Foundation Hosts 9th Annual Physical Education Conference

Supporting Mississippi’s schools, communities, colleges and universities in their efforts to make our state healthy is at the forefront of the mission and vision of the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation hosted its 9th Annual Physical Education Conference bringing together 20 elementary and 20 middle school physical education teachers from around the state. The two-day conference was held in late 2017 for elementary teachers on day one and middle school teachers on day two.

The teachers participated in educational sessions and shared best practices for engaging students and making P.E. classes both exciting and effective. Participants also received indoor fitness equipment and curricula to enhance their schools’ P.E. programs.

“It was the most exciting and useful education conference I’ve ever attended,” said Marva Atterberry of Rod Paige Middle School in Lawrence County. “I learned activities that will engage all students notwithstanding their fitness levels. Thank you Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation.”

Elementary School Students Fire Up for Fitness

Since 2005, the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has awarded grants to 240 schools statewide and more than $6 million in grant funding for the installation of fitness equipment and supporting health curricula from the Project Fit America organization.

The Program includes indoor and outdoor P.E. equipment, training for teachers, curricula and lesson plan support supplies. The indoor and outdoor equipment are specifically designed to address upper body, lower body, abdominal strength, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility for children.

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.

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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, the City of Laurel implemented the Healthy Heroes Program in 2013 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.

As of 2018, the Healthy Heroes Program in Laurel remains sustainable, and the Foundation expanded the Program to an additional twelve municipalities and one county.

“When children have positive role models who regularly exercise and choose healthy foods, it encourages them to follow suit,” said Ridgeland Chief of Police John Neal. “Our goal is to enhance the health of Ridgeland’s children, while also fostering a healthier police force.”

“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 committed to supporting Mississippi’s universities and colleges in implementing healthy eating and exercise initiatives that extend from the campus to the local communities and schools. Learn more about the work of the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation at www.healthiermississippi.org.

Above: Kosciusko firefighters Captain Jake Cummins (left), and Inspector Jake Philyaw (right), lead Kosciusko Upper Middle School students in fitness activities during a “Healthy Heroes” visit to the school.
The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is pleased to partner with the Mississippi Municipal League to promote community health through the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Healthy Hometown Awards.

At the 2018 Mississippi Municipal League Annual Conference to be held in Biloxi this summer, up to three municipalities will receive $25,000 in recognition of their success in being healthy communities. One municipality will be recognized by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation as “Mississippi’s Healthiest Hometown” and will receive a $50,000 award.

The application and criteria are available online at www.healthiermississippi.org. Applications are due to the Foundation by March 1, 2018.

COMING SPRING 2018

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi is excited to announce that the Get Ready to Run School Program is being offered for a second year to elementary schools in the Golden Triangle Region. The Program is also being offered for the inaugural year in the Pine Belt Region.

The Get Ready to Run School Program teaches students about proper running form, nutrition, healthy goal setting and more during regularly scheduled P. E. classes. The Get Ready to Run lessons and activities were developed by health and wellness experts at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Education to ensure the lessons fully support the Mississippi Framework for Physical Education and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Standards.

Eligible students from participating schools in the Pine Belt Region will have the opportunity to run in the Get Ready to Run Kids’ One-Mile Fun Run at The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg on April 28, 2018, at no cost. The Get Ready to Run Kids’ One-Mile Fun Run for eligible students in the Golden Triangle Region is scheduled for April 14, 2018, at Mississippi State University, at no cost.

Get Ready to Run schools compete to win award money up to $2,000 for their physical education programs. More information is available at www.getreadytorunms.com.