



### Mississippi Mayors Encourage Community Wellness Foundation Hosts Mayors for a Healthy Hometown Awards Program Lunch and Learn

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation



*Pictured above: Moss Point Mayor Mario King (right) emphasized the value of community wellness as an economic driver in response to a question from Sheila Grogan, Executive Director of the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, (left) at the Healthy Hometown Awards Program Lunch and Learn event in Hattiesburg on October 5, 2017. Earlier this year, the Foundation honored the City of Moss Point as "Mississippi's Healthiest Hometown" for 2017 with a \$50,000 grant award. Hattiesburg Mayor Toby Barker (center) also participated in the discussion. The City of Hattiesburg received a Healthy Hometown Award in 2011.*

#### Vision

A Healthy Mississippi

#### Mission

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

#### Strategic Focus

- Communities
- Schools
- Colleges and Universities

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The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation recently invited Mississippi's mayors for a Healthy Hometown Awards Program Lunch and Learn held in the cities of Tupelo, Ridgeland and Hattiesburg. Mayors from across the state attended one of the events to learn about the Healthy Hometown Awards Program and other grant opportunities.

Mayors whose municipalities had received a Healthiest Hometown Award, or a Healthy Hometown Award, were invited to participate in a panel discussion. Mayors in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with the panel regarding the Healthy Hometown Awards Program and the benefits of community wellness.

The 2018 Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Healthy Hometown Awards Program Application is available at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org). Applications are due to the Foundation by March 1, 2018.



# Healthy Heroes Program Increases Health Literacy in Children



This school year, for students in grades K-5, uniformed police officers, sheriff's deputies and firefighters from across Mississippi are visiting schools as "**Healthy Heroes**" to lead physical fitness activities, teach healthy nutrition lessons, and hold community walks for students, faculty, staff, parents and members of the community.

Funded through a grant from the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** in 2013, the City of Laurel implemented the **Healthy Heroes Program** to improve the health and quality of life among

members of the police force, as well as educate students in grades K-5 about the importance of healthy eating and exercise. The Healthy Heroes Program in Laurel remains sustainable, and in 2016, the Foundation expanded the Program to an additional seven municipalities and one county.

This August, uniformed police officers and firefighters from **Amory, Clinton, Greenwood, Kosciusko and Wesson** attended the Healthy Heroes Training Conference at the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi campus in Flowood. Training was provided by the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools and health and wellness experts at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi. The cities represented at the Conference are implementing the Healthy Heroes Program for the 2017-18 school year. Since the Program began in 2013, the Foundation has provided nearly \$710,000 to support community health and wellness through the Healthy Heroes Program.

"We are proud of the continued support from municipal leaders, law enforcement and firefighters who are increasing health literacy in our youngest generations," said Sheila Grogan, Executive Director of the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. "Their efforts are part of our collective vision of a healthy Mississippi, and we appreciate their leadership and dedication to their citizens."

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is working to build a healthy Mississippi through targeted funding aimed at supporting schools, communities, and colleges and universities. Learn more about the Healthy Heroes Program, as well as other efforts of the Foundation at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org).



*Pictured above: Police officers and firefighters representing the cities of Amory, Clinton, Greenwood, Kosciusko and Wesson attend the 2017 Healthy Heroes Training Conference hosted by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.*

## Healthy SCHOOL Awards



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 and the application form, 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).

**The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Building Healthy Schools Grant** provides schools with opportunities to develop new and innovative programs or activities to enhance school health and wellness. Schools may use the grant funds to develop projects with a focus on healthy nutrition, physical activity or other health related activities designed to promote healthy lifestyles.

The Foundation is accepting Building Healthy Schools Grant applications from public and private K-12 schools physically located in Mississippi that have demonstrated a commitment to creating a healthy school environment. Schools are required to submit a success story for eligibility to receive a grant to continue their health and wellness efforts. The school must employ a certified physical education teacher or health education teacher who is a member of MAHPERD (Mississippi Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance) to be eligible to apply.

For more information or to request a Building Healthy Schools Grant Application, inquire at [Foundation@bcbsms.com](mailto:Foundation@bcbsms.com). Building Healthy Schools Grant applications are due to the Foundation by October 31, 2017.

## Foundation Provides Health and Fitness Equipment for K-5 Students

Since 2005, the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** has awarded grant funding to schools across the state for the installation of fitness equipment and supporting health curricula from the Project Fit America organization.

In 2017, the Foundation awarded grants to 32 schools, bringing the total to **240 schools statewide** and more than **\$6 million in grant funding**. During the months of September and October, Eugenia King, the Foundation's Health and Fitness Coordinator, attended each of the 32 schools' Project Fit America Program kickoff celebrations to encourage healthy lifestyles among students, administrators, faculty and staff.

The Project Fit America Program includes indoor and outdoor P.E. equipment, training for teachers, curricula and lesson plan support supplies. The outdoor equipment is specifically designed to address upper body, lower body, abdominal strength, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility for children. The freestanding structures of seven fitness stations are permanently installed outdoors on the school grounds. The indoor equipment includes 1,000 "cardio cups" which are used for teamwork, challenge and cooperative cardiovascular activities.

Also included are sport hoops, medicine balls and stability balls, providing weighted activity options that support upper body strength, cardio and abdominal training.

The Project Fit America Program is designed to align with the state-mandated policy of 150 minutes of physical activity each week and to help students develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to be physically active for a lifetime.



*Pictured above: Eugenia King, Health and Fitness Coordinator, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation (center), joins Dr. Ronnie McGehee, Superintendent, Madison County Schools (fourth from left), Madison County Sheriff Randy Tucker (second from left) and other Madison County and Madison County School District leaders, at Mannsdale Elementary School to cut the ribbon and officially kickoff the school's Project Fit America Program.*



*Pictured above: Mannsdale Elementary School students demonstrate the step up station for classmates during the kickoff event to celebrate the school's Project Fit America Program funded by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.*

# Foundation Hosts Health and Wellness Workshop for Universities and Colleges

The **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** recently hosted the 2017 University and College Health and Wellness Workshop for project directors and coordinators from Mississippi universities and colleges with health and wellness initiative names

co-branded with the Foundation. The Foundation's Executive Director and staff members presented the work of the Foundation, including accomplishments and impacts. The Corporate Communications and Legal departments provided information related to branding and marketing expectations and showcased Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi promotional items as visual aids. The Health and Wellness Service Department engaged attendees in hands-on healthy cooking and physical fitness classes, sharing best practices and successes in creating wellness programs. Attendees were provided with educational materials, including recipes and guidebooks for conducting healthy cooking lessons and grocery store tours for their campus and community members.



*Pictured Left: Janette Adams (left) and Dr. Gloria Ross, co-project directors for the Valley in Motion initiative at Mississippi Valley State University, participate in a healthy cooking class as part of the Foundation's 2017 University and College Health and Wellness Workshop. "It was an awesome eye-opening experience that made me want to change [to be healthier] while helping others [be healthy]," said Adams. "Thank you for the experience!"*

## Get Ready to Run



It's good to be Blue.

## Central Mississippi Schools Off and "Running" with the Get Ready to Run School Program

Elementary school students in Central Mississippi are lacing up their shoes and getting ready to run as the fifth, and biggest yet, year of the **Get Ready to Run School Program** is getting started. **Fifty-three schools** are registered to take part in the Program, with **22,642 students** taking part in the lessons and activities as part of their regular P.E. classes. Students attending participating schools will have the opportunity to take part in the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Get Ready to Run Kids' One-Mile Fun Run** to be held February 3, 2018!

Oakdale Elementary School in Brandon hosted the kick-off lap day event in late September. 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**, 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.getreadytorunms.com](http://www.getreadytorunms.com) or email [getreadytorun@bcbsms.com](mailto:getreadytorun@bcbsms.com).*



*Pictured above: Students at Oakdale Elementary School run a celebratory lap during the Get Ready to Run School Program Kick-off Event on Friday, September 29, 2017.*