

SRPLN FCS State Report 2011

Reporting Institution: X 1862 1890 (check one)

Name of Institution Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSU-ES)

Budget Situation:

Slight increase from State, and a 2% decrease in Federal

Staffing Update (field and state office):

In June 2010 a retirement incentive was given to employees. MSU-ES had 72 flied staff and State staff combined to retire. Family and Consumer Sciences was left with 2 Leadership Development Area Agents, 6 Child and Family Development Area Agents, 7 Family Resource Management Area Agents, 4 Health Area Agents, and 3 Nutrition and Food Safety Area Agents. There are also 11 County Directors with a Family and Consumer Sciences Subject matter area within their county. We have 4 State specialists, 1 Family Resource Management, 1 Nutrition, 1 Food Safety and one Family Development.

How Institution is Addressing the Situation: The new Extension Director is investigating yet another restructuring plan. Agents are conducting programming across county lines to cover for the lost of personnel

Top 3 Program Highlights of Current Year: (program, collaborators, impacts)

- **Turning the Tide on Poverty.** Residents of two Mississippi counties, chosen to participate in special program offered for their high rates of poverty and the significant problems associated with populations living in poverty, took on the challenge of changing their communities from the inside out. Led by Extension agents and county directors, volunteers learned to facilitate study circles and form action teams to address the most pressing needs in their communities, embracing diversity and using the assets available. At least 60 citizens and Extension agents in Neshoba County and 36 in Lauderdale County devoted hundreds of hours in the pilot project which is already yielding results as action teams work on projects and enlist others in their communities to join in, reaching a total of 2,095 community members, including: 232 American Indian Males, 237 American Indian Females, 237 White Males, 323 White Females, 432 Black Males, 643 Black Females, 1,815 limited resource adults, and 177 non-limited resource community members--quite a diverse cross-section of citizens all working toward common goals.
- Efforts made by citizen action teams are improving lives of families already, and beginning to "Turn the Tide on Poverty." Community action teams were given no seed money to begin projects, yet generated in-kind donations and sweat equity valued at \$17,660 within just six months. Home gardens, food networks, and farmer's markets have been established. A new youth service club is being organized in Lauderdale

County. A community resource guide has been updated to include Choctaw Tribal Service agencies and will be made available online. Food drives and food pantries have been established, providing more than \$17,000 worth of food to needy citizens, much of which has been recovered from Wal-mart stores that would have otherwise gone to waste.

- **Get Healthy Trim Down Delta.** According to a recent report from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, the Delta has one of the largest concentrations of obesity in the state. This project centers on reducing the incidence of obesity in four Mississippi Delta counties –Carroll (35%), Holmes (42%), Leflore (39%), and Sunflower (40%). In response to this concern, Extension Service developed and directed the *Get Healthy Trim Down Delta* project. Through the formation of grassroots community action groups (CAGs) and development of lay health education volunteers, we hope to impact obesity and create a climate of wellness within the four counties. Community forums we conducted to identify local factors contributing to rising obesity rates, nine community action groups (CAG) of local residents were formed in the four Delta counties and trained in how to move from talk to action; following are examples of early successes of the groups:

- Holmes County Common Gardens CAG –secured 4 locations throughout the county, got volunteer to till land, working with Boys and Girls Club and local mentoring program to involve youth in gardening for health
- Sunflower County Walking Programs CAG – Initial CAG sponsored walk in Indianola attended by 65 people; town of Drew has had 125 people turn out for their first CAG sponsored walk; additional walks planned.
- Carroll County Exercise and Walking Programs CAG – Working with city government in Vaiden, a town of 880 people, an abandoned high school gym was opened for walking. Initially 15 people were walking each morning and 5-10 each evening. The CAG is beginning to look for funds to purchase exercise equipment.

Additional impacts will be felt from the work of the lay health education volunteers that were recruited and trained to deliver important health messages on such topics as portion size control, eating out smart, healthy eating on a budget, basic nutrition and meal planning, and sustaining walking programs.

Thirty-six individuals participated in the volunteer training and, within the first month after training, they reported sharing these messages with fifty-eight individuals and contributing thirty-four volunteer hours to improving the health of their fellow Deltans.

- **Mississippi In Motion** From January 2010 to the end of the May 2011, over 1406 had participated in *Mississippi In Motion* with 4,876 attendees in the weekly educational sessions. Results of participants completing the pre-post surveys (N=664) indicated significant ($p<.01$) significant decreases in pre-post BMI, blood pressure (systolic & diastolic) body weight ($p<.05$), and significant ($p<.01$) increases in fruit and vegetable intake, water intake, and physical activity. Mississippi leads the nation in obesity. The *Mississippi In Motion* program is having a positive impact on improving the health of

Mississippians. In the past the program has been implemented through worksite locations, Mississippi university campuses, and Mississippi communities with favourable results and the program continues today in schools and in the local communities. All groups (schools/communities, worksites, and universities) significantly decreased their BMI, weight, and blood pressure with reported increases in vegetable and fruit intake, water intake, and physical activity

New or Unique Collaborations and/or Funding Sources:

Rural Medical Scholars. Mississippi has the second to lowest number of physicians per capita in the nation. Clearly, this limits access to care for the state's citizens and contributes to many of the negative health status indicators plaguing the state. In response to this concern, Extension Service developed and directs the *Rural Medical Scholars* (RMS) program. The objective of the program is to "grow local docs" for the state by identifying talented and interested high school students and exposing them to academics and experiences relevant to the life of a family medicine physician. During the program, the Scholars enroll in two pre-medicine courses, "shadow" local physicians, and participate in a variety of activities related to rural physicians. Previous Scholars have recently started to arrive at the point in their academic careers when medical school is becoming a reality. To date 256 students have gone through the program. Students have come from 59 of the state's 82 counties and included 63% females, 37% males, and 22% minorities. Approximately 72% of our graduates have gone on to pursue a health-related career, 24 went to medical school, and 15 are practicing physicians as of today. Of the 15 practicing physicians, 7 are participating in residency programs within Mississippi and 10 of the 15 are in primary care residency programs. In addition to future physicians, many others are going into nursing, and some are heading towards pharmacy, counseling, dentistry, physical or occupational therapy, and medical research. The program is certainly beginning to pay dividends for the state. In addition to the health care concerns that motivate the delivery of this program, a recent study has shown that the addition of one physician to a typical Mississippi county results in an increased economic output of \$2million.

Contact for Additional Information:

Paula I. Threadgill, Ph.D

State Program Leader/Extension Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Box 9644

Mississippi State, MS 39762

662-325-3032 (Voice)

662-325-8254 (Fax)

paulat@ext.msstate.edu (email)