



“Healthy Heroes” Increase Health Literacy in Children Police and Firefighters Teach the Importance of Living Healthy Lifestyles

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation

This school year, for students in grades K-5, uniformed police officers 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.



Above: In Hernando, “Healthy Heroes” Officer John Cotter and other members of the police department teach a healthy nutrition lesson to elementary students.

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. Since then, the Foundation has expanded the Program to include 22 cities providing more than \$1.5 million to support community health and wellness.

In August 2018, uniformed police officers and firefighters from **Blue Mountain, Durant, Forest, Gulfport, Hazlehurst, Holly Springs, Marks, Nettleton, Oxford, Poplarville, Starkville and West Point** 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 2018-19 school year.

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Vision

A Healthy Mississippi

Mission

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

Strategic Focus

- Schools
- Colleges and Universities
- Communities
- Wellness Coaches

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“Healthy Heroes is fun,” said Mayor Dr. Henry Robinson, Jr. of Durant. “We are excited about the relationships we will form and the health awareness we will provide to our children that will, in turn, make us a more healthy, livable and sustainable town.”

“As a police chief, I look forward to working with our schools and our kids,” said Chief of Police Byron Swilley of Hazlehurst. “I think that the Healthy Heroes Program will help bring a positive vibe to our community.”

“I think Healthy Heroes is a wonderful program for teaching kids about healthy living,” said Leon Kelley, a firefighter from West Point. “I’m really looking forward to getting started in my city because this program is also a great tool for building community relationships.”

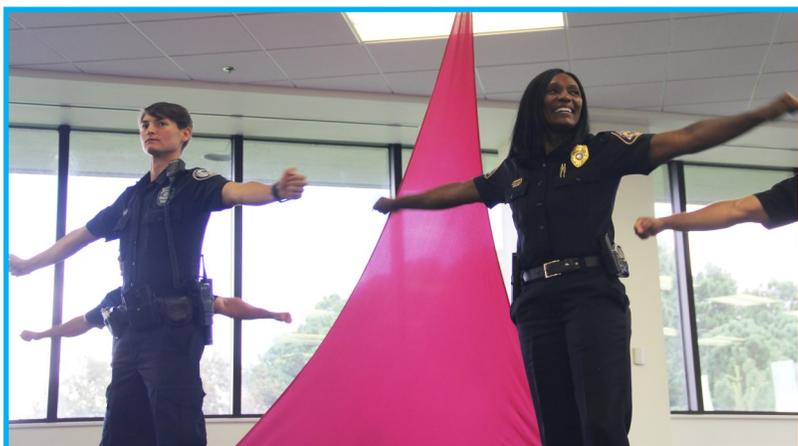
“We appreciate the continued support from municipal leaders, law enforcement and firefighters who are taking an active role in developing a healthy future generation of Mississippians,” said Sheila Grogan, executive director of the

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. “Uniformed police officers and firefighters teaching healthy eating lessons and leading fun fitness activities will encourage children to adopt lifestyles of health and wellness that will carry them beyond their elementary school years.”

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.

Top left: Police officers and firefighters from across Mississippi gather on the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi campus in Flowood for the Healthy Heroes Training Conference.

Bottom left: Officer Alicia McCoy of Hernando (left) and Officer Virginia Rich of West Point learn how to teach physical fitness lessons to K-5 students during the Healthy Heroes Training Conference.



Healthy SCHOOL Awards



2019 Application is Available!

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Healthy School Awards Program recognizes and rewards public K-12 schools that encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors. Winning schools have health policies and programs that promote healthy eating, physical activity, staff wellness and tobacco-free lifestyles among students and staff, as well as parents and the community at large. Healthy schools help students achieve full academic potential and support them in developing lifelong healthy behaviors.

The Foundation will award up to four grants. One school will be designated as the 2019 “**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. The criteria for these awards are based on state and national school health standards.

What are the Foundation’s strategic goals for this awards program? The Foundation established four strategic goals for the Healthy School Awards Program: 1) Establish a school culture of health and wellness; 2) Build and sustain a school health and wellness program; 3) Improve the health of school personnel, students and their families; and 4) Improve academic performance of the school.

Who is eligible? The Healthy School Awards Program is open to public K-12 schools physically located in Mississippi. The award is at the school level– not at the district level.

How does my school apply? Visit the Foundation’s website at www.healthiermississippi.org, then go to the “Healthy Awards/Healthy School Awards” page and click the “Request the Healthy School Awards Application” button. **Applications are due by October 26, 2018.**



The Get Ready to Run School Program is back! This school year, students in grades K-5 in Central Mississippi, the Golden Triangle, North Mississippi and the Pine Belt will be eligible to participate in the 2018-19 program. Visit www.getreadytorunms.com to find out if your school is in an eligible region, then encourage school leaders to sign up!

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