

# AMERICA READS GAZETTE AT CLEMSON UNIVERSITY



## GRADUATING COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT

Interview By Holliane Belford and Oluwaseun Oti-Aina

Congratulations to Seiarra Reveal, our spotlight coordinator for this semester! She is a senior Middle-Level Education Major concentrating in Math and Science. She is from Williamston, South Carolina, a small town about 30 minutes from Clemson. Seiarra is currently a Senior set to graduate in May 2023 and has worked with America Reads since her freshman year. She is passionate about the America Reads program. She has shown that by providing guidance and support to tutors, timely communication with her team, and showing up when it truly matters. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and her dog. Get to know more about Seiarra through this interview.

*Can you tell us why you decided to come to Clemson University?* I came to Clemson because it was close to my mom and most of my friends came to Clemson as well. It is one of the top schools for education majors, and jobs think highly of this school.

*How long have you been working with America Reads, and how long have you been a coordinator?* I have been with America Reads for four and a half years. I have been a coordinator for two years.

*What has been your favorite part of working with America Reads?* My favorite part of working for America Reads is seeing all the students enjoy learning. As an education major, my main goal is to make learning fun while optimizing the quality of education. I also enjoy seeing the connections the tutors make with their students because they are so meaningful.

*What is the most important advice you could give someone wanting to become a coordinator for America Reads?* The most important advice that I can give is to have patience, good communication, and be willing to help. Being a coordinator is not for everyone and requires a lot of patience because overseeing tutors can be challenging. Communication is key to make sure you are getting correct information to the tutors and being able to talk to the teachers of the students, the directors and other coordinators. Finally, being willing to help is crucial when tutors come to you for help. You have to be able to think of something that can help them or find someone who can.

*Thank you so much, Seiarra, for being a part of the America Reads Family. We will miss you!*

## Newsletter Highlights

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Activities that tutors love to do with their students

Books that our students are loving!

Books that our students are loving! (cont.)

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## ACTIVITIES THAT TUTORS LOVE TO DO WITH THEIR STUDENTS

Collated By Jayvon Wright

Our tutors are passionate about working with their students and have shared with us activities they love to do with them. In this segment, we learn about the activities that five of our amazing tutors love to do with their students during tutoring sessions.

With my third grader at West End Elementary, she likes word searches. With my kindergartener, he loves coloring activities.”  
Kayla Rowell

“I love to engage my 1st grader at Clemson Elementary with interactive writing.” Katie Kerce

“With my student at West End Elementary, we do a lot of different activities, but I also like to incorporate drawing or coloring in some way into our writing activities, like writing summaries and creating short paragraphs. She can draw what we write about, which helps her creativity and comprehension. I have also found that she enjoys word searches, so I have done these a few times with her.” Lynnea Jacobsen

“My favorite extended activity to do with my students is to write down things that have happened in our book on strips of paper. Then we can put them in order or mix them up to invent stories. I use this with my 2nd grader at Clemson Elementary.” Kiah Peterson

“ I love doing writing activities with my 3rd grader at Clemson Elementary to learn about her week. For example, she wrote me a paragraph about her Halloween plans.” Cassandra Fox

## BOOKS THAT OUR STUDENTS ARE LOVING!

Collated By Tonya Geathers

Our tutors have shared favorite books that their students love to read. We hope this would help our tutors, parents, and teachers choose resources that are enjoyable for their students.

### Kindergarten

Pete the Cat and the Missing Cupcakes by James Dean

Mr. Tiger Goes Wild by Peter Brown

Bad Kitty by Nick Bruel

The Cat in the Hat by Dr.Seuss

Pinkalicious books by Victoria Kann

Henry and Mudge books by Cynthia Rylant

### First Grade

Kitty and Dragon by Meika Hashimoto

One Big Pair of Underwear by Laura Gehl

Sonic the Hedgehog books

Pinkalicious books by Victoria Kann

*Continued on the next page*

*Do you have a school in the Pickens area that needs tutors who provide one-on-one support to elementary school students in reading and writing during after-school care?*

We would love to hear from you. Please send the Director an email at [oina@g.clemson.edu](mailto:oina@g.clemson.edu).

**BOOKS THAT STUDENTS LOVE: ORGANIZED BY CATEGORY**

Collated by Tonya Geathers

**Kindergarten**

- Mystery books
- Car/Motorsport books
- Superhero books
- Paw Patrol books

**2nd Grade**

- Peppa Pig books
- Mystery books
- Princess books
- Action and Adventure books

**3rd Grade**

- Cat/Animal books

**MOST POPULAR ACTIVITY IN AMERICA READS**

Collated and written by Darien Bowman

Throughout the America Reads tutoring Program this semester, tutors have been asked about their favorite tasks with their students thus far. The most popular activity amongst the responses was pen pal letters. Pen pal letters are an outside form of communication we provide as an option to further interact with one's student. It consists of writing about one's week, silly stories, or asking which books they'd like to read in the future, mailing them, and communicating outside tutoring time. Sky Springs says, "I enjoy writing pen pal letters because I am able to talk to the students on a more personal level rather than learning stuff all the time." This response stays consistent with mostly everyone who chose pen pal letters. Having that outside form of constant communication has been positive for most of our tutors.

**BOOKS THAT OUR STUDENTS ARE LOVING!**

Collated by Tonya Geathers

**First Grade**

- I Was a Second Grade Werewolf by Daniel Pinkwater
- Nate the Great books by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- Fancy Nancy books by Jane O'Connor
- Amelia Bedelia books by Peggy Parish
- Superhero ABC by Bob McLeod
- The Incredible Hulk by Billy Wrecks

**Second Grade**

- Piggy and Elephant by Mo Willems
- The Cat in the Hat by Dr.Seuss
- Magic Tree House books by Mary Pope Osborne
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

**Third Grade**

- InvestiGATORS by John Patrick Green
- Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo
- Goodnight Football by Michael Dahl
- Fly Guy books by Tedd Arnold

*Thank you tutors for sharing some of the books your students love to read.*



## Tutors going above and beyond

By Oluwaseun Oti-Aina

This month, we are recognizing Sky Springs and Katie Kerce for going above and beyond in tutoring!



Sky Springs is a Freshman Psychology major. She joined America Reads in August 2022. As a tutor going above and beyond, Sky never missed a tutoring session with her students. She consistently turned in deliverables on time and always looked for resources to make her students succeed. In addition, Sky always asked questions when she did not understand something and was meticulous with any task she was assigned.

Every week, Sky tutors at "West End Elementary and Clemson Elementary, evaluates assessments, and writes pen pal letters" to her students. This semester, her favorite assigned activity was assessment evaluation. She likes this role because "I like organizing things, so I enjoyed uploading the answers to assessments in the form given."

When asked why she decided to join Clemson University's America Reads team, Sky stated that she had previous experience working with young children and had enjoyed the process. She saw this tutoring role as "a perfect opportunity to work with children again with not only reading but also writing skills." According to Sky, her favorite part of working for America Reads is seeing the students she tutors make progress. Indeed, in the course of this semester, we have seen her students grow. They have enjoyed reading with her and have grown in alphabet recognition, reading fluency, comprehension, writing, and spelling skills.

The leadership at America Reads ensures that tutors receive the support they need to succeed in tutoring their students. Sky affirms that "lesson plan training, bi-weekly meetings, consultancy meetings, writing activities resources, pen pal letters, and a sit-in and immediate feedback by one of the leaders" were the things that supported her tutoring practice this semester.

Sky is excited to share with us that "I was able to help my student from West End Elementary gain a little more confidence in his reading and writing skills. While I worked to keep my student from Clemson Elementary's love for reading and writing".

We are so proud of all Sky has accomplished this semester and for going above and beyond in tutoring. Congratulations!



Katie Kerce is a Senior Early Childhood Education major. She joined America Reads in August 2022. Katie has been chosen as a tutor going above and beyond because she consistently turned in her deliverables on time, never missed tutoring with her students, and handled every task incredibly well.

Katie decided to join Clemson University's America Reads because it was vital for her to grow her educational experiences "and to find another way to make a difference in students' lives."

Katie has made a difference in her student's life. Katie's student has enjoyed reading with her. At the beginning of the semester, Katie's student thought reading was okay; by the end of the semester, she now likes reading a lot. Her student started out spending some of her time reading to now spending a lot of her time reading. Katie focused on improving her student's reading confidence, fluency, comprehension, and writing skills.

Katie used the pen pal letter activity to boost her students' writing and reading skills, and pen pal letters are Kerce's favorite activity at America Reads. "I wrote three pen pal letters to my student over the span of our time together. She would bring our letters to our sessions, and we would read them together. This was another way to get to know my student and her to know a little more about me".

What does Katie's typical work week look like at America Reads? "I write a lesson plan for my student, go to tutoring for an hour, write a daily tutor report, weekly report, conduct library supervision, and assessment evaluation." When reflecting on how the leadership team had supported her in her work with America Reads, Katie noted that something helpful and enjoyable for her this semester "was the assessment evaluation training, writing activities resources, pen pal letters, and curriculum development training."

Congratulations! Katie, you have done incredibly well, and we are proud of all you have accomplished this semester.



## Meet the America Reads Team



Left to right: Torien Oglesby, Seiarra Reveal, Lynnea Jacobsen, Oluwaseun Oti-Aina, Darien Bowman, Anesia Sims, Jayvon Wright

## A Message from the Director

Dear Readers,

I am thankful that this semester, we have continued to work with students on-site at our three partner schools: Clemson Elementary, Six Mile Elementary, and West End Elementary. I am relieved that our new tutors did not have to tutor their students virtually this new school year. Students have enjoyed the one-on-one physical experience that on-site tutoring affords.

I am glad to share that this semester, 18 new tutors joined our team; these exceptional Federal Work Study students came from diverse academic backgrounds. Their major ranged from arts to the sciences. Although they came from different backgrounds, we provided them with training and continuous support throughout the semester. Tutors participated in initial training, bi-weekly meetings, and consultancy sessions throughout the semester. This training covered evidence-based practices in reading and writing, lesson planning, assessment evaluation, and curriculum development.



This semester, we served 40 students: 15 kindergarteners, ten first graders, nine-second graders, and six third graders. By making this selection, our goal was to take a preventive measure rather than a remedial approach; to ensure that we, alongside the elementary schools, contributed to offering a solid foundation for budding readers and writers. These children have enjoyed their time with our tutors and improved their reading, writing, and spelling skills. I am so proud of all the work our tutors have done this semester, and I am convinced that children who participated in the program this semester will continue to grow in their literacy skills.

I wish our parents, teachers, after school directors, and principals from our partner schools, tutors, and the rest of America Reads Leadership team a happy holiday season. - **Oluwaseun Oti-Aina**



# Why Join the America Reads Team

Collated and written by Merritt Meeks

We are a fun team passionate about helping children grow their reading and writing skills. Not an education major? No need to worry. We hire all majors as long as you have a good attitude and are willing to commit to the program's requirements. We asked current tutors what they would tell new people interested in working as a tutor for America Reads. This is what they had to say:

"I believe that working with the students helps you produce incredible leadership skills, allowing you to grow in areas that you may lack." - Tonya Geathers.

"... I would also share that it is a great experience and it feels really good to help these students learn reading and writing skills. You get to build such great connections with the students you work with because they look forward to seeing you every week. And the students really look up to you as role models so it is important to set a good example." - Lynnea Jacobsen

"... America Reads is a very good program. You are given clear directions for your first few weeks tutoring and then given enough freedom to come up with things that will specifically help your student grow in reading. I would recommend it to anyone who loves working with children and reading!" - Kiah Peterson

"I love being able to personalize my lesson plans and curriculum, especially now that I know my students pretty well. I feel like I know exactly what I can do to help them, and it makes me excited that I can implement it my own creative way. I love lesson planning!" - Faith Chaveriat

"I enjoy watching my kids read a word correctly and the way their faces light up."- Kayla Rowell

"I like knowing that by the end of the year, I will have helped a child become a better reader and writer." - Sky Springs

"Knowing that I get to make an impact on this new generation and that I can make a difference in at least one student's life." - Katie Kerce

*Join us as we impact the next generation of leaders!*



## MEET THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

- Oluwaseun Oti-Aina - Director & Newsletter Editor
- Holliane Belford - Coordinator
- Darien Bowman - Tutor
- Merritt Meeks - Tutor
- Tonya Geathers - Tutor
- Torien Oglesby - Tutor



## MEET THE LEADERS

- Oluwaseun Oti-Aina - Director
- Katie McGee - Co-Director
- Corban Williams- Head Coordinator
- Ciarra Weaver - Coordinator
- Anesia Sims - Coordinator and Task Supervisor
- Holliane Belford - Coordinator
- Seiarra Reveal - Coordinator

