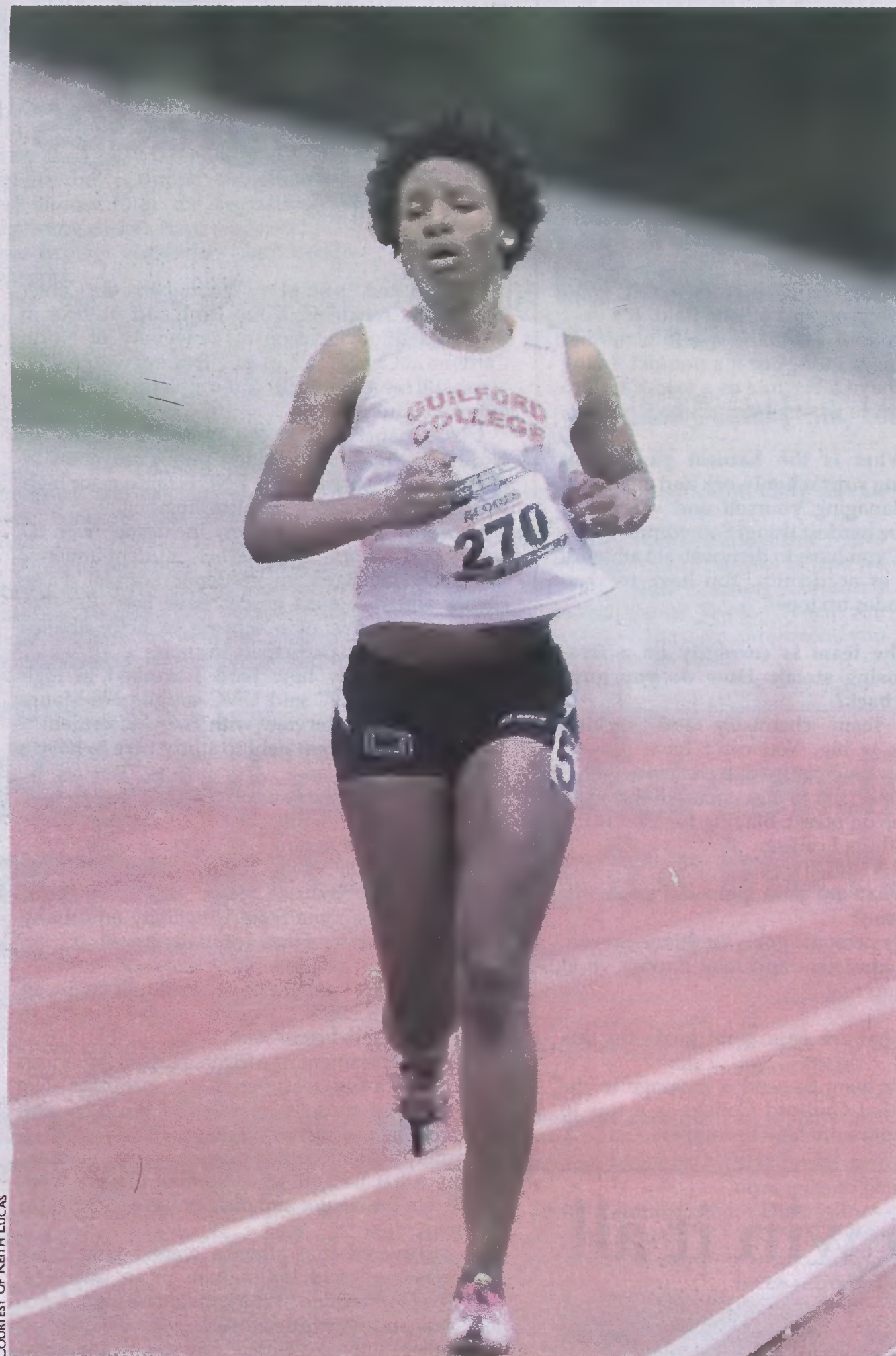


## Building community through youth: Jodie Geddes' plan to help immigrants



COURTESY OF KEITH LUCAS



ELEEN MARTIN/GUILFORDIAN

Senior **Jodie Geddes** previously ran for Guilford's track team. Now she focuses on the retreat she organized for refugee youth, which is set for April 19. She hopes to help the youth thrive in the U.S.

**BY KINSEY DANZIS**  
STAFF WRITER

Give youth a sense of community, and they will flourish for a day. Teach them to build community, and they will thrive for a lifetime.

Such is the goal of senior Jodie Geddes, former track runner and Bonner scholar.

Geddes has organized a retreat on April 19 for immigrant and refugee youth in Greensboro, which will include workshops explaining business innovation and social entrepreneurship.

Throughout the retreat, the participants will put together their own plans for potential business ventures based on what they learn.

However, this is not only a learning experience. At the end of the retreat, six youth will present their ideas in front of judges, and three will be chosen to receive \$200 to jump-start their ventures.

"We want them to know that yes, this is a retreat, and you're learning all these ideas, but this is a reality," said Geddes. "This isn't just a one day retreat that you're going to go through and then everything's going to be over."

It is a rough transition to American life for many immigrant youth and their families, one that Geddes hopes to ease.

"They're coming into a totally different culture, a totally

different way of living," said James Shields, director of the Bonner Center. "Basic things we take for granted, they don't have access to."

"Jodie wanted to empower them to create their own resources."

Greensboro is already rife with foreign social entrepreneurship.

Especially downtown, there are many immigrant and refugee families that earn money selling goods from their own cultures.

"I want young people to recognize that there are people in their communities who are doing social entrepreneurship," said Geddes. "They don't have to follow the status quo of what it means to be American."

Danny Cash, head track and field coach, is not at all surprised that Geddes has initiated such a project.

"Jodie has a very generous nature and is very purpose driven," said Cash in an email interview. "She is always energetic and motivates those around her to do their best."

Shields said that Geddes' character makes her perfect for the job.

"Jodie is a very passionate and energetic person," said Shields. "It's very important to her to feel like she's making a difference."

Though Geddes no longer runs track, her former teammates had great things to say about her.

"Jodie's caring and determined character in her academics and organization work is parallel when it comes to performing and supporting others on the team," said junior Jasmine O'Neill, middle distance and sprinter.

Junior Khadija Carr, sprinter and thrower, said Geddes is a change-maker and has so much to share with our community.

"Jodie has this passion that permeates any space she steps foot in," said Carr in an email interview. "On the track, she worked hard to beat her past records. Even after injury, she fought through the pain to return."

She is indeed sharing with the community, and people are taking notice.

"When immigrants come to a new country many things are different; things like language, religion, customs and traditions," said first-year Jose Oliva, a fellow Bonner student, in an email interview. "Jodie is trying to help students build a strong sense of identity."

"She wants them to feel proud of who they are and where they come from."

For Geddes, this identity and self-sufficiency is a constant motivation behind the project.

"I want youth to recognize that if you want to create something to sustain your community, then you have the right to do so," said Geddes. "It isn't a right granted by the government, but by your own existence."

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### STUDENT ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



E'LEYNA GARCIA  
SENIOR  
LACROSSE

Earned her 5th ODAC  
Player of the Week



TANNER GROSS  
FIRST-YEAR  
GOLF

EMORY INVITATIONAL  
(APRIL 8)

Won 3rd place



CALLI PASTOR  
SOPHOMORE  
SOFTBALL

SHOOT HOUSE  
(APRIL 21)

Threw a perfect game in  
11-0 victory