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# CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

America Reads Gazette

## Newsletter Highlights

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## WHAT IS AMERICA READS?

Curated by Anesia Sims and Avery Wilson

In 1997, President Bill Clinton recommended that Federal-Work study students should serve as reading tutors to help all children read at a proficient level before the end of their third grade term. Research showed that with attention to detail and individualized structure, young students benefited from personal tutors and showed increased reading proficiency.

Clemson University decided to join the initiative and develop a program during the academic year of 1997-1998. The program is composed of Clemson University students and strong leadership who continue to carry out the mission of the program. America Reads at Clemson University is currently partnered with the following schools: Clemson Elementary and West End Elementary to assist students kindergarten to third grade.

Special Thanks to Clemson University, Debra Vassey (Federal Work-Study Manager), Brittany Beeker (America Reads Director), and Chelsea Looper (America Reads Co-Director)

# Director Spotlight

## Brittany Beeker:

Originally from Lincolnton, North Carolina, Brittany Beeker attended Western Carolina University for undergraduate with a major in Middle Grades Language Arts and Science Education. After earning her degree, Beeker was a dog trainer for over a decade. Moving to South Carolina, Beeker attended East Carolina University's Master's in Library Science Program virtually, while simultaneously teaching 7th grade science. After graduating, Beeker became a children's librarian in Clarendon County, SC. Now pursuing a PhD in literacy at Clemson University, Beeker has been the Director of America Reads for the past two years, and is also a Graduate Teaching Assistant in Clemson's College of Education! Outside of the classroom, Beeker enjoys taking her dog, Dolly, to visit migrant shelters on the Mexican border.

### **Fascinated by Beeker's story, our team decided to ask her some questions regarding the America Reads program and her role:**

**Q:** What do you hope young students gain from this program?

**A:** "More than anything else, I hope students in this program learn to love reading. So many kids seem to view reading in such a negative way, but we all read all day everyday, even when we don't realize it, so it is an essential skill to have. I hope they can begin to see reading as the beautiful activity that it is instead of something they just have to do for school."

**Q:** What is your favorite thing about America Reads?

**A:** "There are two things I love about America Reads: the tutors and the students. When you add them together, it is amazing because watching them interact each session is pure magic. The tutors and students form such a special bond and it is truly enjoyable to watch them work together. The tutors really get to know their students and learn about their likes and dislikes, what motivates them, and how they learn."



## **Brittany with her nephew:**

Fun Facts About Brittany:

- She has two dogs, a Poodle mix, Dolly, and a Shih-Tzu mix, Ava, whom she spoils rotten.
- She lived in Geilenkirchen, Germany for almost two years.
- She has a two-year-old nephew and soon-to-be born niece.

**Q:** What lasting impact do you hope to leave behind for young students?

**A:** "I would love for the students in our program to gain confidence in their reading and writing skills. Each student in our program has strengths I want them to recognize and celebrate instead of focusing on the skills they struggle with. I think it is important for students to remember that we all grappled with literacy skills at some point in our lives, so their struggles are not unique. None of us were born knowing how to read and those skills come easier for some than they do for others. Everyone has skills they need to work on or skills they grasp easily and neither of those is bad or wrong."



Chelsea Looper

## Co - Director's Message

Meet our Co-Director, Chelsea Looper! From Charleston, SC, Looper started her Clemson journey in 2013, and has lived in the Greenville area ever since. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Literacy, Language, and Culture with the College of Education at Clemson University. This is Looper's first year as a Co-Director for America Reads as part of her assistantship with the Ph.D. program. She has thoroughly enjoyed working with both the tutors and the elementary students each week! Looper would like to share this message with her readers: "America Reads is important not only for the students who gain greater insights into reading, writing, and word study, but also for the tutors who receive wonderful opportunities to work within their communities and also learn valuable skills from their students' skills, such as creativity, curiosity, and imaginative play."

## Graduating Coordinator Spotlight

Meet our Senior Spotlight, Jamya Jones! From Anderson, SC, Jones will be graduating from Clemson with a Bachelor's degree in Sociology this May! After graduation, Jones plans on working in a social service or human resource job while simultaneously attending Greenville Technical College to earn her Associate's in Science and Dental Hygiene! Jones's ultimate goal is to become a dentist, so this is an important step in her journey!

We asked Jones a couple questions and recorded her responses:

**Q: What have you enjoyed most about tutoring?**

A: "I have really enjoyed building connections with the kids and helping them improve their reading skills. Reading is something I've always loved, so being able to share that passion and make a difference in their learning experience has been so rewarding. Seeing their progress and excitement when they improve is truly the best part!"



Jamya Jones

**Q: What advice do you have for current and incoming tutors?**

A: "My biggest piece of advice is to truly care about the students and have a passion for helping them. Kids can tell when you're just going through the motions versus when you're genuinely invested in their learning. Be patient, encouraging, and willing to adapt to their needs. Tutoring is more than just teaching. It's about building confidence and creating a positive learning experience!"



# Tutor Spotlight



We are proud to announce that our very own Dante' Winfield has been reelected for his third term as an Undergraduate Student Senator in the Clemson Undergraduate Student Government (CUSG)! Winfield is a Psychology major and Political Science minor from the great state of Oklahoma! He is very passionate about making sure the voice of the student body is heard and has done a great job these past two years ensuring that all students at Clemson feel heard and empowered.

We asked Winfield some questions about his position and America Reads.

We asked Winfield a few questions and these were his responses:

**Q: What do you do as a CUSG Senator?**

A: "As an undergraduate student senator, I advocate for students by drafting and passing legislation on issues that impact campus life. I also meet with university administration to ensure student voices are heard in decision-making processes."

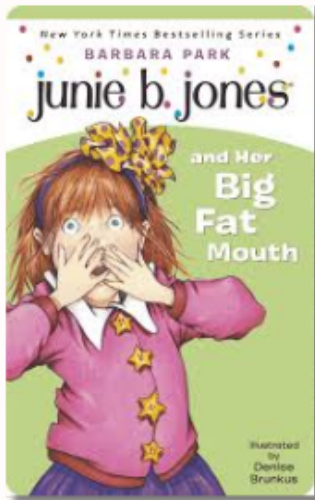
**Q: How did you feel when you got reelected?**

A: "Winning reelection was an incredible feeling. It was a humbling reminder that students trust me to represent them, and I take that responsibility seriously. I am excited to continue working toward positive change and ensuring that Clemson remains where every student feels valued and empowered."

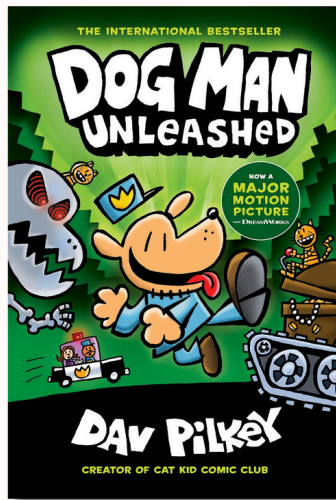
**Q: What is your favorite thing about America Reads and why is it important?**

A: "One of my favorite things about America Reads is the opportunity to directly impact young students by fostering a love for learning. Education is the foundation for future success, and the best way to build a better future is by empowering the next generation through education. America Reads allows us to invest in young minds, inspire confidence, and give them the tools they need to succeed. It is a rewarding experience to see students grow and develop, knowing that our efforts make a difference in their lives."

# Favorite Books



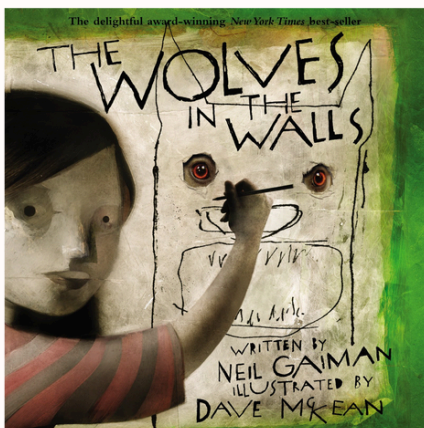
Junie B. Jones and Her Big Fat Mouth  
Book By: Barbara Park



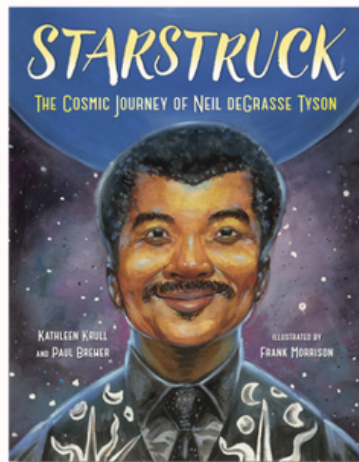
Dog Man: Unleashed  
Book By: Dav Pilkey



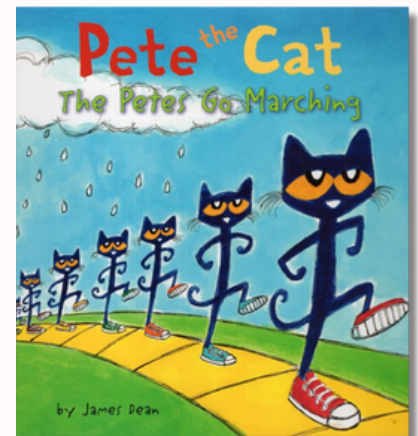
National Geographic Readers: Sharks!  
Book By: Anne Schreiber



The Wolves in the Walls  
Book By: Neil Gaiman



Starstruck: The Cosmic Journey of Neil deGrasse Tyson  
Book By: Kathleen Krull and Paul Brewer



Pete the Cat: The Petes Go Marching  
Book By: James Dean



# Introducing our Newsletter Team



**Anesia Sims**

I am Anesia, a senior Biological Sciences major on the Pre-Dental track from Atlanta, Georgia, graduating this May. To further my education and pursue my goal of becoming an Orthodontist, I am excited to share that I've been accepted into a master's program at Meharry Medical College, where I will begin this fall.

During my four years at college, I've had the honor of being a part of the America Reads program. I've grown within the program by serving as a tutor, coordinator, and now, signing off as a task supervisor. This experience has been incredibly meaningful, allowing me to work closely with children while developing strong leadership and communication skills. America Reads has been a cornerstone of my college experience, and I'm so grateful for the amazing teams I've had the pleasure of working with over the years. As I move forward in my journey to becoming an Orthodontist, a career where I'll continue working with children and I'll carry the lessons, memories, and joy from this program with me.



**Avery Wilson**

My name is Avery Wilson and I'm a sophomore Civil Engineering major from Crystal Lake, IL. My role in America Reads this year is to be a Task Supervisor in training and to be on the Newsletter team. It has been an amazing experience working on this team! I don't get to write much in my major, so this has been a really cool experience for me! My favorite part about doing this job was learning about some different people in the America Reads program! I believe that we have a lot of cool people that deserve to be showcased. We also have great kids in the program, and I am confident in their abilities! After graduation, I plan on working as a Civil Engineer either in the south, or closer to my family in Illinois. I also hope to travel for a bit. Thank you for reading our Newsletter!

## America Reads - Word Search

I F W I G N P O P S I C L E O M M Z  
 C U Q I H O M E I M N K E C U D R I  
 E N Y L S M A R T S U M M E R W V V  
 C F L I P F L O P S L A U S I T A O  
 R C Z C A M E R I C A R E A D S C F  
 E P E N C I L O K L T G X S F I K V  
 A K U J H K C L C R E A D I N G C J  
 M V J N S N C L Q A U Z D B O O K H  
 Z T S F D P P I C T U R E E H J T W  
 P I T E A M W O R K Y I W H E D H X  
 N E W S L E T T E R F F A U F N D J  
 B U Q C O N S U N T V N E A Y H C D

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘

AMERICA READS  
 NEWSLETTER  
 FLIP FLOPS  
 TEAMWORK  
 ICE CREAM  
 POPSICLE

READING  
 PICTURE  
 PENCIL  
 SUMMER  
 SMART  
 BOOK

HOME  
 FUN  
 SUN

Created by Anesia Sims and Avery Wilson