This summer, more than 400 youngsters got to be explorers, scavengers, actors and scientists during nine weeks of fun at Georgia College & State University’s Kids’ University camps. They learned a little of everything—from the great outdoors and cultures around the world to hometown heroes and creepy crawlies.

“It was fun for campers and for the college students who monitored them,” said junior Stelios Spirou of Milledgeville. “The kids are all very interesting, and they’re excited to learn and have fun.”

“I love how this summer we’ve really gotten to integrate some different things into our curriculum,” said Dr. Sheri Noviello, dean of COHS and College of Health Science. “It’s really a great opportunity and a great experience to spend time with children and to see their personalities shine, to see their growth,” said junior Stelios Spirou of Milledgeville.

“A political science major, Sprouse brought a little of his own expertise to camp this summer. He taught about the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights and freedom. He enjoyed guiding tomorrow’s leaders. “The kids are all very interesting, and they’re excited to learn and have fun.”

“Kids’ U also provides counselors an opportunity to apply hands-on learning and leadership skills,” she said. “Working at Kids’ University gives Georgia college students a chance to learn about their strengths and become more self-assured as they prepare to graduate. Leading a summer camp and group of kids helps them learn more about the world, and for our future teachers, it helps them acquire the skills they’ll need before joining the workforce.”

“Kids’ U offers the youth of Baldwin County creative, fun and exploratory learning opportunities in a welcoming camp environment,” said Nancy Finney, director of Kids’ U and program coordinator for the department of Continuing and Professional Education, which is part of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SoCPS).

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Alanna Ame Possey, 18, got her degree in special education at Georgia College. She’s been teaching at Medley Hills Primary and other Georgia public schools the past few years. This summer, she was assisted director of Kids’ U and prepared curriculum for campers. She also guided Georgia College students as counselors.

“I love how this summer we’ve got to integrate some different themes into our curriculum every day.” Possey said. “We have electives where counselors get to collaborate and work on an activity of their own special interest.”

“Bringing in outdoor education and project-based learning added so much value to everything we do,” she said. “Some kids, despite nature being all around us, haven’t had that opportunity in five or six years, or not at all. We’re teaching them the value of the outdoors and culture.”

Diondra Franklin of Carrollton, Georgia, got her undergraduate degree in Creative Writing at Georgia College in 2021. Now, she’s working on her Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT).

“She’s a spritual leader and an old soul,” said senior Stelios Spirou of Milledgeville. “She’s been leading the camp this long. She has a special way of relating to campers and, for our future teachers, it helps them acquire the skills they’ll need before joining the workforce.”

“I really enjoy leading tomorrow’s leaders,” she said. “It’s a perfect way for Franklin to practice her teaching skills, while also gaining young in conversations about college. “I can really feel my kids walk away from here and know that there’s something more out there,” she said. “Then I feel like I’ve done my job.”

“We’ll tell anyone, if you’re unsure you want to be in the teaching field,” she said, “then I feel like I’ve done my job.”

New Georgia College Nursing Scholars Program funds aspiring nurses

With their first five scholars in tow, the Georgia College & State University (GCSU) College of Health Sciences School of Nursing (SON) kicked off its Lettie Page Whitehead Nursing Scholars Program.

“In a year of ongoing global health challenges, it is particularly important that we ensure all students have equal opportunity to access higher education,” said Dr. Sheri Noviello, dean of COHS and College of Health Science.

“This scholarship program will allow us to continue to recruit the most qualified students into our college nursing programs,” said Jessie Davis, interim director of SON. “This is an opportunity to grow the number of well-qualified nurses in Central Georgia by providing opportunities to those who otherwise have had financial restrictions.”

Hannah Pelt of Macon, Georgia, is part of the first pre-nursing cohort. She said the scholarship changed her life.

“When I got that degree in my hand, and I’m able to help people,” she said, “it’ll all be worth it.”

The grant money will be used to conduct interviews across Georgia, Florida and Minnesota. It will also cover transcription and analysis and surveys.