



# Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

Friday, September 23, 2022

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider*

Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent

2895 Vineville Ave. Macon, GA



Georgia Academy for the Blind

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@gablibrary

**Mission Statement:** The Georgia Academy for the Blind provides quality education services to Georgia's students with visual impairments and/or visual impairments in conjunction with other disabilities to prepare them to achieve their highest level of independence in transition to college and career readiness.

## Mark your Calendars

9/30 - First School Council Meeting on Friday at 1:00

10/11 through 10/14 - Fall Break Week

11/3 through 11/5 - National Highschool Goalball  
Tournament in St. Augustine, FL

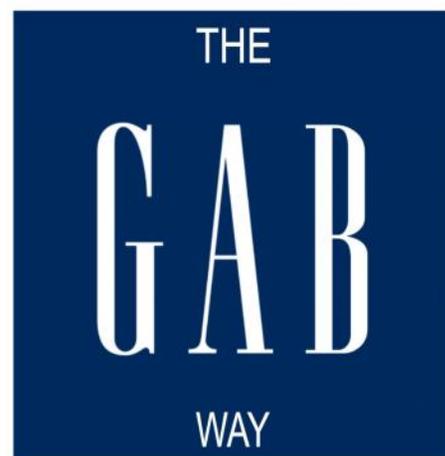
11/21 through 11/25 - Thanksgiving Break

**PBIS** Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

Next week's Motto:

Kindness:

Being  
friendly &  
considerate



Give it your best  
Achieve your goals  
Be respectful



# A message from our Superintendent

Dear GAB Family,

If you have not been following the adventures of Space Camp 2022 in Huntsville, AL, you are in for a treat. Students Mason, Zy, Josie, Shayla, Terrel and Elisha star all over our Facebook page, and they will have stories to tell when they return Friday, September 23, 2022. We appreciate parents for allowing students to travel to this STEM opportunity out-of-state! Dr. Bennett, Ms. Moore, and Mr. Fuller-Green will need time to rest from all the activity of this week. Let us all thank them GAB style for the level of commitment for the one week, 24 Hour per day, teaching and learning.

You have met the cadre of staff lovingly dubbed "the Of-The's" by Ms. Lauren Eckman who coordinates this faculty and staff recognition program. Now the four **Of-The** parking spaces are marked reserved and guarded by little green men who hold canes and wear large badges. Each **Of-The** selected a parking place to their liking! Congratulations to Teacher **Of-The** Year, Alesia Bechtel, who is now in the running for State Schools District Teacher of the Year; Julia Miller, Paraprofessional **Of-The** Year; Debra Wells, Residential Adviser **Of-The** Year; and Kim Smith, Support Person **Of-The** Year! Watch for the little green men and be thankful for our GAB honorees.

The Housekeeping Staff enjoyed a luncheon off campus in honor of National Housekeepers' Week! An island get-away was not in the budget, but we did send them off the GAB island for quality time and self-care! We do love our Housekeepers!

There is nothing better than starting the day being greeted by students as they proceed with their class routines. Ayden, Camden, and Tyson of Ms. Barfield's class were giddy with excitement as they proceeded to music. Happy Birthday to Tyson! And... Ms. Holloway, you have a fan club!

The Project SEARCH students Rickoy, Terrance, Korey, and Caden were a fabulous feature on 13 WMAZ this morning as they shared what Project SEARCH is and their goals for transition. The leaders of that program are Mr. Guest, Ms. Drinkard, and Alicia Jackson, Principal of Transition. Check it out here!

<https://www.13wmaz.com/article/news/local/academy-for-the-blind-partner-with-atrium-health-navient-for-internships/93-818ed1c1-e977-4a95-b927-b64cbb4e5b64>

Note that our first School Council meeting is Friday, September 30, 2022.

As ever,

**Cindy** "Creating a Brighter future by Working Together!"



## A Tribute to James Caldwell



Several of us at the Georgia Academy for the Blind attended a function to honor Mr. Caldwell's life and career at Macon's Tubman African American Museum this past Sunday. The gala event entitled "My Journey in Art" featured tributes to Mr. Caldwell and a viewing of his art collection now bequeathed to the museum as his legacy. The occasion was extremely moving for his family, friends, and colleagues.

Mr. Caldwell is near and dear to me, and I relish sharing our 23-year relationship! I loved Mr. Caldwell because he first LOVED my children! Yes, he would brag on my children, and I smiled as I thought for sure he was confused! Ah, but he did with my children as he did with all others! He saw in them something they may not have known they had, and then he

challenged them to achieve and surpass those ideals! Mr. Caldwell is in the business of empowering others to grow, experience, and share forward!

Mr. Caldwell has a cadre of friends in middle Georgia school systems and communities, and most notably the Bibb County School District. We have served and socialized together for decades. I especially appreciate that after a full career of teaching Humanities and Foreign Language, Mr. Caldwell joined me at Renaissance Academy when I was Principal there and has for the past several years taught French at the Georgia Academy for the Blind. The circle of friends just keeps rippling out as Mr. Caldwell causes us to celebrate culture, food, art, communication, and the human spirit of creativity.

Mr. Caldwell, the Georgia Academy for the Blind thanks you for all you are and do!

**Dr. Cindy Gibson**

Supt., Georgia Academy for the Blind



# Celebrating Housekeeping Appreciation Week

## Thankful for our wonderful staff!



How long have you worked at GAB?

From left to right in the picture:

Joann Taylor - 15th year

Lisa Walker 4th year

Rosalyn Sparks - 9th year

Tiara Fields - 23rd year

Valerie Trim - 7th months

Leoroa Tyler - 2nd months

**Mrs.  
Tiara  
Fields**

**Housekeeping  
Supervisor**

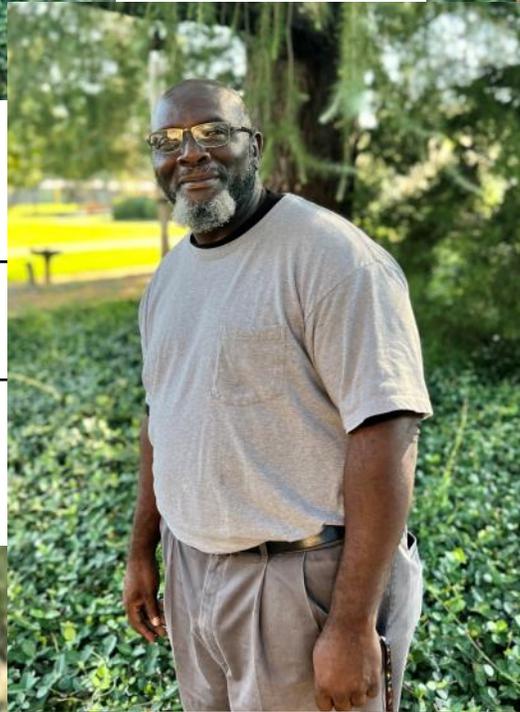




**Ms. Rosalyn**



**Ms. Joann**



**Mr. Tyler**



**Ms. Valerie**



**Ms. Lisa**

# Transition Talk

## Teaching Our Students How to Ask for Help

The simple task of asking for help can be a challenge for many people. For students who have a visual impairment, this could be equally challenging when you are uncertain as to what type of assistance you may need to complete a task or to gain information. At GAB, teaching students how to appropriately request assistance is embedded in every class, every day. We also provide our students with opportunities that requires them to have to determine not only how to ask for help, but also how to be specific in the requesting the right type of help according to their need. For example, we may have students who are low vision but still require accommodations to view their assignments. In this instance, the student is taught what type of low vision tools and accommodations are available and how they work so when needed, the student will know how and what to request to access their assignments.

Self-advocacy skills do not necessarily come naturally, however. Students must learn when to ask for help and from whom, as well as how to request assistance assertively and appropriately. Furthermore, most students with vision impairments need to practice this skill in order to become comfortable asking for help, as the prospect can be quite unnerving for many (Perkins, 2022).

**At home:** Request assistance related to the student's vision impairment

Example: Family member asks the child to do a task that is not readily accessible (i.e start the dishwasher when the buttons do not yet have bump dots. The child must ask for help in learning the buttons or in marking them for future accessibility.

**At school:**

Ask for assistance when the issue is related to the student's vision impairment or additional disabilities.

Example: Teacher passes out a worksheet to the class but does not readily provide it in an accessible format. The student needs to ask for assistance to access the material. This can be done either directly in class or in private with the teacher afterward, depending on the student's preference and comfort level.

**In the community:**

Ask for help from a community member on a task that is not related to the student's vision impairment or additional disabilities.

o Example: Student asks an employee at a local grocery store if the store carries a certain product and where the item can be found.



**Alicia M. Jackson**  
**Principal of Transition**



# Transition from High School to Work: Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Students and Families

**THURSDAY, SEPT 29, 2022**

9:00-11:00 AM

GEORGIA VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION AGENCY

*Information on:*

- Employment Support
- Independent Living
- And More

NEW HAMPSTEAD HIGH  
SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

2451 Little Neck Rd  
Bloomington, Ga 31302



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION AGENCY

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Contact Juliet Hardeman for more  
information at  
[Juliet.Hardeman@sccpss.com](mailto:Juliet.Hardeman@sccpss.com)



**GEORGIA VOCATIONAL  
REHABILITATION AGENCY**

Technical Support Provided by First  
District RESA



**The Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology** is nominating Parent/Guardian members to serve on the Smokey Powell Center Advisory Board. Please volunteer! Here's the link:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6322982/Smokey-Powell-Advisory-Board-Parent-Recruitment>



**Responsibilities:** The Smokey Powell Center (SPC) is the outreach component of the Georgia Academy for the Blind. Please consider influencing how the SPC works with students all over the state to enhance their school experience while being served in their local district. The meetings are easy to attend because they are virtual and meets quarterly.

#### **PREAMBLE**

The purpose of the Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology Advisory Board, hereinafter to be referred to as the “Board”, is to serve in an advisory capacity to the Smokey Powell Center by assisting it in the pursuit of its mission and goals.

Primarily, the Board’s focus and responsibilities are to make recommendations for direction and guidance and to serve as a source of information and advocacy for the Center.

Additionally, the Board will support the State Board of Education in fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the Smokey Powell Trust funds are being properly used to support the mission of the Smokey Powell Center for Assistive Technology.



**SAFETY FIRST**

## September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month!

Thoughts of suicide can affect anyone of any age, gender, or background.

Suicide Prevention Week is September 4-10, a time to raise awareness of this stigmatized topic.

According to the CDC, youth and young adults ages 10-24 account for 14% of all suicides.

For youth ages 10-14, suicide is the second leading cause of death.

**If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress or crisis, call or text 988 or 741741 from anywhere in the U.S. to connect via text with a trained crisis counselor 24/7.**

# September Birthdays

9/7 Destiny R.

9/20 Tyson

9/7 Luca

9/23 DJ

9/10 Korey

9/27 Aubrey

9/15 Trinity



Tyson's 10th