



### Mississippi Schools Learn Healthy Lessons Foundation Hosts School Health and Wellness Conference

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation



*Pictured above: Eugenia King, health and fitness coordinator for the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation (center) stands next to Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi health and wellness specialists and master gardeners, following a hands-on workshop with School Health and Wellness Conference attendees related to school garden programs, healthy snack options, proper hydration and staff wellness opportunities.*

The **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** works to support our state’s schools in creating healthy learning environments through innovative programs and strategic funding opportunities. With the increasing need for health education and resources, the Foundation is partnering with schools and school leaders to bring awareness to the support and funding opportunities available.

The Foundation hosted a **School Health and Wellness Conference** for school personnel to learn about wellness program and grant opportunities aimed at supporting healthy lifestyles and strengthening school health programs. The Foundation shared the successes seen at Pontotoc Middle School and the school garden created with grant funding from the Foundation. Pontotoc Middle School’s garden has become a focal

#### Vision

A Healthy Mississippi

#### Mission

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

#### Strategic Focus

- Schools
- Communities

#### Inside this issue:

Mississippi Schools Learn Healthy	1 –2
“Healthy Heroes” Increase Health Literacy in Children	2
Healthy School Awards Program	3
Get Ready to Run School Program	4
Honoring Mississippi’s Healthy Hometowns	4

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from page 1*

point of the school and incorporated in many of the subject areas. Students work in the garden and greenhouse to learn gardening skills, science and weather, good nutrition and more.

“The Pontotoc Middle School Garden has not only engaged students and staff in gardening and growing healthy food, but has also promoted the school’s academic performance,” said Sheila Grogan, Foundation President. “The school’s approach to planning and developing the garden, and how they are managing it, is a best practice approach being extended to other schools.”

At the Conference, attendees participated in healthy activities led by representatives from Pontotoc Middle School who shared successes with its school garden, and Ocean Springs High School, a two-time winner of the Foundation’s Healthy Schools Awards Program. Health and wellness experts and master gardeners from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi also led hands-on workshops related to staff wellness, healthy nutrition and school gardens.

“The Conference was filled with quality information,” said John Conway, assistant principal at East Flora Elementary School. “It was inspiring and motivating and has challenged me to take action.”

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has a vision for a healthy Mississippi and provides targeted grants to fund initiatives and programs to improve the health and wellness of Mississippians. Learn more about available grant and program opportunities as well as other efforts of the Foundation at [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org).



*Pictured above: Pontotoc Middle School Garden*

## “Healthy Heroes” Increase Health Literacy in Children



*Pictured above: Police officers and firefighters from across Mississippi gathered on the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi campus in Flowood for the Healthy Heroes Training Conference.*

In late July 2019, the **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** hosted a **Healthy Heroes Training Conference** for the cities of **Booneville, Greenwood, Lexington, Quitman, Saltillo and Tupelo**. Fourteen police officers and firefighters received training by the Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Healthy Schools and health and wellness experts at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi as to how to teach healthy eating and exercise lessons to students in grades K-5. Also, as part of the Healthy Heroes Training Conference, police officers and firefighters from Hernando and West Point shared their experiences and successes with the Program.

In September, with educational materials provided by the Foundation, police officers and firefighters will visit their local schools teaching students the value of making healthy food choices and leading them in fun physical activities and a community walk at each school for students, faculty, staff and neighborhood residents.

# Healthy SCHOOL AWARDS



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 2020 **“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: 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.

**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](http://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 25, 2019.**

## Congratulations to the 2019 Healthy School Awards Winners!



**Poplarville Lower Elementary School**

“Mississippi’s Healthiest School 2019”  
\$50,000 Grant Award



**Columbia Primary School**

“Mississippi Healthy School 2019”  
\$25,000 Grant Award



**Oak Park Elementary School**

“Mississippi Healthy School 2019”  
\$25,000 Grant Award

***Previous Healthy School Awards Program winners include:***

- Northside Elementary School - Clinton
- Forrest County Agricultural High School - Brooklyn
- Ocean Springs Upper Elementary School - Ocean Springs
- Ocean Springs High School - Ocean Springs

- Twenty-Eighth Street Elementary School - Gulfport
- Grenada Upper Elementary School - Grenada
- Columbia Elementary School - Columbia
- Pass Christian Elementary School - Pass Christian



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 BlueCross BlueShield  
of Mississippi  
It's good to be Blue.

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 Gulf Coast will be eligible to participate in the 2019-2020 program. Visit [www.getreadytorunms.com](http://www.getreadytorunms.com) to find out if your school is in an eligible region, then encourage school leaders to sign up!



## Honoring Mississippi's Healthy Hometowns

Lexington, Quitman and Tupelo Named "Healthy Hometowns"

**Congratulations**  
to the cities of **Lexington, Quitman**  
and **Tupelo** for being named Mississippi's  
Healthy Hometowns for 2019!

The **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation** announced three cities as **2019 Healthy Hometown Award** winners at the Mississippi Municipal League Annual Conference in Biloxi on June 26, 2019. The cities of **Lexington, Quitman and Tupelo** all earned the title "Healthy Hometown" in recognition of exemplary community health and wellness. Each received a **\$50,000** grant award from the Foundation to assist in continued efforts to ensure their respective communities are healthy places to live and work.

The Foundation established the Healthy Hometown Awards Program

in 2010 to reward cities that have made the most progress and displayed the highest level of commitment in creating a healthy community culture.

For 2019, the Healthy Hometown Awards Program expanded to incorporate approaches that have shown to be effective in creating healthy communities such as demonstrating municipal leadership and involvement, adopting environmental ordinances and policies, providing access to healthier foods, promoting physical fitness activities, reducing tobacco use and ensuring healthy school environments.

The Healthy Hometown Awards are each \$50,000, regardless of municipality population, and one or multiple cities may be awarded.

"The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation celebrates the achievements of city leaders and Healthy Hometown committee

members from Lexington, Quitman and Tupelo for providing and sustaining opportunities for residents to lead healthy lifestyles," said Sheila Grogan, Foundation President.

"Adopting health and wellness as a key community initiative improves well-being and sets a positive example for creating healthy cultures throughout the state."

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Visit [www.healthiermississippi.org](http://www.healthiermississippi.org) to learn more about the Healthy Hometown Awards Program, or to find additional information about the Foundation and any of the Foundation's programs.