



News Release

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Athens, GA—Students in the college's Early Childhood Care and Education program volunteered to serve as puppeteers during the 2008-2009 academic year for *Hands Are Not for Hitting*, a program on bullying and violent behavior started by C. R. Chisholm, solicitor general for Athens-Clarke County. The volunteers presented puppet shows to over 1,800 kindergartners and first graders in elementary schools in the Clarke County School District.

Mr. Chisholm states that the shows present children with nonviolent solutions to bullying. It also addresses violent behavior that some children witness in domestic violence situations at their homes. Chisholm adds that the Athens-Clarke County police received approximately 1,350 calls related to domestic violence in 2007.

The Athens Luncheon Optimist Club paid a professional puppeteer from Atlanta to prepare the students for their roles as volunteer puppeteers. The Athens Rotary Club, the Athens-Oconee Junior Women's Club, and several private donors also provided financial support for the program.

Lisa White, chair of the Early Childhood Care and Education program, got her students involved in this initiative after Chisholm gave a presentation on the program during one of the meetings of the Optimist Club. She is planning to continue the volunteer efforts during the upcoming year. The current group of volunteers will train the next group of Early Childhood students who volunteer for this endeavor.

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