

# AMERICA READS GAZETTE AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY



## GRADUATING COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT

Interview By Holliane Belford

Our spotlight coordinator is Jordan Mann, a senior Financial Management major from Augusta, Georgia. Jordan is very passionate about America Reads and is always working towards making the program better. She has worked with America Reads since her freshman year. She will be graduating this December and this is currently her second year as a coordinator. She loves to bake to help relieve stress, watch marvel movies and take rides at amusement parks. Get to know more about Jordan through this interview.

*Can you tell us why you decided to come to Clemson University?* My mom lives in Georgia while my dad resides in North Carolina and Clemson ended up being the school that was slab in the middle!

*How long have you been working with America Reads?* Since my freshman year, so Fall 2018!

*Wow! That's amazing.*

*What has been your favorite part of working with America Reads?* Before we were virtual, my students would often use our extended activity to draw pictures for me or write me nice notes!

*What is the biggest piece of advice you could give to someone wanting to become a coordinator for America Reads?* You need to make time by fitting America Reads into your weekly schedule, this will help tremendously. The work isn't hard, it's just a matter of having the time to do it thoroughly.

*How will working with America Reads help you in your future career after graduating?* America Reads has taught me the importance of turning things in on a deadline, how to do conflict resolution, and manage individuals to get a common task done. I think all of these skills will be essential to my success in making my boss's job easier.

*Thank you so much Jordan for being a part of the America Reads Family. We will miss you!*

## Newsletter Highlights

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**Graduating coordinator spotlight**

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**Tips for a better online tutoring experience**

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**Tutor going above and beyond**

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**Reminders**

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**Graduating tutor spotlight**

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**Books that our students are loving!**

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**A message from the Director**

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**Meet the Newsletter Team**

## TIPS FOR A BETTER ONLINE TUTORING EXPERIENCE

By Hannah Swift and Michael Diaz

Tutoring can be more rewarding when you plan ahead and know what questions to ask during read-alouds and writing activities. Writing activities can be tricky on WebEx, however, getting your student to share their ideas and thoughts as you write on a small white board might make this experience more engaging. If your student is having trouble with creative writing, try to do a journal writing activity about their day or something familiar to them. Using a familiar topic may make your student more comfortable with writing.

While tutoring online, you may experience technical problems. For example, sometimes, you might find it hard to hear a student or may get kicked off the WebEx meeting due to a poor connection. Other times, you may not be able to share your screen. We know that this can be frustrating or overwhelming for you. To have a better online tutoring experience, try out these tips.

1. **Have the WebEx application downloaded on your phone.** In case you have issues with logging on with your PC, you can try using your phone.
2. **Remain calm and be patient.** Sometimes these issues may not be resolved during your tutoring session, but it is important to have a good attitude and do your best to communicate with your student through the technical issues so that they still have a positive tutoring experience that day!
3. **Communicate as best as you can.** Sometimes it can be upsetting or frustrating for the student when there are issues during the session, so make sure you are explaining to the student what is happening and just be as flexible as possible with them. Ask them what they are experiencing from their end. It is okay to change the plan if needed.
4. **Call in the host or coordinator to your breakout room.** They might be able to help answer some questions you may have about how to handle a specific technical issue, or might be able to help cover for your student while you try to log back in to the session.
5. **If the technical problem is on the student's end, have them call over an adult in the room to help the student try to figure it out.**
6. **Always have a backup plan!** If for some reason you are not able to share your screen on any of your tutoring days, make sure you have a backup plan! For instance, you can have a paper book in the room with you or a small whiteboard to be able to draw or write out certain activities to show your student.



### TUTOR GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND!

This month we are recognizing Michael Diaz for going above and beyond in tutoring!

Michael Diaz is a sophomore at Clemson University. His major is in Management, and this is his first year working with America Reads. Michael says he is “passionate about educating kids on how to read and write better, but more than that, I desire to teach children skills that they will need to live a successful life.” When asked what his favorite part of working with America Reads is, Diaz says it is the opportunity “to help students accomplish their study goals in an entertaining and engaging way.”

He further said that he loves “to see children work hard to get better at necessary life skills even when it is hard. The look on their faces is priceless when they realize they are growing in wisdom and knowledge.”

I know that these kids are going to change the world.” Michael Diaz believes that when tutoring is done properly, this inspires “students to get better at subjects that may, in fact be difficult. I believe that it shows them that anything is possible if they are willing to work hard, keep determination and never give up.” We are glad that Michael is part of the America Reads team.

We look forward to all the amazing things this experience will offer you.

### REMINDERS!

Important days to keep in mind:

- November 18 - Last day of tutoring
- November 19 - Last Bi-weekly Meeting. Monthly Reflections are also due.
- Contact Oluwaseun Oti-Aina at [oaina@g.clemson.edu](mailto:oaina@g.clemson.edu) if you would like to fulfill some more hours over Christmas break
- January 18 - Tutoring for the Spring begins.

### *Would you like to join the America Reads Team?*

Send the Director an email at [oaina@g.clemson.edu](mailto:oaina@g.clemson.edu) to indicate your interest. We would love to have you as part of our team in the Spring.

## GRADUATING TUTOR SPOTLIGHT

By Faith Fulmer

It is a bitter-sweet experience to see our tutors graduate because they are an integral part of America Reads. This year, the spotlight is on Mckenzie Howard because she always brings her best to the program.

Get to know more about Mckenzie in this segment.

### *What are you majoring in?*

My major is Political Science, and my minor is Philosophy.

### *When did you join America Reads?*

I joined America Reads in the fall of 2020.

### *Why did you choose America Reads over the other Work-Studies?*

I adore books, and they are a big part of my life. So, getting to work with students and showing them that books are more than just words on a page seemed really fun. I also have a nine-year-old little brother, so I have a lot of experience working with elementary aged students.

### *Do you have any advice for our younger tutors going forth through college and being a tutor?*

My advice for going forth through college is to get involved, as having those experiences is really rewarding. My advice for tutors is to focus on creating good bonds with your students. In general, this helps your students become more comfortable with both you and the America Reads program, which can cause them to be much more engaged in the sessions. More specifically, your students look up to you. Forming good bonds with your students and connecting with them is really important. Creating these bonds doesn't have to be anything big or time consuming either, ask them about their day and encourage them frequently. It makes more of a difference than you realize.

### **Fun facts about Mckenzie**

Her favorite ice cream flavor is strawberry. If Mckenzie had to choose between hot coffee and hot chocolate, she will choose hot chocolate and her career aspiration is to be a college professor or work as an editor at a publishing company.

We wish you all the best!



## BOOKS THAT OUR STUDENTS ARE LOVING!

Collated by Katherine Anderson

### Kindergarten

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss - Gracyn Duncan

### 1st Grade

Pete the Cat by James Dean - Katherine Anderson

Biscuit Books - Maria Collins

Grumpy Monkey Books - Nicole Shertzer

David Goes to School - Rund Abdelnabi

### 2nd and 3rd Grade

Mythical Creatures: Unicorns by Lisa Owings - Anesia Sims

Sea Dog by Dayle Campbell Gaetz and Charlie Brown. - Michael Diaz

Lorenzo the Pizza Loving Lobster by Claire Lordon- Holliane Belford

*Thank you tutors for sharing some of the books your students love.*

## MEET THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

*Oluwaseun Oti-Aina - Director and Newsletter Editor*

*Corban Williams - Head Coordinator*

*Hannah Swift - Task Supervisor*

*Cassandra Fox - Tutor*

*Faith Fulmer - Tutor*

*Holliane Belford - Tutor*

*Katherine Anderson - Tutor*

*Michael Diaz - Tutor*

## A Message from the Director

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first issue of the America Reads at Clemson University Newsletter. At America Reads, we support young children's reading and writing development through tutoring and other innovative programs. It is a delight to see children who participate in this program become more confident, and grow in their love for reading and writing. Although COVID-19 has briefly made the tutoring experience an online one, we are so glad to be

able to work with children via the online platform. I am so proud of our tutors and coordinators who have risen to the challenge. You all are doing great!

This year, we worked with 3 schools - Clemson Elementary, West End Elementary, and Six Mile Elementary. We also had many new tutors come on board too.

We look forward to continuing tutoring with these schools and hope that more Undergraduates will join the America Reads Family. Happy Holidays! - Oluwaseun Oti-Aina