



**READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY CELEBRATED IN PICKENS COUNTY** – The University of Alabama Center for Economic Development and the Pickens County Extension Office teamed up to help our local schools celebrate the National Education’s Association’s 2017 Read Across America Day. Dr. Seuss books and reading toolkits were placed in the county’s elementary school libraries. Each year, National Read Across America Day is celebrated on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Left to right are Andrea Mims, Reform Elementary School Librarian, Patti Presley-Fuller with the Pickens County Extension Office, and Debra Wiggins, Career Tech Counselor.



## Washington receives more academic honors

Henry L. Washington, Jr. was named to the Dean’s List at Duke University for the Fall 2016 semester. This student was among 2,151 students who achieved that honor (1,307 with dean’s list and 844 with distinction). To make the Arts & Sciences Dean’s List, students must rank in the top third of their college; for Dean’s List with distinction, the top tenth of their college. Henry will graduate in May with double majors in English and African & African American Studies, and a minor in Political Science. He is a Mellon Mays undergraduate research fellow and is in the process of writing a thesis on black masculinity in literature and culture. After graduation, he will begin working on a PhD in English, focusing on African American Literature and Cultural Studies. In addition, Henry was nominated and selected as the undergraduate student to become a member of the Samuel DuBois Cook Society. The awards dinner was held at Washington Duke Inn on Feb. 21. The Samuel DuBois Cook Society was founded in 1997 to honor the first African American faculty member hired and tenured at Duke University, and to recognize his contributions as a member of the Duke University Board of Trustees. Henry is a graduate of the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. He is the son of Henry Washington, Sr. and Minnie Washington of Aliceville.

# Cooking healthier a goal of UA partnership student



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®  
PICKENS COUNTY PARTNERSHIP  
*A Health Care Teaching County*

Courtney Rentas, a Fellow with the University of Alabama-Pickens County Partnership, is teaching a nutritional cooking class to freshmen at Aliceville High School this semester.

Rentas graduated from The University of Alabama in May of 2016 with a BS in Biology and a BA in Psychology, and she will begin medical school in the fall.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 17 percent of high school students in Alabama are obese compared with 14 percent nationally. Rentas hopes that teaching high school students basic nutrition and elementary cooking skills will lower the rate of obesity in Pickens County in the future.

“The long-term goal of this project is to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Pickens County by lowering the prevalence of obesity and associated chronic diseases; but, the short term goal is to establish a foundation of knowledge for these kids regarding healthy eating,” Rentas said.

At Aliceville High School, Rentas teaches nutrition education classes biweekly. In the weeks between nutrition edu-

cation, the students are in the kitchen cooking healthy meals related to what they have learned about in class.

“The first lecture was spent discussing obesity and how sugar is related to the sky-high rates of obesity we’re seeing in Alabama and throughout the rest of the country. So, the next week in the kitchen, we made pancakes, minus the butter and syrup. Students had strawberry and blueberry fruit compote instead, and they loved it,” Rentas said.

Students are provided with recipe cards to take home after each lesson, in the hope that they will bring their newfound knowledge and skills home with them and encourage healthier eating amongst their families. Rentas teaches the students how to prepare food that is affordable and readily available, to make the course relevant to all of the students.

“I could teach the students how to make quinoa or salmon, but I would be cheating them. Those foods are not readily available in Pickens County, and they are certainly not affordable on a weekly basis; I am not trying to reinvent the wheel, either, so I teach them how to make healthier versions of food they

already eat, like pancakes. Next week they requested sausage biscuits, so I am working on making sausage biscuits that are a little bit healthier,” said Rentas.

Courtney Rentas also teaches biweekly courses at the Career Center in Carrollton and with the 4H after-school program in Gordo.

“Teaching is one of my truest passions and something I hope to do throughout my future career as a physician. Kids have a contagious energy that I cannot get enough of, and I love nothing more than watching students have their ‘aha’ moments when everything that I am telling them finally clicks. I am overjoyed by this opportunity to teach on a topic that is so fundamental to health, despite the fact that it is so often overlooked,” Rentas said.

Courtney’s program aligns with the mission of the UA-Pickens County Partnership, which is to provide sustainable health programs. Health is such a big topic right now, and is it is very important that everyone is aware of all the health care resources that are available.

**In order to make sure our residents in Pickens County are up to speed,**

**Pickens County Medical Center is bringing back their health fair. This time around they will be partnering with the UA-Pickens County Partnership.**

**The health fair will take place at the PCMC HealthPlex in Carrollton on April 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be FREE health screenings, giveaways, food, and so much more.**

**SAVE THE DATE; this is going to be such a great event for our community.**



COURTNEY RENTAS

## MEETING

(Continued from Page 1.)

uneven places which he felt might lead to cut tires. He said he had nearly 15 calls about the rough shape of the road and one caller said his tire had been cut. Kennedy added they hoped to remedy the situation soon. Curiously, earlier in the meeting when Kennedy made a motion to put this item up for discussion under new business, it did not receive a second.

- heard a report from EMA Director Ken Gibson that the county is still in the 90-day environmental study for the storm shelter being sought for the Poplar Springs area. He said he hoped to hear in March if this hurdle had been cleared.

- also asked Gibson how the emergency alert for wireless phones has worked during bad weather situations. He said the last alert sent out

to about 5,000 phones had a 61 percent rating.

- awarded the bid for in-place asphalt on Tabernacle Road to ST Bunn for \$79.92 per ton. Others bidding were Central Asphalt and Mid-south Birmingham.

- approved \$1,715 to Hank’s Auto Glass for replacing glass in four pieces of equipment (including two dump trucks and a motor grader) and one pickup in the Road Department.

- scheduled their six-month materials and supplies bid opening for March 27 at 9 a.m.

- cancelled the bid opening for an HVAC system installation, originally scheduled for March 23, until detailed specs for the juvenile dorms and shop can be determined. Commission Chairman Drew Elmore said the Commission was not against this project but wanted more information in an effort to save the taxpayers some money.

- voted to rebid the sale of miscellaneous scrap materi-

als and equipment at the Zion barn and to set the new bid date for March 9 at 9 a.m. They also voted to rebid the sale of a surplus fuel tank at the Reform barn and set the new bid date also at March 9 at 9 a.m.

- will hold a bid opening for replacing the roof over the Service Center addition for April 6 at 9 a.m.

- heard a report from County Attorney Tim McCool; he had drafted an access agreement for some people interested in cutting some timber near the county landfill. This would grant the interested party permission to cross the landfill property but would hold them responsible for any damage done to the roads in the landfill.

- promoted the 2017 “Don’t Drop It on Alabama” PALS statewide spring cleanup (and its accompanying poster contest), which will be held April 15-27. The Commission noted how successful this campaign has become, and how a local child won third place in the state

## PICKENS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION FIRST CLASS PRE-K REGISTRATION

We are currently accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Applications may be filled out online or in person at the Pickens County Early Childhood Learning Center beginning March 1, 2017. Please return all entries need to be entered by April 7, 2017.

Pre-registration Form in=[English/alprek.education/A](http://enrollment.alprek.education/A)

Pre-registration Form in=[Spanish/prek.education/B](http://spanishprek.education/B)

### PICKENS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SITE CODE

Pickens	Carrollton Pickens County	384018
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We must have a copy of the following documents with your application:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Original Immunization Record
- Insurance/Medicaid Information

The random selection drawing for classes will be held on April 13, 2017 at the Learning Center Media Center. If you have any questions concerning Pickens County Education Pre-K registration you may contact the Pickens County Early Childhood Learning Center at 205.367.8152, 205.367.2064 or request an application link via [email williams@pickens.k12.al.us](mailto:williams@pickens.k12.al.us)

Alesia Williams, Program Director  
Allison Wheatley, Lead Teacher  
Le’Desheia Hodges, Auxiliary Teacher  
Lazeth Craig, Lead Teacher  
Cynthia Windham, Auxiliary Teacher



Where children learn, play, and grow!