

GORDON Gazette

Weekend, December 26, 2020

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Calhoun-Gordon County's #1 Source for News

American Red Cross blood drive to be held this Monday at First United Methodist Church of Calhoun

Brandi Owczarz
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The American Red Cross invites the community to give the gift of life this season at a blood drive this Monday, Dec. 28 at First United Methodist Church of Calhoun, located at 205 East Line Street in Calhoun.

The blood drive will be held from 1 – 6 p.m.

Statistics show that 1 blood donation can potentially save up to 3 lives, and there's an urgent need of blood donations in our area. Help where it is needed the most. Your gift supports the many urgent

needs of the American Red Cross.

Donors of all blood types are needed. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood donors can now save time at their next donation by using

RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, from a computer or mobile device on the day of their donation, prior to arriving at the blood drive. To get started and learn more, visit RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass and follow the instructions on the site.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing, and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help



protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are required to wear a face-covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

About the American Red Cross

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds, and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members

and their families. The Red Cross is a not-for-profit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or visit us on Twitter at @RedCross.

Investigation into Dalton shooting; victim dies at local hospital

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Investigators with the Dalton Police Department are looking into a shooting that occurred in the early morning hours of Thursday, Dec. 24 in Dalton, but details are still uncertain at press time.

The Gordon Gazette has left messages with the DPD concerning the incident. Calhoun police reported that at approximately 2:45 a.m. on Thursday, officers responded to an incident at AdventHealth Gordon where two male subjects brought another male subject, who had a gunshot wound, into the hospital and dumped him, then took off in

what appeared to be a dark, four door sedan, possibly a Ford.

The victim, identified as 22-year-old Jordan McDougle, who was raised in the southern Gordon, northern Bartow/Adairsville area, had a gunshot wound to his abdomen and succumbed to that injury shortly after being dropped off at the hospital.

The CPD began investigating, reviewing video footage from the hospital, attempting to identify the male subjects that dragged McDougle into the hospital and ran.

The CPD discovered

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'It's My Turn Now Georgia' website gives hope to children waiting for adoption

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Foster children who are waiting for adoption now have hope in having finding their forever home.

"It's My Turn Now Georgia" is the state's official adoption photo listing website. The children featured on this website are looking for caring families to make their adoption dreams come true.

The website can be found at itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov

It's My Turn Now Georgia publicizes the need for permanent homes for children from the Georgia foster care system in hopes of bringing together caring parents and waiting children to make forever families.

It's My Turn Now also lists children in partnership with other adoption agencies, such as the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption Wednesday's Child and AdoptUSKids.

A photolisting of these children can be viewed under the Meet the

Children tab. Included on the website are photos and videos, along with descriptions that show how some of the children want a family that will take them fishing; other children want a family that will cook a lot or teach them to ride a bike. Some children, according to the site, just want a family that will also take in their siblings so they can remain together.

Basically, the children just want a family that they will fit in and feel like they belong.

"These are the actual children who are currently in need of their forever families; it shows the public who are children are that need adoption," said Garrett Pierce, the

Social Services Administrator-Region 1 Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit at the Department of Family and Children Services.

On the website at press time, 12-year-old Seth, a future engineer, earns good grades at school and would like to play lacrosse and basketball. He enjoys reading books, playing video games,

and participating in Boy Scouts.

There is also 10-year-old David, who enjoys reading, building with LEGOs and playing 'Minecraft' and basketball.

And 13-year-old Eulana is a sweet and loving girl who enjoys spending time with family and friends, listening to R&B music, and watching Disney movies and shows on the Disney Channel.

These children, plus hundreds of others, can be found on the website itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov. While the names of the children are listed, no other identifiable information is given, such as location or school.

In addition to the children available for adoption, there are also additional resources on the website, such as information on adoption and the process, adoption services, financial assistance and post-adoption services information.

DFCS is committed to helping these children realize their dreams and



The public can now find foster children who are looking for forever homes that are in need of adoption on the website itsmyturnnow.dhs.ga.gov. The website safely features hundreds of children that are waiting for adoption through the Department of Family and Children Services.

help your family grow. If you are interested in adopting a child featured on this site, please call: It's My Turn Now Georgia at 1-800-603-1322 or for general information about becoming a foster and/or adoptive parent with the state of Georgia, please call 1-877-210-KIDS.

And as always, As

always, there is great need for foster families in Calhoun-Gordon County. At any given time, there are between 170 and 200 children in foster care in our community. While the goal of DFCS is to reunite foster children with their biological

See **DFCS**, page 7A

Second Front

Ring in the New Year with a bang: All Star Fireworks offers huge selection of fireworks, favors and safety tips for your NYE celebration

Brandi Owczarz
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All-Star Fireworks owner Scott Lunsford said that while New Year's Eve is a perfect opportunity to enjoy a good fireworks display, it's important to remember to do so safely.

"Our #1 goal is safety," said Lunsford. "Never underestimate the power fireworks have. Always respect fireworks and follow all safety procedures. That is very, very important to me."

In addition to having the largest offering of fireworks in Calhoun-Gordon County at his store located at 976 Highway 53 W/SW Spur, Lunsford puts on pyrotechnic/ fireworks shows for a wide range of events and knows a thing or two about fireworks safety and has a long history with fireworks.

"My family had 11 stores in Northwest Alabama for about 20 years before being bought out, so saying that I have been around fireworks my whole childhood isn't an understatement. I do all types of 1.4 class shows for weddings, quinceanera, graduations, church events, festivals and all celebrations that require fireworks. There is nothing I love more to hear the stories from people that have bought from me and just how pleased and excited they were to see the fireworks go off!"

Inside the large, climate-controlled All-Star Fireworks store, Lunsford boasts a large variety of fireworks for the novice to experienced fireworks fan.

"We carry a wide array of 1.4 class fireworks," said Lunsford. "I also carry approximately 15 of the best quality brands on the market. I carry everything ranging from kids novelties to the biggest 3-inch multi-shots available to the public."

And just in time for New Year's Eve, All-Star Fireworks is offering a variety of party favors



to celebrate ringing in 2021.

"We have hats, horns, light-up and non-light up glasses for your New Year's Eve parties at All Star Fireworks," said Lunsford.

All Star is also holding a couple of giveaways for New Year's. One of the items to be given away is a huge, 12-shot firework called GOLD RUSH. To enter for a chance to win, simply visit their page and like, share and tag their post about the giveaway.

Also, a HERCULES artillery pack will be given away; it includes big breaks and tons of shots. To enter, find the post on the All Star Fireworks Facebook page and Like/share/tag for a chance to win.

Both drawings will be held on Dec. 31.

Ring in the New Year with a bang. All-Star Fireworks is open throughout the next week for all your firework needs for your New Year celebrations.

In addition, Lunsford adds the following safety tips for the public to remember when shooting fireworks:

-Purchase fireworks from a licensed fireworks dealer (such as All-Star Fireworks

-Observe all state laws regarding the use of fireworks.

-Read the labels carefully before igniting any fireworks.

-Ensure that an adult



supervises all firework activities.

-Never allow children to ignite fireworks.

-Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.

-Light only one firework at a time.

-Only use fireworks outdoors in a clear area; away from buildings and vehicles.

-Never try to relight a firework.

-Have a garden hose or bucket of water nearby.

-Use caution with animals. Excitement, noise, and lights can cause fear and stress.

All-Star Fireworks can be found on Facebook or at their website www.allstarfireworkspro.com

WE'VE GOT JOBS!

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

BINDING: (sewing machine) candidates that have sewing machine experience we will pay them \$14.25 per hour. They must have previous sewing experience. 2nd shift-and work Monday – Thursday 5pm to 3:30am

CSR -entering orders taken via phone, updating order information, checking inventory, etc. Paying temp is about \$11-\$12/hr-Monday - Friday. For now, the hours will be 9:00 - 5:00 when training, but will be adjusted 8:30 - 5:00.

HALL MONITOR: \$8.25/hr, must have clean background, will be cleaning, assisting with students and taking care of facilities. Must show work history on resume to be submitted to client.

A5-10 openings- no interviews needed-5am – 3:30pm M- Saturday - \$10-Material Handler

A2 Packaging -No interview needed-2nd shift -3:30pm – 2am Monday – Friday / Saturday 1:30pm – 10pm- -Pay: \$11

SHOP WORKER: \$11-12/hr, day shift, will work wrapping/cleaning up cabinets for shipping, clean in shop, work as needed to assist in shop for making commercial grade cabinets

GENERAL LABOR: \$9/hr, 1st shift-will work in variety of places in plant, packing, stacking, beveling, shipping, wrapping rolls, cut table helper

GENERAL LABOR: \$10/hr, 12 hour shifts 7am to 7p and 7p to 7a, 7 days a week right now, lots of over time, bilingual/Spanish is a must! Heavy lifters needed for cutting, sealing boxes, packing, and able to work with variety of people.

SHIPPING CLERK: \$11/hr., e-commerce, shipping, bill of lading skills, bilingual is needed-sending profiles to client for interviews.

ADMIN ASSIST: \$12/hr, accounts payable, and receivable, computer skills, good solid work history, some receptionist skills needed-must have resume showing all computer/accounting skills.

MACHINE OPERATOR – 5pm – 3am (machine operating-extrusion/TMO experience)-2 OPENINGS-\$14/hr starting

TIRE HANDLER: \$11 & UP BASED ON JOB/SHIFT-12hr swing shift days—7am-7:30pm, 2nd & 3rd—Tire Handlers 3pm-11:30pm/ 11:00pm-7:30am

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Obituaries

December 26, 2020

Shirley Andrews

Mrs. Shirley (Long) Andrews, 72, of Calhoun, went home to be with her Lord on Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020. She was born in Little Rock, Ark. on Aug. 7, 1948, daughter of the late Willis Henry Long and Frances Vance Long. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by one sister, Janice Long; four brothers, Donnie Long, Billy Long, Junior Long and Homer Long.

Prior to retirement, she was employed by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Survivors include her husband, Greg Andrews; daughter, Melissa Bartlett; son and daughter-in-law, Steve and Lori Albano; grandchildren, Shane Bartlett, Cody Bartlett, Ashley Brittan, Chasity (Kyle) Higdon, Sabrina Albano; great-grandchildren, Asher and Marleigh Bartlett, Kade and Emmalynn Higdon, Kyleigh Kerr, Julian Morataya, Cole and Ruben Barajas; special friend, Glenda Morris; brothers Willie (Joann) Long and Wayne Long; sisters, Evelyn (Lawson) Passmore, Allene Lane, Julie (Lamar) Stacy, Belinda Long and a host of loving nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020 at 3 p.m. from the chapel of Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Eddie Cochran and Rev. Wyley Walden officiating. Burial will follow at Haven of Rest Memorial Park Cemetery on Red Bud Road, Calhoun, GA 30701. The family will receive friends on Sunday, Dec. 27, between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the funeral home.

Those who choose to attend the service and come to the visitation at the funeral home are asked to follow the CDC recommended guidelines by adhering to social distancing and the proper wearing of a mask while inside the building.

In consideration of those unable to attend the funeral, it will be recorded and placed on the funeral home website (www.maxbrannonandsons.com).

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the Andrews family.



Ray Erwin

Wallace Ray Erwin, 80, of Calhoun, Georgia, passed away Wednesday, December 23, 2020, at Redmond Medical Center after an extended period of declining health.

Mr. Erwin was born in Gordon County on Nov. 29, 1940, son of the late Rev. Stanton and Mary Jo Thomas Erwin. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Parrish Erwin; sisters and brother-in-law, Alice Pass, Charlotte and Lamar Tomlinson.

He grew up in Gordon County and attended Sonoraville School. He was a Master Barber for over 50 years having started at Gresham Park Barber Shop in Atlanta and owned and operated Erwin's Barber Shop and prior to his retirement, he was with Paul's Community Barber Shop. Ray enjoyed his many fishing trips with his nephews and loved to get together with family. He was an avid fan of the Dodgers and Celtics.

Survivors include his wife, Linda Ferguson Erwin, to whom he was married for 47 years; daughter and son-in-law, Tami and Paul Defoor; sons and daughters-in-law, Rusty and Kathy Gibbs and Todd and Sandra Gibbs; grandchildren, Bruce and Samantha Defoor, Carson and Austin Sollicito, Noah Gibbs; great-grandchildren, Easton, Addie and Parker Sollicito, and Duncan DeFoor; sister and brother-in-law, Debbie and Henry Hunter; brothers and sisters-in-law, Randy and Wilma Erwin, Danny and Benita Erwin and Timmy and Pam Erwin; brother-in-law, Mickey Pass; his fur baby Bandit, along with nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a private family service for Wallace Ray Erwin will be conducted on Saturday, Dec. 26 at 1 p.m. from the chapel of



Max Brannon & Sons Funeral Home with Rev. Gary Bowman officiating. Interment will follow in Erwin Hill Cemetery. Pallbearers serving will include Bruce DeFoor, Noah Gibbs, Austin Sollicito, Tony Tomlinson, Daren Pass, and Monty Erwin. Honorary pallbearers serving will include Jeff Erwin, Seth Erwin, Gabe Erwin, Jason Carney, and Drew Bell.

The funeral service will be recorded and posted to the funeral home website at www.maxbrannonandsons.com where personal condolences may be expressed and the guestbook signed.

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the Erwin family.



Ronnie Hammonds

Ronnie Ladale Hammonds, 71, of Calhoun, died Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020. He was born on March 25, 1949 in Floyd County to Lola Mae Dowdy Hammonds and the late John Henry Hammonds.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced later by Max Brannon and Sons Funeral Home.

To leave condolences and sign the online guest book please go to, www.maxbrannonandsons.com

The Brannon family and staff are honored to serve the family of Ronnie Ladale Hammonds.



Gary Haulk

Gary Westfield Haulk, age 61, of Calhoun, passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020 at AdventHealth Gordon.

Gary was born on May 13, 1959 in Dalton, son of Evelyn Brookshire Haulk and the late Harlin Haulk, Sr. Gary was a veteran of the United States Army, where he served his country as a Green Beret and Sergeant.

Gary is survived by: his mother, Evelyn Brookshire Haulk; daughter, Camille Haulk; brother, Harlin Haulk, Jr.; and two sisters, Janet Haulk Cross and Tammy Dool.

Services will be held at a later date and will be announced by Thomas Funeral Home.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Gary Westfield Haulk.



Roy Ingle

Roy Lee Ingle, age 85, of the Resaca Community died at 3:22 a.m. Friday, Dec. 25 at AdventHealth Gordon Hospital.

Roy was born, May 14, 1935 in Whitfield County, a son of the late Levi and Viola Ingle. Also, he was preceded in death by a son, Richard Ingle; a granddaughter, Anna Ingle; sister, Inez Johnson; mother-in-law and father-in-law, Millard and Gladys Tuggle; and two sisters-in-law, Collene Casey and Evelyn Davenport. Roy was a member of the Tilton Baptist Church of Whitfield County and was retired from Shaw Industries.

Roy is survived by his wife, Helen Tuggle Ingle of Resaca; two sons, David Ingle of Dalton and Terry Ingle of Calhoun; one sister-in-law, Brenda Roegner and her husband Jess, and several grandchildren.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27 at the Chapel of Thomas Funeral Home with the Reverend Harold Blackstock officiating. Burial will be in Corinth Baptist Church Cemetery.

Pallbearers are nephews. The Ingle family will receive friends from 1 - 2 p.m. the funeral home preceding the service.

Thomas Funeral Home is honored to serve the Ingle family.



Byron "Rex" Mahan

Mr. Byron "Rex" Mahan, age 66, of Ranger, departed this life Monday evening, Dec. 21, 2020 at AdventHealth Gordon. Rex was born June 6, 1954 in Fairmount, a son of the late Noble Clyde and Mary Reathel Higdon Mahan. He was also preceded in death by a son Byron Adam "Bub" Mahan, and brothers, Gene Mahan and David Mahan.



Rex was retired from the Gordon County Road Department and worked for over thirty years with Seaboard Farms.

He is survived by his loving wife, Brenda Childers Mahan of the residence; son and daughter-in-law, Josh and Kara Mahan of Ranger; grandchildren, Joshua Adam "Jake" Mahan, Ashley Mahan, Joseph Mahan, Cainan Lane Mahan, Keagan Mathews; great-grandchildren, Christopher Mahan, Ryan Mahan, Kayla Fuller and Adam Cochran; brothers and sister-in-law, Larry and Myona Mahan of Calhoun, and Matt Mahan of Canton; sisters and brothers-in-law, Sheila and Dean Holt of Farner, Tenn., Kathy Childers of Calhoun, and Brenda and Douglas McDaniel of Calhoun; nephew, Brent McDaniel; several other nieces and nephews.

Graveside services to celebrate the life of Mr. Bryon "Rex" Mahan will be held Monday, Dec. 28, 2020 at 1 p.m. at Salacoa Baptist Church Cemetery in Cherokee County, Ga., with Reverend Donnie Trammell officiating. Pallbearers will be Josh Mahan, Jake Mahan, Cainan Mahan, Tony Childers, Brent McDaniel, and David Mahan. T. C. Childers will be an honorary pallbearer.

The family will receive friends at Ponders Fairmount Chapel from 5 - 9 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020. The family request no food be brought to the funeral home and in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the funeral home.

Due to the National health crisis and the Covid-19 virus, masks must be worn properly at all times and social distancing must be observed when visiting the funeral home.

Condolences may be expressed to the family at www.pondersfuneralhome.com.

Arrangements will be announced by, Ponders Melrose Chapel 138 Melrose Drive Dalton, GA 30721, 706-226-4002



Samuel "Sam" Slaughter

Samuel "Sam" Slaughter, age 71, of Calhoun, passed away Thursday, Dec. 24 at AdventHealth Gordon.

Samuel was born March 23, 1949 in Gordon County, son of the late Clinton Slaughter and Sannie Tucker Slaughter. He was a member of the College Street Church of God and was employed by Engineered Flooring. Samuel was very religious; he was a friend to many and loved everyone.

Besides his parents he was preceded in death his sister, Linda Hunter.

Survivors include his wife, Nina Pass Slaughter; daughters, Karen Slaughter and Pamela Tanner; a stepson, Keith Walraven and his wife Kathy of Calhoun; his sisters, Juanita Ray, Mary Jo Freeman, and Shirley Fuller; a special friend, H.A. Newman. Several grandchildren also survive.

Funeral services will be conducted Saturday, Dec. 26 at 2 p.m. from the College Street Church of God with Rev. Dewayne Smith officiating. Burial will follow in Fain Cemetery.

The family will receive friends at the church from 1 p.m. until the funeral hour.

Due to the ongoing national health crisis, face coverings must be properly worn by all those who plan to attend. Social distancing guidelines must be followed at all times while attending the service.

You may leave the family online condolences at www.thomasfuneralhomecalhoun.com

Thomas Funeral Home has proudly been entrusted with the care of Samuel Slaughter.



Help for the Hurting

-The Life Choice Hospice Bereavement Support Group will be meeting the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

The support group is open to anyone in the community who would like to attend. The office and support group are located at 189 Professional Court, Suite 300, Calhoun. For information, contact Jennifer at 706-602-9001.

-The Northwest Georgia Parkinson Disease Association, Inc., is offering a monthly support group for persons living with Parkinson Disease, their caregivers, family and friends. The support group will meet at Gordon Hospital; Conference Room A. For any questions about the support group and future meetings, call James Trussell at 706-235-3164 or 706-346-5678.

-Families Anonymous is a 12-step program, for those concerned about drug abuse and behavior problems of a relative or friend. Completely anonymous, non professional, and non religious. No dues, no fees. Not connected with any hospital or agency. Located on Red Bud

Road in plaza below Fitness First, next to Calhoun Counseling Center (Dr. Bledsoe's office). Meeting every Thursday 7 - 8 p.m. Call 770-548-7849 for more information.

-Bondage Breakers- Breaking the chains of addiction one soul at a time. Every Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Crane Eater Community Church, located at 3168 Red Bud Rd Calhoun, GA 30701.

-The Georgia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association is sponsoring a monthly support group at Morning Pointe Assisted Living, 660 Jolly Road, on the third Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. For more information or directions, call Mary Braden at 770-548-4683 or Karen Parrott at 706-346-5220. For more information about dementia and Alzheimer's disease, call 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/georgia.

-Special Care Plus, a free one-on-one consultation program, offers education and information to primary caregivers of persons with dementia. Any primary caregiver who is caring for a loved one with dementia in the home is eligible to

receive this program. To learn more about the Special Care Plus program, call 800-272-3900.

-Want to make a difference in the community? Tapestry Hospice is seeking volunteers to provide companionship to our patients, read books, make crafts, garden, light house cleaning, administrative work, etc. If you're interested contact Megan at megan.guthrie@tapestryhospice.com

-The Alzheimer's Association's Caring Closet was created to help offset the high cost of incontinent products and give the families support they often desperately need. If you would like to visit the nearest Closet, call the chapter office to receive a flier with locations and hours. Morning Pointe in Calhoun has a Caring Closet; call Mary Braden at 706-629-0777.

-Community volunteers are needed at Countryside Hospice Care, where the mission is to promote comfort and dignity at the end of life. The agency covers 26 Northwest Georgia counties between three offices in LaFayette, Rome, and Newnan.

If you would like to participate in this rewarding program, call 706-638-7651 or 1-800-660-7381.

-Discovering Hope, an autism support group for Northwest Georgia, meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Friendship Baptist Church, Rocky Face. For more information, call Connie Post at 706-673-7765 or www.discoveringhope.us.

-Caring Connection is a telephone support group especially for caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's who cannot leave their homes because of care responsibilities. This support group is as close as the phone. Call 706-275-0819 or 1-800-272-3900 and ask to be enrolled in Caring Connection.

-Grief Recovery Group for those who have lost loved ones and friends, receive support and guidance with the Four Tasks of Grieving. Cost is Free. Second Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m. at Harris Radiation Therapy Center at Gordon Hospital. For more information or to RSVP, please call 706.879.5850.

Hometown Holidays



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GEORGIA HEALTH NEWS: Christmas Eve brings record number of COVID cases in Georgia

ANDY MILLER,
Georgia Health News

It's sad to bring unpleasant news on Christmas Eve.

But this is the year 2020, when unpleasant things keep happening.

Thursday's preliminary figures show more than 10,600 new COVID cases in Georgia, easily a single-day record. The total includes 2,682 positives from rapid antigen tests.

Other virus-related numbers are equally frightening.

ICU bed capacity in Georgia is "severely constrained" at 90 percent, according to COVID Exit Strategy. Test positivity in the state (the rate of COVID-19 tests that come back positive) has increased to 13.7 percent, a long way from the goal of 5 percent or lower.

Northeast Georgia Health System (NGHS), based in Gainesville, sent out a stark warning Wednesday about another post-holiday spike – and the possibility of rationing medical care.

"We're struggling to find staff and space to care for people, and our front-line workers are exhausted," Dr. Clifton Hastings, chief

of medical staff for Northeast Georgia Medical Center, the system's flagship facility, said in a statement. "If COVID cases continue to increase, we may be forced to start making decisions about who we can treat effectively and who we have to send elsewhere or turn away. That's a decision no physician should have to make, and a situation no one in our community should have to face."

The average positivity rate for NGHS testing has hit 28 percent, matching the system's previous high, recorded in July.

"Early in the pandemic, we learned that limiting some services and expanding others can create additional space to care for patients – which we've continued to do – but we're still faced with the challenge of maintaining enough qualified physicians and nurses to provide high-quality care," said Dr. John Delzell, COVID-19 Incident Commander for NGHS.

"We're extremely thankful for the staffing support the state has supplied, and we will continue to request additional help, but hospitals across the state all need those same

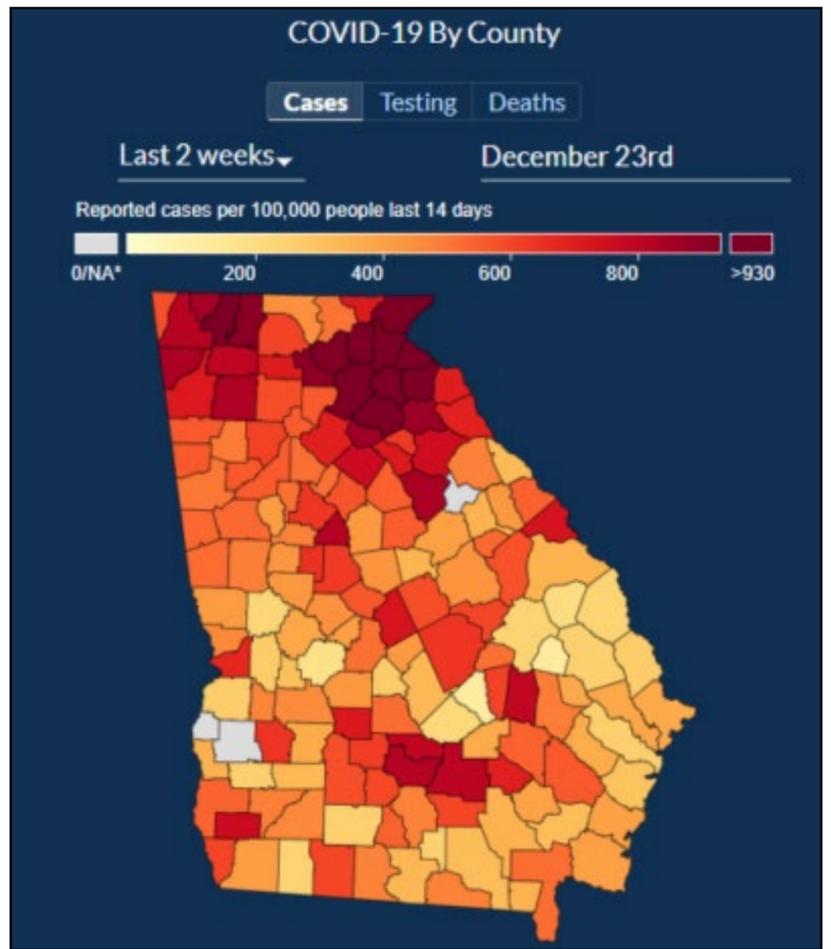
resources." A state website, as of midafternoon Thursday, listed 20 Georgia hospitals being on ICU/Critical Care diversion, and four on "total diversion," including Piedmont Healthcare hospitals in Coweta, Fayette and Henry counties.

Phoebe Putney Health System, based in Albany, is seeing the number of hospitalized COVID patients reach a level that it hasn't seen since the spring, when the virus spread exponentially in the southwest Georgia city.

"We believe much of this spike can be attributed to travel and gatherings around Thanksgiving, and we are extremely concerned about the impact Christmas celebrations may have on the numbers," Scott Steiner, Phoebe Putney president and CEO, said Wednesday.

The state is reopening a temporary hospital at the Georgia World Congress Center, a convention venue in downtown Atlanta, as medical centers around the state struggle to meet the needs of patients.

"It's important to remember that vaccination [which began



in the United States this month] isn't a magic bullet that will end the pandemic immediately," Dr. Supriya Mannepalli, medical director of infectious disease medicine at Northeast

Georgia Medical Center, said in a statement. "People are tired of hearing this, but the best way to protect yourself, the people you love and your community this holiday season is to not

visit family and friends outside your household, or take precautions if you do."
Andy Miller is CEO and editor of Georgia Health News.

7 ways to kick off your exercise routine after the holiday lull

ADVENTHEALTH GORDON

The holidays are known for many things, but a commitment to fitness is not one of them.

With the busy schedules, gatherings, travel and the abundance of tempting treats around, tasks around your health like your diet and exercise routine are often the to-dos that get left off of your list.

So, how do you step it up again after your holiday lull?

Fortunately, it's easier than you might think. Here you'll learn seven things experts recommend you do to get back into your groove after the holiday season hiatus.

1. Forgive Yourself

Rather than beating yourself up for letting your fitness habit slip, instead forgive yourself so that you can move on. Remember, you're not alone. For many people, the busy holiday schedule means that things happen and wellness slips through the cracks. Realize that this is just a small setback and keep trying.

Once you've decided to move on, spend time thinking ahead to what you want to do differently next year. If you plan for potential setbacks ahead of time, you're less likely to repeat the cycle during the next holiday season.

2. Start Small and Mind Your Joints

Getting back into any routine takes some time. If you miss an entire month or two of

being active during the holidays, expect that it might take you that long or more to get back to your old program.

To stay motivated, set small fitness and activity goals that you can realistically achieve. Even small victories every week will help keep you focused and confident on your path to success.

Pay close attention to how your body responds to activity and new movements. Remember, a little muscle soreness or fatigue is usually okay. Pain, especially if it's coming from your joints, might be a sign you're trying to go too hard, too fast.

It's always smart to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program, and to reach out to experts who specialize in joint health and lifelong mobility if you're experiencing pain.

Connect with our team of experts with questions about any discomfort you experience in your hips, knees, shoulders or bones to learn how we can help.

3. Get Yourself a Virtual Exercise Buddy

Having a workout buddy seems like an obvious recommendation, but experts say its worth entertaining.

Having a workout buddy is a popular strategy that works for several reasons:

Someone is there to hold you accountable

It makes exercising more fun

It provides social and emotional support

People tend to better

maintain focus and reach their goal(s)

To stay safe and socially distanced, set up weekly video workouts or join a community online to share your successes.

4. Make it Fun

When you enjoy an activity, you want to perform it often. Get back into your exercise routine with the physical activities that you enjoy most, whether its weightlifting, cardio or a stretching and toning class online.

Exercise is an opportunity to be a kid again. Think of it as finding your recess and making it fun so that you like doing it.

5. Remember, Fitness is a Lifetime Journey

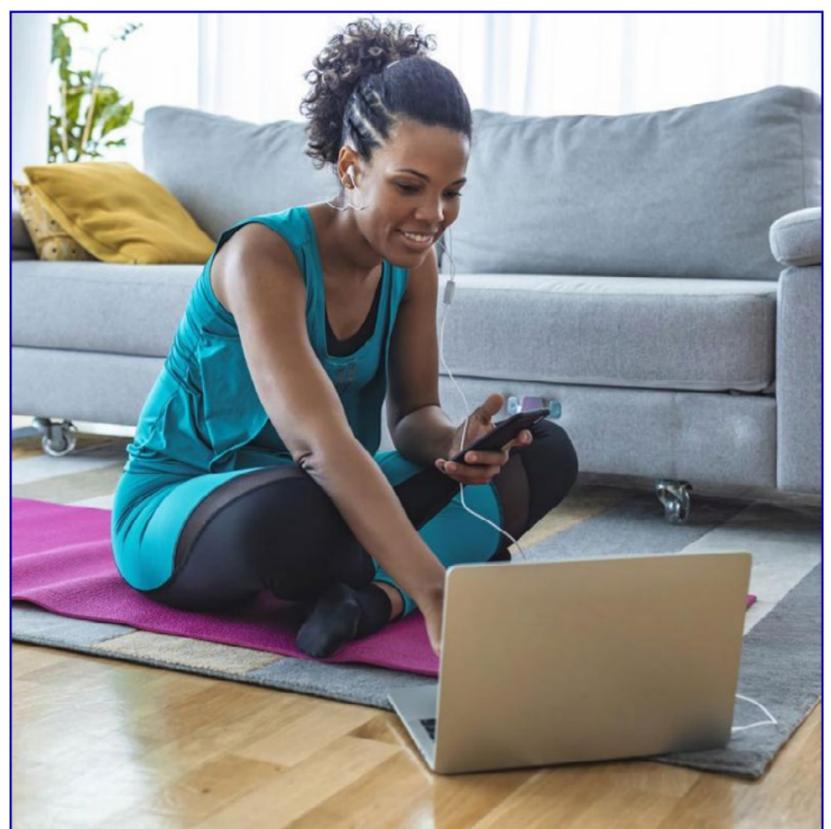
Don't think of getting back into your workout regimen as a short-term goal. It's a lifelong journey. You're always in the game, and you can win.

6. Quit the Unhealthy Habits

Your body craves what you digest the most. If you are snacking or not eating a healthy diet, take control. Start eating well again, and seek help from a medical professional if you need guidance on developing a healthy eating lifestyle for you.

You already know what foods are good and bad for your body. It's time to take the reins and refocus on nutrition to achieve your fitness goals and optimal health.

7. Remind Yourself Why



You're Getting Healthy

Health is what we need to complete our purpose in life. We need it to fulfill what we're intended to do.

Remind yourself of your larger purpose and

why it's important for you to regain the health you need to complete it.

Partner with Us for Your Whole-Person Health

If you need help from a physical therapist or orthopedic expert to

ease back into your routine, we have experts can help. Reach out to our motivational, compassionate team to learn how we keep you safe in our facilities and get started on your journey.

To stay up to date on the latest community news, follow the Gordon Gazette on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter

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Becoming 'Mr. Dalton State'

CONTRIBUTED

Diego Alvarado watched from an apartment in a foreign country as life seemingly moved on without him.

For years Alvarado waited. Waited for news his life would get back on track. Waited to return to the only home he'd ever known. Waited to reunite his family.

"Everyone moved on, and I lost a lot of people slowly from my life during that period," Alvarado said. "I couldn't move on. There was nothing I could do. I had my life stolen from me. As a young adult I was supposed to be enjoying the best years of my life, but my life was on pause. That was what really grew the resentment."

Alvarado had come to America at 6 with his family, grew up in Dalton, went to Southeast High School. But about a month after his 18th birthday in 2011, he had to leave for Mexico due to his immigration status.

The day he had been waiting for finally came in May of 2015. He was approved to return to America as a permanent resident. He was still bitter, still struggling with the years he'd lost in Mexico.

But all that changed at Dalton State, where

attended Dalton State. But I believe Dalton State is luckier to have Diego as part of our family. His contributions to Dalton State, to our current and prospective students and to our employees is inspirational. He told me once he wants to be president of Dalton State, and I never forgot it. Someday, he will be the best president Dalton State has ever had."

Waiting in Mexico

Alvarado's family had arrived in America on July 4, 2000. He doesn't remember much of his journey or his early childhood in Mexico.

"Anytime my mom talks about the multiple things they had to endure to get here, I realize it was the ultimate sacrifice anyone could make," he said. "There's no way I won't try my best for them. The reason I want my bachelor's degree, my master's and maybe a doctorate later is because it's incomprehensible to put yourself through what they did for your children."

Shortly after Alvarado turned 18, in December of his senior year of high school, he had to return to Mexico with his family as they fought the immigration system. He was able to complete his requirements to obtain

literally just waiting on immigration to update us."

After 3.5 years of waiting, Alvarado received news his case was denied, and he would not be able to return home. His parents had already received permanent residence status and had returned to Dalton. So now Alvarado was alone.

"At this point, I am stuck in Mexico," he said. "I cannot legally come back no matter what. I had a few options. I could come back and stay illegally, stay in Mexico or emigrate to another country. We ended up appealing my case. I'll always be grateful former Congressman Tom Graves wrote a letter on behalf of me for my appeal. And I was back to waiting for an update on my status. By that time, I was so jaded I didn't care."

The appeal worked. In January of 2015, Alvarado discovered he would have one chance to return home. He would go for an interview in May, and his entire fate rested in that one person's hands. He dedicated the next four months to learning how to present himself, how to advocate for himself, how to behave and how to be likable and charismatic.

"Everything I had in me, I put into this one day," Alvarado said. "I cannot put into words



invested in who I wanted to be. I loved helping people. It is a passion of mine. A former student, Ana Mendez, helped me register for classes, and she did not leave my side. What she did and showed me, I wanted to do and give to others what she gave me. She gave me attention and helped me create my first semester of college. Everything I did while at Dalton State was because of that moment and that day."

Alvarado applied to become an orientation team member that January. That decision became pivotal to his career as a college student. He spent the next four years introducing incoming students to what it means to be part of the Roadrunner family. He gave them tips, helped them decide on classes, mentored them and was a positive, supportive presence on campus.

Alvarado connected with the faculty and staff. He made an impact. He touched the lives of thousands of people in his role as an orientation leader. While later also serving as a student ambassador, Alvarado represented Dalton State to high school students touring the college. He served on the Student Government Association and assisted several students with beginning student organizations on campus, including the photo/film club.

"Diego has not only been the face but also the heart of all things Dalton State," said Katelyn Humphrey, assistant director of recruitment and orientation. "When I step back to look at the orientation program at DSC - how we have grown and learned and

changed and laughed together - there isn't a single moment worth noting that isn't somehow infused with who Diego has been to our team. Diego has impacted hundreds of students all across Dalton State. He is recognized everywhere he goes for the impact he has had as an orientation leader and a student ambassador; he has been responsible for making Dalton State a home to so many."

Alvarado was on the homecoming court and was elected prince as a freshman. He was also the person inside the Rage mascot for a period of time. He danced on the sidelines at basketball games wearing the Rage suit and made public appearances as Rage. He also spent time in the student-led spirit club, waving giant Roadrunner flags at basketball games and engaging spectator participation. His involvement in athletics hasn't stopped yet. He now serves as the announcer at home soccer games.

"I felt like I was everywhere and doing everything," Alvarado said. "That's because of what I went through. I was no longer afraid. I had already talked to a single person who decided the fate of my life. What else was there to fear? Those four years I spent in isolation made me want to be around people and involved in everything I could take advantage of."

"Diego is Mr. Dalton State," said Dr. Jodi Johnson, vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. "I have known him since he started on the orientation team. Diego's

enthusiasm for Dalton State is unrivaled. He seizes every opportunity to talk about Dalton State. I am so grateful he was leading the student orientation group this year during this unusual and difficult season.

"Like so many of our students, Diego had a difficult and circuitous path to Dalton State," she said. "His personal story is so powerful, and I believe it resonates with so many prospective students who think higher education may not be achievable for them. For many years, Diego said he was never leaving Dalton State, and now he doesn't have to because we were fortunate enough to hire him full-time. I have heard Dr. Venable introduce Diego as the future president of Dalton State, and I believe a few years down the road he might just achieve this."

In his position at the college, Alvarado helps incoming students and their families understand all that is available to help them. Before enrolling, he didn't realize all the financial aid and other opportunities Dalton State provides to help students succeed.

"Anytime a Hispanic mother comes in, I see my mom, and I see what I wish she had been able to do for me," he said. "I want to use that to help others. What I want to do is change the way people look at financial aid and empower them. I want to educate and grow this knowledge, especially for people with undocumented parents. You can still go to college. You can still get financial help. You can do it. I'm excited for them, and I'm excited to help them."



Alvarado enrolled as a student to begin spring semester in 2016.

Alvarado graduates this semester from Dalton State with a degree in communication. During his time as a student, he was heavily involved as an orientation leader and a student ambassador and was active in athletics and in student life.

He grew. He evolved. His life was transformed. "Dalton State got rid of the bitterness," he said. "Dalton State got rid of that resentment. I realize being in Mexico during that time didn't take my life away from me. It gave me life. It got me to the life I had dreamed of. Those four years were what I needed to put me exactly where I am today. Without that delay, I wouldn't have the people I have today. Now I know it was exactly where I needed to be."

Alvarado was hired as an enrollment specialist at Dalton State this semester, and he's glad to continue giving back to the college that turned his life around.

"Diego represents all Dalton State stands for," said Dr. Margaret Venable, president of the college. "Some would say he is lucky to have

a high school diploma before he left, and he hoped to be back in time to walk across the stage with his class that spring.

"My story is, like so many others, the immigration system takes its sweet time," Alvarado said. "Even now, I've applied for my citizenship, but I was told there wouldn't be any progress on my case until at least September 2021."

Alvarado and his parents lived in a suburb on the desert. They had to walk for miles because they didn't have a car or close access to public transportation. And after the sun went down, anyone still out was in danger because of the violence in the area.

"I didn't work. Didn't go to school. Didn't do anything," he said. "I stayed home. I got on my computer. I expected this to last only four to five months. At any point, I could have received a notice for an appointment for my immigration hearing. I wasn't normal for the culture there because America is my home. That made me a target. It was extremely dangerous for me to get a job. So, I waited. From December 2011 until spring 2014, I was

what I wanted. I played Eminem's 'Lose Yourself' to put me in the right place mentally."

As a 21-year-old, Alvarado was approved to return home as a permanent resident who would be eligible for citizenship in five years.

"When I came back it was happiness of the purest form," he said. "I had spent from 18 to 21 in Mexico waiting. I was happy to come home, but that resentment and bitterness was still strong. People usually don't get a full clean slate to start over, but I did. My next objective was clearly college."

Running Boldly

Alvarado took some time to acclimate to life back in America. Then, he enrolled to begin at Dalton State in January of 2016.

"Orientation changed my life," Alvarado said. "I went to orientation in December of 2015, and here were these students that were helping incoming students and fully being themselves. They were laughing and enjoying life. I gravitated toward that. In Mexico, I just wanted a second chance. I was fully

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RUNOFF

From page 1A

that McDougle was last seen in a 2019 Kia Rio, gray in color, license plate CNU 6001. That vehicle is currently missing and authorities are searching for it.

Calhoun police announced late Thursday that while investigating, they learned that the shooting actually occurred in Dalton, and that the two men brought McDougle all the way back to Calhoun to the hospital. Dalton Police are now investigating the shooting, with the Calhoun Police continuing to assist in the investigation.

Anyone who can identify the subjects in the photos or that has any information on the incident are asked to contact Dalton Police Department at 706-278-9085 or call Det. Kevin Sutton at the Calhoun Police Department at 706-263-4422.



DFCS

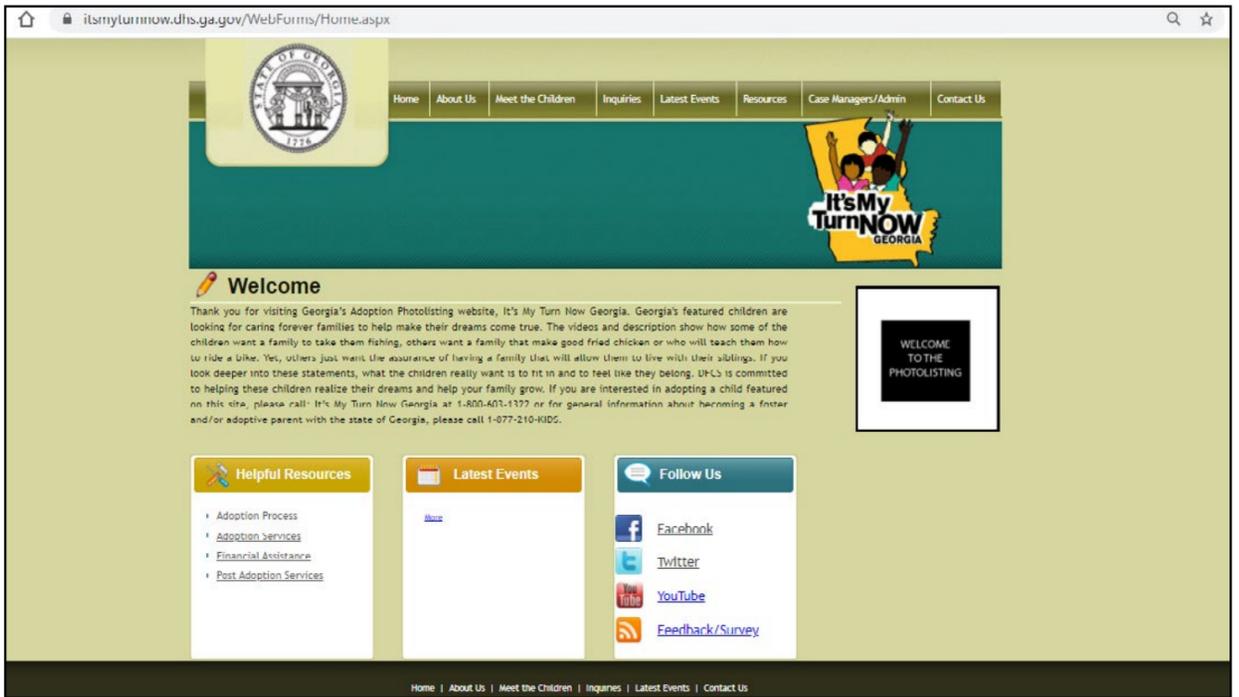
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families that is not always a possibility, so there are also opportunities to adopt through fostering.

Anyone who feels a calling to become a foster parent can visit the Foster Georgia website or call the 800 number to learn how to become a foster parent, changing lives of the children of Calhoun-Gordon County most in need.

According to the State DFCS website, prospective foster parents must meet these criteria:

- Must be at least ten (10) years older than the child to be placed and if single, be at least 25 years of age
- Must complete a 2-hour orientation in the local county office or via the internet
- Must successfully complete pre-service IMPACT Family Centered Practice training
- Must complete a medical exam, fingerprint checks, as well as undergo both child welfare and criminal records checks/screenings. If a parent or any



other adult household members (over age 18) have not been a resident of Georgia for a minimum of 5 years, they must be screened in the Child

Abuse and Neglect registry of each state of prior residence
-Must provide proof of current residence and financial stability

Anyone interested in becoming a foster parent can call 877-210-KIDS, or visit fostergeorgia.com for more information.

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