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Georgia State President Wins Contest Raising Money for Childhood Literacy

Georgia State University President Mark P. Becker won the Ferst Foundation for Childhood Literacy's "The Battle of the CEOs," a friendly competition among Georgia leaders to raise money for childhood literacy.

Together, they raised nearly \$7,000 that will provide quality, age-appropriate books each month to almost 200 pre-school children.

Having received the most votes for his reading video, Becker was declared the "Favorite Reader" by the Ferst Foundation. He was awarded the foundation's inaugural "For the Love of Reading Award" at the Downtown Rotary Club of Atlanta meeting on March 1.

Becker said he was honored by the award, but stressed the emphasis on reading to children must continue.

"Childhood literacy is important in the creation of language skills, concepts and good habits," Becker said. "Start early and do it often."

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GPC Program to Train Project-Management Professionals

Georgia Perimeter College's Center for Organizational Development has developed a program to help unemployed workers to train for careers in project management. Georgia Perimeter College is collaborating with TenStep, Inc., to conduct the classes.

"This program was developed after extensive research into the future needs of businesses and government agencies that are seeking professionals who can successfully manage large, complex projects in a cost-effective manner," said Wally Weihe, director for the Center for Organizational Development. "The value of this program has been recognized by the various Workforce Development Departments in metro Atlanta and has been approved for funding."

The program provides candidates with training in project-management fundamentals and prepares them to take the Project Management Professional (PMP) certification exam administered by the Project Management Institute (PMI). Effective resume writing, interviewing and job search networking are also covered to prepare the candidate to enter the job market.

"The demand for project-management professionals remains high even in the current, extremely competitive job market," said Tim Peek, Director at TenStep, Inc. "The Project Management Employment program provides

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Center for Organizational Development

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each participant with the education and training needed for that extra edge over other job candidates.”

The cost of the program is \$5,000, provided by funding from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) through the Georgia Department of Labor. Candidates must visit their local career resource center and meet with a career adviser, who will assist them in the qualification process and will determine if the applicant is eligible for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding. Then, potential candidates are required to complete a qualification form from GPC to determine their work history and if they qualify to enroll in the program.

Student **John Kantor** had 15 years experience in Supply Chain Consulting before being laid off. He chose the GPC program over other classes being offered because of the length of the program.

“I liked the fact that it was a two-week program,” Kantor said. “Other programs I looked at only met a couple of days a week and were spread out over a couple of months. I wanted something that was intense and got you through the process fast.”

Kantor says the skills he learned in the class were helpful.

“Even the most sophisticated project managers can learn necessary concepts in order to improve how they perform on the job,” he said. “I would strongly recommend this program to anyone who is interested in the field of Project Management.”

Kantor is currently working as a project manager with The Home Depot and says he has

applied the skills he learned from the program to his new job.

“So far, I have worked on creating measurements to help the Home Depot management staff benchmark their projected costs and verify that they are in line with expectations,” Kantor said.

The program is 120 hours of training and includes a minimum of 40 hours of self-directed study with computer software to help students prepare for the Project Management Professional certification exam. Participants in this program are awarded eight continuing education units (CEU’s) for satisfactory attendance and completion of required coursework.

For more information, visit <http://gpc.edu/orgdev/pmwia.htm>. 

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Becker read the book, “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie,” to preschool children at the Lanette S. Suttles Child Development Center on the GSU Campus. Eight additional executives, including presidents of the *University of Georgia* and the *Georgia Institute of Technology*, were videotaped reading a favorite book to groups of children.

Colleagues, students, alumni, clients, employees and friends were encouraged to vote for their favorite reader on the Ferst Foundation’s web site, www.ferstfoundation.org.

The Ferst Foundation began in 1999 in Morgan County, Ga., through the efforts of Robin Ferst, who modeled her program on the Imagination Library initiative begun by musician and philanthropist Dolly Parton in Tennessee.

“It is important to our educational system and our workforce that we lay the foundation for success in school,” Ferst said. “Nearly 61 percent of families don’t have a single book in their home and we’re trying to change that. These people have helped us illustrate that reading is a critical component in raising the educated workforce that Georgia needs.” 