Sierra Leone refugee now a community volunteer and HPU student

By Chelsie Gastright
Organizations Editor

"We were okay until we started hearing on the radio that the rebels were advancing into the capital. I was pregnant and gave birth to my son in the basement of a neighbor's home. Several hours went by as I was in labor, and then I heard gunshots in the alley,” said Kamara’s mother. “The emotions were high and I was scared. I didn’t know what was going to happen to my baby."

Dr. Larry Simpson, HPU professor of African history, explained what caused the war and the tragic consequences that came with it. "Like much of Africa, Sierra Leone suffered due to widespread corruption, the manipulation of ethnic politics by unscrupulous politicians and the lack of civil liberties. This contributed to more than a decade of civil war and caused thousands of thousands of civilians, about a third of the population, to become refugees.”

By 1995, the RUF had control over much of Sierra Leone, and Kamara was close to controlling the capital of the country, Freetown. Just three years later, Kamara’s life began to change when he started hearing gunfire in Freetown. It was then that 8-year-old Kamara and his family went into hiding to begin the longest journey of his life.

On the night when his mother picked him up from school, when the war was taking a turn for the worse, Kamara and many other friends from school hid in the basement of their house. Several hours went by as they sat quietly together, waiting for transportation to arrive.

Finally, a large eighteen-wheeler pulled up. The group hurried from the basement and piled into the truck, hiding under whatever was in the back. The emotions were high as the truck began driving to a local port.

"I remember we hid under quilts that were in the back. Kind of like what your grandmother would make by sewing together pieces of fabric," said Kamara. "I also remember my younger sister was crying. My mom did her best to quiet her down and keep her calm during the ride.

The eighteen-wheeler was taking the group to catch a ferry at a local port. When Kamara was younger, he remembered times when going to the port to catch a ferry was to celebrate a joyous occasion. "Usually when we took a ferry it was to go to the beach. We would go during Easter and Christmas with the whole family to celebrate."

This time, Kamara knew it was different. They were not going to the port to catch a ferry to the beach, but rather to escape the travesties of war. Kamara and the rest of the group arrived at the port and quickly boarded a ferry. Half way up the ramp, the ferry broke down after unknown complications. The group waited anxiously for a rescue boat to come to their aid, but when it finally did, the rescue boat was already carrying other passengers.

"When the rescue boat got there, people were already on it," said Kamara. "But my sister was one of the first ones on the boat and then I came on. My mom was last and I remember telling her it was going to be fine, but she was so nervous about crossing over from the ferry to the rescue boat. I just kept saying, mom it’s going to be fine.

The rest of the trip was spent on the rescue boat. The group finally arrived at their destination in Port Loko, a small village about 17 miles from the capital city of Freetown in Sierra Leone.

While in Port Loko, Kamara and his family met with his Uncle Milton and one of his older sisters. However, the journey was not over yet. Kamara and his family still had to make it to Guinea, which borders the southern side of Sierra Leone; they needed to make it there in order to escape the war.

"Waiting for them in Guinea was Kamara’s father; he had previously been living in America with Kamara’s stepmom and came back to Sierra Leone when the war started to worsen. Once in Guinea, Kamara and his two sisters were told they were going to America to live with their father. Since Kamara’s father had lived in America for some time, this allowed Kamara and his family to have a secure way out of Sierra Leone."

At this time, Kamara found out that the correct paperwork had not been secured for his mother’s travel to America. (The paperwork would not be complete, and until they could work out the issues, Kamara’s mother would have to stay behind. While the thought of his mother having to stay behind in Sierra Leone was not ideal, Kamara knew that if all went well, his mother could soon join them. In America, the family knew that life would be different and almost perfect."

"The way people talk about America from a foreign perspective is that the streets are painted with gold and there is candy falling from the sky. It was like something out of Willy Wonka," said Kamara with a small chuckle. "I mean I was a 7- or 8-year-old kid, so I just couldn’t wait to get there."

"And when I got here I was like, ‘This kind of looks like Freetown.’ I asked my dad if we were here yet because I was looking for streets of gold and candy falling from the sky. He told me we were here and I remember thinking, ‘Wow, this is America!’"

Once in America, 8-year-old Kamara and his sisters settled in with their father and stepmother in Maryland. Thrown back to his childhood, Kamara had to be given words to learn to spell, but see Kamara, page 3

Student body elects Tyler Steelman as SGA president for 2012-13 academic year

By Steven Haller
Editor in Chief

T he students elected sophomore Tyler Steelman to be HPU’s SGA president for the 2012-13 academic year. Steelman said, “The first priority of my administration will be to create a more streamlined [SGA senate] meeting with tighter fiscal responsibility and more individual senate responsibility.”

Steelman has been a class representative for the class of 2014 with SGA for two years. In addition to SGA president next year, Steelman will be serving in other leadership roles such as the Assistant Resident Director of Finch, Mills, and Wilson and a University Ambassador. As SGA president, his primary goals involve running more efficient meetings. "I feel like it is important to start with the small things, like the mess we sometimes have with bills being incomplete and the long process we go through to check in," said Steelman. "I feel like once we take care of the small things, people will not feel like SGA is such a hassle."

Steelman said that the vice president of judicial affairs and the assistant resident director have been narrowed down to a short list of possibilities of students to fill those positions. Steelman cites secretary, technology chair, academic chair and public chair as positions that have individual academic goals. Steelman said that the vice president of judicial affairs and the attorney general positions might be filled by students that have those positions involve work with Honor Court, so he wants to consult the student justices and the university’s judicial affairs administrators before he makes those decisions.

Steelman and his chosen executive council will be sworn in at the beginning of the final SGA senate meeting this semester on April 19, which will be the first official meeting run by his new administration.
Opinion

The perks of owning a puppy: a woman's best friend

By Meghan Pignataro  Staff Writer

I have two dogs and they are my life. When I say they are my life, I mean that in every way possible. Since I was a child of three, I have been a dog owner. I have hundreds of photos of them stored in my phone, I'll play with them for hours and never get sick of them.

Some people are afraid of dogs because they are afraid of what they might do. I do not even remotely understand why anyone would ever choose anything different.

As a dog owner, you have to allow the pet owners to choose animals other than dogs, but what's even worse is when people choose animals that are boring, scary and creepy. Like cats.

No, I have never owned a cat before — nor do I ever want to.

After watching my aunt's cats for a few days, it confirmed my dog phobia. Much better pets than those ferocious felines.

When I walked into my aunt's house, I looked around trying to find where the cats were. For nearly 20 minutes I had no idea if they were even in the house. I went into the kitchen and threw their food-storing food and within seconds they creptily appeared. They hopped on the table, with such good manners, ate their food and then ran off being their selfish, independent selves.

They barely acknowledged I was there. On one occasion, I was cleaning inside my house, my dogs came running full speed up to me, licking my face and wagging their tails. They are overly excited and follow me around for at least 20 minutes. Knowing my presence makes them so excited so it is heartwarming.

Based on their excitement, it's clear dogs form a friendship that will last a lifetime.

Decision 2012: voters wanted

By Pat Budd  Staff Writer

What an exciting time of the year to be a North Carolina voter. As we end a long winter (if you even want to call it that), the spring temperatures have heated things up in the Tar Heel State. But 80 degree days are not the only thing heating up North Carolina.

This season, North Carolina voters have a very important job on their little election calendars. First, on May 8, voters get the opportunity to vote in the only primary left in the country. Voters will put out the chance to voice their opinion on same-sex marriage, same-sex marriage is a hot issue in North Carolina, and I predict a very close vote between Republican and Democratic candidates.

Second, on Nov. 6, North Carolina voters have the opportunity to decide even more. With current Gov. Beverly Perdue annoncing she will not seek another term, voters hold the purse strings to determine the outcome of the 2012 Presidential Election. And as North Carolina is a swing state, a swing state will play a large part in determining the outcome of the 2012 Presidential Election.

There has never been a more important time in North Carolina's history to be a registered voter. High Point University's Survey Research Center has found that only a sliver of voters are split on all candidates running for office in 2012, more of a reason to get to the voting booth to change all of that.

In 2010, the U.S. Census found the 18-24 age bracket had the lowest number of registered voters at less than 50 percent (43.3 percent). Yet, many agree that voter turnout is at an all-time low. We all have annual duties that are not typically favorable: going to the dentist, getting a physical, filing taxes, taking final exams. The Dentist, getting a physical, filing taxes, taking final exams. But what does this all mean? It means, if you're not registered, go online to your home state's website and do something. It is essential and equally as important as the list of duties above.

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From Kamara, page 1 he would make us learn fifty. Not only would we need to know how to spell those words, but also how to use them in a sentence," said Kamara. "It paid off in the long run because I remember in high school, I would be able to understand them and even pulling all-nighters. Even though the situation was undesirable, Kamara and his family were at least doing the best they could and that is what mattered most.

And I would think to myself, 'Wow I've gone, 'Oh man I don't know these words!'

During that time, his social worker made a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank, a thrift store, and Excel Unify - Special Olympics' national community outreach programs.

This is when the state came and told Kamara that since he was not of age he could not take care of his sister properly. Kamara's sister was then made a ward of the state, and Kamara did not know what to do.

A kind neighbor, whose name has been omitted, heard what was going on and suggested that Kamara could live with her. Grateful for her offer, Kamara moved in with her and for a while, the waters were calm.

"I don't know if it was because she got more stressed, or if it was something on her personal life but (the neighbor) started to change," said Kamara.

Kamara eventually moved back to Sierra Leone to finish his high school, and then went on to college. He fell into a deep, deep depression, he just seemed off.

Kamara's family struggled. Finally, after much searching, Kamara's stepmother managed to find a job at a Wendy's in North Carolina, Kamara's stepmother became the man of the house in their Burlington home. This is when he began to understand how much he could care of anything else that may come up for his little sister and himself. However, Kamara decided it would be best for him to return to Sierra Leone to care for Kamara's grandmother.

To Kamara, he would never forget the face of his stepmother. She would be gone for days at a time. "She was left to cook and clean and take care of anything else that may come up for her,

So Kamara's family struggled. Finally, after much searching, Kamara's stepmother managed to find a job at a Wendy's in North Carolina, Kamara's stepmother became the man of the house in their Burlington home. This is when he began to understand how much he could care of anything else that may come up for his little sister and himself. However, Kamara decided it would be best for him to return to Sierra Leone to care for Kamara's grandmother.

Kamara received a nursing job in Lincolnia, Kamara's stepmother had to commute several hours to a school social worker, Ms. KC, made a phone call to Travis Burrell, who is the Executive Director of I Am Now. "I don't really remember the exact date, but I do remember it was around December of 2007 when we first met," said Kamara. "I Am Now house. They were still putting up the exit signs the day I moved in."

From there, Kamara finished his schoolings at High Point University and - Central High School in May of 2008. Kamara had big goals of playing college football and for an SAT score.

Burlington, North Carolina. He then earning and graduated from High Point College and into Livingstone College in Salisbury, N.C. and decided to major in architectural engi-
The everyday fashionista: spring
By Jordan Breetz
Staff Writer

Spring has arrived. The trees are finally in bloom and everyone is dressing like it is summer. Even though I love the weather and that everyone is coming out of hibernation, there are a couple things to keep in mind when dressing for spring 2012. Brights, whites and bold prints are key, but there are guidelines to follow in order to pull off these trends.

Color! - Pops of color are my favorite thing about spring. With them, they carry a sort of promise for great weather and that the frigid winter months are coming to an end. This season, wear any bright color you choose. You can even wear multiple together, but if you incorporate "nude" color it will really complete the look. Check out J Crew, Kate Spade and Anthropologie; they are all pushing the nude-colored bright look.

Whites - Whites hold an awkward position during spring. When are they appropriate? I say not until Memorial Day, but certainly be sure to wait until after Easter. Either way, white shorts should not be the first thing you run to as soon as the weather starts to warm up.

Dresses - Oh the sundress... the item some guys wait for. Why they want to see our pale (or orange if you go the spray tan route) legs is beyond me. Either way, dresses will always hold a special place in the heart of spring. Try a "maxi" dress this year. I know it feels a little like a high school prom flashback but you will look fabulous and that’s a promise.

Bold Prints - From Dolce & Gabbana to Jason Wu, bold prints are here to stay this spring. Try a large floral or a bold polka dot; some designers are even mixing the two. If you are feeling the urge to experiment with mixed prints, then now is your chance. You really can’t go wrong.

Spring is finally here! Take note of these simple steps, and you will look fabulous. Remember, the secret to spring is to dress fun and have fun!

The style guy: A guide for men
By Tyler Yarema
Staff Writer

Comments on Business Attire
• When it comes to business dress, stick to your blues and greys. Black should be saved for funerals and for children to wear at their first communion.
• It is perfectly acceptable to have fun – in moderation. Play with bold patterns in your socks and pocket square.
• A building starts with the foundation: Invest in a pair of quality shoes. Good care can make them last a decade.
• Wingtips. "Nuff said.
• On Casual Business: try a gingham shirt with a knit tie. Perfect match.
• Don’t be afraid to layer. If it’s cold, add a sweater over your shirt and tie.
• No undershirts.
• Never match your tie/bow tie and pocket square. Be creative. Find one color in common and let your mind do the rest.
• Less is more. Don’t try to make the bow tie and square perfect. Throw it on, and get out the door.

• Want a small detail to go a long way? Monogram.
• On fit: everyone has a different body, so find your perfect fit. The keys are pants break, sleeve length, jacket waist and shoulders.
• Lose the belt. Start buying slacks that match your waist.
• Thus, find a tailor you trust. No suit is ready to wear off the rack.
Elevation Church extension provides new worshipping experience

By Katie Harmon  Staff Writer

North Carolina is just one part of the Bible Belt. This is where, each Sunday, the faithful of all denominations rise early and do their Sunday best with zeal. Businesses are closed on Sundays and church bells are heard over everything else. Within many churches, a person can have difficulty finding a seat in the back of the church. However, one church has caused quite a stir among the students of High Point University. Last year, Evan McGuirt founded the HPU extension site of Elevation Church, a Charlotte-based church led by Pastor Steven Furtick.

"Early my freshman year, God put the desire in my heart to share His word to people who have no idea where to start," McGuirt explains. "Not until this year did I understand He wanted me to do that through an extension site." The church's mission is "to see people far from God raised to life in Christ." Elevation has been acknowledged as one of the fastest growing churches in America by Outreach Magazine. When the first Elevation site opened its doors in 2006 it had only 121 members. Since then, the church has seen over 19,000 professions of faith and over 4,000 baptisms.

The HPU extension of Elevation has grown into a well-respected and recognized organization. In order to make Elevation possible on campus, McGuirt had to work with administration and go through two interviews in order to gain permission to lead the extension site. She also had to put together a "core team," which would help her get the site started and lead the worship service every Sunday.

"We started the site in the York common room with 20 students attending on the first Sunday," McGuirt says, "We quickly realized that we needed a larger space to meet." On Sunday morning, the church meets in the Student Union to accommodate the large number of people who attend. McGuirt attends the college's worship service every Sunday morning.

"I really wanted to reach out to girls who were freshmen who were having a tough time adjusting," McGuirt says. "I guess it's just a way to reach out to people and let them know that you don't have to fit in."

Matthew Munroe, president of College Life and student at HPU, also talked highly of the strong sense of community that College Life has to offer students. To help model the idea of community, Munroe opens his on-campus home at the up-perclassmen Bible study that is held each Sunday night from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. "I tried out College Life and it just felt like that's where I needed to be. I was just so thankful because that's where I found my community," said Munroe. College Life also hosts two other meet-ings on Mondays and Wednesdays. On Mondays, they offer an off-campus Bible study for freshmen from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. During the hour that the Bible study meets, students are taught how to become leaders in ministry through leadership training. However, after the first few weeks of the Bible study, weekly attendance is strongly encouraged so that students can get the most out of each session.

On Wednesdays, the organization hosts College Life Club from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Greek Village. These meetings happen every other week and are open to all who want to participate. During these meetings, the group plays games, performs skits, sings songs and shares the Biblical teachings found in the gospel.

During the year, College Life also hosts a kick-off celebration in August to help recruit new members. Barrett mentioned that typically the organization invites a band and tries some "off the wall and fun things" to make the celebration memorable. They also host two retreats, one in the fall and one in the spring, to help deepen the sense of community that College Life strives for. Whether you have always known the Bible or you have no idea where to start, College Life welcomes all who have a desire to grow through community and scripture.

For more information, you can contact Megan May at maym07@highpoint.edu and Matthew Munroe at munrom10@highpoint.edu, or search their Facebook group HPU College Life for more details.
Volunteer Center provides variety for community service projects

By Chelsie Gastright
Organizations Editor

Each year, the students at High Point University average 30,000 hours of volunteer and community service work. With several outreach-oriented organizations on campus, it can become difficult to decide which organization offers the right service opportunities for you. The Volunteer Center at HPU offers students a wide variety of community service opportunities all throughout the year.

Maggie Sturdivant, coordinator and president of the Volunteer Center, explained that unlike other organizations on campus, this organization does not require regular attendance to service events, and that most of the students that volunteer through the organization only volunteer for a single event. “We just try to reach out to our students and provide opportunities for them to help the community,” said Sturdivant.

Sturdivant also talked briefly about some of the largest events they hold each year that help provide service opportunities for both students and off-campus organizations. In the spring and fall, the Volunteer Center holds a carnival for the local elementary school students around the High Point area. The students get an authentic carnival that includes giant inflatables, booths run by HPU organizations and a large lunch in the Student Center. The Volunteer Center is hoping to see anywhere from 100 to 150 students at this semester’s carnival.

The Volunteer Center also hosts several blood drives, with their largest drive in the fall. Sturdivant explained that the fall drive averages 250 units of blood, while the smaller drives average 60 units.

Finally, Sturdivant talked about how each semester the Volunteer Center offers “alternative break trips” where students can spend their spring breaks giving back. (See photos from a recent alternative break trip above.) For the last three years, HPU has sent students to Guatemala during their fall break to help build close-fire stoves, provide water purifiers and distribute medicine to local families in other under-developed parts of the world.

“I decided that I wanted to get involved when I heard about the fall alternative break trip to Guatemala,” said Dylan Robinson, a junior and political science major. “I am a native of Guatemala, and had never been back, so I thought it was a good way to visit the country I am from.”

Robinson has been to Guatemala twice and has also been to Mississippi in the spring. The Volunteer Center has been to several other locations during its alternative breaks, including Alabama this past spring. Students who attended the Alabama trip helped rebuild homes that had been destroyed because of recent tornadoes.

“I have learned a lot about myself and it gives you a new outlook. I have gained so many experiences I wouldn’t get in a classroom,” said Robinson.

The Volunteer Center hopes to show students that volunteerism does not mean you need to be at a weekly meeting or regularly attend events; you just need the drive to want to help others.

For information on how to help and how to get involved, search for the Volunteer Center on Facebook (Volunteer Center-High Point University), or Twitter (@VolunteerHPU), or email the Volunteer Center at volunteer@highpoint.edu.
VertKlasse sees record times and close finishes

By Nolan Stout
Staff Writer

VertKlasse sees record times and close finishes at VertKlasse. Fraser, defending champion of the event, took first (11:23.34), while Malloy finished fifth (12:07.66). Sophomore Kaillt Whittington finished fourth for the Panthers in the triple jump with a distance of 11.02 meters.

On the men's side, Coach Espo said, "This is probably the best overall track team we've had since I've been here."

In the sprinting events, the men are led by sophomore Evan Emery, who placed second in the 200-meter dash with a personal record time of 20.87. The record was previously held by Kent Sidler, who ran the 200-meter dash with a time of 21.45 in 1983. Emery defeated Jamaal Torrance, a runner for Team USA who won a gold medal in the 4x400-meter relay at the 2008 IAAF World Championships.

Another winner at VertKlasse was junior Jacob Smith, who placed first in the 1,500-meter run. Photo by HPU Sports Information

Junior Jacob Smith defeat's Dukem's Domenick DeMatteo by less than a second to place first in the 1,500-meter run. Photo by HPU Sports Information

The Panthers had a total of 29 top-ten finishes in the meet. The men had eight individual top-five finishes while the women placed four in the top five.

Looking at the women's side for the Panthers, the sprinters are led by senior Marita Gamble.

"She's probably one of the better hurdlers on the East Coast," said Coach Espo.

Gamble placed third in the 400-meter hurdles (58.85) and the 200-meter dash (24.23) at VertKlasse. She is a school record holder in the 100- and 400-meter hurdles as well as a national qualifier in the 100-meter.

Coach Espofo says the team should be strong in the steeplechase this season with senior Kelsey Fraser and sophomore Audrey Malloy.

"They've done both in the past," Espofo said. "Both placed in the 3,000-meter steeplechase at VertKlasse. Fraser, defending champion of the event, took first (11:23.34), while Malloy finished fifth (12:07.66)."

Hosting the Big South tourney is beneficial for HPU basketball

By Nick Studer
Staff Writer

For the past couple of years the women's basketball Big South Conference Tournament has called High Point University its home. As the HPU Panther basketball tournament gives spectators more than just a basketball showcase, but a platform for the city of High Point and the more than 2,000-acre campus to showcase their beauty. According to Craig Keilitz, Athletic Director at HPU, the school does its best not only to draw in student attendance to the games but also to reach out to people in the community.

"For our season ticket holders and our alumni we send emails and text messages. Also in the newspapers we advertise [the tournament] throughout the year and we use radio, television and have our local radio station make a venture, manly, black coffee with a couple shots of espresso to "save" a 2012-13 season, only to realize they traded him away. You are: a man. A popular, professional-looking man. Then, buy yourself a 2013 Mustang and then head to Florida to watch some Spring Training.

"It's really different customers, most of my customers are interested in the ACC teams are not likely to come to see the High Point Panther basketball schedule. The ACC basketball tournament for women and men also makes appearances the same week in the Piedmont Trail."

However, the Big South Tournament is still able to hold its ground in High Point and is likely to be filled by this competition and adversity.

"It's really different customers, most of my customers are interested in the ACC teams are not likely to come to see the Big South teams and vice versa," said Keilitz.

Even though the women's basketball Big South tournament will not be back in High Point this year, the boosters are hoping that it doesn't jump at the opportunity to come back again later.

Jimenez said, "It gives people in the community something to do and look forward to. Why go out of your way to other cities when you can see good basketball here in High Point?"

"It's really different customers, most of my customers are interested in the ACC teams are not likely to come to see the Big South teams and vice versa," said Keilitz.