

School Safety...from Page 1A

our experiences with them are very, very numerous," said Dr. Rayfield. "When I first got here, one of the first faces that I would see in and out of the office here, offering to help us with most anything we had going on, was Ms. Leslie

Daniel. I consider her to be really a great school liaison, because if we say we need AED machines, she helps, she gets them for us.

"We've got a sports medicine program started and an athletic trainer because of a

partnership that all these folks worked on and approved for our students to take part in."

The hospital has hosted special training for staff at all of the Union County Schools, including how to use automated defibrillators, how to do CPR, and lessons on how to stop various types of wounds from bleeding.

That training was conducted by Union General EMS Director Wesley Rogers, with assistance from Air Life Georgia and Northeast Georgia Medical Center.

"That's just a sampling of the things that they do," said Dr. Rayfield. "They do a tremendous amount of work throughout the school system and provide lots of services for our students and employees, and we're just

absolutely excited to recognize Union General Hospital as our community partner for this month."

Representatives from Union General Hospital, Inc. who accepted the award that evening were CEO Lewis Kelley, COO Michael Gay and Hospital Administrator Leslie Daniel.

Past recipients of the award include the Union County Government, UGA

Extension Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, the Union County Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency, and the *North Georgia News*.

The board also approved a series of Fiscal Year 2018 budget amendments in the meeting. The amendments were routine and dealt with federal and state grant monies only.



Photo by Shawn Jarrard
Dr. Rayfield presenting Lewis Kelley, Michael Gay and Leslie Daniel of Union General Hospital, Inc. with a Partner in Education Award.

Hooper...from Page 1A

Replacements, Inc. Union County Schools Career, Technical and Agricultural Education Director Josh Davis also gave a presentation during the ceremony, explaining what CTAE is and why its business partnerships in the community are so important to the education and future successes of Union County students.

High School Principal C.T. Hussion introduced the STAR Student and STAR Teacher that evening, explaining what exactly it means to be honored as a STAR.

STAR stands for "Student Teacher Achievement Recognition," and is sponsored by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators Foundation.

To be named a STAR Student, one must be a high school senior and obtain the highest score on any single test date of the SAT taken through November of their senior year, and also be in the Top 10 percent or Top 10 students of their class based on grade point average.

Each high school STAR Student is then asked to name his or her STAR Teacher.

"When we talk about the STAR student of this school, that's a pretty big deal," said Hussion. "I want you to really understand that McKenzie is one of the top-notch students, and all around just a great person."

Hooper attended the event with her family, and she thanked all of those who continue to encourage, motivate and inspire her to go the extra mile in all that she does.

"Our school system is amazing, and our administrators are amazing," said Hooper. "I would like to thank everyone who has ever helped me in my academic career."

"I would really like to thank my mom for always being there. I would like to thank my sister particularly. She has always been an inspiration for me academically, and she has always been willing to help me with my homework."

"And I would like to thank all of the teachers at Union County High School who put so much effort and dedicated their lives to helping educate."

Hooper went on to explain why she chose Krieger as her STAR Teacher, saying that she learned more in Krieger's classroom than simply the subject at hand - Krieger taught her other valuable skills and lessons that she will carry with her for the rest of her life.

"I would like to acknowledge that there are many different teaching styles," said Hooper. "Some teaching styles work better than others. Throughout the years, I've realized what works well for me and what doesn't, and adopted many study habits from it. I can tell you right now, I've adopted many study habits from Mrs. Krieger."

"Her teaching style specifically has had a huge impact on me. And even though I haven't had her as a teacher this year, I can still go to her for guidance and advice. She is always fine with me coming in and sitting down with her."

"She's different than any other teachers I've had, and she stands out more than any other teacher I've ever had."

Krieger, who followed



Photo by Lily Avery
UCHS Principal C.T. Hussion

Hooper, kept her speech short and sweet, saying that she could tell from the first day Hooper was in her class that she was going to be different from any student she had previously had.

According to Krieger, Hooper's bravery, talent, intellect and perseverance will take her far in life, and she is excited to see all of the many accomplishments in Hooper's future.

"For me, I firmly believe that when you take away all of the fancy terms, all of the

comparisons, and all of the white noise that's at the heart of education, the mission is to learn," said Krieger. "My job is to teach so that my students know that learning is the key."

"So, I thank you, McKenzie. You are a true lifelong learner and a wonderful young lady. I firmly believe that all of the success in the world is in store for you."

Hooper and Krieger were presented with an award on behalf of the chamber and UCHS at the end of the ceremony.

Chamber...from Page 1A

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When he first arrived in January, he said he quickly realized that the chamber office needed a boost in efficiency, so he updated the chamber's system software and streamlined behind-the-scenes accounting processes to free up time for chamber employees.

"What I've focused on is, what are the people's roles?" said Harper of the chamber. "What are their jobs? What should they be doing, and maybe, what shouldn't they be doing? We also look at, how can we automate things, streamline things so we have more time (with chamber members)."

Added Harper: "I don't want us sitting in the office. I want us out there, trying to focus on things that actually can help small businesses."

During his time as interim president, Harper noticed that many of the chamber's more than 650 members remained unclear as to what their membership fees were getting for them.

"I told all the staff, we have to think every single day about, where's the beef?" said Harper. "We have to answer that question to our members every day: where's the beef? And let's come up with some beef."

That's why one of Harper's main focuses has been on member

services, and he's been working on implementing better messaging about existing member benefits, and he is also looking to expand those benefits.

Currently, chamber members have access to myriad networking, advertising and discount opportunities through chamber events, platforms and programs, with more to come.

Furthermore, the chamber has already begun to emphasize business-friendly educational components with the Monthly Mingle luncheon and other initiatives.

"We're getting discounts from Dale Carnegie (Training), we're fixing to roll that out where they can get management training and help and all that kind of stuff at a discount," said Harper. "We're fixing to roll out a discount for a mobile marketing product that we can pass on to the members."

Chamber members also enjoy listing in the online Business Directory that allows them to upload a wide variety of useful information for customers via the Member Portal, all of which is search engine optimized thanks to the high visibility of the chamber website.

For more information on the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, check out VisitBlairsvilleGA.com.