

*December 2009: Keep Your Tissues Handy: Defending Against Disease*  
*Health Services*

In Marion County, partnerships have contributed to opportunities for children to be fit, healthy, and ready to succeed. Collaboration is key to the success of disease prevention in schools. In an effort to prevent the H1N1 virus from spreading throughout their school environment, **Marion County and Columbia Municipal School Districts** collaborated with Marion General Hospital to provide two immunization clinics for two schools each day that H1N1 vaccines were offered this fall. Because of the number of nurses on hand to administer injections, it was feasible for the schools participating to also have two school nurses on site at each school to provide follow-up care and comfort those students who were apprehensive about receiving a vaccine. School nurses from both districts and staff from Marion General Hospital met on professional development days prior to the clinics to work out details, locations, community assistance, etc. The Allied Health nurse brought her students to the clinics each day to serve as monitors and provide additional assistance. Rebecca Clarke, the Columbia school district nurse, commented in looking back, "It was so fantastic to be able to work as a team—we could delegate to each other and know that the job(s) would be done correctly. School nurses are great working alone, but we are unbeatable working together!"

*November 2009: Don't Be An American Idle: Healthy Exercising*  
*Physical Education/Activity Services*

Like other schools across Mississippi, Northeast Lauderdale Middle School is always looking for more opportunities for their students to enjoy physical activity so that they will be fit, healthy and ready to succeed. With funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, **Lauderdale County School District- Northeast Lauderdale Middle School** built a walking track on their campus to encourage students, teachers and community members to walk together in a safe environment. Some of the comments that students shared about the walking track include, "The track is safer, less bumpy, and it doesn't get muddy when it rains." Another student commented that "he felt good when he was walking in the sun". Northeast Lauderdale is thankful to have a safe place to walk where they can be physically active and see others as they do it. The track has made a healthy difference in the lives of their students.

*October 2009: Where's Your Parachute? Staying Safe*  
*Healthy School Environment/School Safety*

The month of October is all about safety—at school and at home. **Madison County School District- Madison Avenue Upper Elementary** took a great opportunity during October to collaborate with state and community partners to educate their students on life-saving skills

necessary in the event of a fire. On September 15, the state fire marshal, Madison county firemen and the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools staff came together to provide a one-day training to all students on what to do in the event of a fire. Partners gave students the opportunity to engage and demonstrate the steps to follow when exiting a building in the event of a fire. Partners also shared with the school teachers the "Risk Watch" curriculum that is available from the National Fire Protection Association to educate Pre-K- third grade students on injury prevention.

*September 2009: Eat, Drink and Live Healthy  
Health Promotion for Staff*

Four administrators in the **Bay Saint Louis-Waveland School District** created the Mind, Body and Spirit Foundation. They have begun running together in charitable events across Mississippi and walking after school with students and school district staff. The mission of this group is to encourage morale in a workforce where the retirement rate is so high by raising funds for teacher scholarships. They also want to do their part in an effort to reduce obesity in their district. The Foundation is a collaboration between the district and communities to encourage physical activity and also education for students who would like to pursue degrees in education and also teachers that would like to advance their degrees. The benefits of worksite wellness programs are well documented for schools and other work settings. Like Bay-Waveland, they include: improved morale and productivity, fewer absences and injuries, lower healthcare and insurance costs, and a greater ability to attract and retain high quality employees.

*August 2009 - Think Smart, be Healthy  
Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services*

In an effort to address the mental health component of Coordinated School Health and also provide services for their students, **Corinth School District** formed a partnership with Timber Hills, the Region IV Mental Health Center under the state Department of Mental Health that serves this area of Mississippi. Timber Hills serves K-12 students in the Corinth School District by providing individual, group and family therapy by certified, licensed therapists who are available to their students 24 hours a day every day of the week. Each student in the school district that is receiving services is assigned a case manager who ensures that the student receives the mental health services that he/she needs, whether it is transportation to a doctor's appointment, providing entertainment, or, in some cases, helping the family find housing. Timber Hills' registered nurses are also stationed in schools to take care of any medical needs that students might have and also make physician referrals. Principal Denise Webb added, "With our partnership with Region IV Mental Health Services, we have been able to assist children in areas that we were not always able to reach before. Having them in our schools assisting our children and working with our staff

has helped tremendously in attaining our goal of educating the whole child, mentally and physically." Services provided by Timber Hills are invaluable to the Corinth School District.

*May 2009 – Spring Into a Healthy School Environment*  
*Healthy School Environment*

During the 2008-2009 school year, **Clinton School District** performed a district-wide assessment of all aspects of school wellness through school health councils and the child nutrition director for the district. The assessment included all aspects of health and physical education classes, school parties, cafeteria food, the school environment, and family and community involvement. Their desire, with the strong leadership of superintendent Dr. Phil Burchfield, was to impact the health of students in a positive way. From the assessment, they formed a plan to provide healthy fruits and vegetables for their students and ensure that nutrition education was being taught in class. They increased the amount of physical activity that was taking place during the school day so that students were active as well as excelling in a learning environment. They wrote many articles for the local newspaper asking parents and the community to volunteer and assist them in providing a healthy environment for their children when they are at home or out of school. They also encourage weight loss among teachers through incentive programs so that a healthy lifestyle would be modeled throughout the faculty at each school. All activities were implemented with no additional funding, and students, as well as teachers, have definitely benefitted as a result.

*April 2009 – Tying it All Together*  
*Family /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.

*March 2009 – Nutritious and Delicious*  
*Nutrition Services*

During the 2008-2009 school year, **Sudduth Elementary School** began a program to feature a "vegetable of the month" in their cafeteria each month to encourage student consumption of vegetables and trying new foods. At the suggestion of the principal, Libby Mosley, teachers and cafeteria staff worked together, utilizing the U.S. Department of Defense fresh vegetables, to create bulletin boards, taste testings, teacher fact sheets, cafeteria table tents, and even a "sweet potato drop". Featured vegetables were zucchini, sweet potatoes, potatoes, pinto, black and green beans, carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, and tomatoes. Menus were sent home with students each month to highlight the vegetable for that month. As a result of this activity, vegetable consumption increased in Sudduth Elementary, and teachers had the opportunity to collaborate with others to meet a common goal that would benefit their students.

*February 2009 – All's Fair in Love and Health*  
*Health Education*

The health education program at **Oxford High School** is far from ordinary. Students are using the skills that they learn in health education class to transform their own lives and their community as well. As a result of quality instruction, students are receiving preventive testing and life-saving treatment from their local health department for a wide array of illnesses, such as sexually transmitted diseases and hypertension. Students who might otherwise think that they are the "perfect picture of health" are finding that they have health conditions that could have caused premature death if left undetected.

Parents are also making healthier choices. Parents are exercising more with their children and making wiser choices when grocery shopping as a result of the education that their children receive. The high school students have also started a district-wide recycling program to promote a healthy school environment by partnering with elementary students to recycle in their classrooms.

Finally, students have worked in groups to produce their own alcohol awareness videos to teach healthy refusal skills to prevent drinking and driving and binge drinking. These videos were given to the local cable station and are being used in elementary and junior high schools to promote good decision-making behaviors when dealing with alcohol. One student said, "I used a lot of what I was taught [healthy refusal skills] to avoid getting into the partying thing."

*January 2009– Staying Healthy Together*  
*Family/Community Involvement*

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.