



UWG kicks off Black History Month with Second Annual Cookout Living West

Cindy Martinez
Feature Editor

The University of West Georgia (UWG) kicked off its second annual Black History month celebrations with a lively kickoff event themed as a cookout. This event brought students together as well as faculty to begin the month long observance of his month. Held on the UWG campus, the cookout was a virat celebration of Black culture, history and community.

In addition to food, attendees enjoyed a creative journaling station, where they decorated personal journals with stickers, paint pens and other art supplies. The station also featured fragrant scents like sandalwood, lavender and spearmint, adding a unique sensory touch to the day’s festivities.

Jakai Yancey, a senior at the university attended the event with friends. “My favorite was decorating the notebook,” said Yancey.

Music and dancing were at the heart of the event, with students joining in line dancing to popular songs. The cookout was more than just a celebration of Black history—it was a chance to come together, express pride and enjoy each other’s company in a fun way and learn in an culturally inclusive atmosphere.

“The Black History Month reunion on campus was fun,” said Yancy. “The music, food, and ambience brought a different vibe of black culture.”

“The moment was very intentional, black history isn’t just something we

read or hear about but it’s something we live in,” continued Yancey.

UWG has plenty more exciting events lined up for the remainder of Black History Month. The events are as follows:

Black History in Business Luncheon on Feb. 11 at 11:30 a.m. in the Campus Center Ballroom, featuring influential Black leaders in the business world

BHM Poetry Slam on Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. in the Campus Center Ballroom, where students can showcase their poetry and creative writing

BHM Sip & Paint: Rhythm and Blues on Feb. 17 at 5:00 p.m. in the Campus Center Ballroom— an evening of painting, music and creativity inspired by the sounds of rhythm and blues.

Late Night With Divine Nine on Feb. 22 at 6:00 p.m. in the Campus Center Ballroom, where students can enjoy an evening of entertainment and cultural expression, organized by the Divine Nine Greek organizations.

BHM: Family Reunion on Feb. 27 at 4:00 p.m. in the Campus Center back gym, bringing together students, and staff for a fun-filled celebration of Black history and community.

For more details on these events and to stay updated on all Black History Month activities at UWG, be sure to follow the UWG Campus Life Instagram page @uwg.campuslife.

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Photo: Cindy Martinez, The West Georgian

UWG Volunteer Ambassadors Encourage Student Involvement with “Step Into Service” Event

Arrianah Jones
Contributing Writer

University of West Georgia’s Volunteer Ambassadors hosted a “Step Into Service” event on Jan. 30, 2024. Students gathered in the Campus Center Ballroom for snacks, crafts and an informational session on how to become a servant leader. Attendees gained access to ambassador applications, exclusive mentorship and the opportunity to serve and inspire.

“Being a volunteer ambassador means giving back to the community and creating opportunities for others to do the same,” said volunteer and UWG senior Shaleem Mason. “It’s all about service.”

Through university partnerships, Volunteer Ambassadors host monthly events, extending their resources, time and support to the Carrollton, Newnan and Metro Atlanta communities. They focus on educational support, home maintenance and campus engagement, aiming to make a meaningful impact.

Through a program called Hands on Atlanta, ambassadors visit schools in the Metro Atlanta area and provide academic assistance in subjects like math, reading, phonics and more. They offer the tutoring and encouragement needed to help students improve their education.

Similarly, ambassadors work at the



Photo: Arrianah Jones,
The West Georgian

Early Learning Center on Campus fostering literacy development.

“When they enter the programs, we assist them with whatever they have trouble with,” said Mason.

In partnership with the organization, River Life, ambassadors assist families unable to maintain household responsibilities due to physical ailments or other challenges. They take on tasks like raking leaves, trimming hedges—general yard maintenance. Their goal is to improve the quality of life for those who don’t have the means to do it themselves.

Likewise, the BIG Event encourages

students to come together and make an impact—both off, and on campus.

“The more people we have, the bigger impact we can make,” said Mason.

Every spring semester, ambassadors introduce a variety of volunteer opportunities for the students of UWG, encouraging them to get involved. The event highlights different service opportunities, provides applications and motivates new volunteers to participate.

“It’s an event where students can really get their hands dirty and get out there and into the community,” said Mason.

Students are also rewarded for their commitment: receiving volunteer hours for attending. “When students come and volunteer with us, they get volunteer hours for that event,” said Mason.

In addition to their contribution towards change, students learn skills like teamwork, communication, patience and adaptability. They also have networking opportunities with the chance to grow personally and professionally through hands-on experiences.

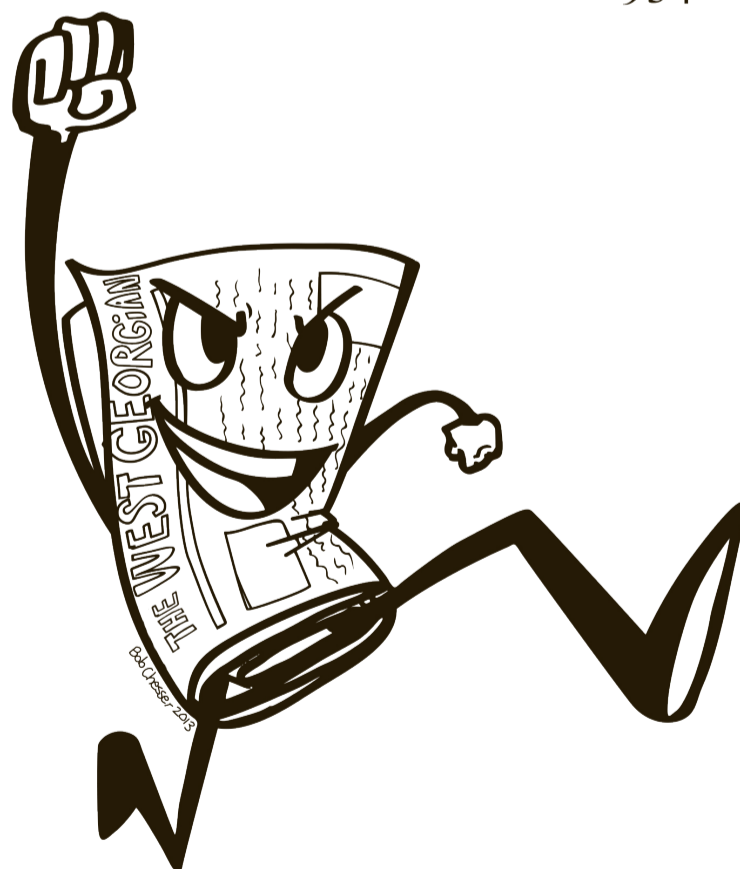
UWG’s Volunteer Ambassadors are dedicated to creating lasting change in their communities.

By providing opportunities and taking part in a variety of projects, volunteers benefit both themselves and others. These experiences build skills and connections that will have a lasting effect on everybody involved.

“People are going to remember you by what you show them,” said Mason. “Make sure it’s always positive.”

For more information about UWG’s volunteer programs, visit its website.

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Companion is the Perfect Valentine's Slasher

Abbie Klein
News Editor

Valentine's Day is the perfect excuse for dinner and a movie with your partner, friends or just for yourself. If you're someone like me and have trouble deciding what to see, Companion will have you on the edge of your seat while laughing out loud at the same time.

Companion released on Jan. 31 and follows the story of Josh, played by Jack Quaid, and his girlfriend Iris, played by Sophie Thatcher. Iris is what is referred to as a Companion Robot, a highly advanced artificial intelligence robot designed to be completely devoted to Josh. However, things start to get out of hand when Josh messes with Iris' code and turns her into a violent killer that will stop at nothing to protect herself and her lover. The film holds themes of love, devotion, greed, misogyny, self identity and of course brings up the scary and incredibly relevant question of the powers and dangers of AI. Due to its complex and diverse plot it's a movie that anyone can get something out of.

While categorized as a Sci-Fi Thriller, Companion is much more of a horror comedy filled with gore and shocking plot twists, but also laugh out loud moments. Thatcher and Quaid did a fantastic job keeping this balance



Photo courtesy of IMDB

and brought their own individual strengths to their performances. Thatcher is no stranger to dark and twisted stories, with her roles like Natalie in Showtime's Yellowjackets and Sister Barnes in Heretic. Through her role of Iris you can really tell this is where her strengths as an actress lie.

The same could be said for Quaid, who is no stranger to dark humor, which we see in his role of Hughie in Prime Video's The Boys. Quaid's familiarity with uncomfortable humor and his ability to turn shocking gore into laughter makes him a fantastic antagonist in Companion.

The rest of the cast did wonderful jobs in their supporting roles but the thing that really put Quaid and Thatcher above the rest was their ability to create complex characters. Both actors were playing characters that went much deeper than surface level. While Josh appeared to be a loving boyfriend in the start, there was a much more sinister and selfish side to him that came to light as the movie went on. Thatcher did a great job on playing the tricky role of a robot who doesn't know they're a robot. She appeared life-like and raised no questions about her true origins except for a few very subtle choices in dialogue and mannerisms.

Overall, Companion was an interesting movie that was full of jaw dropping twists and kills that made me grimace. The horrifying story was juxtaposed by its light coloring and gorgeous scenery that didn't make it seem like I was watching a disturbing slasher at all. I found myself rooting for one character and then hating them the next all to feel sympathy for them in the end. If you want a movie that will continuously shock you and leave you wanting more, Companion is the perfect choice.

Amy Schumer's New Netflix Movie Sparks Meaningful Conversation

Breanna Tillie
Editor-In-Chief

Movies often provide a sort of escapism through thrilling amusement, action and entertainment. The temporary disconnect from reality through cinema can be a satisfying retreat. However, it is also worth noticing the way that many films seek to not just pull viewers away from their reality, but to offer a commentary on it. Films that open up the floor for discussion about culture, popular philosophies and societal issues are intriguing. When a film is able to do this as a romantic comedy rather than a heavy drama, the movie is not just intriguing, it is worthy of a standing ovation. Amy Schumer's newest romcom, Kinda Pregnant, released through Netflix on Feb. 5, does just this.

Although this movie progressed into being a phenomenal work, it began on a bit of an awkward note. The movie follows a common romcom movie opening theme where the protagonist, Lainy, is expecting her boyfriend to propose to her. When he does not do this, there are several cringe-worthy and cheesy scenes

depicting Lainy's spiral into lunacy after having her heart broken. Though these scenes are obviously present for comedic effect, it plays on the poor and overused portrayal of a man having the power to break a woman so badly that she loses her mind. Thankfully, the movie improves drastically after this.

Lainy's best friend then announces that she's pregnant. This brings up surprising feelings of envy within Lainy as she believes that her clock is ticking and she should already be at that stage in life where she is married and having a baby as well. This does a brilliant job of introducing and displaying a common sentiment about women in their thirties and forties. Lainy has a respectable career as a schoolteacher. For a man, having a respected career is often more than enough to grant him acceptance in society. For a woman however, that may be perceived as not being enough. If a woman is not fulfilling those roles of wife and mother, both requiring male participation, she may feel inadequate.

Interestingly, although the film does display a handful of rude remarks from others, nobody puts Lainy down more for where she is in life than she does herself. She first does this by buying a false baby bump. When she puts the bump on, she receives a congratulatory applause from strangers passing by, and she relishes in the attention and the way she is praised by society because they believe she's carrying a child. The adoration motivates her to continue wearing the false bump. This brings up another critical cultural point for discussion. Why does a woman's ability or willingness to carry a child make her worthy of celebration? Is a woman's worth not much more than this?

Lainy eventually befriends a woman who really is pregnant, and this woman finds strength in confiding in Lainy about the struggles of pregnancy and motherhood that she feels like she's not allowed to discuss. It is commendable that the movie included this, as it raises another question of why women are expected to

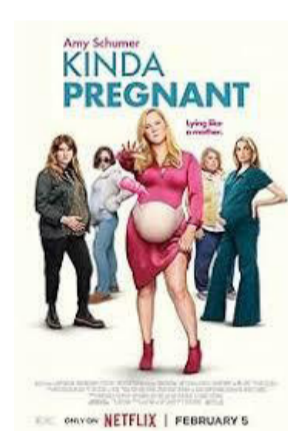


Photo courtesy of Netflix enjoy every aspect of being a mom and are shamed for ever complaining.

The movie displays scenes where Lainy is vulnerable about not having family and how the baby gave her that sense of family, even though the baby never existed. When her best friend got pregnant, Lainy was worried she would lose the closest thing she ever had to family. By pretending to be pregnant, she coped with the fear by pretending she was starting a family of her own. It is brilliant that the movie displays how bad decisions are often made out of fear and insecurity rather than malice or stupidity. This is an empowering film about self-worth and how the most important relationships we have are with ourselves.