



\$3.8 Million Awarded to LeFleur’s Bluff Museum Partnership 21st Century Playground, Outdoor Classroom and Pavilion and Museum Trail

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation



Above: The main playground area will include a 25’ Hedra Tower, only the second one to be installed in the United States (the other one is located in Arizona). The Hedra Tower is designed for inclusive play and includes climbing towers, elevated tunnels, cargo nets and other fun activities.

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has awarded a \$3,855,000 grant to the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Foundation for the LeFleur’s Bluff State Park Education and Tourism Partnership between the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks’ (MDWFP) Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and the Mississippi Children’s Museum.

The LeFleur’s Bluff State Park playground will be located in Jackson between the MDWFP’s Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and the Mississippi Children’s Museum. This grant will provide essential funds to create a state-of-the-art complex for physical and educational activities through a playground, outdoor classroom and pavilion, and museum walking trail.

The 21st century playground will feature 80 play activities, 73 of these features will be inclusive to children with accessibility needs, and will be separated into different play areas based on age, for children ages 6 months to 12 years old.

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Vision

A Healthy Mississippi

Mission

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

Strategic Focus

- Communities
- Schools

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The Outdoor Classroom and Pavilion will provide multiple functions for both museums, such as educational and outdoor programming for field trips and a place to showcase presentations for the award-winning Mississippi Science Festival. The pavilion will provide tables and seating for up to 50 students, as well as accommodate a larger assembly with an open-air amphitheater and grass lawn.



Above and Left: Renderings of the Outdoor Classroom and Pavilion

Below: Rendering of the Museum Trail

The Museum Walking Trail will provide engaging, family-oriented opportunities to travel between MDWFP’s Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and the Mississippi Children’s Museum, so guests can safely and conveniently visit both museums and the playground. The 8-foot wide walking trail will feature educational components from the Newbery Honor Award winning children’s book, *Minn of the Mississippi*.



The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is the signature sponsor of the LeFleur’s Bluff State Park Playground, Outdoor Classroom and Pavilion, and Museum Trail. Leaders of the Foundation are proud to work with the Mississippi Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks Foundation, MDWFP’s Mississippi Natural Science Museum, and the Mississippi Children’s Museum to build a healthy Mississippi.

“The LeFleur’s Bluff State Park Playground, Outdoor Classroom and Pavilion and Museum Trail align with the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation’s strategic focus to provide sustainable health and well-being opportunities for Mississippians,” said Sheila Grogan, Foundation President. “Encouraging children, families and others to spend more time outside engaging in fun play activities, taking a walk or learning together in an outdoor classroom setting develops life-long positive attitudes about maintaining healthy lifestyles.”

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 well-being of Mississippians. Through its vision and mission, the Foundation is impacting Mississippi’s communities and taking a leadership role in setting the future course for healthy living among all Mississippians. Visit www.healthiermississippi.org to learn more about how the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is building a healthy Mississippi.



The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation Healthy School Awards Program recognizes and rewards public K-12 schools that encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors. The Foundation may award a “Healthy School Award” to one school, or award “Healthy School Award” grants to multiple schools, each at \$50,000, regardless of school enrollment.

The 2021 Healthy School Award application will be available in January at www.healthiermississippi.org. Applications are due to the Foundation by April 1, 2021, and the winning schools will be announced in July at the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents / Alliance Summer Convention.

For more information about the Healthy School Awards Program or the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, please visit www.healthiermississippi.org.

Central Mississippi Elementary Students “Tee Off” with First Tee

With grant support from the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation, elementary students in Central Mississippi are participating in The Life Enhancement and Achievement Program. The Program, widely recognized as “First Tee,” is an international youth development organization introducing the game of golf to children and teens. Through in-school and after-school programs, the organization integrates the game of golf with life skills such as self-confidence and resilience that students can carry well beyond their school years.



Above and Left: “First Tee” activities at Flowood Elementary School

Pedaling Good Health at Mississippi Community College Foundation

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation has a partnership with the Mississippi Community College Foundation to improve the health and well-being of the 500 employees who work in the Education Research Complex on Ridgewood Road in Jackson. Participants are successfully improving their overall physical well-being by engaging in health education and fitness classes. This winter, a bike share program was made available with 15 bicycles to encourage outdoor exercise and provide transportation across campus in lieu of driving a vehicle. All participants received their own personal helmet to be used while bike riding.



Above and Right: Employees at the Education Research Complex in Jackson enjoy a lunch time bike ride to enjoy the crisp air and keep fit.



Strengthened University and College Tobacco-Free Policies



Above: New signage added to building entrances at Pearl River Community College

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is providing ongoing support to Mississippi's universities and colleges by encouraging strengthened tobacco-free policies. The Foundation is awarding grant funds to higher institutions of learning that are willing to adopt or strengthen tobacco-free policies that will ensure safe and healthy campus learning environments.

“Pearl River Community College is committed to adopting policies and promoting opportunities that will ensure the well-being of our campus and surrounding communities,” said Dr. Adam Breerwood, President, Pearl River Community College. “Our faculty, staff and students have embraced the College’s strengthened Tobacco-Free Policy, and we continue to highlight the benefits of nicotine-free lifestyles.”

As of 2021, four universities and ten community colleges have adopted or strengthened current tobacco-free policies, including: Alcorn State University; Delta State University; Mississippi Valley State University; The University of Southern Mississippi; Coahoma Community College; Copiah–Lincoln Community College; East Mississippi Community College; Jones County Junior College; Mississippi Delta Community College; Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College; Northeast Mississippi Community College; Northwest Mississippi Community College; Pearl River Community College; and Southwest Mississippi Community College.

Is your town a **Mississippi** **Healthy** Hometown?



2021 Applications
Due : **March 15, 2021**

The Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation is pleased to partner with the Mississippi Municipal League to promote community health and wellness through the Healthy Hometown Awards.

At the 2021 Mississippi Municipal League Annual Conference, the Foundation may award a “Healthy Hometown” grant to one hometown, or award “Healthy Hometown” grants to multiple hometowns, each at \$50,000, regardless of municipality population. The application and criteria are available online at:

www.healthiermississippi.org.

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