

# SYNTHESIS

Summer 2022



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Anderson University College of Arts and Sciences

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Cover photo by Jason Jones

## SYNTHESIS

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# Lab course now using CRISPR

New technology helping students learn processes that can fuel genetic discoveries

By Shelby Parker

Molecular biology students are now using CRISPR technology to study and modify genes.



Parker photo

**Carrie Koenigstein**

Anderson University Associate Dean of Sciences Carrie Koenigstein worked with her students on a semester-long project to make a yeast gene nonfunctional through the use of CRISPR. A technology created in the early 2000's, CRISPR gene editing can be used to alter DNA to treat genetic diseases.

Koenigstein, who holds a doctorate in biochemistry from Duke University, said the project helped students learn how to design experiments using the technology.

She said the lab work is beneficial because it allows the students to gain more research experience and learn that the work they put in each week is crucial to the overall success of a research project.

"There's a thought process that goes into designing an experiment and then being able to look at a set of more general directions to apply them to a specific circumstance," Koenigstein said.

She said this is especially important in a course being taken by senior biology and biochemistry majors who are preparing for their careers after college.



Parker photo

**Nathan Wachsmuth**

Senior biochemistry major Nathan Wachsmuth said the lab helped him to better understand how to work with future patients.

"I'm hoping to go to medical school eventually, and I think it's going to be really useful... to understand both epigenetics (the study of how behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect how genes work) and how our genome works through the model of a lowly yeast,"

Wachsmuth said.

Koenigstein said she also wants her students to understand the ethical and moral implications behind the CRISPR technology and how it could be used



*Molecular biology students discuss progress on a project with Associate Dean of Sciences Carrie Koenigstein, right. Koenigstein introduced her lab students to CRISPR gene-editing technology through which they experimented with altering a yeast gene. CRISPR gene editing is used to develop treatment for genetic diseases. (Photo by Shelby Parker)*

unethically in human genetic engineering.

"As a Christian university, we get to talk about how our science and our faith come together in this area," Koenigstein said. "Scientifically, we can understand how CRISPR works, but we have to step outside of science into the realm of understanding our faith to start thinking through...the ethical ways to use this technology."

**"Scientifically, we can understand how CRISPR works, but we have to step outside of science into the realm of understanding our faith to start thinking through...the ethical ways to use this technology."**

**Carrie Koenigstein**



# AU receives cancer research grant

CAS student and professor examining how fathers' smoking impacts children's DNA

By Anna Weeks

An Anderson University biochemistry student and her professor have been awarded a \$10,000 research grant to study how a father's smoking impacts the DNA of his children.

Biochemistry student Addison Powell, in collaboration with Professor of Biology Diana Ivankovic, director of the Anderson University Center for Cancer Research, received the grant from the South Carolina IDEa Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence.

Ivankovic said the grant will fund a new study focusing on how a parent's smoking – especially a father's – can affect the expression of genes in children. She said that while the best genes can be passed down from parents to their children, if the parents smoke, these genes may not be expressed.

Powell and Ivankovic said the study may further support previous findings about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle as part of cancer prevention.

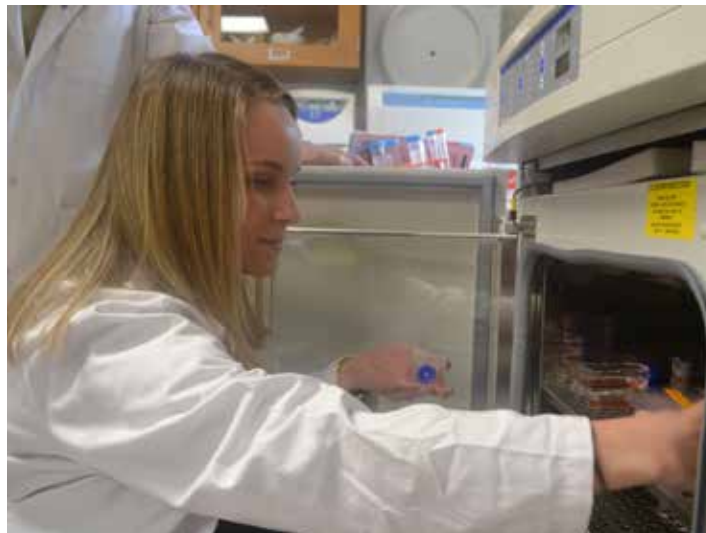
"Everyone knows smoking is bad, but this research gives a different perspective," Powell said. "Now, I'm not just looking at my life, but my future kids too. It would be huge if people understood this and could get out of a selfish mindset."

Powell said part of her role in this project includes making codes for data points and reference sheets to aid researchers who are involved in the data analytics.

"There's a lot of research out already about how smoking affects the mother and her children, but there's not a lot of research necessarily on the father," Powell said.

Some research has already indicated that tobacco has a negative effect on the father's DNA through the mutation of certain genes, Powell said. This mutation, shown to cause cancer, is not only harmful to the fathers, but to their children, generations down the road.

Ivankovic and Powell say they are passionate about this type of research because they have seen the effects of cancer on their loved ones.



*Biochemistry student Addison Powell reaches into an incubator to examine lab samples. Powell was awarded a SC INBRE grant to study the impact a father's smoking can have on the DNA of his children. (Photo by Anna Weeks)*

"I was born in '66 and, at that time, nobody told our parents how bad smoking was..." Ivankovic said. "Tobacco is the causative agent of so many mutations and so many different types of cancers."

She said she began her own personal battle with cancer on her 38th birthday, notably after growing up with parents who smoked.

For Powell, the diagnosis was given to her father.

"Personally, it's big for me because my father had cancer," Powell said. "He beat that and it had nothing to do with

smoking, but that's why I'm passionate about it."

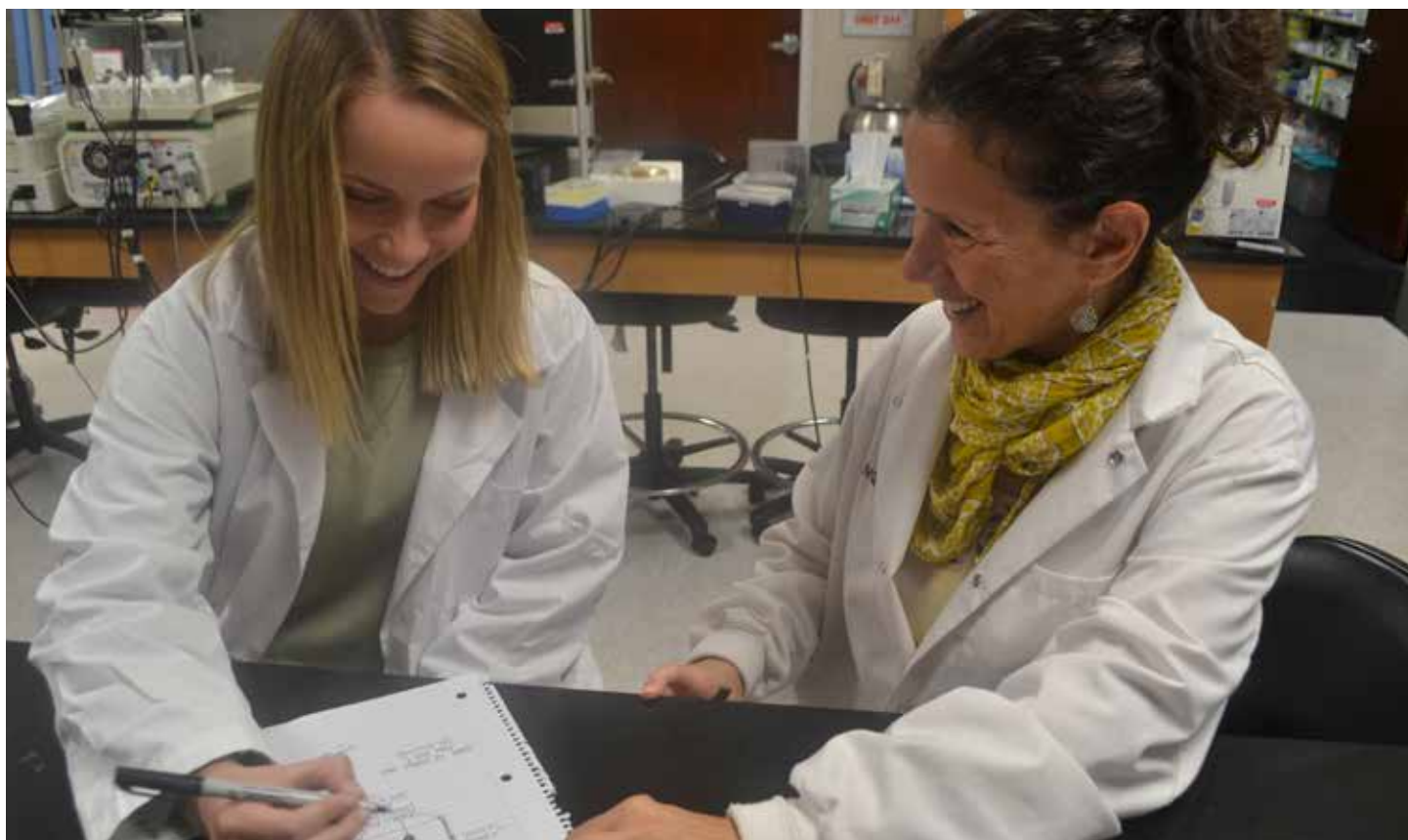
The experiences of Powell and Ivankovic with cancer within their families have formed a bond between the two.

"Dr. Ivankovic has been my mom in this field...getting baby Addi and teaching her all about science and what research is and how I am going to reach my goals," Powell said. "She doesn't do any of the work for me. Everything I do is my work."

Ivankovic said she appreciates the unique oppor-

**"There's a lot of research out already about how smoking affects the mother and her children, but there's not a lot of research necessarily on the father."**

## Addison Powell



*Addison Powell, left, looks over research notes in the lab with AU Professor of Biology Diana Ivankovic. The grant the two received to study the impact of smoking on parental DNA is the first received by the university through the South Carolina IDEa Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence. (Photo by Anna Weeks)*

tunity that AU provides for professors to work with students closely, get to know them personally, and have an impact in their personal lives and professional careers.

“Addi not only wrote the grant with me, but she is also my student in many classes, and she is my work study student,” Ivankovic explained.

The grant was awarded in August 2021, after weeks of preparation.

“Dr. Ivankovic had this idea about what she wanted to do, she proposed it to me, and we pulled this team together. We meet on Zoom calls every couple of weeks to keep updated,” Powell said. “It’s huge and I’m so excited.”

Ivankovic said competition is stiff for grant funding through the South Carolina INBRE program.

This marks the first time Anderson University has received a grant of this kind.

“In life, unless you apply, you will never get a chance,” Ivankovic said.

She credits Associate Dean of Sciences Carrie Koenigstein with giving her and Powell the encouragement to apply for the grant.

“We are very proud of Dr. Diana Ivankovic and Addi Powell for their hard work in preparing the grant application and for receiving funding,” said Koenigstein. “This is a great opportunity for Addi to learn more about grant writing and research, both vital skills for science majors.”

### **Diana Ivankovic**

Ivankovic, Powell and their team of researchers plan to present their findings in January 2023.

According to its website, the goal of SC INBRE is to increase the National Institutes of Health research capacity of South Carolina by expanding programs and networking the research activities of faculty and students at academic institutions throughout the state.

The organization also supports career development of faculty and hands-on research training of students at 17 other state universities and colleges.

**“In life, unless you apply, you will never get a chance.”**

# Digital media lab expanded

## Bigger space, new equipment enhances learning

By Adam Crawford

Anderson University has expanded its digital media lab to accommodate a growing number of students taking communication courses.

The lab was originally one room on the lower level of Watkins Hall. Over the Christmas break, the lab was extended into an adjacent classroom.

Bobby Rettew, assistant professor of communication, said a number of other improvements were made to the lab as well, including increasing the number of computers, adding audiovisual equipment, and installing a sound proof “whisper room” for the recording of narration for videos.

Rettew also said the floor was raised to provide space to run computer cables,

“We hear about raising the roof, but we raised the floor,” Rettew joked.

He said the vision for the room was to create a place where students could not only work but also practice their skills and build community.

Robert Reeves, associate professor of communication and chair of the communication department, said the improvements create a much better learning environment.

“From a comfort standpoint, it allows people to spread out a little bit more so it’s not as crowded in the room,” Reeves said. “So whether Professor Rettew



*Trey Newton, a communication major from North Augusta, works on his visual communication skills in the newly-expanded Digital Media Lab in Watkins Hall. (Communication Department photo)*

is doing demonstrations of how to use cameras or students are just getting together in groups to work, there’s just a little more space to spread out, which is a big improvement.”

Rettew said the the expanded lab, which is equipped with 20 iMac computers running the latest Adobe software, is the hub of activity for all of the digital media classes. During the spring semester, it was used for students studying video production, coding, magazine design. and various digital media software packages.

“So, basically what we want to do with this room is to make it all things digital,” Rettew said. “It will be a destination for communication students to come in, work on projects, learn, collaborate, work together, and also use it as a production room.”

Ryan Gundersen, a sophomore communication major with a concentration in digital media, said the changes have been positive.

“After the wall was torn down, there was a lot more room to space out computer stations, as well as add some empty tables that created a more open space for a better learning and working experience,” Gundersen said.



*The Digital Media Lab in Watkins Hall was doubled in size over the Christmas break to accommodate more digital media students and classes. (Photo by Robert Reeves)*

# Minors add value to degrees

By **Nadia Castillo**

While every Anderson University student will have a declared major area of study, many are also discovering the benefits of adding one or more minors to their academic plans.

Minors are areas of emphasis that add expertise to a student's resume but require fewer credit hours (18 in most cases). There are many minors not only within the College of Arts and Sciences but throughout the other colleges at AU as well.

According to the university's academic catalog, there are 18 different minor opportunities within the College of Arts and Sciences. Minor options can be found in modern languages, math, English, history, political science, communication, behavioral sciences, and chemistry.

Roger Flynn, chair of the department of history, political science and public policy, said minors of all types can help support a student's major.

"Programs can help everywhere. Minor in theater can help a lawyer perform better in court," Flynn said. "I encourage students to be as interdisciplinary as possible since they don't know what the future looks like."

Flynn, who works with students as an academic advisor, said there are many ways for students to expand their programs of study with various combinations of majors and minors.



**Roger Flynn**

"Minors demonstrate a knowledge base and help build your resume," Flynn said.

Bob Hanley, chair of the English department, said he is a living testimony of how a minor can benefit a career.

"I had a major in English and a minor in history," said Hanley. "The minor in history was just for fun because I enjoyed it. It helps in my career as a teacher although at that time I had no interest in teaching."

Flynn said that as students graduate and begin



*Student Will Hindman talks with his advisor, Joe Spencer, about the upcoming semester. While Hindman's primary area of study is marketing, he has chosen to expand his areas of specialization with a minor in digital media. (Photo by Nadia Castillo)*

their post college journey, having an expanded academic background can help make the job seeking process smoother.

"In preparing yourself for tomorrow's challenges today, minors are a huge component. They can make you stand out," said Flynn.

Will Hindman, a marketing major who has a minor in digital media, said he has plans for using his minor.

"I wanted to add some diversification and a creative outlet," Hindman said. "I hope to work for Black Diamond (a company that produces climbing and skiing equipment) within their marketing and creative departments."

Flynn said having a minor is more than having a "secondary academic add-on." It's about being well-rounded.

"Some people use their minor within their career more than their major," said Flynn.

Flynn said that when students are considering a minor, they should reach out to their advisor and get more information.

"Take every chance you can get," Flynn said. "You will miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

# Why teach?

## Professors explain why they love their profession

By Jennifer Ames

Whether it was through the influence of their college professors, their early love of teaching or the desire to be close to their families, professors in the College of Arts and Sciences all have reasons for teaching.

Katherine Wyma, a senior lecturer of English who earned her doctorate at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, has been serving at Anderson University since 2015.

"I wanted to be a judge, but during my senior year, towards the end of the first semester, a good friend of mine told me 'You don't want to do that. What you really want to do is help people,'" Wyma said. "I started thinking, 'Well, who has helped me the most?' and it was my college professors."

Wyma's story of how she decided to become a college professor is not that different from other professors' in the CAS, especially when it comes to being inspired by their own college professors.

Josiah Reisinger, an assistant professor of mathematics, said he also became a professor because of the influence of some of his college professors. He said he became a tutor in college which is when he decided that he wanted to work with students and help them succeed.



**Josiah Reisinger**

"I really enjoyed working with students at a variety of different levels and seeing students who didn't think they could succeed in math do so," said Reisinger. "Every once in a while, one will do better than they think they could and that's a good thing to see."

Kayode Karunwi, assistant professor of physics and general engineering, said he loves how teaching at Anderson University allows him to not only mentor students academically but also spiritually.

In a card given to him, a past student said: "Thank you for letting me express my faith with you, I enjoyed all of our faith-based conversations."

Karunwi describes getting this reaction from a stu-



**Kayode Karunwi**

dent as one of his proudest accomplishments in his teaching career.

However, as much as he enjoys mentoring his students, he said that's not his favorite part of the job.

"My favorite thing about teaching college students is watching them have this 'aha' moment. Nothing ever beats that," Karunwi said.

Some CAS professors say they chose to teach at AU because of the proximity to home and the ability to be involved in their families' lives.

"I really want to be home and involved in my wife's life and my children's lives, and being a professor is one thing that allows me to do that," Reisinger said.

Reisinger is the father of a young daughter and a newborn son.

"Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday I'm usually home by two o'clock and I usually spend about two hours just playing with my daughter so that my wife can have a break, and that's something that to me is priceless," said Reisinger.

As for the least favorite part of the job, professors were unanimous – grading.

Jason Neill, associate professor of psychology, has been working at AU since 2015 and is licensed by the state of South Carolina as a mental health therapist.



**Jason Neill**

"If I could teach and someone could grade for me, that would be great. That would be the perfect world," said Neill.

Although they all agreed that grading was their least favorite part of the job, the professors all also said that while tedious at times, grading is important.





Senior Lecturer of English Katherine Wyma teaches an English 102 class in one of the classrooms in Merritt Hall. Wyma said she was inspired to begin teaching by the example set by her own professors when she was a student. She takes the approach that everyone has something to contribute in the classroom. (Photo by Jennifer Ames)

“I hate doing it but I would also not give anyone else the stuff to grade,” said Karunwi. “Grading actually helps me learn about what students are doing or how they’re thinking.”

Professors said they learn from their students through open discussions in the classroom and talking with them individually.

Wyma said that she likes to view her classroom as her kitchen table.

“Everybody’s welcome, everybody has something to communicate and to contribute, and I have something to give to them,” said Wyma.

The professors said they also love working in the College of Arts and Sciences because of the community among the faculty and how they can all go to each

other for advice.

“I appreciate the community we have where we’re friends but no one’s looking over anyone’s shoulder, which isn’t the case at every university,” said Reiswig.

“I enjoy being able to collaborate with my colleagues on topics,” Neill said. “I think it’s great to be able to walk down the hall and to be able to talk with a colleague who is an expert in a particular topic.”

**Jason Neill**

These CAS professors all fell in love with their current careers and encourage students to be patient in discovering their own passion.

Karunwi said he leaves students with this message: “Pray and see what direction God is leading you in. He will never lead you wrong.”

**“I think it’s great to be able to walk down the hall and to be able to talk with a colleague who is an expert in a particular topic.”**

# Biology professor says plant research demonstrates the wonders of God

By Emerson Courtney

*Scaling Rabun Bald, a mountain with an elevation of 4,696 feet in northern Georgia, biologist Laary Cushman leads a team first up a trail and then through the woods until they reach their destination – an outcropping of rock on the north side of the mountain. The landscape surrounding them looks as if it has not been touched by mankind. The team spreads out and carefully searches the area for rare species of alpine relics that are not typically found in the South.*

Environments such as Rabun Bald in Georgia and Table Rock in South Carolina are protective habitats that shelter delicate plants from harmful conditions and are a particular focus of research for Associate Professor of Biology Laary Cushman.

Cushman leads his students in research of high elevation cliff flora in these areas. Cushman said that there are plants that have climbed up the mountains to escape the heat. The mountains have stayed cooler than their surrounding climates, which has created a perfect environment for the plants.

According to Cushman, the research aim is to find “ice ponds that are in high elevation, usually on north-facing slopes that are constantly in shade.”

“Since the last Ice Age, plants have receded either north or climbed up mountains to escape the heat,



*Associate Professor Laary Cushman examines plants for his research. Cushman is leading his students to study high-elevation plants more commonly found in the Arctic Circle that also thrive in the southern Appalachians. (Photo by Ken Ruinard)*



*Students Nathan Hill and Noah Rawlings participate in a research trip to find rare plants at Rabun Bald in northern Georgia in April 2021. (Photo by Laary Cushman)*

and so a lot of the plants that we find either around the Arctic Circle or the tundra, like in northern Canada, we can actually find in high elevations here in the southern Appalachians,” Cushman said.

Essentially, the plants find an environment in which they can survive. Last spring, Cushman and his team of two research students sought to discover the different species of plants on the side of the mountain and compare them to those found at Table Rock. Cushman explained that the two mountains have very similar climates.

He said the team discovered seven rare species of alpine relics and have sent them off for comparison with regional plant collections by taxonomists to determine if they have been identified and named



*Table Rock State Park, at the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Pickens County, is one of the locations where rare high-elevation plants normally associated with tundra areas in northern Canada have been found. (Photo by Laary Cushman)*

before. Two rare species of these plants have been confirmed so far, Cushman said.

Cushman, who holds a master's degree in religion in addition to a doctorate in biology and plant genomics, said he views biology through the lens of Scripture. He said his research has taught him that "the wonder of God is never-ending and that He's made a place for each and everything in this world."

Cushman said he integrates faith and science in his thinking and cannot help but proclaim all God has done.

"There are still secret places that we haven't touched that God has kept for himself," he said.

Nathan Hill, one of Cushman's research assistants, is also on an interdisciplinary path as a biology major who plans to pursue ministry.

"Some of the gems of nature are hidden just beyond our reach," Hill said.

Hill said Cushman has helped him to take both a rigorous scientific and faith-based approach to research.

"One of the first things he has taught me is a blend of being very faithful to the Lord and very faithful to the Scripture while also being very studious in science and being very dedicated to understanding," Hill said.

Hill said Cushman pursues and models excellence for

his students and cares about each of them.

Cushman said his research "confirms in my heart the hand of God."



*Rabun Bald in northern Georgia hosts examples of the traditional ice pond structure that allows rare plants normally found only in very cool climates to flourish. (Photo by Laary Cushman)*

## One for the books

# History professors have new projects in progress

By Abby Gorman

Two Anderson University history professors are in the process of writing and editing new books.

Lindsay Privette and Ryan Butler, both assistant professors of history, are pursuing projects within their respective areas of expertise. Privette's book focuses on the medical practices used at the Civil War Battle of Vicksburg while Butler's book examines how the Bible was interpreted to justify slavery or abolition.

Privette said her book is based on the doctoral dissertation she wrote while attending the University of Alabama. Her book spans the time period of December 1862 to July 4, 1863 when Vicksburg fell to Union forces.

She said she wants to show what happened during a really important time in the medical field when surgeons had to perform many amputations.

"If you hunt down what surgeons are saying, they are talking about how to preserve quality of life, how to preserve limbs," said Privette. "There's a method and there's a reason."



**Lindsay Privette**

The audience for her book will span from scholars to surgeons, she said. She also hopes to have the book available in gift shops at national battlefields as well as used in the classroom.

Privette said she wanted to publish a book before she had even thought about teaching.

"I am trying to cut the divide," said Privette. "Ideally, it would be the perfect kind of book that if you know just a little bit about the war you would find it interesting. If you're interested in medicine and the history of your field you would find this interesting. It would be the perfect kind of book to work into a Civil War class."

Butler is beginning his second book project to explore how Christians reading the same Bible arrived at different conclusions about slavery.

"Lots and lots of people in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries paid close attention to their Bibles, but they came out with different interpretations," Butler said.

The book will draw from four different areas of the



*Wounded soldiers are treated in a Washington, D.C. hospital in 1865. Assistant Professor Lindsay Privette is writing a book about medical practices during the Battle of Vicksburg. (Library of Congress photo)*

world – West Africa, the Caribbean, North America and Britain.

The idea for the book germinated in 2019 when Butler presented on this topic at a conference in England at Oxford University. He said he realized that this could be more than a conference presentation and that there was enough source material for a book.

This book will be directed towards scholars and students.

"The other audience that I would really like to see it hit, though, is the church," said Butler. "I envision all scholarship that I do to be of service not just to the academy but also to the church."



**Ryan Butler**

Privette and Butler have been accepted into AU's Scholar Development Program which allows them to have a course release for one semester where they only teach two classes. This will allow them more time to complete their books.

"Doing the work and doing the research and sharing that not just off campus but also on campus helps everybody," said Roger Flynn, chair of department of history and political science. "The more we know about the past and the better we understand the past, the better we can prepare for the future."

# PRSSA helps students connect professionally

By Cara Johnson

Anderson University's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America recently completed three years of helping students make professional connections and enhance their skills.

The student organization, which was chartered in the spring of 2019, has monthly meetings featuring guest speakers, panel discussions, and networking opportunities. The chapter also offers field trips and service opportunities to local public relations firms and conferences where students have the chance to connect with working professionals and make contacts for internships and jobs.

"It's fun and a practical investment that they can make in their own future careers, whether that's specifically in PR, another area in communication, or in any field really because every field needs communication," said Robert Reeves, associate professor of communication who serves as the faculty advisor for PRSSA.

Morgan Lane, who will serve as the chapter's president beginning in the fall, said she enjoyed being pushed out of her comfort zone to develop professionalism and networking skills.

"It has been great to be around students who are striving for the same professionalism and are just all learning at the same time," she said. "You don't just figure it out in one day, but you're all figuring it out together."

Reeves said PRSSA provides students with a great opportunity to launch their professional careers.



Communication students participate in a panel discussion about their internships experiences as part of a recent PRSSA meeting. From left to right are: Cade Tessmann, Morgan Lane, Herlinda Zevallos, Caroline Mason and Bonnie Frick. (Photo by Robert Reeves)



Communication students hear from employees of Jackson Marketing during a PRSSA-sponsored field trip during the spring of 2022. Field trips are one way the student organization connects students with working professionals. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

By joining, members receive access to networks of like-minded friends, mentoring from professionals, and abundant learning experiences. He said the organization is a great way to open doors and connect to professional development resources, especially for those who don't know where to start.

"Often when students are first learning about PR, they feel a little inadequate or intimidated by the idea of going out and applying those things that they've learned in a professional setting," Reeves said. "However, once they start meeting and networking with professionals, they realize they are very well equipped and capable of being professionals in this field and doing a great job."

Students also have the opportunity to learn by holding a variety of leadership positions and being a part of a larger organization. Anderson's chapter is sponsored by the South Carolina chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and is a part of the national Public Relations Student Society of America organization, which has more than 300 chapters and nearly 7,000 student members.

"Joining PRSSA is a great opportunity to work with other students who are passionate about what you're passionate about," said Bonnie Frick, the 2021-22 chapter president. "Not only does it look good on a resume, but the leadership team works diligently to make it a fun thing that students want to be involved in."

# Storefront stories

Corporate video production course teaches students to serve clients

By Abby Durst

Anderson University students are helping local small businesses recover from the pandemic through videos and livestream productions.

“Storefront Stories,” originally begun by Assistant Professor of Communication Bobby Rettew through his business, Rettew Creative, has grown into a major student project to help areas businesses and nonprofits.

Rettew said he began the project with his business partner during the worst days of the pandemic by capturing video and conducting interviews for short videos that merchants could use to promote their services.

After joining AU’s full-time faculty, he pitched the idea for students to be involved to Caroline Gaddis, the community events manager for the city.

Gaddis said she was thrilled to see students getting involved in the project.

“It took on a whole new life of its own when we introduced students into the mix,” Gaddis said. “I knew it was going to be great for the students to interact with business owners and gain some real world experience that can’t be taught in a classroom setting.”

Rettew said his goals are to teach students how “to



*A Storefront Stories team shoots a selfie with their clients from the Matty’s Pattys food truck. From left to right at the back are Simon Loftis, Gabe Miller, Katelyn Bass and Jillian Zeltzer. Clients Matthew and Sarah Miller are at the front.*

work firsthand with businesses” as well as “transition them from students to practitioners.”

To accomplish this, Rettew said students are put into groups that reach out to local small businesses to conduct video interviews.

The process not only teaches students communication, organization, video, editing, and audio skills but also teaches them perspective on their surrounding community, Rettew explained.

Once interviews are conducted, students take the content captured and create impactful videos which are posted on Facebook and Rettew Creative’s website.

Several students attended The Brew, a weekly brainstorming meeting among Anderson small business owners to talk about their work.

“It was great to see our business owners in Anderson truly appreciate what the students could offer their businesses,” Gaddis said.

Student Grace Ann Vargo said her team’s work with Electric City Brewing Company was eye-opening. She



*A video camera is set up to capture an interview at Calvary Home for Children. Students in Anderson University’s Corporate Video Production class produced a series of videos this spring telling the stories of how the ministry provides help, hope, and home to abused and neglected children. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)*



*An Anderson University video team conducts an interview at Calvary Home for Children in Anderson this spring. The students in the COM 351 Corporate Video Production course learn to work with real clients to produce needed video projects as part of their coursework. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)*

said her perspective was completely changed not only about small businesses but store owners as well.

“I view them (the business owner) less as a business and more as a person,” Vargo explained.

Loudon Rosier who worked with peers to promote The Fashion Shack said he learned how to take a professional approach to projects.

“It was cool watching Bobby teach us how to live-stream and also how to adapt and be ready for problems,” Rosier said.

Jimmy Newton, the owner of Figs Café and Farmacy, said the project helped the students better understand the challenges faced by small businesses.

“It helped them (the students) understand and got them more involved in the small businesses that are in Anderson. It showed them the struggles small businesses go through. They stepped forward and helped,” Newton said.

The success with Anderson downtown businesses has also led the initiative to expand with students completing projects this spring in West Pelzer, Pelzer and Due West.

A modified version of the project, called “Front Porch Stories” was also created this spring to support Cal-

vary Home for Children in Anderson. Through this project, students interviewed cottage parents, staff and supporters of the ministry for videos.



*Jo Barnwell, right, of the Jo Brown Senior Activity Center, reacts as a Storefront Stories video about the center is played at a meeting of downtown business leaders. Student Rylee Brtek was part of the team that produced the video. (Photo by Bobby Rettew)*

# Student workers play important role in CAS

By Grace Matthews

Student workers play an important role in keeping a busy operation like Anderson University College of Arts and Sciences moving.

Faculty and staff say they rely heavily on students working part-time jobs in their offices to accomplish a wide variety of tasks. The jobs allow students to work on campus through the Office of Student Employment to gain experience as well as earn a paycheck.

Susan Kratko, administrative assistant for the College of Arts and Sciences, said student workers provide important assistance throughout the college.

“The valuable help of student workers are a blessing to the College of Arts and Sciences,” Kratko said.

Natalie Fenters and Brianna Rao, sophomore biology majors, were student employees in the biology department during the spring 2022 semester. Fenters and Rao assisted in the lab and helped to grade assignments for biology professors Joni Criswell and Rocky Nation.

The students said working in the department allowed them to learn many new skills as well as tutor students in classes that they have already completed. They said this helped them to sharpen their own skills while making new connections.

“I love my job. I think that it is really fun and it prepares me well,” Fenters said. “And on top of that, I am able to meet a lot of students and help them which is super rewarding.”



Natalie Fenters and Brianna Rao, sophomore biology majors, show off agar trays used to culture microorganisms for a biology lab. The students serve as teaching assistants for the biology department. (Photo by Grace Matthews)



Teaching assistant Brianna Rao allows biology students to touch the department's pet snake. (Photo by Grace Matthews)

Rao said she encourages other students to apply to be a teacher's assistant because of the positive impact the position has had on her.

“A lot of the time last semester, I was struggling with school and Dr. Criswell was always there to provide me encouragement and keep me going in my major and just give me that push that I needed,” said Rao.

Greyson Schleimer, a senior communication major with a concentration in digital media, served as a digital media lab assistant for the communication department along with first-year student Molly Dorman. Schleimer helped students check equipment in and out and assisted students with projects they were working on. Schleimer said she found it rewarding to give so much of her time to be in the lab and help other students.

“Recently,...Molly and I became content creators for the Anderson University communication department for all of their social media platforms,” Schleimer said.

Schleimer, who graduated in May, said she really enjoyed the sense of community in the lab. She loved meeting new people and interacting with other students who use the lab. The relationships she has built with her coworker, supervisor, and other students have been impactful to her.





*Greyson Schleimer, left, a digital media lab assistant for the communication department, gives a camera to communication major Ashlynn Dapper. The lab assistants manage all of the department's equipment. (Photo by Grace Matthews)*

"I just really love helping people reach their goals," said Schleimer.

Schleimer said she was thankful to work and represent the CAS because it was a chance to give back to AU. She said that AU had given her so much and the position allowed her to be a part of something bigger and to be a small part of someone else's journey.

She said that watching students grow their skills in the lab and accomplish their projects has been meaningful.



*Jonathan Parker, right, a sophomore biochemistry major who serves as a college ambassador for Anderson University Office of Admissions, presents information to prospective biochemistry and biology students. (Photo by Grace Matthews)*

Jonathan Parker, a sophomore biochemistry major, served as a college ambassador for Anderson University Office of Admissions during the spring semester.

Parker said he showcases the college and major so that prospective students can see what it is like to attend AU as a biology or biochemistry major.

"It's always interesting when you get to meet new people and interact with different people every day," Parker said. "It's never the same thing even though on paper it might look like it. It's always different because it's with new people."

Jonathan Raines, guest relations and student ambassador advisor, said Parker has a great reputation based on reviews from families on tours he has led.

"He is a great student worker, very responsible and on top of everything, too," said Raines.

Parker said his interactions with the public are both professional and personal. He said he loves getting to represent the CAS and AU and that he enjoys getting to personalize each tour based on the group he leads that day. He said he finds it rewarding that he may play a small part in a potential student's decision to attend AU.

He said he also likes getting to know the families and learning about the students' passion for biology and biochemistry.

"This job just gives me people skills and the ability to foster relationships professionally," Parker said. "These are all skills I will need in a future career setting regardless of what it is."

# Student-athletes balance sports, academics

By Daniel Similton

The life of a collegiate student-athlete is fast-paced with little time for breaks. With practice twice a day, multiple games or competitions during the week, a packed class schedule, and a social and faith life, student-athletes say they must prioritize their time wisely.

Student-athletes with majors in the College of Arts and Sciences are typically in class about three hours each weekday but with reading, research and homework expected outside of class in addition to strenuous practices, the students say their days are long.

Diamond McDowell, a first-year history major from Asheboro, North Carolina, who is also a member of Anderson University's women's basketball team, said she's still learning to balance her schoolwork with her athletic responsibilities.

"There are days where I want to hang out with my friends but I can't because of practice or homework," said McDowell, who was named to the South Atlantic Conference All-Freshman Team and Freshman of the Year. "It's tough (balancing priorities) because you must put the biggest priority (schoolwork) first and juggle everything else around that time."

McDowell said she was guilty of procrastination when she first arrived in college but after staying



*Diamond McDowell drives toward the basket during a regular season game. The first-year student-athlete said she's learning to balance her time as a student and athlete to have success both on and off the court. (Anderson University photo)*

up all night to finish a paper during her first semester, she vowed to "never again procrastinate."

Through her first two semesters at Anderson, McDowell said she has become more aware of what is needed to be a successful student-athlete at the collegiate level and advises other athletes to be willing to seek help when it's needed.

"Enjoy the first year (as) it goes by super fast. Don't let college do you, you do college," McDowell said. "Most importantly, do not be afraid to ask for help because most people don't mind giving it."

Spencer Snow, a junior communication major in AU's Honors Program and member of the Anderson tennis team, said he also had to learn the hard way about procrastination. He said that during his first year, he waited until the last minute to finish a paper and ended up "pulling two all-nighters in a row to compete (it)."

Snow said he learned from this experience and is now a much better manager of his time and resources.

"The quicker time management is learned, the easier your life will be. It's that simple," Snow said.



*Communication major and AU tennis player Spencer Snow said he had to learn the importance of time management the hard way after procrastinating on a paper. (Anderson University photo)*

David Mahnke, a freshman political science major from Hetttenleidelheim, Germany, said he's had to navigate living in a different country on top of managing life as a student-athlete.

Mahnke runs for both the cross country and track teams and set a new Anderson University school record of 24 minutes, 37 seconds in the eight-kilometer race during the fall cross country season. He was also a top 20 finisher in the mile race at the South Atlantic Conference indoor championships.

On the academic side, Mahnke also excels. He was named to the Dean's List for the fall semester and highly prioritizes his academic success.

Patrick Berlejung, a teammate of Mahnke, praised Mahnke's academic prowess and discipline.

He said Mahnke's "ambition is very strong and he is used to a strict and efficient way of working."

Mahnke said he's developed some key habits that have helped him succeed.

He said student-athletes should check their calendars for future assignments, "so they can be prepared for that (lengthy assignment) mentally" and do some of the work in times that are less busy. He also said that it's important to allow at least some time for social activities to maintain a healthy life balance.

"That is a good investment," Mahnke said.

Kevin Eagle, the Anderson University cross country coach of five years, said committing to academics and athletics "might mean that (an athlete's) social life could take a hit, but this is something that student-athletes must sacrifice if they truly wish to be successful."



**Kevin Eagle**

Eagle said he knows the sacrifices needed for a successful program both on and off the field. This past fall his women's cross country team qualified for nationals while his men's cross country team received Anderson University's Dr. Shirley Jacks Award which is given to the athletic team with the highest GPA.

Eagle said he encourages student-athletes to "eliminate any types of outside stress that may affect... academics and athletics."

"If you can minimize the distractions that have a negative impact on your life, you will be better off in everything you do," Eagle said.



*At top, David Mahnke finishes strong during an eight-kilometer cross country race. At bottom, he studies for an upcoming test. (Photos by Daniel Similton)*

# PR research project receives Palmetto Award

By Herlinda Zevallos

Anderson University students recently received recognition for public relations research they conducted to help Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County.

Students taking “Public Relations Research and Evaluation” in the fall 2020 semester received a Palmetto Award of Merit from the South Carolina chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators for a project to help Habitat better understand their volunteers and donors.

The award came as part of IABC’s annual Palmetto Awards contest through which communication professionals throughout the state submit their best work from the previous year for critique.

“I was thrilled to hear they won this award,” said Associate Professor of Communication Robert Reeves, who taught the course. “I thought the students had done excellent work.”

Kylie Herbert, director of development at Habitat for Humanity, said developing and maintaining relationships with their supporters is essential for the organization, and they appreciated the opportunity to learn more about how they could improve those relationships.

“We wanted to learn what kind of content donors and volunteers best responded to and what social media they used the most,” Herbert said.

The students also used the research to provide clarity about the demographics of the organization’s supporters, their motivations, and their feelings about the organization, Herbert said.

“One of the most valuable things, especially when working with younger people, is the fresh perspective that they bring,” Herbert said.

Reeves said that through the project, students were able to gain real-world experience and apply their re-



The AU research team poses with Habitat for Humanity Development Director Kylie Herbert following their presentation. Back row from left to right: Jacob Nottingham, Connor Wheatley, Patrick Bush, Caleb Madden, William Bell, Ashby Stoudenmire, Madison Roy, and Allison Travis. Front row: Madeline Cromer, Sydney Fowler, Elizabeth Leeth, Paige McDowell, Kylie Herbert, Joanna Arnsmeier, and Caroline Turner. (Photo by Robert Reeves)

search skills through creating a survey and conducting focus groups.

“With this project, I gained skills through analyzing and researching how Habitat’s supporters preferred to be contacted and what social media platforms they get their information from through a survey,” said

Caroline Turner, a senior communication major who was in the class. “I also gained experience in conducting my first focus group with this project, and I felt our class worked very well together as a team.”

The students presented the research findings to Herbert and provided Habitat with all the information in a final report of the research project.

“I loved seeing the students present to the client at the end of the semester,” said Reeves. “They did an excellent job after having spent the entire semester working on this project and pulling everything together into a polished, well-written report.”

Herbert said the research results are being used to shape the organization’s communication strategies and plans.

**“One of the most valuable things, especially when working with younger people, is the fresh perspective that they bring.”**

**Kylie Herbert**

Born with printers' ink in his veins

# Webb makes learning a lifetime endeavor

By Hannah Crouch

Lawrence Webb sees education as a lifetime endeavor and is living proof of the importance of this idea. At 87, the Anderson University emeritus professor makes continuing education a priority as both a student and teacher.

Webb recently published a book on author and poet Carl Sandburg, whom he has studied for 40 years, titled "Carl Sandburg: Poet, Politician, and Prophet."

He also recently produced a 30-minute video lecture on Sandburg for the Elmhurst History Museum, located in Elmhurst, Illinois, where Sandburg lived during his early career.

Webb holds a bachelor of science degree from Hardin-Simmons University, a master of divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a master of mass communication degree from the University of South Carolina.

He said he's been writing nearly all of his life. The Sandburg book is his ninth.

"Well, I think the Lord put printers' ink in my veins and expected me to use it for him," Webb said.

While Webb's recent projects have been on Sandburg, he said he was not always familiar with the renowned 20th century American poet, biographer, journalist and editor.

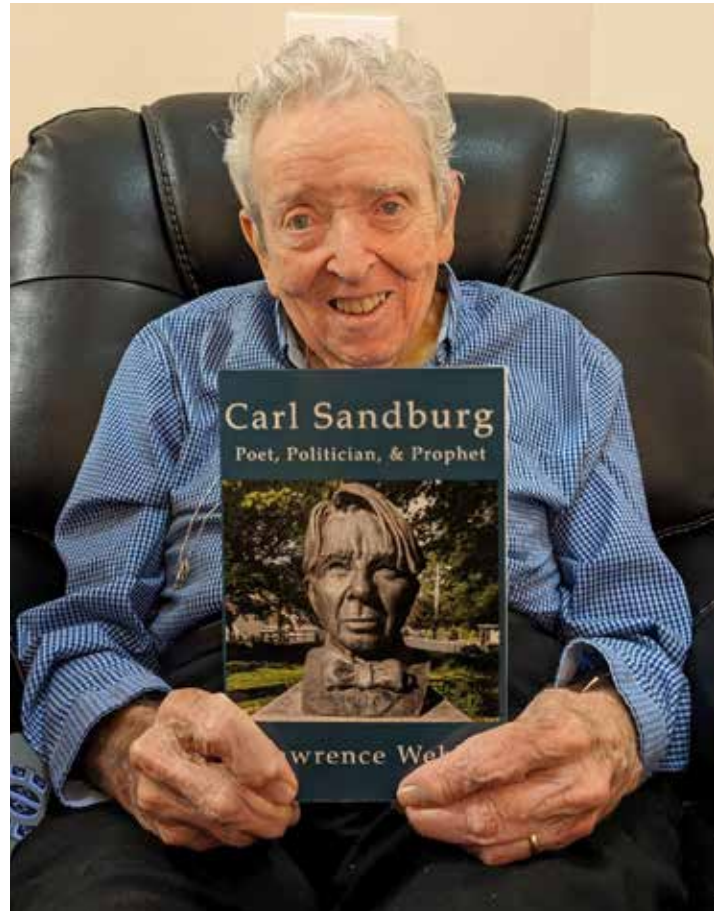
"I did not know anything more about Carl Sandburg than the next six people that passed me on the expressway," said Webb.

He said it was preparation for his first short course on Sandburg in 1982 that led him to begin exploration of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author and he's never stopped learning about him.

Webb has had a lengthy and varied career himself, including two tenures teaching journalism at what was then Anderson College, first from 1963-1967 and again from 1981-2000.

He also served in various churches as a pastor and minister of education and edited publications for the Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention.

**"Well, I think the Lord put printers' ink in my veins and expected me to use it for Him."**



Anderson University Professor Emeritus Lawrence Webb shows off his most recent book, "Carl Sandburg: Poet, Politician, and Prophet." (Photo by Robert Reeves)

Webb even had his own cable TV show in Anderson, "Spotlight," which featured human interest stories.

He has also produced Sunday school lessons on the radio for the First Baptist Church of Anderson for the past 30 years.

Bob Hanley, chair of the English department at AU, has known Webb since his second tenure as an Anderson professor.

## Lawrence Webb

He said Webb has always been a man who enjoyed learning, writing, and educating others.

"He is a multitalented man who knows so much about so many topics and is a very well-read person," said Hanley.

# Alum now teaching in Czech Republic

By Clancy Stauffer

When Anderson University alum Jacob Cavett first went to Prague in 2018 to share his faith, he knew someday he wanted to return to the Czech Republic. He is now accomplishing this goal by teaching English and Bible at the Christian International School of Prague.

Cavett graduated in 2019 with two degrees: one in English and one in communication with a concentration in digital media.

While at AU, Cavett went on a six-week college mission trip to share his faith in Prague with Generation Link, a church-planting organization, in 2018 before he moved there in 2020.

“We visited public high schools, and that’s when I realized I wanted to come back as a teacher,” Cavett said.

Cavett said he felt that God used the mission trip to “set his heart on Prague and to give him a vision.”

He now teaches English and professional communication to the ninth grade class and “Bible: Worldview and Ethics” to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade class at the school. He said he can teach the Bible freely and in English.

Beyond teaching, he has goals to spread the gospel, befriend the people in his community, and to become a published writer.

Professor of English Bob Hanley said Cavett was the kind of student every professor wants in the classroom. Having had him as a student prior to his graduation in 2019, Hanley said Cavett was, “dependable, grounded in Christ, and displayed leadership in the classroom.”

The Rev. James Hanson, director of campus ministries and campus pastor at AU, said Cavett is, “intelligent, creative, and very mission-focused.”

He remembered encouraging Cavett to serve and share his faith overseas because of his own experience with living outside the U.S. Cavett said he also recalls this and that it encouraged him to work in Prague.

“I remember being fascinated by his (Hanson’s) stories about (living overseas). He gave me a lot of

**“This is a very beautiful city and there are a lot of really awesome people here, but there is also a lot of brokenness, too. I’m very hopeful that the Lord is accomplishing His will here.”**

**Jacob Cavett**



*Anderson University alum Jacob Cavett, a 2019 graduate with degrees in English and communication, is now teaching in the Czech Republic at the International School of Prague. (Photo courtesy Jacob Cavett)*

wisdom and I think some of his passion rubbed off on me,” Cavett said.

After his graduation in 2019, Cavett said he did not think he would make it to Prague so soon but he trusted God’s timing. “It was definitely time, and the Lord showed me it was time to be here,” Cavett said.

He also said this is the perfect time of life for him to travel.

Cavett said he appreciates the Christian environment at his school.

“We teach from a biblical perspective. It’s a part of our school identity,” Cavett said. “We are a Chris-



*Jacob Cavett uses his off-time exploring his new home in Prague. He became interested in living in the city after participating on a mission trip with a church-planting organization in 2018. (Photo courtesy Jacob Cavett)*

tian school and yet, so many of our students are not Christians.”

He said that even though the faculty are Christians, the school teaches to many unbelievers, which allows him to share God’s word with them. He described Prague as having a “post-Soviet, atheistic mindset,” and said that the best way to share the gospel in the future is through building relationships now.

“This is a very beautiful city and there are a lot of really awesome people here, but there is also a lot of brokenness, too,” Cavett said. “I’m very hopeful that the Lord is accomplishing His will here.”

Cavett said he lives in Prague alone, but has a strong Christian community around him. This includes families in his local church, his church small group, a weekly prayer group, a writer’s group, and a recently-founded English club.

“Having a community like this here is what makes it home,” Cavett said.

He said he plans to stay in Prague until he senses God

is finished with him there.

“God won’t be finished with this ministry anytime soon,” Cavett said.



*Jacob Cavett leads a mock trial in his classroom at the Christian International School of Prague. (Photo courtesy Jacob Cavett)*

# SYNTHESIS

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*Students in the COM 451 Documentary Video Production course interview Zephaniah and Whitney Smith as part of a documentary on the Cleo Bailey Experiment, a project to turn an old school building in Anderson into a vibrant community center. (Photo by Aaron Bennett)*