



## UWG PR Students Score a Georgia Power Tour at Atlanta Corporate Office

Cindy Martinez  
Feature Editor

On April 15, Public Relations and Communications students from the University of West Georgia took a field trip to Atlanta for an exclusive behind-the-scenes experience at Georgia Power’s corporate headquarters. The visit, led by UWG alum and Georgia Power’s Director of Communications, Jacob Hawkins, offered students a look into how strategic communications operate within one of the state’s largest and most regulated industries.

This field trip followed Georgia Power’s \$25,000 donation to UWG’s student-run PR firm, bluestone, a partnership that underscores the company’s ongoing investment in the future of communications. The donation, presented earlier in the semester by Hawkins and his team on behalf of Georgia Power, laid the groundwork for a hands-on learning opportunity that blended academics with real-world practice.

Students were welcomed by members of Georgia Power’s communications department, including Lionel Hernandez and Andy Huff, the company’s Director of Executive Communication and Visual Storytelling. Huff shared his unconventional career path, which began with a passion for journalism, detoured into nonprofit work and ultimately led to corporate storytelling.

“You don’t have to gain every skill in school or on the job, you can gain just as much by volunteering,” Huff told the group, reflecting on how his college volunteer work for Relay for Life led to a career-shaping opportunity at the American Cancer Society.

His story served as both inspiration

and advice for students preparing to step into the professional world.

The visit provided a firsthand look at how Georgia Power’s communications team supports both internal and external messaging across the state. From simplifying the complexities of power generation and grid management to supporting real-life crisis communication, the team demonstrated how storytelling drives understanding and trust across diverse audiences.

Huff, who manages communication strategy for CEO Kim Greene, explained how his team uses a structured approach to map out the CEO’s engagement across six core stakeholder groups.

“There’s a real strategy behind where she shows up, how often, and what she says,” Huff explained. “It’s not just about showing up, it’s about being intentional.”

Throughout the day, students saw firsthand how public relations plays a critical role in crisis communications within a regulated industry by building public trust and connecting employees to mission-driven work. Whether through engaging town halls, strategic stakeholder messaging or simply translating complex data into easy to read language, Georgia Power’s communication professionals made one thing clear: effective storytelling is essential to powering a modern utility.

For the UWG students in the room, it was more than a tour. It was a glimpse into what’s possible when curiosity, strategy and purpose come together in one of Georgia’s most impactful industries.

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Photo: Cindy Martinez, *The West Georgian*



Logan Bradd  
*Contributing Writer*

Much of the time, drag queens took turns distracting the audience with comedy during the breaks between acts, usually after their own performances. Whether it be interacting with and pointing out a particular audience member, making jokes about how far out in the middle of nowhere compared to Atlanta UWG is, or wondering about where the best place to party in Carrollton might



be, the performers never failed to entertain.

And while there is definitely a sexual nature to drag shows, the human connection is also very important to a successful performance. "It's a way to get people outside of their everyday stress," says Antionette. "And it's a way to connect with people and bring a little happiness to the world."

Arrianah Jones  
*Contributing Writer*

A large, colorful mural depicting a forest scene with various animals (deer, rabbit, bear, birds) and a central tree. The mural is part of a play area with interactive elements like a small screen showing a video and a large, stylized tree trunk.

"These opportunities are so special," said Lamfers. "I feel very lucky to be a part of them."



UWG Hosts Rapha Clinic Annual 5K Fundraiser

Abbie Klein  
News Editor

Rapha Clinic of West Georgia is having their 9th annual 5K event on April 19, organized by UWG’s Emerging Healthcare Leaders. The 5k is a fundraiser event for the clinic and will begin at 10 a.m. at the Greenbelt Hobbs Farm. Registration opens 30 minutes before the 5k and requires a \$25 registration fee, or \$20 for participants who register early. All proceeds go to support the clinic.

Rapha Clinic is a faith-based non-profit clinic offering low-cost health and dental care to uninsured adults who are at or below the federal poverty level. The clinic hosts multiple fundraiser events a year to raise awareness and bring in funding to help continue their work.

“The funds we [generate] go to general operations,” said Developmental Director, Patrick Calvillo. “We’re a nonprofit health and dental clinic, so anytime that we do fundraisers it kind of just goes to general operations. Just kind of keeping the place going and programming.”

So far, Rapha has raised over \$250 from the 5k with a general goal of \$3000.

“We usually raise a few thousand and it’s always nice to get a little bit extra,” said Cavillo. “I think the main goal is just to have more exposure

and more participants in the 5K.

While the 5k registration fee is a donation, anyone can donate at any time as much or as little as they would like. There is no requirement for donations or involvement.

“If they just want to donate, they can always just donate,” said Cavillo. “There is a QR code on our website... so they can always just donate on our website and don’t necessarily have to participate in the 5K.”

People who are interested in the 5K but hesitant about running the full distance can still participate in Rapha’s fundraiser. Instead of being a competitive race, it’s an opportunity for the community to participate in a healthy event that goes toward a good cause. There is no pressure to perform in any specific way, just come as you are.

It is a run-and-walk 5K so you don’t necessarily have to run,” said Calvillo. “I think that was one of the main things a lot of people were like ‘Well I don’t really want to do a 5k’ and it’s like ‘Oh well you can walk it.’”

Rapha Clinic has several opportunities for the community to show support year round including volunteer options and other events. Just recently, Rapha hosted their 5th annual Fore Your Health Golf



**Photo courtesy of UWG**  
Tournament on April 4, raising just over \$6000. More information on upcoming fundraising events, like self-defense classes and music festivals are posted on [www.raphaclinic.org](http://www.raphaclinic.org).

“Our next big fundraiser is The Sound of Medicine which will be on University of West Georgia’s campus in September or October,” said Calvillo. “That’s open to students as well and it’s a music fundraiser. A bunch of bands play, and we have food and a silent auction, so that’s a lot of fun and it’s targeted for anybody and everybody.”

UWG Theatre Breathes New Life into a Beloved Classic

Breanna Tillie  
Editor-In-Chief

Watching a production come to life on stage is an experience deeply appreciated by individuals who hold a passionate respect for art, storytelling and performance. The University of West Georgia’s Theatre Department plans to both entertain and inspire the community with its production of *The Sound of Music* on April 24-26 at 7:30 p.m. and April 26-27 at 2:00 p.m.

*The Sound of Music* is a musical following a woman named Maria who becomes a governess for seven children and their widowed father, Captain Von Trapp. She slowly but surely gains the love and trust of the children, but matters become complicated as Maria and Captain Von Trapp begin to develop feelings for one another.

“The music is actually what brings the family together,” said Austin Sharpe, an actor in *The Sound of Music*. “Maria, in order to get the kids to trust her, starts teaching them all these songs. You find out through the older kids that the captain also used to love singing. However, whenever his wife died, he pretty much banned singing and music altogether. But as he starts to open his heart up and become more vulnerable, you can hear him singing more and more and building that connection with his children.

Sharpe is honored to contribute to the telling of this story with his role as Butler Franz in the production. Butler Franz is portrayed as loyal to the captain in the beginning of the show, but it is soon revealed that he has an alliance to the Nazi party, which creates a tension in the household.

“It’s definitely a different role for me, I can’t say I’ve played anything quite like it. But it’s interesting because throughout theatre classes we’re told you cannot judge your character,” said Sharpe. “Instead you have to find the reasonings of ‘why.’ So I’m sitting



there thinking ‘What happened in his childhood?’ or ‘What was he promised that made him want to join this side and essentially do these awful, terrible things?’ It’s been a bit of a challenge to say the least but I get to interact with all of the children a bunch.”

Sharpe says having children in the production has been enjoyable for all of the cast and crew.

“Having been in *Cinderella* as well, where we also worked with children in the community, they are just the sometimes funniest, cutest, sweetest things,” said Sharpe. “Other times, they’re hyper and full of energy and we need to calm them down a bit. But I think by partnering with the children in the community, it really just brings together that sense of family.

The children in the production also bring nostalgia and remembrance of doing theatre at a younger age, which has served as a humbling and heart-warming reminder

“I started doing theatre in second grade,” said Sharpe. “Seeing them experience all of these things for the first time kind of brings back that sense of wonder and joy that sometimes you don’t even realize that you’ve lost.

**Photo courtesy of Austin Sharpe**  
In addition to the main cast and crew of *The Sound of Music*, Sharpe also seeks to recognize the hard work of the understudies in the production as well.

“It’s hard being an understudy because you don’t always get all of the credit that the main cast gets,” said Sharpe. “You’re there as kind of a shoe-in, but you still have to learn everything. So having them just be there and supporting and always having such a positive attitude really helps all of us.

Sharpe states the UWG theatre program as a whole has helped nurture his talent and passion in meaningful ways, and *The Sound of Music* is just one example of that

“I love being on the stage and performing and bringing these characters to life,” said Sharpe. “There’s so much that goes into theatre to create a beautiful performance. There’s a lot of research, a lot of context, a lot of experimenting and play. It’s building a show. It’s that sense of community and family you create with those around you. You have to be able to build those connections with people. It’s a little scary sometimes, but I know that if I’m doing what I love, it can’t go wrong.”