

## GWU Degree Completion Program Recognizes Student with Community Engagement Award

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JUNE 2, 2022



### Through Online Program, Heather Foushee, '24, Keeps Her Job and Serves Others While Earning Her Degree

Through Gardner-Webb University's fully-online Teacher Assistants to Teachers program, Heather Foushee is earning a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education without giving up the job she loves. A teacher assistant in the third grade at Vass (N.C.) Lakeview Elementary, Foushee expects to graduate in 2024.

While the online format is convenient, the main reason Foushee chose Gardner-Webb is the University's Christian mission. At school and in the community, Foushee lives out Gardner-Webb's motto, "For God and Humanity."

Because of her volunteer service, she received the first Community Engagement Award presented recently by the GWU Degree Completion Program. Foushee said her motivation comes from 1 Peter 4:10: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

"We are called by God to serve others," she stated. "I have been blessed with so many things throughout life. I serve others in hopes to be a blessing to someone else."

One of her most memorable volunteer opportunities was providing a Thanksgiving meal to low income families at her school. "It was such a blessing to serve these families," Foushee observed. "I enjoyed seeing familiar faces and getting to share in their joy and appreciation of a Thanksgiving meal. I had several families tell me how wonderful it was to see the school staff go beyond educating the children to meeting all of their needs in and out of the classroom."

She also joins others to provide games and candy for the annual community fall festival. Every few years, she returns to her home in Johnston County, N.C., to help with Special Olympics.

Foushee has been in early childhood education for four years. “I love working with kids, and wanted to move into the public school sector,” she related. “I have a passion for education. The profession is hard and can feel like climbing a mountain some days. I look at the reward on top of that mountain.”

Gardner-Webb’s professors have shown her innovative and more efficient ways to use technology in the classroom. She also values how much the instructors care about their students. However, the most important lesson she’s learned transcends any subject. “More than anything, Gardner-Webb has taught me to give grace and be teachable,” Foushee asserted. “Teaching goes far beyond educating the mind. I want to be a stable adult in the life of every child who enters my classroom. I could be that child’s only cheerleader.”

**Learn more about the Teacher Assistants to Teachers Program.**

**Learn more about Gardner-Webb Online.**



