

MASTER WELLNESS VOLUNTEER NEWS



Master Wellness Volunteer Program

Fall 2015

Program Piloted in Itawamba County

The mission of the Junior Master Wellness Volunteer program is to promote healthy living through community connections. The allied health students and faculty at Itawamba Career and Technical Center in Fulton have a passion and dedication for helping others through community service. Therefore, they were key recruits for piloting the Junior Master Wellness Volunteer program.

This program is a community health education and volunteer leader training program offered through **MSU Extension** in partnership with the **University of Mississippi Medical Center**. Extension partnered to use the curriculum and added a leadership and community service component which involves the local Extension Agent mentoring students, teaching leadership skills, and team-building through planned community service projects. 4-H enrollment and participation in the health/visual competition during State Congress was also encouraged. Twenty one students completed the training. Ms. Kerri Collier, RN directs and teaches in the allied health program. Ms. Romona Edge serves as the Itawamba County Extension Agent and County Coordinator; she worked with Ms. Collier to facilitate



several community service projects. Ms. Edge related well to the students due to her background as a registered nurse. Also working to encourage 4-H involvement was Ms. Marie Rogers, Extension Agent for 4-H/Youth Development.

A total of **480** community service hours or an average 20 hours per student were given back in the delivery of health messages to family/friends, and to younger students about health topics important to them. Peer to peer learning can be very effective in many cases. The younger student sees the older student as a mentor and friend and will listen more intently and may change behavior quicker and at a higher success rate. The estimated value of volunteer time for the total 480 hours of community service at \$23.07 per hour equates to **\$11,073.60** (www.independentsector.org).

Volunteers and Staff

In no certain order: *Extension Staff* : Romona Edge, Ann Sansing, Marie Rogers, *Allied Health Teacher*, Kerri Collier; *Students*: Tori Mallory, Beau Wigginton, Mekenzie Johnson, Megan West, Amber Brown, Madalyn Carter, Madi Walton, Cody MacOsbrin, Chayston Westmoreland, Caitlin Nichols, Chelsea Whitaker, Anna Justice, Caitlynn Chilcoat, Brittany Goodwin, Madison Parker, Anna Mask, Shayna Walston, Allison Dobbs, Bethany Bryan, Kerri Williams, and Amber Thomas





Benefits from Junior MWV Program for Allied Health Students

- Increases self efficacy
- Improves skills in leadership and teambuilding
- Increases knowledge about health issues
- Enhances resume for college and job opportunities
- Improves socialization skills
- Provides recognition opportunities
- Provides opportunity for connection to community
- Experience helps solidify future career choice

Examples of Behavior Change from Health Messages

- ◆ Nicotine addiction changes reported.
- ◆ Family discussions resulted in a decrease in sugary foods.
- ◆ Adding exercise regimen to daily activities.
- ◆ Assistance interpreting Rx prescription labels resulted in clarity, yielding better management of medications.
- ◆ Education provided about hidden sodium in foods helped decrease extra salt in the diet.
- ◆ Increase in buying healthy foods ensured healthier outcomes for family diet.
- ◆ Stress reduction techniques were implemented.
- ◆ Education provided about healthy teeth and gums helped young students understand the importance of brushing and flossing regularly. Toothbrushes were distributed to each student to promote good oral health and decrease cavities.



Posters Created As Visual Aids

One of the creative and educational experiences the students participate in was to choose a project related to their curriculum, research more about it, and prepare a poster to help the children in younger grades understand the health topics. Posters created included; diabetes, stress management, oral health, tobacco use, autism awareness, obesity, heart health, and handwashing.

Other events included; Literacy on the Lawn Book Fair, Ag and Safety Day, Blood Drive, and CPR Demonstrations for high school teachers.

Will you participate in a second year of piloting this program?

“Yes, the students enjoyed it and it worked well with our overall objectives. I will be glad to participate next year.”

— Mrs. Kerri Collier, RN
Allied Health Teacher



4-H is a collaborator of the Junior MWV program

For more information about the Junior MWV program in Itawamba County contact:

Romona Edge, Extension County Coordinator
662-862-3201 or romonae@ext.msstate.edu
Ann Sansing, Community Health Coordinator
662-325-4043, or asansing@ext.msstate.edu