



Chapel Hill High School star takes on Costa Rica. Page 9A.



Farm's interpretive plan earns award for graduate student. Page 2A



17th 'Taste of Douglasville' is May 15 in downtown Douglasville. Page 1B

# Douglasville police officer lends a hand in homeland

**By Helen McCoy**  
**Staff Writer**

Douglasville Police Officer Ron Philistin spent 30 days in Haiti as an interpreter in the aftermath of the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Philistin, 31, and his wife, Bernadine, are natives of Haiti and first heard about the earthquake when he received a text message from a cousin.

"I asked my wife if she'd heard anything about it, and she said 'no,'" Philistin said. "We turned on CNN and then saw it."

They both started trying to call their parents. That night he finally reached his mother, who gave him several phone numbers of other relatives to try to contact.

See HAITI/5A



Douglasville Police Officer Ron Philistin speaks with a patient while working as an interpreter at a hospital in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti.

# Stimulus money can put jobless back to work

**By Helen McCoy**  
**Staff Writer**

The state needs employees and employers.

When the federal stimulus package was approved last year, money was set aside to help put Georgians back to work.

Now, employers and employees alike can benefit from the Georgia Department of Human Services' (DHS) subsidized employment program, which has a goal of putting 5,000 Georgians back to work and boosting the economy.

The concept is simple: The state is looking for 5,000 employers to hire a worker using funds from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

What's in it for the employers? They will receive an 80 percent wage subsidy from the state for hiring workers under the program.

See WORK/3A

# Group seeks homes for retired racing greyhounds

**By Winston Jones**  
**Staff Writer**

What happens to racing greyhound dogs after they get too old to run?

Patti Peterson, who lives with her four adopted greyhounds off Ridge Road in Paulding County, used to not know the answer to that question.

Peterson is now chair of Second Chance Greyhounds, an organization she founded to find adopted homes for retired racing greyhounds.

"I started out to find a dog who could live with my cats," she said. "My neighbor had a bichon frise and a greyhound

and brought them over. The bichon got very agitated but the greyhound fit right in."

Peterson soon adopted her own greyhound and became hooked by the gentleness of the breed and the culture of greyhound adoption.

"I started doing volunteer work with an Atlanta greyhound group," she said. "A friend, Heather Coulombe, who also worked with the Atlanta group, and I started laying groundwork in January 2009 for our own group."

However, Peterson had a unique idea for her group. Second

See HOUNDS/3A



Winston Jones/Sentinel

Ruth Callison, left, a resident at Douglasville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, offers a treat to 'Remi,' a 9-year-old retired racing greyhound. Patti Peterson, right, chairperson of Second Chance Greyhounds, often takes her adopted greyhounds to visit the center.

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# This year marks 40th anniversary of Earth Day

**Special to the Sentinel**

While tens of millions of people from Poughkeepsie, N.Y., to Papua New Guinea will take part in events to mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day this April 22, the story behind the first Earth Day begins with a single individual. In the early 1960s, when Earth Day founder Gaylord Nelson, a Senator from Wisconsin, first hatched the idea that began the modern environmental movement, there was little public awareness of the fragile state of the planet. The

nation's roads were filled with cars sporting massive, leaded-gas-guzzling V8 engines and its factories were spewing smoke and sludge into the air with little regard for environmental consequences.

Nelson had been working to bring national attention to a wide range of environmental issues for several years before launching the first-ever Earth Day in 1970. His early efforts included persuading President John F. Kennedy to

See EARTH/8A



Contributed photo

While tens of millions of people from Poughkeepsie, N.Y., to Papua New Guinea will take part in events to mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day this April 22, the story behind the first Earth Day begins with a single individual.



# Local teacher is 'Special Education Teacher of the Year'

**Special to the Sentinel**  
Cyndi M. Chappel, Learning and Early Assessment for Preschoolers with Special Needs (LEAP) program teacher, will receive the 2010 Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) April 21 at its 2010 Convention and Expo in Nashville.

The Clarissa Hug Teacher of the Year Award recognizes an outstanding teacher of children with disabilities or gifts and talents. The award honors a CEC member whose work reflects significant educational success for students, continued professional development, and the highest standards of educational quality.

Chappel, who teaches at Mason Creek Elementary School in Winston, Ga., is known as a teacher who strives to provide a positive learning environment for children with significant developmental disabilities, including autism.

She accomplishes this through parental input, staff collaboration, and evidence-based, differentiated instruction. Students thrive as a result, improving their behavior, attention spans, adherence to the school-day schedule, and other skills.

"There is a light that shines



**Cyndi M. Chappel**

in Mrs. Chappel that is undeniable," one parent said in support of her nomination. "She believes in children and knows what they are capable of. We will be forever grateful that she came into our son's life."

Chappel is known as a collaborator, working closely with her classroom's paraprofessional and speech therapist daily to assess student progress and determine ways to improve class structure.

To engage parents, Chappel illustrates student progress

through photos and video clips. She even develops PowerPoint presentations for each child who graduates from her classroom, documenting strengths, weaknesses, motivating activities, and medical information for parents and incoming teachers. And she has been known to purchase clothes, food, and other supplies for students in need.

Chappel has been an educator for 20 years and has taught in Douglas County since 2002. She is a member of CEC's Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and was Georgia CEC's 2009 Teacher of the Year.

Chappel will be recognized during the CEC 2010 Convention & Expo's Opening General Session on April 21 and at a special brunch in her honor on April 24 at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center in Nashville. For more information, visit [www.cec.sped.org/convention](http://www.cec.sped.org/convention).

CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC's mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy.

For more information about CEC, visit [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

## Work

**Continued from 1A**

In other words, if a business hires a worker at \$10 an hour, the state will pay \$8 of it, and the company just \$2.

DHS put out bids for providers across the state to run the program in specific areas.

Ringer Employment Solutions won the bid to administer the program in Douglas, Clayton, Henry, Fayette and DeKalb counties.

The word has been slow in getting out, according to Samantha Barnum, an office manager with Ringer. They have had only two referrals so far, and the deadline to take advantage of the program is Sept. 30.

People looking for a job must be U.S. citizens or legal immigrants allowed to work in the U.S., be a Georgia resident, have a minor child in the home (under the age of 18) or be the parent of a minor child who lives with their other parent or a relative, and have a gross monthly household income at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level.

Barnum said that equates to a family of four not making more than \$60,000 a year.

Job seekers must sign up with an ARRA representative, who will determine their eligibility. The specialist then refers the prospective employee to Ringer, who will contact the applicant between 24 and 48 hours to schedule an orientation.

During the two- to three-day orientation, the employment company will assess the

applicant's job readiness in terms of skills, resume, dress, interviewing skills and other criteria.

Job coaching is also available to those who need it.

In addition to job coaching, DHS will also pre-screen employees and conduct background checks, if required.

"After that, we start looking for a job for you," said Barnum. "During orientation, we see what job the person is best suited for and the company, and we set up an interview."

Employers must also apply, get screened and approved.

If selected, the employer must provide at least 30 hours of employment per week, and positions must pay minimum wage or above.

Wages must be comparable to wages paid to current employees performing similar tasks, according to the DHS Web site.

Employers cannot replace existing employees to take advantage of the subsidy.

The maximum subsidy for a six-month period per employee is \$26,000.

The ultimate goal is to find companies that can benefit from the program but can also find a way to keep the employee on after Oct. 1, when the stimulus dollars run out, Barnum said.

"We are trying to stimulate business as well as put people to work," she said.

Anyone who would like additional information or to sign up may contact Barnum at 770-947-1003 or visit the DHS Web site: [www.jobsforgeorgia.org](http://www.jobsforgeorgia.org).

## Hounds

**Continued from 1A**

Chance Greyhounds would link up with prison programs that use inmates to train dogs. These trained dogs would then be adopted to their "forever homes."

The group reached an agreement with Gadsden Correctional Facility in Quincy, Fla.

"The prison was ideal because they already had a program with inmates training bomb sniffing dogs," Peterson said. "They were used to having dogs around."

She said Second Chance Greyhounds filed in February with the Internal Revenue Service for 501(c)3 nonprofit status. The organization received approval before the end of March.

Her group gets its retired dogs from Southern New England Kennels in Birmingham.

"We have a really good relationship with trainer Alan Olson," she said. "He's a good guy, a trainer who will not put a dog to sleep unless it's hurt so bad that it can't be healed. He's very good to his dogs and knows all of them by name."

Peterson explained that greyhounds are retired from racing service based on a grading score of how they perform. A greyhound may be retired as young as 18 months or as old

as 5 years. A few of the dogs are kept for breeding, but most now go to adoption groups.

"They used to be euthanized when their careers ended," Peterson said.

Second Chance Greyhounds sent its first group of dogs to the prison for training last June.

"This program benefits both the inmates and the greyhounds," she said. "It teaches the inmates patience and responsibility, relieves idleness and allows them to experience unconditional love."

She said the inmates teach the greyhounds a number of commands which qualify the dogs for a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) rating with the American Kennel Club (AKC). The dogs spend nine weeks with the inmates, the first week to get acquainted and eight weeks of training.

Her group sends about six dogs to training each time and, typically, people arrange for adoption of about half before the dogs complete their training. The remaining ones are kept in foster homes until they're adopted.

Peterson said April is national Adopt-a-Greyhound Month and her group, composed of about 25-30 volunteers, is making a special effort to educate people about what good pets greyhounds are.

"It's an ideal breed for

most homes," she said. "They're calm, relaxed and easy going. Most are quiet and shed minimally. Although they stand tall, they tend to curl up in an amazingly small space for sleeping. Some are tolerant of cats and other small animals and they get along well with children of all ages."

Peterson said a common misconception is that greyhounds are high-energy animals.

"They're actually very laid back and gentle," she said.

The adoption fee for a trained greyhound is \$350, but some untrained dogs are available for \$275.

Second Chance Greyhounds relies on these fees, plus donations and grants, to keep the organization going.

"We'll be at the Taste of Douglasville with our greyhounds and we're attending the Georgia Renaissance Festival near Fairburn which begins April 17," Peterson said. "We're planning a 2011 Greyhound Calendar, featuring photos of our dogs."

Peterson said when people adopt racing greyhounds, they usually become "part of the greyhound family," because the dogs enjoy spending time with former racing brothers, sisters and cousins. Many owners become adoption group volunteers.

She advises anyone interested in adopting a greyhound to first read

"Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies," by Lee Livingood.

(By the way, Peterson's four personal greyhounds are all females, Remi and Sugar, both 9 years old, Lucy, 5, and Sami, 2.)

More information on greyhound adoption and Peterson's group can be found online at [www.secondchancegreyhounds.org](http://www.secondchancegreyhounds.org), or by calling 1-877-67GREYS (1-877-674-7397).

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