

# Dr. Iida Pöllänen and the Black Renaissance

Elliot Steeves  
Staff Writer

Iida Pöllänen delivered a lecture on the Black Renaissance and its Nordic Affiliations on March 9 from 7 to 9 p.m. in Cec Echhoff Alumni Hall. Dr. Pöllänen has undertaken postdoctoral research concerning the connection of Black Modernism to the Nordic region according to the Gustavus website, true to the topic of the lecture.

The lecture concerned the Nordic region, which has been largely neglected by studies concerning the Black Renaissance and the Jim Crow era of segregation, according to the Gustavus website. The website also detailed that Pöllänen was concerned with the unexplored ways in which Nordic literature explored Black art and the ways in which products of that Renaissance were appropriated into a largely white cultural context in Europe.

After the lecture, there was a session involving snacks and a one-on-one opportunity to converse with Dr. Pöllänen. This took place in the Interpretive Center on March 10 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. The conversation was an opportunity for students to further engage with her and ask their own questions about the lecture.

This lecture had been in the works since at least the Fall semester of 2022. Per Senior Amanda Nyakwada, Pöllänen was brought to Gustavus Adolphus



Amanda Nyakwada, along with the poster for the event

Katie Doolittle

College by longtime friend and connection Martha Ndakalako, an English Professor at Gustavus specializing in African literature and feminisms.

"She was friends with Martha, and they are very close", Nyakwada said. "Martha just asked her to come in and talk about her research." Indeed, both Ndakalako and Pöllänen hail from the University of Oregon, where they obtained their doctorates.

Nyakwada also had the opportunity to be on the planning committee alongside Ndakalako. This proved to be an extensive endeavor. Nyakwada discussed how she helped make Iida comfortable at Gustavus, and marketed and researched in

preparation for the opportunity.

Nyakwada also discussed the specific areas in which Pöllänen's lecture would resonate with the student body at Gustavus.

"I think that for Gustavus globally, there is an interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion", Nyakwada emphasized. "In perspective, it is about the black renaissance and the history of black people, and that is important for diversity and inclusion."

Further, the angle that Pöllänen took was unique within the scope of the Black Renaissance itself.

"Most people think of the Harlem Renaissance," Nyakwada pointed out where people's minds generally go with the Black Renaissance. "[Pöllänen]

is taking it from the Nordic perspective; this is a new perspective that people do not often consider."

The connection proved to be fruitful not just for the opportunity to lecture, but for connection in the classroom. During her visit, Pöllänen took the opportunity to connect with three different classes in the English department: Ethnic Literature, Pan-African Poetry, and Writing Fiction.

Part of Pöllänen's visit to classes was influenced by an overlap in coursework for these respective courses. As an example, the assigned reading in Writing Fiction was a transcript of a lecture that Pöllänen delivered on Race, Narrative, and Literary History. The article detailed a lot

of Pöllänen's broad research, in particular focusing on her work on colorblindness in modern literature.

Nyakwada also commented on the overlap in Ethnic Literature as a student in the course. The class covered Booksand by Nella Larsen, a book that received focus from Pöllänen in her lecture.

"[The book is about] a mixed race woman, Black and Danish, who is sort of figuring herself out...she is at an institution that should be uplifting Black students, but it is hypocritical", Nyakwada commented.

The sponsors for the event were the English department, the Division for Equity and Inclusion, the Scandinavian Studies department, the Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies department, the Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies department, the History department, and the Comparative Literature department.

Pöllänen received her doctorate at the University of Oregon in RUHG, and also resided in the school's Comparative Literature department. Her main areas of research, in addition to the material covered in the lecture, are English, Finnish, and Swedish prose, as well as Novel theories, according to the University of Oregon website.

Pöllänen has delivered additional lectures on topics in Modernist Literature. Per Ohio State, she served as a guest scholar in 2019 and delivered a lecture concerning Willa Cathar's *The Song Of The Lark* in relation to immigration communities.

## News

Compassion Initiative... Page 3

## WEEKLYScan

A preview of this week's top news and more

## Entertainment

Green Book... Page 13

## Variety

Mr. Gustavus... Page 5

## Features

Girl Scout Cookies... Pages 8-9

## Opinion

Oscar-vations... Page 12

## Sports

Women's hockey... Page 16

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## Events Calendar

**Mr. Gustavus**  
 March 10 6:00-8:00 p.m.  
 Dining Room

**International Festival**  
 March 10 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
 Alumni Hall

**Latinx Film Fest**  
 March 13 6:30-8:00 p.m.  
 Wallenburg

**Gustavus Day at the Capitol**  
 March 14 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
 St. Paul

**The Compassion Initiative**  
 March 15 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
 Three Crowns Room

**Mystery Bag Plinko**  
 March 15 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
 Campus Center

## Daily Sabbath Calendar

**Academic Convocation:**  
 Tuesdays (Christ Chapel)  
 10 - 10:20

**Morning Praise:**  
 Wednesdays (Christ Chapel)  
 10 - 10:20

**Holy Communion:**  
 Thursdays (Christ Chapel)  
 10 - 10:20

**Musical Showcase:**  
 Fridays (Christ Chapel)  
 10 - 10:20

**Sunday Worship Community:**  
 Sundays (Christ Chapel)

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## Campus Safety Report

**Friday, February 24, 2023**

- On Friday, February 24, 2023, Campus Safety recieved a report of damage to college property in North Hall

**Saturday, February 25, 2023**

- On Saturday, February 25, 2023, Campus Safety recieved notification of two exit signs damaged in Norelius Hall

**Monday, February 27, 2023**

- On Monday, February 27, 2023, Campus Safety responded to a water leak at College View Apartments

**Friday, March 3, 2023**

- On Friday, March 3, Campus Safety responded to a fire alarm in Sohre Hall.

**When driving in snowy and icy conditions:**

- Make sure to increase your following distance from the car in front of you so you have more time to stop.
- Turn slowly and wide
- Don't hit the brakes when you feel your car sliding on ice, but keep control of the wheel.
- Don't use cruise control when driving on slippery surfaces, such as ice and snow

Contact the Campus Safety office 24 hours a day at 507-933-8888.

# Small gesture, big impact: the Dario Compassion Initiative

**Katie Samek**  
Staff Writer

Gustavus Adolphus College is about to see a sharp uptick in random acts of kindness, and it's all thanks to the Dario Compassion Initiative. This weeklong event, running March 13-17, is a reminder to show compassion in all aspects of life, whether it's holding the door for a stranger or sitting with someone new at lunch.

The main draw of this event is the weeklong bingo game, which runs the entirety of the event. Students can grab a bingo card (or several) from the tables outside the Caf all week from 10 a.m.- 1 p.m., upon which are tasks such as "sit by a new classmate" or "give a hug to someone who needs it." Students are then encouraged to complete as many tasks on the card as they can over the course of a week, collecting signatures from everyone they show compassion to. After getting at least one bingo, students can drop their cards off either at the tables by the Caf or at the GustieWell office. Each legitimate bingo on the card earns one raffle entry for one of five gift cards for a local business.

Students who fill out their bingo card completely, otherwise known as "blackout," can turn in their finished card to enter a special grand prize raffle for an Apple Watch. Do note, however, that only blackout bingo cards are eligible for the grand prize raffle - you cannot enter a bingo card for both the gift card raffle and the grand prize raffle. Separate baskets for each type of card will be indicated at the drop-off spots.

Alongside the bingo event, which runs all week, there will also be a workshop held on Wednesday, March 15 from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the 3 Crowns Room, inside the Jackson Campus Center. Kate Dario, founder and organizer of the Dario Compassion Initiative, will be hosting student-led discussions on topics such as "What does compassion mean to you?" and "How



*Kate Dario, founder of the initiative*

Parker Tewes

do you spread love to the people around you?". All students who attend the event will receive an additional bingo card, which means more opportunities to enter the raffles.

The initial idea for the Dario Compassion Initiative came after Junior Kate Dario was trying to think of ideas for events she could host for her then-sorority, Sigma Sigma Sigma. Doug Thompson, who works with the President's Council for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, suggested she host a Town Hall event on the merits of compassion, which was hosted back in November of 2022. As the event went over well with her sorority, Dario decided to expand her audience and bring her message of compassion to the wider Gustavus community.

"I thought the town hall event went really well," Dario

said. "It only made sense that I should expand my audience and let the rest of the student body participate the next time around."

Dario acquired funding for the Dario Compassion Initiative from the Campus Activity Office's newly-minted Special Engagements Fund, which provided her with the resources she needed to get this week-long event up and running. Of special importance are the series of posters advertising the event on the boards located in the main hallways of the Jackson Campus Center, which provide a way for students to engage with the event more passively.

"I had to argue for the right to keep my name on the project. I want this project to be a way for me to leave my mark on the campus, and without my name on it, how would

anyone know it was started by me? The college originally wanted it to be called the Compassion Initiative, but I said no, I want it to be the Dario Compassion Initiative," Dario said.

Dario's inspiration for the event may be simple, but she believes that it will be a great way for students to show a little compassion for a world that has largely forgotten how to show it.

"Compassion is something that is so small that people forget to show it to each other. Hosting this event, it allows people to make a small impact on someone else's day that can impact the world in a much bigger way," Dario said.

If the Dario Compassion Initiative draws enough recognition this year, Dario has said that she would be willing to host the event again next year.

"Yeah, sure, I'd love to host

this event again," Dario said. "Provided I can get the funding for it, that is. But even if I can't, it's nice to know that it generated interest with the student body and changed a few lives for the better."

# Madness in the library

**Andrew Clark**  
Staff Writer

The fourth annual Library March Madness is currently taking place. This year's theme is books that have been turned into TV shows. There are 32 of the latest, best, and most popular TV shows — all started off as books — that are being put in a bracket-style tournament to see which show is superior. After each week of voting, points are tallied, and at the end, the person with the most points will receive a prize.

This year's competition includes big titles such as *Queen's Gambit*, *Bridgerton*, *Game of Thrones*, and so many more. Physical copies of the brackets can be found underneath the Library March Madness display by the e-classroom on the second (main) floor of the library. Or if you would prefer to fill out an online bracket, they are available on the Gustavus website as well as through a link in the daily *Gustavus-L* emails. Brackets must be submitted by Friday, March 10 in order to be eligible to win prizes. Everyone in the Gus-

tavus community is welcome and encouraged to participate, including faculty and staff!

There will be six rounds of voting that will take place online. Links to the google form can be found online on the Gustavus website. Each voting round will be open from 8 a.m. Monday mornings to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays. At the end of each round, the television show with the most votes will move on. All voting is completely anonymous and everyone can vote as many times as they would like.

Each participant will be scored according to how many correct television shows they guessed per round. Each correct answer will earn the participant one point, and double points will be awarded to any participant that guesses the final television show winner correctly. "Scoring will take place on March 30th once the voting window has closed, and the winner will be announced on March 31st," Information Desk and Assets Specialist Leah Zacate said. Stay up to date with the

winners of each round by following the library on Instagram, @gustavuslibrary. Winners of each round will be announced on the library's Instagram page as well as what television show they are going to be head-to-head with next.

While the main focus of Library March Madness is on the big tournament, there are also other events happening throughout the month at the library. There is a month-long reading challenge as well as a reading party to celebrate all things reading. All are encouraged to participate in these events as well as in the reading party. Events are open to all members of the Gustavus community.

The month-long reading challenge consists of four different rounds each lasting one week and includes tasks such as "Visit the Archives" and "Work on a puzzle in the Library", amongst other fun and engaging activities. Each activity that a contestant completes correlates to a different amount of points ranging from five points

to 15 points. To claim points, there is a google form with all of the available challenges where participants can tick off the ones that they have completed. Contestants can submit points once per week and there will be one winner per week as well as a grand-prize winner at the end.

"... We're encouraging people to accumulate as many points per week as possible so that we end up with an overall points leader who will win the 'grand prize' [of choosing a new book to add to the library's collection]," Acquisitions Manager Kate Sonstebly said.

Information about the reading challenges and links to the online form to submit points can be found via a QR code on posters around the school, as well as among resources that can be picked up from the library help desk.

There is also one more event that will be happening later this month. On March 26, there will be a reading party that all are welcome to attend.

"We'll be advertising more

about the reading party soon, but the basic idea is to bring people together in the library for a cozy evening of food and reading--a way to build community without having a formal program or a requirement to mingle. Attendees will be encouraged to come and enjoy both the food and the company of other bibliophiles while finding something new or bringing an old favorite to read," Sonstebly said.

If you like reading, then this is definitely the month for you! There are tons of different book-related opportunities, and events to indulge your bibliophile urges with. Don't forget, it's not too late to fill out your brackets for the tournament, but make sure you do it soon. May the best television show win!



The bracket

Hailey Brune

# 2023 Mr. Gustavus soon to be crowned

**Katie Doolittle**  
Staff Writer

The annual Mr. Gustavus pageant is ready to take place on Friday, March 10 at 6:00 p.m. in the Evelyn Young Dining Center.

The Mr. Gustavus pageant is a fundraiser hosted by the Theta Xi Gamma sorority. This year, they are raising awareness and donations for their philanthropy organization, the Pinky Swear Foundation. "The Pinky Swear Foundation supports children battling cancer and their families in a number of ways. Some of these ways include helping with rent/mortgage payments, paying for gas and groceries, car insurance, and other everyday expenses," Senior Molly Smerillo said.

The Pinky Swear foundation began in 2003 when 9-year-old Mitch Chepokas, who was a cancer patient, found that other families in a similar situation could not afford Christmas gifts. Mitch went to his bank, deposited money, and donated to a family in need.

Before his passing, Mitch made a pinky swear with his father to continue to help children with cancer and their loved ones.

The organization is dedicated to saying 'yes' to every family in need with a dedication to compassion, collaboration, and celebration. Some of its many partners include Hy-Vee, Cargill, Mall of America, General Mills, Barnes & Noble, and iHeartMEDIA.

The Thetas officially adopted the Pinky Swear Foundation in 2007 and have held various annual events to raise donations, some of which include the Pinky Swear Silent Auction, the Benefit Dinner, volunteering at the Pinky Swear Kids Triathlon, and hosting the Mr. Gustavus pageant.

"The purpose of the Mr. Gustavus event is to raise money for our philanthropy, the Pinky Swear Foundation, in a fun and casual way! It is the biggest event the Thetas do for the campus community so we are all really excited," Senior Emily Meyer said.



Mr. Gustavus of spring 2022.

Submitted.

*"The purpose of the Mr. Gustavus event is to raise money for our philanthropy, the Pinky Swear Foundation, in a fun and casual way!"*

The process of deciding who will be Mr. Gustavus consists of peer nominations. The top five people with the most nominations are then selected to participate in the pageant. The week leading up to and also during the event, attendees can donate \$2 to vote for their favored candidate, either via Venmo or cash. The person who successfully raises the most donations wins the title of Mr. Gustavus.

The 2023 candidates are Seniors Tait Erickson, Eric Johnson, Peyton Churchwood, Teddy Johnson, and Zach Gbor. "The guys have been working hard to put on the best possible show for everyone, so hopefully votes will make those results

pay off," Sophomore Emma Kennedy said.

"This year our candidates are super dedicated to putting on an outstanding performance to raise as much money as possible, so it should be a really wonderful event," Smerillo said.

*"This year our candidates are super dedicated to putting on an outstanding performance to raise as much money as possible, so it should be a really wonderful event."*

The event will also include raffle prizes, Insomnia Cookies, popcorn, commentary from guest judges, and LineUs comedy improv troupe.

Over 15 years of work towards the Pinky Swear Founda-

tion is a testament to their mission as sisters of the Theta Xi Gamma sorority.

As members of the Theta Xi Gamma sorority, these girls are dedicated to creating and serving the greater community. According to their personal mission statement, Thetas commit themselves to compassionate action. "We will strive to better our community, our world, and ourselves by devoting time to serve others in need. We will strive to act as strong, positive role models in the community through our actions, words, and involvement," they said.

Smerillo, Meyer, and Kennedy began working on this event at the beginning of February and are looking forward to the outcome of this year's Mr. Gustavus. "I am really looking forward to getting the opportunity to MC the event this year. Emma, Emily, and I have been working really hard to plan this event, so I am just excited for all of our hard work to pay off and to help kiddos battling cancer,"

Smerillo said.

"I have really enjoyed working with Emily and Molly over the past few weeks in order to make this event happen. I was a freshman watching the event last year and had a lot of fun, so it's really cool to be putting on the show this year," Kennedy said.

This year's Mr. Gustavus is especially meaningful for the seniors as this will be the second time the event will take place for them since COVID-19 restrictions. "I am looking forward to holding our second Mr. Gustavus event for students," Smerillo said.

*"I am looking forward to holding our second Mr. Gustavus event for students."*

"We are excited that we could do it again," Meyer said.

# GUSTIE of the WEEK

## Mike Martínez



Gustie of the Week Mike Martínez

Soren Sackreiter

**Michaela Woodward**  
Staff Writer

*"[Martínez] is a genuine friend, roommate, and student. He is always willing to go the extra mile...Mike Martínez does shine in every setting."*

Senior Mike Martínez has been able to find a community within the close-knit environment at Gustavus.

"I'm originally from Worthington, Minnesota. I actually didn't know about Gustavus up until my junior year of high school. I had two teachers that came to Gustavus, a math teacher and an English teacher, and they both recommended me to the school because they thought I would be a good fit for it. I was really unsure about where I wanted to go to college. I was originally going to go to the U of M Twin Cities, but Gustavus had a better offer when it came to financial aid. I visited [and] stayed the night here my senior year – I was in Sohré. I liked the environment, I liked that it was a small school and you could actually be in touch with your professors," Martínez said.

Martínez notes that while Gustavus is a small school, it is not difficult to get involved or form connections with other students, such as Senior Jenesis Tompkins.

"[Martínez] is a genuine friend, roommate, and student. He is always willing to go the extra mile, even if that means tagging along to drive to the Twin Cities. He thinks of others and acts on that as well. I have seen [Martínez] as a member of OLAS (Organization of Latin American Students) and a member of PASO (Pan African Student Organization) and he is always participating in some capacity. Mike Martínez does shine in every setting," Tompkins said.

Martínez has been involved with OLAS for the past two years and finds his experiences with the organization to be some of the most memorable from his time at Gustavus.

"I am the PR [public representative] of OLAS. I've been in OLAS for two years now and we actually have our big event coming up on April 14th: Latinx Night, which will be held in Alumni Hall. Last year, attending Latinx Night was really fun. It was very unfortunate that my freshman year it couldn't happen because of the COVID pandemic and then my sophomore year it also didn't happen because the regulations were still very much strict. So last year was the very first time I could actually experience Latinx Night for myself, especially as a Latino student, I feel really proud of my heritage. That was one of the best experiences I've ever had. There were so many performances, foods that I always have loved that I got to eat, I tried foods from different places in Latin America, so I'd say that's a really favorite memory of mine," Martínez said.

As a Psychology major with a Communications Studies minor, Martínez was set on his academic path in a perfect melding of behavioral sciences and media.

"My mom and I, we would watch crime shows and sometimes a psychologist would show up on the show and explain why this criminal was acting this way, or there was a behaviorist and they would explain stuff like that, and I just really thought that was super interesting," Martínez said.

In the future, Martínez hopes to work with children in a clinical psychology setting.

"For my future plans, I hope to work with kids that have mental disabilities and just learn more about it and go out in the field and help as much as I can. I want to go right into the workforce and I know that there's just so many entry-level programs too for people who want to work hands-on with children, which is really what I want to do. With my degree, I want to work more hands-on with patients and children. I'm not much of a researcher, I'd rather be the one to apply the research," Martínez said.

When he's not doing homework or working at the local Starbucks, Martínez is busy singing with the Gustavus Choir in the Bass section. He traveled with the group during J-term and was able to visit Italy and Spain for the first time.

"I was in Chapel Choir last year and my friend encouraged me to try out for G Choir because I was really unsure whether to even join in the first place. I tried out, like 'What's the worst that could happen?' you just get rejected. But thankfully I got accepted," Martínez said.

Taking advantage of the opportunities and resources available to students is Martínez's advice for any student who might feel like they are unsure or haven't found their place on campus yet.

"Don't be afraid to ask for help, especially if you're new here, like a transfer student or just a first-year, or even if you're like a senior as well. If you have questions about careers, there are so many resources here on campus that I feel like lots of people don't take advantage of. Talk to your professors, talk to your advisors, they're here to help you. Just don't be afraid to ask, because people are more than willing to help out," Martínez said.

**Do you have a suggestion for a Gustavus student, professor, or staff member who could be our next Gustie of the Week?**

If so, send their name, position on campus, and a short description of why you think they should be recognized to

**[cparamor@gustavus.edu](mailto:cparamor@gustavus.edu)**  
for a chance to be featured!

A representative from the Gustavian Weekly will be in contact with you via email if your suggestion is chosen to be featured in an issue of the paper.

# Call for writers and artists

**Emma Kelsey**  
*Staff Writer*

**F**irethorne, The Gustavus Journal of Literary and Graphic Arts, is a magazine that is composed solely of student work, and is made each year by Associate Professor of English Matthew Rasmussen's Editing and Publishing class

as their main project. Professor Rasmussen It consists of non-fiction and fiction literature, as well as prose, poetry, and art. Any student, regardless of experience or major, is welcome to submit their works. They are currently accepting submissions until March 17th.

Prose editor, Junior Elliot Steeves, shares his knowledge on the magazine. "It used to be an actual organization, run by

[Professor] Philip Bryant, and at some point it shifted to be Matthew's course on editing and publishing. The class is divided into various roles for [the editing process]. For example, I am one of three editors of prose fiction, so I will be receiving the entire slush pile along with the others and we will parse through it for inclusion. There are two or three poetry, art, and nonfiction editors each who do

similar things in those areas. There is a person who does the marketing and publicity. There are one or two copyeditors, who specialize in being grammar dictators. Finally, there are the two design editors, which is exactly what it sounds like. What I will say is that everyone does a little bit of everything; these are just specialized titles. If you are with the team making

Firethorne, part of doing well in the course is getting as hands-on as possible," Steeves said.

Those who want to submit their works can go on to the Firethorne Instagram, at @firethorne\_gac, or scan the QR code on the posters for Firethorne to access the link where you can submit your own work.

## FIRETHORNE SUBMISSIONS

are now open!



**SUBMIT BY MARCH  
17TH, 2023**