by Lee Smith. It was really amazing to read a book that was written how I have heard people talk for my whole life. I was recently able to meet Silas House when I took a trip to Burnsville and did a book signing at our library! I was such a fangirl. It was amazing.

### **3. What would your perfect/ideal day look like?**

My perfect day would start with a trail run. While I'm trail running my husband would be doing some house projects that we have been putting off for months and it would be done by the time I got back! Lol. We have been renovating an old house in Yancey County for the past three years. We completely gutted it while living in it and have now moved on to the outside. It's definitely a slow but rewarding process. We would then go canoeing on the North Toe river and take our two dogs (and they would both sit still and not tip us over- but if they do its fine too lol). Then we would lay on the couch and watch Big Bang Theory!

### **4. What fictional place would you like to visit?**

Ugh I'm going to be so basic and just say Hogwarts. But do you blame me?! And I would go at Christmas. I have loved Harry Potter forever. I watch the movies (all the way through) every Christmas, especially while I am decorating the tree.

### **5. What's something you'd like to do that you've never done?**

I'd love to do a triathlon soon! I love running and biking, and would love to get more into swimming. I started long (ish) distance running during my first year of college and it really changed the way I saw myself and my capability. I love running long distance races but have felt burnt out over the past year-ish and think it would be really cool to try something new.



## **New Partnerships**

AppCAC formed partnerships with three new schools and districts for the 2023-24 school year: St. Stephens High School (Catawba County), Erwin High School (Buncombe County), and North Henderson High School (Henderson County). AppCAC advisers will be serving in 23 different counties (and 26 different schools).



On or around May 1, AppCAC advisers hosted Decision Day events to celebrate their seniors who enrolled, enlisted, or were employed.

## **End of School Year Celebrations**

Advisers met for an End of Year training session and celebration at White Duck Taco Shop in Asheville, NC on Friday, June 2. Dr. Eric Klein, former CAP colleague and current Associate Director of Outreach & Success at UNC-Asheville, led advisers in a guided reflection and discussion about the year and what they would like to take with them as they move forward. It was a beautiful way to recognize the advisers, enjoy time together as a team, and close out AppCAC's fourth program year!

## **Family Engagement Leaders**

The results are in! During the 2022-23 school year, AppCAC advisers met with 2,592 seniors, which is 93% of the seniors in the region served. AppCAC advisers continued to lead the way with Family Engagement, connecting with an average of 43% of their students' families, which far exceeds the national average of 27%.



*We have a few positions for hire, please share with anyone you may know who would be a good fit!*

## **Available Positions**

### ***Assistant Director for CAP Grants Management***

The Assistant Director for CAP Grants Management will act as the department's leader for financial and grants compliance.

**[\(Read more & apply here\)](#)**

### ***Empowering Teacher Learning (ETL) Navigator***

They will serve as the direct point of contact for public school teachers participating in the ETL grant program. As part of the ETL Team, Navigators are responsible for supporting participants in the completion of a classroom needs assessment, the creation of a learning contract, and ensuring teacher stipend obligations are met.

**Contact [chesnutt2@appstate.edu](mailto:chesnutt2@appstate.edu) for more details**

### ***2023-24 College Advising Corps Adviser***

***(Multiple Vacancies, in-person and hybrid options)***

The College Advising Corps at Appalachian State seeks to hire recent graduates to serve as college advisers in high schools throughout western North Carolina.

**[\(Read more & apply here\)](#)**



## Bus Tours

For many young students, the prospect of attending college can feel like an unattainable dream. However, thanks to initiatives like Appalachian State GEAR UP, these dreams are being nurtured and encouraged. GEAR UP's summer bus tours took students on an inspiring journey, visiting university campuses all over North Carolina.

Each campus visit was a unique experience that left a profound impact on the participating students. Walking through the hallowed halls, engaging with current college students, and witnessing cutting-edge research facilities offered glimpses of a world brimming with possibilities.

Beyond academic exploration, the tours also incorporated fun activities and team-building exercises, which created a supportive and encouraging atmosphere among the participants. Friendships blossomed, creating a network of like-minded individuals all sharing the aspiration of pursuing higher education.

The success of the summer bus tours would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Appalachian State GEAR UP team, passionate educators, generous sponsors who believe in the transformative power of education, and of course the campuses that we were able to visit.



Students visited Wilmington, Charlotte, and Greensboro

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**"Wow! This library changes everything I thought college might be like! I could live in a place like this."**

*-Madison County Student*

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## Academic Innovation Conference

GEAR UP's Academic Team hosted the 2nd Annual Academic Innovation Conference on June 12-14th in Asheville, NC as a culminating event, highlighting the work throughout the academic school year. Representatives included all of the partner districts and IHEs, as well as eleven third-partners. In addition, ETL (Empowering Teacher Learning) from our own CAP family and PSP (Public School Partnerships) from the Reich College of Education presented as part of the thirty-three session offering. The attendee total maxed at 112 and showcased a variety of stakeholders across the entities. The Academic Team was elated that all food-associated costs, as well as giveaways, were Match from the contracted partners. For more information regarding the conference, please check out the official [website write-up!](#)



A-B Tech's Conference center from the morning of the first day of the Academic Innovation Conference on June 12th.



## NCCEP Presentations

From July 17th to July 19th, our GEAR UP team embarked on an enriching journey to San Francisco to participate in the annual National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) event. With immense enthusiasm and dedication, over 20 of our team members engaged in this conference. This remarkable opportunity allowed us to exchange invaluable insights and network with esteemed professionals and educators from across the nation. Notably, four of our exceptional team members were selected to present their innovative initiatives and success stories, showcasing the remarkable impact of our GEAR UP program on student success. The event proved to be an unforgettable experience, fostering collaborative efforts and inspiring us to continue making a positive difference in the lives of the students we serve.



(Top)Corinne Smith, Dr. Jui-Teng Li, and (Bottom)Rachel Nave-Lewis, posing for a photo before presenting research at NCCEP

## Latest Feature Stories



### Academic Innovation Conference 2023

On June 12, 2023, ten cohort LEA districts, eleven third-party organizations, and cohort higher education partners sent over one hundred representatives to the Academic Innovation Co... [READ MORE](#)

### TRIO Scholars Bowl 2023

Congratulations to the Appalachian State Upward Bound Scholars' Bowl teams that participated in the NC TRIO State Student Initiative Competition earlier this month at NC State University... [READ MORE](#)

### Upward Bound Lighting the Way

Upward Bound is doing good things, not only for the students they serve, but for families and the High Country Community as a whole. [READ MORE](#)

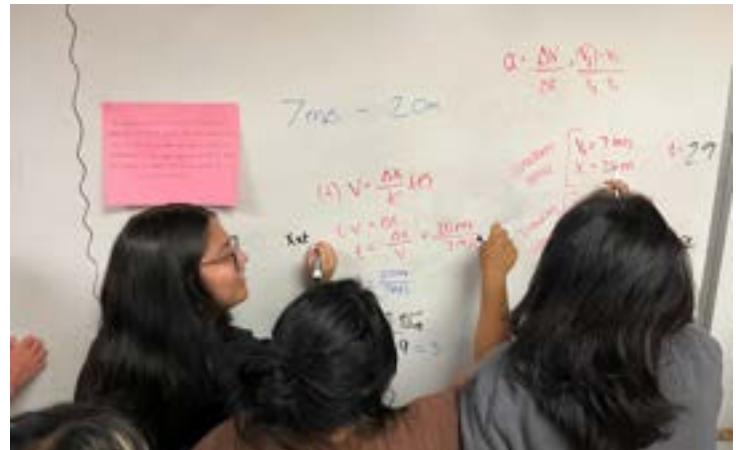
### **Have an idea for a CAP news story?**

We are always looking for new content to include on our [Features Page](#), and we welcome your input. Please share story ideas from your program with Elysee Gibson ([gibsonse@appstate.edu](mailto:gibsonse@appstate.edu)), and we will work together to spread the news of your great work!



## **Academic Classes**

A core element of the Upward Bound summer experience for students is academic preparation for the upcoming school year. Rising 10th and 11th grade students spend the majority of their summer attending academic preview classes every morning. These classes are taught by regional high school teachers with an emphasis on highlighting useful, interesting, and fun concepts in each field. Classes include English, Math, Spanish, French, American Sign Language, Biology, and Physics. This picture showcases our Physics class in action!



*Upward Bound students practicing their math skills.*



*Recent Upward Bound graduates in Washington DC celebrating their successes from this academic year.*

## **Graduate Bridge Experience**

This June, we took a group of 20 recent UB graduates to Washington DC for our annual Bridge trip. This is a time to celebrate these students for achieving their goal of attending college in the Fall. It is a week full of exploration, nostalgia, fun and challenges. The highlights for this trip were the African American Museum, riding electric scooters through the National Mall, and seeing the play "1776" at the Kennedy Center Theatre. This trip is always bittersweet as we reflect on the past 4 years with these students and wish them well as they embark on a new journey!

## **Disc Golf Exploration**

Since the pandemic, one sport that has really gained popularity has been Disc Golf. Many of our students live close to some really fun disc golf courses which gave me the idea of trying to introduce the sport to them this summer. The goal was for every student to get a disc but I wanted the students to be able to add their own flair to their discs as well. Dyeing discs is a great way to incorporate some art into the sport and a fun way to let them add a custom touch. I reached out to one of the disc golf companies MVP and proposed this idea to them with the hope they would be interested in sponsoring our Upward Bound group this summer. To my surprise they were very excited about the idea and sent us enough discs for every student to get one at no charge! Throughout the summer the Upward Bound students have rotated through groups that taught them the fundamentals of disc golf while giving them a chance to play on some practice baskets around campus. They have also dyed over 80 discs. To end the disc golf experience for the summer all of the rising 10th graders will take a trip to Ashe county park to play a full round of disc golf with their newly dyed disc. My hope is that this would be an experience that they bring back home with them to encourage them to get outside and be active while playing a new activity.



## **Interview Skills and Etiquette Dinner**

The rising seniors spent two weeks on Appalachian State University's campus earlier in the summer, researching colleges, working on the Common App and personal essays, and learning about scholarship opportunities and the financial aid process. They worked hard and accomplished quite a lot so that they will have a jump start when college applications open this fall. One of the many highlights this summer was having an etiquette dinner. Amy Odum, Executive Director of Business Career Services in the Walker College of Business at Appalachian State University, presented the program and walked the students through a formal three-course dinner. Chase Miller, a senior from Ashe Early College, had this to say: "The etiquette dinner was an informative and valuable experience. I not only was able to practice to improve my dinner etiquette but also learned helpful interview skills and techniques. I loved having the opportunity to talk with a professional on the subject and to apply these new skills in a real-world setting." The seniors were excited to dress for the occasion and had fun figuring out all those utensils on the table setting. It was a delicious meal and a very informative and engaging evening.



Upward Bound students learning about table etiquette.



ETL teachers at the Leadership Summit in Asheville, participating in a team building activity.

## **ETL School Leadership Summit**

The ETL team recently hosted a group of school leaders in Asheville for the ETL School Leadership Summit. At the event, educators from western NC were able to explore what it means to foster a culture of agency at their school and with their students.

## **ETL Summer Convening**

The ETL Teacher Summer Convening is coming up next week! Our team will host 80 teacher participants on campus to network with a group of educators as they begin their self-directed learning journey for the academic year.



ETL group photo from the ETL School Leadership Summit.



## YES Graduation

We're so excited to celebrate the YES high school Class of 2023. Our 10 Scholars have worked hard throughout high school, thoughtfully applied to schools and scholarships, and are ready to launch into their next adventure. Scholars will be attending Appalachian State University, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute, North Carolina Agriculture & Technical State University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of Southern California, and Wilkes Community College. In June, the YES Home Office was able to send April Rosner, the National Director of College-to-Career Services to meet incoming and have dinner with ongoing college scholars.



April Rosner, the National Director of College-to-Career Services giving a presentation to YES students about college.

## Book Club

Thursdays in July, YES Scholars met from 6-8 pm to catch up, eat pizza, and complete summer reading! Some high school scholars have required reading and others are choosing to make time to read.

Some books for high school students include:

- Anthropocene Reviewed by John Green
- My Real Name is Hanna by Tara Lynn Masih
- Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Middle school students are diving into:

- Yonder by North Carolina native, Ali Standish
- Our Spanish-speaking students are reading a book in Spanish called: La Ciudad Bestias, The City of the Beasts, by Isabel Allende.



YES students right before they flew in a wind tunnel at iFly in concord, North Carolina.

## Taking Flight at Camp

In June, Carly Stephens successfully planned and implemented two different weeks of YES day camp. The first week served rising 8th graders and the following week for rising 7th graders. Campers and staff embraced trying new adventures, foods, and getting to know new friends. Both weeks started off with a STEM focus and experience at iFly in Concord, NC, not only did staff and scholars get to fly, scholars learned how the wind tunnel works and experimented with parchment paper parachutes. Both grades were able to learn from Appalachian State's nationally awarded solar car team with staff member Chris Tolbert and some students. The 7th graders learned about and built a Beakman Motor. We're also grateful that our former ETL colleague and now Ashe Campus Wilkes Community College partner, Dr. Caleb Marsh, not only welcomed us on campus, but took both groups on a tour and facilitated a session on leadership. Both weeks were a fabulous time facing challenges and learning!



YES students reading at their summer book club.