



# Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation

A Subsidiary of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi.



## Building a Healthy Mississippi

Fall 2015

### Mississippi Elementary Schools Awarded Health and Fitness Grants by Foundation

Supporting Mississippi's schools, communities, colleges and universities in their efforts to make our state healthy is the goal of the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation**.

Since 2005, the Foundation has awarded grant funding to Mississippi elementary and middle schools for the installation of the Project Fit America fitness equipment, including corresponding health curricula. Recently, the Foundation added **20 more schools** to the list, bringing the total to **208 schools across the state**.

The health and fitness program includes indoor and outdoor P.E. equipment, training for teachers, curricula and lesson plan support supplies. The equipment is specifically designed to address children's upper and



lower body strength, abdominal strength, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility.

In 2014, the Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center completed an evaluation of the health and fitness program, which was already in place in 188 schools. The results indicated an overall **decrease of 2.5 percent in Body Mass Index (BMI)** among participating students

combined with an increase in physical fitness. The report concluded the health and fitness program has made a positive impact on students' health.

The health and fitness program is designed to align with the state-mandated policy of **150 minutes of physical activity each week** to help students develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.

### Foundation Hosts 7th Annual P.E. Conference



The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation hosted its **7th Annual Physical Education Conference** bringing together 20 physical education teachers from around the state.

The teachers participated in an educational session and shared best practices for engaging students and making physical education classes both exciting and effective. Participants also received indoor fitness equipment and curricula obtained from the Project Fit America organization to enhance their schools' P.E. programs.

#### Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation

##### Vision

A Healthy Mississippi

##### Mission

Provide targeted grants to fund health programs and initiatives to improve the health of Mississippians

##### Strategic Focus

- Schools
- Communities
- Universities and Colleges

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# Healthy SCHOOL Awards

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The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation's **Healthy School Awards program** recognizes and rewards public schools with health policies and programs that promote healthy eating, physical activity, staff wellness, tobacco-free lifestyles among students and staff, and parental and community involvement.

The Foundation will award up to four grants. One school will be designated as **"The Healthiest School in Mississippi"** and will be awarded a **\$50,000** grant. Three schools will be designated as **"Healthy Schools"** and each will receive a **\$25,000** grant.

For more information on the Healthy School Awards program including award criteria, visit the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation website at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org) or email [healthyschoolawards@bcbsms.com](mailto:healthyschoolawards@bcbsms.com).



## Davis Magnet Elementary Students "Get Ready to Run"

Students in Central Mississippi are lacing up their shoes and getting a running start in preparation for the **2016 Get Ready to Run Kids' One-Mile Fun Run** to be held on January 9, 2016 in downtown Jackson.

The **Get Ready to Run School Program** officially kicked off this fall as students at **Davis Magnet Elementary School in Jackson** celebrated their participation with fitness activities and a half-mile fun run. A group of employees from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi known as **Team Blue**, volunteered to participate as guest fitness leaders and runners to encourage the students to set milestones and reach new goals.

Supported by **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi** and the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation**, the Get Ready to Run School Program is helping to build a healthy generation of Mississippians by enabling students to develop the skills they need to make exercise and physical fitness a part of their lives.

For more information on the Get Ready to Run program, please visit [www.msbluesmarathon.com/gr2run](http://www.msbluesmarathon.com/gr2run) or email [getreadytorun@bcbsms.com](mailto:getreadytorun@bcbsms.com).



# Springing into Motion at Pontotoc Middle School



In partnership with the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation**, the **Springing into Motion** initiative at **Pontotoc Middle School** is providing students with hands-on gardening experience. Fruits and vegetables harvested from the garden are used for healthy meal preparation in the school cafeteria and sharing with the community.

Situated parallel to the school cafeteria, the garden features raised vegetation beds, potted herbs, flowering plants, hanging vegetation, a pumpkin patch, and a greenhouse. The design allows for the care and growth of plants while optimizing learning across the curricula with innovative ways to teach students about health and wellness.

One of the main goals of the Springing into Motion initiative is to instill in everyone involved the desire to have and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The initiative is designed to promote and support the health and wellness of students, faculty, and the community by empowering individuals to take responsibility for their own health.

# Town of Walnut Celebrates as “Mississippi’s Healthiest Hometown” 2015



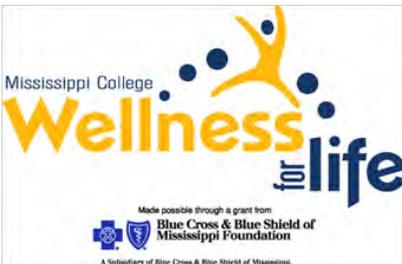
The **Town of Walnut** celebrated being selected as “**Mississippi’s Healthiest Hometown**” in the sixth year of the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Healthy Hometown Awards Program**. The selection was based on the municipality’s application, as judged by a panel of known health and wellness champions from around the country. Walnut received a **\$50,000 grant from the Foundation** to support ongoing community health initiatives.



The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation established the Healthy Hometown Awards in 2010 to encourage communities to promote healthy lifestyles and to provide financial rewards to those who have demonstrated the most progress. Healthy Hometown winners are chosen based on select criteria, including having a tobacco-free ordinance, helmet laws and more.

To learn more about the Healthy Hometown Awards and this year’s winners, visit the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation website at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org).

# Mississippi College has Wellness for Life



**Mississippi College** in partnership with the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** is making wellness awareness an integral part of campus culture through the **Wellness for Life** initiative.

The college’s main focus is to improve the health of individuals living on campus and in the Clinton community by making campus walking trail enhancements to encourage walkability. The initiative also includes goals for integrating nutrition, exercise and tobacco cessation information into the college curricula with a defined process for obtaining measurable outcomes.

For additional information about the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, please visit our website at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org).

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