



Students Get Fit with the Laurel Police Department’s Healthy Heroes Initiative

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation continues to support unique programs that are changing the face of health and wellness. The Laurel Police Department is leading by example with their Healthy Heroes Initiative. The department is focusing on promoting healthy lifestyle habits among their own while also encouraging kids to practice healthy behaviors.

Laurel Police Department officers attended the Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Healthy Schools Physical Education Framework training and a nutrition education session to prepare them to teach the students age-appropriate physical activities and how to make healthy food choices.

Leading the community as Healthy Heroes, Laurel police officers, along with Mayor Johnny Magee, are visiting local schools to promote healthy eating habits and exercise.

“The Laurel Police Department holds firm that healthy lifestyle practices have a direct impact on



job performance, not only in law enforcement, but in the classroom,” said Officer Doug Dickerson of the Laurel Police Department. “As community leaders, officers are taking the Healthy Heroes nutrition and exercise program to elementary school students and encouraging them to adopt good health and wellness practices.”

Highlights of the program include biometric screenings among members of the police department, monthly children’s fitness walks and officer visits to area schools. Employees of the police department have access to an onsite fitness center 24 hours a day and are encouraged to exercise one hour per week on company time.



Students Complete “Get Ready to Run” Program at the Mississippi Blues Marathon Kids’ One-Mile Fun Run



Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi, in partnership with the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation and the Mississippi Blues Marathon, helped more than 13,000 students learn about the benefits of being active and just how much fun running can be!

Invitations to participate were sent to public and private schools in the Hinds, Rankin and Madison county area, with 29 schools electing to participate. Students in grades K-5 received incentives as they completed 7 health lessons from the *Get Ready to Run Lessons & Activity Guide*.

The *Get Ready to Run Lessons & Activity Guide* was developed by health and wellness experts at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Education to ensure that the lessons fully support the Mississippi Framework for Physical Education and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Standards.

As part of their participation in the program, participating schools held “lap days,” in which invited guests joined the students as they

prepared for the race. Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi employees visited several local schools as guests on lap days, while other schools hosted local police officers, fire fighters, high school teams and more.

Participating schools also created storyboards to visually demonstrate their journey through the program. The winning school, Mannsdale Elementary, will receive \$500 to support their P.E. program.



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The program culminated on Saturday, January 11, 2014, at the Mississippi Blues Marathon and Half-Marathon in downtown Jackson. Over 1,100 students gathered by the Mississippi Museum of Art, laced up their blue shoelaces and ran the **Mississippi Blues Marathon Kids' One-Mile Fun Run**. Participants received finishers' medals as they crossed the finish line.

"Get Ready to Run" schools competed to win award money for their P.E. programs. The winning schools are:

- 1st Place** – Saint Anthony Catholic School
- 2nd Place** – New Hope Christian School
- 3rd Place** – Luther Branson Elementary School

Saint Anthony Catholic School will be invited to the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi campus for their check presentation, to take part in a run on the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi blue walking track, to participate in fun physical activities and to enjoy healthy snacks.



MUW Gets a Passport to Wellness

Mississippi University for Women (MUW) is among the growing trend of colleges and universities across the state making health and wellness a priority on their campuses and in the surrounding communities. The Passport to Wellness program, funded through a grant from the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, targets residents in Columbus and Lowndes County, students and staff at MUW, as well as Franklin Elementary, Joe Cook Elementary and Annunciation Catholic School.

Passport to Wellness is built upon five key elements, including a wellness program for MUW students, faculty and staff, training for physical education teachers, a wellness program for elementary students and community wellness events. Funding will also be used to build a walking track at Franklin Elementary School, as well as to purchase new equipment for the P.E. program.

“To really make an impact in improving an

individual’s health and overall wellness, the effort needs to truly be community-based,” said Katherine Roberts, program manager for Passport to Wellness. “By creating a culture of health, people are more able and apt to make healthier choices. That is the overarching goal of Passport to Wellness - to not only focus on one particular segment of the population, but to incorporate all members of the community, beginning with young elementary students, who are just learning to make their own choices regarding health, to the oldest members of the community.”



Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Hosts its 5th Annual Physical Education Conference

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation hosted its 5th annual Physical Education Conference, bringing 20 select physical education teachers together to share best practices and to learn more about building better P.E. programs. The Foundation has partnered with Project Fit America since

2009 to provide P.E. teachers with lessons and concepts needed to integrate fitness and movement into their daily lessons.

The Physical Education Conference provided an opportunity for P.E. teachers with limited resources to learn innovative ways to keep their students

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engaged and physically fit. Project Fit America trainers led activities and discussions to help the teachers relay to students the value of movement, cooperation, teamwork, healthy competition, wellness and responsibility to self and others.

By hosting the annual Physical Education Conference, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation encourages physical education for students. This P.E. Conference provided exciting and motivating experiences including cup-stacking exercises, chart and challenges, and dance energizers.

The conference also provided information on what the Foundation is doing to help schools change the culture of health and fitness and allowed P.E. teachers to share experiences and best practices.

"I will use the information and activities proudly to motivate my students."

"I have attended many conferences in and out of state. This is, and will be, the best in helping me provide my students with quality activities without the use of many pieces of equipment," said Kelli Jewel Bruce P.E. Teacher at Inverness Elementary School. "I will use the information and activities proudly to motivate my students."

Creative lesson plans and P.E. equipment are essential to helping teachers teach students how to live active, healthy lives. The Foundation provided each teacher with P.E. equipment valued at over \$600 and lessons and activities from the new Project Fit America Curriculum. The teachers also received CEU credits from the Mississippi Department of Education.

As the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation continues to support schools in their efforts to help students become healthy, the Foundation will continue to be a source of motivation to physical education teachers who are providing invaluable benefits to the health of Mississippi students.



For additional information about the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, please visit our website at www.healthiermississippi.org.

Winter 2014 News

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