

Statewide Success Stories

Family and Community Involvement

On April 16, **Pecan Park Elementary's** PTA sponsored their Second Annual Family Academic/Wellness Night from 5:30-6:30 PM. Only students who brought a parent/adult with them could participate. The whole family was encouraged to attend. When students registered, they were given a color-coded card based on their grade level. Students and parents were then instructed to walk around the track one time (a quarter mile track) to receive a sticker for their card. Then the child chooses an academic (vocabulary, math, puzzles) or another type of activity, such as the "Project Fit America" (PFA) (sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield) station or the KaBOOM!! Playspace station (The Home Depot) to receive another sticker. After the child completed an academic/PFA activity, they walked around the track again. Each child could earn up to eight stickers (4 for successfully completing the academic/PFA stations and 4 for walking around the track 4 times). Students then redeemed their stickers for prizes. All participants are given fresh fruit (provided by our Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program grant from MDE) and water. The entire event was put together in one day by partnering with 250+ community volunteers and school staff members. Faculty, staff, and parent volunteers conducted the activities.

Parents, staff, parent volunteers, teachers, extension agents, and school administrators met in the school gym of **Pontotoc Elementary** for an update on their implementation of coordinated school health and plans for future activities to take place in their school. After the presentation, attendees got the opportunity to climb a rock wall, play Dance, Dance Revolution, basketball and the "Shipwreck" game. As a result of having this event, key players in the implementation of school health at Pontotoc Elementary were given the opportunity to voice their ideas and willingness to help meet their school's goals for achieving optimal wellness and academic achievement for their students. This will also increase community and family involvement in the things that take place outside of school that promote the health of their students.

The Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service provides a short nutrition counseling tutorial at each monthly PTO meeting at **Charleston Elementary** in the East Tallahatchie School District.

The **Amory Elementary School** received a "Safe Routes to School" grant to make it easier and safer for more children to walk and bike to school. For more information on the Safe Routes initiative, go to www.gomdot.com/srts and www.saferoutesinfo.org.

In order to involve parents in school wellness **Charleston Middle School** of the East Tallahatchie School District and Natchez-Adams School District sponsored "Family Fun and Fitness Nights".



Forming partnerships between the school and community is a great way to foster and support the health of students. **South Pike School District** is doing just that. With the help of their local school health councils, schools are bringing students, staff, parents and the community together to reduce obesity, absenteeism, and educate everyone on how to stay healthy during the winter months. At **Magnolia Elementary School**, parents, staff, and students eat and play together in their “Walk, Run, and Roll” program to show the link between regular physical activity and success in school. Dr. Daisy Thomas, M.D., spoke to Magnolia Elementary staff and community about how to combat "winter illnesses" through lifestyle and dietary changes. She brought healthy, all natural food and drink samples to share with all participants. The Mississippi State Extension service conducted a mini health and wellness workshop at Magnolia Elementary in conjunction with a "Grandparents Breakfast". To keep momentum going, the Mississippi State Extension service and Pike County Health Department will be on location at Magnolia Elementary for the annual Mardi Gras Fun Day. Community members received information on a range of health related topics including diet and exercise. Creating an environment at school where the students, staff, community and parents feel that their health is important is a great way to encourage students to be fit, healthy and ready to succeed.

At **Grenada Upper Elementary School**, they do Muffins with Mom and Donuts with Dad. The school nurses show “Growing Up Girls” and “Growing Up Boys” which are both Medicaid approved videos for ages 9 and up. With parental consent, they show these videos to all 5th grade students and give parents the opportunity to join the video showing. They also welcome grandparents, aunts, uncles, pastors, youth ministers and whoever else is interested in watching the video with the 5th grade students. At the end of the video, each student receives a care package from Kimberly Clark Company containing personal items specific to the students’ gender. They have been doing this for three years and it has been a great outreach to the family and community in Grenada.

Clinton Public School District hosted an event called Arrow Meltdown that involved both parents and teachers from Clinton Public Schools. This event was coordinated through the Clinton Public School Health Council and hosted by the Baptist Healthplex at Mississippi College. There were 16 participants selected from 65 applicants, which were selected by a panel of fitness, nutrition and medical experts. There were at least one parent and/or teacher selected from each school. During this three month contest there were fitness and nutrition “boot camps” held each week and participants received free membership to the Baptist Healthplex during the competition. There were also weekly weigh-ins and publicities to the community recognizing who was in the lead and the progression of the contest. The winner of the contest was chosen based on body weight lost and received a \$3,500 prize package. After the competition, a Healthy Family Day was held where the winner was announced and keynote speaker Roger Shultz, season 5 winner of “The Biggest Loser” spoke.

