



Small Footprint CEO and Founder Richard Star ets (back row, center) with Small Footprint staff members (from left) Tom Oliphant, Danielle Lamphier, Brian White, Rob Robless and Steve Vest, Speas Principal Robert Ash and students (back row, from left) Yahzarah Wall, Jasmine Cordray, Aseelah O'Neal, Celexia Johnson, Jamie-Lyn Poe, Taliya Lyons, (front row) Brian Martinez, Michael Jimenez Dorantes, Lino Hernandez Chavez and Theron Money.

Photos by Layla Garm

**Speas**

from page B1

end of the school year. "... The biggest thing (we're trying to teach) is cultural acceptance and knowing that there's more to society than Winston-Salem and North Carolina. They need to be aware that we live in a global society and if we're going to have good jobs and be good members of our society, we have to be culturally accepting."

Reem Farra, an English-as-a-Second Language teacher's assistant, said the Speas students worked hard to bone up on their understanding of Romanian culture and customs in preparation for the trip.

"They were really happy and excited about this," related Farra, a native of Syria. "They tried to get as much as much information about Romania as possible, so they could represent themselves well, and I think they did."

In honor of the occa-



Steve and Ginna Vest organized the outing.

sion, the students sampled Romanian food prepared by a Speas staffer. The field trip, which was extended only to high performing Speas students who have exhibited good behavior and leadership skills, was arranged by Vest and his wife Ginna, who serves as a testing and curriculum coordinator at Speas.

"With Speas being a

global studies school and them working globally (at Small Footprint), we decided this would be a great experience for the kids to see how software transcends globally," Ginna Vest said.

As his work environment demonstrates, having an awareness of cultures around the world is of increasing importance in the business world, said

Dr. Rob Robless, a native of Malaysia and the vice president of Enterprise Services for Small Footprint.

"I've worked with companies from all over the world," said Robless, who previously navigated the global marketplace as an employee of General Motors and American Airlines. "...There's a lot of value to having a global understanding."

In Romania, students often aspire to technology driven careers such as software engineering, but here in the United States, such ambition is far less common, said Small Footprint CEO and Founder Richard Star ets, who spent 16 years living and working all over Eastern Europe. By hosting students from Speas and other area schools, Star ets is hopeful he can spark a greater interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) careers among local youth.

"Here in the U.S., we still need to work hard to make math and science and

technology an important or key element of our education and steer kids that way," he noted. "...If I can help make that happen, then that's what we want to do."

Speas, which is home to a diverse student body, adopted a global studies theme this school year. The school recently hosted an International Day featuring foods, performances and presentations reflecting cultures from all over the world that drew over 500 attendees, Ash said. The veteran administrator said he is hopeful that the Small Footprint trip is the first of many experiential learning projects the school takes on.

"I appreciate Small Footprint giving us the opportunity to have our kids come in and experience this," Ash said. "They're even excited about just the view, the conference room, that kind of thing. Just the experience has been a big thing for them."



Hairston

**Aggie wins USDA essay contest**

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Simone Hairston, a senior majoring in dietetics at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, was among 20 juniors and seniors from universities across the country to win the U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Agriculture as a Career" essay contest.

Hairston received an expenses-paid trip to the USDA's 2014 Agricultural Outlook Forum, themed, "The Changing Face of Agriculture," in Arlington, Va. from Feb. 20-21.

"It's a great, great honor," she said, adding that her essay described her belief that, "agriculture is the basis for everything. Nutrition and agriculture are closely related."

Hairston, a research scholar and participant in A&T's multicultural scholars program, said the potential for a rewarding and stimulating career in dietetics is one reason Hairston decided to enroll in the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. She hopes to focus her career on childhood nutrition's relevance to obesity prevention.

In addition to focuses on nutrition and dietetics, the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences has programs that lead to an array of other careers.



**Habitat for Humanity**  
of Forsyth County  
[www.habitatforsyth.org](http://www.habitatforsyth.org)

**Welcome, Collegiate Challenge!**

We are honored that Habitat for Humanity International has chosen our affiliate to host the 25th Anniversary celebration of the national Collegiate Challenge program March 2-8. About 100 students from 9 schools will build 4 new Habitat houses in the Boston-Thurmond neighborhood, the target community of our Neighborhood Revitalization program.

PRESENTING SPONSOR:

**IMG**

COMMUNITY SPONSOR:

**BB&T**

OTHER SPONSORS:



The CHILDREN'S Home  
Goodness grows here



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF WINSTON-SALEM  
Building Professionals



WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL



Villanova University has sent several teams to Habitat Forsyth since 1999 and is returning as part of the 25th Anniversary celebration.

**Participating Schools:**

- Coe College / LaSalle University / Villanova University
- University of Florida / St. John's University
- Susquehanna University / Vanderbilt University
- Southern Polytechnic State University
- Milwaukee School of Engineering