

# AWARENESS

A NEWSLETTER OF MS COMMUNITY HEALTH COALITIONS



## Message from the Coordinator

Meeting enthusiastic community members focused on improving health is exciting! That was the experience of MSU Extension Service staff as a number of health and community conscious individuals participated in two separate Coalition Skill Building Workshops during the fall. During the workshops, participants explored issues around building stronger partnerships, developing a logical plan for addressing community health issues, and working with the media to effectively broadcast a health promotion message to the community.

Participants represented existing health coalitions, school districts, county and city government, and professional health agencies. Some of the benefits of the training identified by the participants were:

- How to more effectively present a health promotion program to potential partners
- How to map a problem logically to achieve results
- How to plan and monitor a realistic goal for a project
- How to prepare information for the media

MSU Extension Service wishes to thank both Mississippi Delta Community College and Copiah-Lincoln Community College for hosting the two events. Also, we would like to thank the participants for their interest in working together to promote health in our state. Together we can make a difference!

*Rachel Welborn*

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## National Health Observances

### NOVEMBER

- ✓ National Diabetes Month
- ✓ Great American Smokeout

### DECEMBER

- ✓ National Drunk & Drugged Driving Prevention
- ✓ Toy Safety Month

### JANUARY

- ✓ Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
- ✓ Birth Defects Prevention Month



## Health Challenge Helps Losers Win



Most towns do not boast about losing, but West Point residents earned some serious bragging rights in a weight-loss challenge this year. Prompted by Mississippi's recognition as the "fattest state in the nation," West Point wanted to reverse the growing trend. In a showing of sincere commitment to healthier lifestyles, community residents lost nearly 6,000 pounds during the first three months of 2004.

The community organizers included North Mississippi Medical Center in Clay County, state and local AARP, and Mississippi State University Extension Service. The program, "Weigh Down in West Point," encouraged teams of 10 people to lose a cumulative 100 pounds during a 12-week period beginning mid-January. The goal was to have 22 teams comprised of 220 individuals, which is one percent of the county's population. Instead, 98 teams enrolled as well as a number of individuals.

In addition to the support the team provided its members, each team was responsible for sending at least one member to a weekly education session designed to help the team meet its goal. These sessions included information on the importance of exercise, portion control, healthy eating, and the reduction of sweets and fats. Participants were encouraged to keep journals of what they consumed and how much they exercised.

## Motorcycles and Pink Ribbons

What do motorcycles and pink ribbons have in common? In Itawamba County, both are symbols of the important fight against breast cancer. In a first time event, the Mingo Motorcycle Club and MSU Extension Service partnered to organize the Carolyn Fortune Memorial Breast Cancer Awareness Ride. Don and Carolyn Fortune founded the Mingo Motorcycle Club based in Tremont, Mississippi. When Carolyn recently lost her battle with breast cancer, the club became warriors against the disease. The event began with a motorcycle parade and ended with a health fair targeting the whole community. The Mammography Unit from North Mississippi Medical Center's Breast Cancer Center was onsite for women who were in need of services. In addition, other health education and screenings were provided by Access Family Health Clinic, the Partnership for a Healthy Northeast Mississippi, Premier Family Practice, Daniel Health Care Complex and MSU Itawamba Extension Service. Good food, door prize chances, and lively entertainment were also community draws. Proceeds from the event totaling more than \$700 were presented to the North Mississippi affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Foundation at the *Race for the Cure* celebration in Tupelo.

*Ride participants take a minute to pose for the camera. (Picture courtesy of Itawamba County Times)*



## Uniting Women and Knowledge



Every woman is at risk of developing breast cancer. However, women in Prentiss County are better informed about facing the risk thanks to a team of dedicated community servants.

During the early days of October, a countywide event was organized to educate women about early detection and prevention of breast cancer. This Breast Cancer Awareness Luncheon, a

collaborative effort of Baptist Memorial Hospital and MSU Extension Service, featured Dr. Sylvia Richie of the University of Tennessee Cancer Institute, Sherry Abraham, who is a breast cancer survivor and co-founder of the Women's First Resource Center in Tupelo, and a breast cancer lobbyist for the state and nation. Eight of the 43 participants were breast cancer survivors, including one who is a 35-year survivor, adding an even more personal face to the life-threatening illness.



*Pictured (L to R) – are Traci Stockdale, Baptist Memorial Hospital; Sherry Abraham, Women's First Resource Center; Zetta Green, a cancer survivor for 35 years; Janice Sims, 4-H Program Associate; Dr. Sylvia Richie, University of Tennessee Cancer Institute; and Linda Wilemon, Area Health Agent with MSU Extension Service*

## Women Continue to Fight the B.A.T.T.L.E.

Winston County is waging a war on breast cancer through its annual BATTLE Luncheon and Fashion Show. Teaching the women of Winston County early detection methods has been the goal since the beginnings of the BATTLE luncheon. The event has grown annually from a guest list of 28 during its first year in 1999 to more than 300 this year.

Since the inception of the BATTLE program, mammogram rates in Winston County have doubled from 34 percent in 1999 to 68 percent in 2002.

Information and Quality Healthcare, a peer review group, has used Winston County as a model for what can be accomplished when groups work together to increase the awareness of breast cancer. The luncheon featured a keynote speaker and fashion show. Dr. Michael Hailey, staff physician with the E.H.H. Breast Cancer Research and Treatment Center in Baton Rouge, La., served as keynote speaker. Participants in the fashion show were breast cancer survivors modeling clothes from local stores.

**B**reast Cancer  
**A**wareness  
**T**o  
**T**each  
**L**adies  
**E**arly Detection



## Hats Off for Health

Laughter can often be a great teacher as a number of women throughout the state are realizing through one of MSU Extension Services' newest programs, *Hats Off for Health*. Through humorous portrayals of many common excuses for failing to have regular mammograms and pap smears as a part of breast and cervical cancer early detection, women find themselves thinking through their own situations as they see whose excuses crumble in the face of facts.



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## New Health Web Site Unveiled

MSU Extension Service unveiled its new health promotion web site this past month. One of the features of the site is an interactive map identifying community health coalitions working within our state. The purpose of this feature is to help local citizens and organizations identify those in their area who have a strong interest in promoting health in the community. In addition to the county map, several state health coalitions are showcased. Training and support opportunities that MSU Extension Service provides to health coalitions are also outlined, as well as health promotion programs, staff contact information, and volunteer opportunities.

Please take time to browse the site and give us feedback. If your coalition's information needs updating, please contact Rachel Welborn at the address on the front of this newsletter.

The web site is: [msucares.com/](http://msucares.com/) Click on "health"