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SCHOOLS

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Green Highlands makes service trip to Tybee Island

STAFF REPORT

Green Highlands, the environmental student service organization at Georgia Highlands College Cartersville campus, recently made its third annual spring service trip to learn about the ecology of the area and to help in efforts to restore its environment. This year's destination was Tybee Island, just off the coast of Savannah. The visit didn't just include work and play. It also provided educational opportunities through a Marsh Trek with the Tybee Marine Science Center and a visit to the lighthouse and Fort Screven. Additionally, students worked with the Tybee Beautification Association to pick up litter on the island's beaches and dunes, and learned of

the damage litter inflicts on sea life. For example, young sea turtles are often found with plastic six-pack drink holders constricting their necks. As they grow the plastic tightens, putting them at risk of choking.

While on Tybee, the Green Highlands group also broke ground on the Jon Peney Memorial Garden at the Burton 4-H Center. Penny, a 22-year-old soldier from Tybee, died in the Middle East last year. The garden is now ready for planting, which will take place in April.

Green Highlands promotes sustainable lifestyles among the members of the college and local communities. The group's service trips began three years ago in an effort to use

the leisure time during spring break as an opportunity to pursue environmental projects that positively impact the state. Previously, Green Highlands has visited South Georgia, learning about native plants and the ecosystems of the area. They also went to Broxton Rocks Nature Preserve to work on a beautification project with students from South Georgia College and worked with field agents to collect data on the federally protected eastern indigo snake.

Georgia Highlands College is a two-year institution of the University System of Georgia, serving more than 5,200 students at six sites in Rome, Cartersville, Marietta, Paulding County and Douglasville.