



EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMALS APPROVED ON CAMPUS

MARIA JESUS MARTINEZ

Contributing Writer

Skai, a 7-month-old Argentine Dogo, lives with her owner, Mackenzie Gresham, and Gresham's roommate on the campus of UWG. She spends her time playing with toys and being around Gresham. Her owner needs her around because she is an Emotional Support Animal.

An Emotional Support Animal, also abbreviated ESA, is a pet certified by a licensed healthcare professional that is capable of emotionally alleviating a person with a mental health condition through companionship or comfort.

"There was a guy that was giving away dogs at the Kroger parking lot near Carrollton, and a woman caught Skai there because she was running away," said Gresham. "When she saw me, she asked, 'Do you want a dog?'" and I said, "Of course, why not?"

At that precise moment, Gresham was going with her now ex-boyfriend and some friends to the grocery store to buy something for dinner. Her mind was not set on getting a pet, let alone an Emotional Support Animal, but life had not been easy for her.

"I like to say that she came at the correct time, because I was really stressed and going through a lot," said Gresham. "When she came she added more responsibility for sure, but she also helped me manage my stress as well."

"A little after I found her, I broke up with my boyfriend," continued Gresham. "Whenever I would get sad about it, she would just come and lay in my lap as she knew that something was bothering me, so I was like 'maybe I should give her training to be an Emotional Support Animal.'"

Photo Courtesy of Mackenzie Gresham

Gresham trained her dog at Petco and Skai was certified by Gresham's therapist to become an Emotional Support Animal. The next step was to do the paperwork to let Skai live with her in her dorm. It was an easy process to get a letter written from her therapist that approved her pet of being an Emotional Support Animal. However, it was a little difficult when trying to get Skai on campus.

"I had to figure out who I needed to talk to, that was the most difficult thing, because I was using therapy off campus, so I wasn't able to find someone in the counseling center to help me," said Gresham. "Then I found out about Erin Williams, through a co-worker that had an ESA and he was able to give me her email and contact information."

After some time with her dog in her daily life, Gresham noticed improvements in many aspects of herself and her habits.

"I struggle with stress, anxiety management and seasonal depression," said Gresham. "Having a dog means that you have to get up the bed and walk the dog and that has forced me to come outside and interact with people when otherwise wouldn't."

Gresham notices a pattern when it comes to Skai. When Gresham is doing her homework or hurrying up to meet a deadline, she would feel a weight on her chest. Everything changes the moment Skai sits next to her and Gresham rubs the pup, then the heavy weight becomes a breath of fresh air.

"She has definitely improved my mental health, my health in general and my life in general," said Gresham. "She keeps me active as I am the type of person who would stay inside all day long if I could and she definitely gets me outgoing and talking to people, being an active part of society or my community."

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CHATGPT'S IMPACT ON UWG

RACHAEL BROWN

Contributing Writer

ChatGPT has the potential to have a positive impact on UWG if students and teachers are committed to using it responsibly.

"The rapid development of AI and other technologies is changing education and assessment, offering diverse ways of utilization," said Dr. Ralitsa Akins, Vice Provost at UWG. "The Provost's Office, UWG's Faculty Senate, and the Institute for Faculty Excellence (IFE) are engaged in conversations about the best way to include AI tools in teaching and learning."

Although we will likely see more use of AI tools in the classroom, they will not replace teachers or other resources anytime soon.

"AI tools, such as ChatGPT, have their limitations and cannot replace the authentic experience that UWG students have in interactions with their professors," said Akins.

While many are concerned about the ways that ChatGPT can be used to cheat, there are signs that it can be used to help students instead.

"Instead of seeing ChatGPT as a challenge, we can view it as a catalyst into the next age of higher education,"

said Akins. "ChatGPT is one among many artificial intelligence (AI) tools. AI can be used to augment learning and facilitate student experiences in academia."

There are many ways that this can be accomplished. Akins is using ChatGPT to create authentic assessments and teaching assignments that will help students translate in-class learning to practical knowledge that can be used on the job.

"Assigning authentic assessments and teaching assignments that require students to apply the skills and knowledge they develop in their courses to real-world situations engages students more deeply in their learning by giving them a sense of authority and encouraging critical reflection," said Akins. "Students could use ChatGPT to generate ideas for an authentic assessment."

Mandi Campbell, Director of UWG's Institute for Faculty Excellence, also emphasizes the importance of faculty educating students in this way.

"The ways in which ChatGPT can support teaching and learning are countless and will be ever-evolving," said Campbell. "Impressively, Dr. Sunil Hazari, UWG Professor of Marketing, was one of the first to publish a book on ChatGPT. '100 Useful ChatGPT prompts for Students, Educators, & Researchers' demonstrates 'how the ChatGPT model can be fine-tuned for specific tasks

in research and educational settings.'"

However, this does not mean that ChatGPT will allow students to abandon academic honesty as some have suggested. Although the AI tool has been famously used to pass exams and write essays for students, academic honesty is vital to students' education beyond simply earning a letter grade.

"Academic honesty is a cornerstone in academia," Akins said. "At UWG, we value and uphold academic honesty as an important part of achieving one's academic degree. Faculty educate students on strategies to maintain academic integrity and encourage them to develop their own skills and knowledge as a means of both personal and professional growth."

"We would like to discuss openly and often with students the ethical use of ChatGPT and other AI programs and tools," said Campbell. "By demonstrating appropriate uses of such technology, we will be able to augment and facilitate the process of teaching and learning. Learning from and alongside professors and student-peers is a powerful and authentic experience."

ChatGPT is far from the first major shift in technology that has impacted education, and it will likely not be the last. There has already been discussion about how it will make a positive impact on students and educators alike.

THE RESERVES APARTMENTS UNDER FIRE FOR UNFIT LIVING

Onwumbiko visited the unit upstairs to find the source of the water leak. While

"I never knew why I was losing weight and throwing up," said Onwumbiko. "I had high blood pressure for so long. Even at one point in time I thought maybe I was crazy."

The Reserves apartments did not respond when asked for comment.



Photo Courtesy of Linda Onwumbiko

BEHIND THE SCENES OF A SOCIAL MEDIA AMBASSADOR

MARIA JESUS MARTINEZ

"I want to show that the University is not only a school, but also a community. It's actually fun and really an on and on experience," said Jones.

When she was choosing between studying at the University of West Georgia or another college, Jones visited UWG

"I wanted to give back to UWG by showing college life from my student perspective because I think genuinely that coming here is the best decision anyone will ever make and would help them in a lot of ways," said Jones.



Photo Courtesy of Ananda Jones

THE
WEST GEORGIAN EST. 1934

John Sewell, Ph.D.
Advisor

LIVING WEST

UWG COUNSELING CENTER CAN HELP YOU MORE THAN YOU THINK

RACHAEL BROWN
Contributing Writer

The unfortunate misconception students have about the Counseling Center is that it is only for emergencies.

Dr. Benedict Ezeoke, Executive Director for Health Services, Counseling & Accessibility, encourages students to come by the UWG Counseling Center, even if they think their problems are not a big deal.

“We don’t want our students to only visit the center when they are very, very sick,” said Ezeoke. “We want them to be part of the center, to know that these services are there for them. They can come around and ask questions and seek advice. You don’t have to be suffering from schizophrenia or manic depression to come around.”

Ezeoke also said that students have a tendency to minimize problems and do not admit to themselves or to others that they need help. This is why it is important for students to learn about what problems can occur and how they can lead to more serious issues down the line.

“The most important thing

we do is to create health and wellness consciousness in every student and encourage them to seek help,” said Ezeoke. “If you feel that things are not normal, if you feel overwhelmed, we encourage you to come around. Some students think that the only time you need to seek help is when you are incapacitated, but what we encourage them to do is to seek help.”

No issue is ever too small or insignificant for the Counseling Center to help students with.

“Even if you feel lonely, if you want to talk to somebody, you can come around and speak to us and maybe from that conversation, other things will come up,” said Ezeoke.

Other than this, many students do not know about the wide variety of services that the Counseling Center provides.

“Specifically, the Counseling Center offers individual counseling, group counseling, outreach to educate people about mental health, case management, and training for staff,” said Ezeoke. “We can also do some relational things to help students go to the right place, help them plan their life and their finances, and help them approach their studies. It’s a holistic approach to health and wellness that we apply.”

Ezeoke also emphasized

the importance for students’ mental health to try extracurricular activities or connect with others.

“Be part of the university process,” said Ezeoke. “University is not just for academics. Do other things so that you don’t just pass through the university, you want the university to pass through you. That will help you to be a formidable adult ready to face the world after your graduation.”

Being a part of the community allows students to avoid feelings of isolation and loneliness. As a part of the university process, students should also remember that all of the services and resources on campus, such as the Counseling Center, Health Services and Accessibility Services, are here for their benefit and that they are completely welcome to use them. These services are free or discounted because they are included in tuition.

“Students have so many resources, and they have the right to use them because those resources are there for them,” said Ezeoke. “They should own them and know that they are their own. Even if it means coming around and asking questions, just know that you have the right to do that, and people are here waiting for you to assist. Nothing is stupid. Come and ask questions.”

IRISH BRED PUB REVIEW

DOUGLAS SALTER
Contributing Writer

If you’re looking for old taste and classic favorites, look no further than Carrollton’s local Irish Bred Pub. The Irish Bread Pub has been located in downtown Adamson Square for decades, serving up good food, cold beer and friendly service to the Carrollton area. The Pub has a decently large menu featuring sandwiches, burgers, bowls, famous pub entrees and more. I ventured there last week with some friends to enjoy some fellowship and food.

For my appetizer I started with some chips and queso. The chips came in a variety of colors including red and green. They are served with some white queso dip. The chips were bland, so I added some salt to give them some flavor. Interestingly enough, each chip tasted slightly different because of the food coloring. The queso, however, was creamy and delicious. It was a very thick cheese and gave the chips some extra layers on top for a pretty good taste. It was nothing special, but nonetheless, the chips and queso made for a good appetizer.

For my main course, I decided to go with their famous pub sandwich. The Bread Pub had many good looking sandwiches, including the Blackened Salmon Sandwich and The French Dipper. The French Dipper is roast beef sauteed in au jus, covered in provolone, and served on a hoagie roll.

Ultimately, I decided to go with the Lucky Bird Sandwich. The Lucky Bird Sandwich is grilled turkey breast, bacon and cheddar cheese. The sandwich also included Guinness BBQ sauce, and is served on a hoagie roll. I got an insider from a friend in the kitchen who said the turkey is the best meat they cook and he was not wrong. The turkey was fantastically grilled and everything mixed so well together in the sandwich. The bacon was juicy and crispy, and the cheddar cheese was perfectly melted. However, the Guinness BBQ sauce is what made the sandwich. The sweet and tangy sauce ensured the turkey did not go dry and it went well with everything it touched. The hoagie roll was nicely toasted and encapsulated all the flavors of The Lucky Bird.

However, the biggest disappointment of my time at The Pub was the fries. I ordered a serving to go with my sandwich and I made a bad choice.

They were nothing special. There was no seasoning and barely any salt. The fries were soggy and fell apart. To top it all off, they were cold before I could even finish them. If I come back, I am certainly picking a different side dish.

In general, The Irish Bread Pub is a great environment, but the food can be hit or miss. Some of my food was incredible, while other parts of my meal were disappointing. Additionally, the pub could be a little overpriced for the average college student. My sandwich came out to be \$13.20 and including my appetizer, side and drink my total was around \$25, plus tip. Overall, when comparing the environment, food and price I give The Irish Bread Pub a 7/10. My advice is to take account of the specifics on the menu. This is certainly a place I would not pick, but I would not complain if someone asked to go there.



Photo Courtesy of the Irish Bred Pub

ENTERTAINMENT

ROMANCE WRITER EMPHASIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK LOVE THROUGH BOOKS

SAMIRA BARNETT
News Editor

AE Valdez, a self-published writer, is well-known for her books about Black love. Valdez’s books emphasize the importance of self-love as a Black individual, as well as the love as a Black couple.

When Vadez was 11 years old, she started writing occasionally. She composed some poems in high school and in 2020 she finally started to take writing seriously with her debut book, “Everything I’ve Wanted All I’ve Needed,” released in 2021.

Valdez was always driven to share her work with the public, entering in different poetry contests. Her poetry fundamentally served as the inspiration for her writing’s theme and her poetic style also transferred to her books. Her poetic style thematically demonstrates the difference in African American love than what is usually shown through either books or television is what distinguishes her work from others.

“Writing has always been an integral part of my life, a form of expression for me,” said Valdez. “When I first discovered that I loved writing, I found that I could convey my feelings better through writing than speaking.”

Along with her first book, Valdez has published several others in recent years, including “The Beginning of Forever: A Sunshine + Ace Story” (a duology to the first), “A Worthy Love,” “Colliding with Fate”

and “Snow King Catches His Snowflake.” Her goal with each book was to center the concept on women and to create characters that are similar to her and her husband.

“I know there are a lot of Black authors out there, but I just wanted to put my spin on things because I think that all stories are needed,” said Valdez.

It is difficult to suggest that the words will have an impact on the reader as a romance writer or an author in general. It’s a matter of hope that people will enjoy your work. A book can take readers on a journey that stops time and transports them to another world; it is her job as an author to create the best fictional world possible.

“It has been a very humbling and rewarding experience for me,” said Valdez. “I have this space to help my reader see life in a different way. I know it is fictional but all my themes apply to real life.”

She creates a theme within herself in order to create a theme for each book. The goal of her book is to create a narrative that informs readers that life is hard, but there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it begins within.

“I think it’s harder to receive things when we don’t love ourselves,” said Valdez. “I think self love is so important first because realistically we cannot look to other people to fill voids for us.

“You have to feel those feelings before you expect someone else to give them to you,” continued Valdez.

Her goal is to provide stimulation other than sadness and loss, which are commonly associated with African Americans.

Instead, in her writing she transforms the loss into a loving and joyful theme, all while retaining the realistic hardships of life.

“We don’t see that [Black love] in the media or anything,” said Valdez. “It’s so important to see black people get a happy ending because we are so often told we don’t deserve it or should expect that.”

Valdez is currently working on the second book for the Three Kings trilogy, with “The Snow King Catches His Snowflake” being the first book. Her goal is to have this upcoming book released in late April or early May. She plans to continue this theme of love, telling the story of how African American love can be achieved and magical, whether within oneself or another person.

Valdez networks and promotes much of her work on TikTok and Instagram, where she goes by the handle @a.e.valdezwrites. Follow to stay up to date on new releases and book information.



Photo Courtesy of the Amanda Valdez

ANT-MAN AND THE WASP: QUANTUMANIA; PHASE 5 IN EFFECT

MYLES WILLIAMS
Contributing Writer

“Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania”, is the newest Marvel movie to kick off 2023. Released on Feb. 17, this film is the third movie for the hero Antman and this adventure would push him to his limit as a hero and father.

The film follows Scott Lang (Paul Rudd), Cassandra Lang, Hope Van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly), Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) and Janet Pym (Michelle Pfeiffer) as they are shrunk-en down into the Quantum Realm.

The film wastes no time in thrusting viewers into the plot of the movie by slowly revealing the antagonist. The pacing of the movie felt very moderate. The film did a good job of balancing between the storylines of Hope, Hank and Janet trying to find Scott and Cassandra while avoiding detection from Kang the Conqueror and his plan for revenge.

This wouldn’t be a MCU film if Marvel did not add any comedic moments and Corey Stoll who played M.O.D.O.K definitely was a great comedic character. Even though

he was a villain working for Kang, M.O.D.O.K was a threatening yet hilarious character you couldn’t help but laugh at in certain moments due to his witty banter with Cassandra and his reunion with Scott and Hank. The comedic moments didn’t feel too forced to where you felt like it wasn’t funny. Scott had his moments as well from his own self narration of his own book and his banter with Kang. It gave me a little bit of a laugh, genuinely because Scott is a funny character.

Most actors in the film played their roles amazingly, while some felt very monotone. Jonathan Majors, who played Kang The Conqueror, was phenomenal. Each time Kang appeared, people could feel that he was truly a threat to everyone who inhabited the Quantum Realm. Majors was calculating, devious, arrogant and confident when playing Kang, all traits that describe Kang in the comics and was properly portrayed in the movie. On the other hand Kathryn Newton, who played Cassandra, was mediocre at best. Newton’s acting felt like she was reading the script without any type of emotion or energy. Her acting made me feel less invested,

even though she was one of the main characters who caused everything to happen in the first place. Each time she was on screen it felt like she was there just to be there and nothing else. She wasn’t terrible, but in all honesty I think the film could’ve worked best if I felt her emotion a lot more.

My favorite scenes featured Kang and showcasing how dangerous The Conqueror truly is. From showing us his vast army, to his future technology, and even his fight with Antman it definitely didn’t disappoint me. Seeing him in comics and Cartoon adaptations compared to the big screen was truly a sight to see.

Overall, the movie was average. It’s definitely a movie you don’t have to watch immediately. Even the end credit scenes that Marvel are notoriously known for did not move me and that’s saying a lot because those scenes are what get the fans excited for the next movie. Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania is the second movie out of phase five and for it to be just a mundane movie that you can skip in the MCU. It raises the question on the direction of where the MCU will be headed and if it will be good or bad.