

**SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**  
**AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER**



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**CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

**Presented to:**  
**Board of Supervisors**  
**Southern University**

*"Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success"*

**February 2011**

**Number 243-51**

# Southern University Ag Center, USDA Partner on Mentoring Program

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On January 31, the National 4-H Council announced that it has launched a nationwide mentoring initiative to increase youth social competency, family relationships, and academic success. The 4-H National Mentoring Program will provide funding to land-grant universities in 47 states to replicate three evidence-based Extension 4-H programs in communities that have an increased risk for youth delinquency.

The Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) awarded a \$5 million grant to National 4-H Council in support of the 4-H National Mentoring Program. The grant comes as a part of the OJJDP's national effort to strengthen, expand and implement youth mentoring activities nationwide to improve the lives of millions of young Americans.

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center has been selected to implement *4-H LIFE – Living Interactive Family Education* as a part of the 4-H National Mentoring Program. Staff members recently joined representatives from other

state 4-H programs for training at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, MD, near Washington, DC, January 10-15, 2011. State 4-H programs selected from three of Cooperative Extension's proven mentoring programs to implement in their local communities: *4-H Mentoring: Youth & Families with Promise (YFP)*, created by Utah State University; *4-H Tech Wizards*, created by Oregon State University; and *4-H Living Interactive Family Education (LIFE)*, created by the University of Missouri.

The 4-H LIFE Program is a family strengthening program that addresses the needs of children of incarcerated parents. The overall objective of the 4-H LIFE Program is to promote a strong, healthy, and nurturing family environment for children of incarcerated parents, while helping incarcerated parents and trained 4-H volunteers become positive role models and mentors.

The program has three, interwoven components focused on parenting skills classes and planning meetings for the incarcerated parents and 4-H club meetings that unite children

with their families inside the prison visiting room. These components are designed to create stronger parent-child bonds, improve the quality of prison-based family visits, and increase youth decision-making and communication skills. Incarcerated parents are required to participate in weekly parenting, leadership, and planning meetings in order to qualify for the program. Children of offenders who are involved in 4-H LIFE are also enrolled as members of county 4-H programs and are mentored by 4-H volunteers.



**Franklin addresses training group**

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## Mentoring program

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It has been demonstrated that a trusting relationship with a caring adult can have a life-changing effect on a young person. The **Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center** will implement, monitor, and assess program mentoring strategies to create positive outcomes for youth. Research data indicates that mentoring programs have reduced first-time drug use by almost 50 percent and first-time alcohol use by 33 percent. In addition, mentored youth displayed greater confidence in their schoolwork and improved their academic performance.

The SU Ag Center Family and Human Development team received a grant in the amount of \$82,000 to implement the program. Three SU Ag Center representatives traveled to Chevy Chase, Maryland for a weeklong training to on implementing the program.

Principal Investigator Tiffany Franklin, along with Delores Johnson and Stacey Nevills, who will serve as site coordinators, attended the training. The team of three will implement the 4-H LIFE (Living Interactive Family Education) program, which is a replication from the University of Missouri Extension. The program in Louisiana will be implemented in the East Baton Rouge and St. Landry Parish Prisons.

The objective of this program is to afford incarcerated inmates an opportunity to spend quality time with their children during supervised visits utilizing the 4-H meeting model. The team from the University of Missouri has utilized this technique for approximately 10 years. During these visits, parents will practice new parenting skills, obtained during mandated monthly sessions. The benefits of the 4-H LIFE program is intended to get children excited about meaningful visits through the 4-H experience and will help build their communication and leadership skills while they see their incarcerated parents in a positive leadership role.



**Nevills, left, and Franklin in training**

After being acquainted during a 3-day tract and working with the team from the University of Missouri, Tiffany Franklin was asked to speak on behalf of the group during the closing ceremony. Franklin began by sharing with the audience, a quote she adopted

years ago, “if you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.” Working with youth can be a challenge, but we can restore hope as change agents by calling our kids “at-promised” instead of “at-risk.” This sends a more positive message by making it known that they still have a chance. “Hopefully, with this program, we can slow down the revolving door of youth getting involved in the justice system because parents are incarcerated,” said Franklin.

### **About 4-H**

4-H is a community of six million young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of 4-H National Headquarters at the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within USDA. 4-H programs are implemented by 109 land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension System through their 3,100 local Extension offices in every county across the country. Learn more about 4-H at [www.4-H.org](http://www.4-H.org).

For further detail, please contact Tiffany Franklin at 225-771-2242 or (225)771-2775.

*This project is supported by Award No. 2010-JU-FX-0016 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs*

## SU Ag Center Faculty Participate in National Conference

The USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA) held its First Hispanic-Serving Institution Grant Program/1890 Capacity Building Grant Program Project Directors' conference in Washington, DC November last fall. Also held in conjunction with this conference was the Competitive Grants Workshop hosted by Virginia Tech University. The theme of the conference was "Promoting Student-Centered Learning and Engagement." Educators, researchers, and other scientists from the agricultural and food industry participated in the conference "to share their unique and enriching scholarly experiences within their respective learning environments" said Drs. Ali Mohamed and Irma Lawrence, NIFA National Program Leaders. The conference brought together experts from 1862, 1890, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and the USDA to share ideas on building institutional capacity and partnerships in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Faculty members representing the SU Ag Center were, Kamran Abdollahi, Yadong Qi, Danielle Collins, Glenda Johnson, Bridget Udoh, and Oscar Udoh.

Several high ranking officials from USDA/NIFA including Dr. Roger Beachy, Director; Dr. Ralph Otto, Deputy Director; and Dr. Henry Doan, Program Analyst-Planning and Accountability addressed the participants. They stressed the need for scientists to address issues pertaining to the priority science areas which include: Global Food security and Hunger, Climate Change, Sustainable Energy, Childhood Obesity, and Food Safety.

Participants at this intense conference also discussed issues during breakout

sessions relating to the following topics: Plant science; agricultural economics and rural communities; successful education projects; environment; international programs; logic model; coordinated agricultural projects; and capacity building for minority serving institutions. Altogether, twenty-five HSIs and thirteen 1890 Institutions were represented at the conference. The last day of the conference was devoted to poster presentations set up in the USDA South Building Jefferson Auditorium and a visit to the National Science Foundation (NSF). Several Southern University alumni from the College of Agricultural, Family and Consumer Sciences and USDA senior officials took time to visit the poster exhibits. Officials included Allison Thomas, Special Assistant to the Deputy Administrator; Daniel Whitley, Deputy Director, Trade and Biofuels Analysis Division; Arthur Neal, Director of Program Administration, Agricultural Marketing Service; and Garland Robertson, Program Specialist, NIFA.

Project presentations and representatives from the SU Ag Center were as follows: Application of Nanotechnology in Forest Health Management by Yadong Qi; Plant Biosecurity Short Courses to Enhance Urban Forestry Education and Training at Southern University by Danielle Collins; Enhancement of K-12 Pipeline in Family and Consumer Sciences Using an Innovative Recruitment and Retention Model by Glenda Johnson; Strategies to Improve Farm and Business Efficiency Through Integrated Communications by Bridget Udoh; Enhancing the Teaching Capacity of Urban Forestry Program at Southern University

and A & M College by Kamran Abdollahi; and Academy for the Academic Enhancement of High School Students in the Food and Agricultural Sciences by Oscar Udoh.



Johnson explains project to poster visitor, left



SU Ag Center conference participants, l-r: D. Collins, K. Abdollahi, B. Udoh, Y. Qi and O. Udoh

## **SU Ag Center Conducts Successful Program in Orleans Parish**

The 4-H/Y.E.S. Club at Thurgood Marshall Early College in New Orleans participated in a poultry project entitled “From Farm to Feast.” The students raised broilers from one-day old to four months starting in September 2010 utilizing a 4-H curriculum under the supervision of Hendrix Broussard, Orleans county agent. The students and teacher built a brooder for the small chicks, and when the broilers were older, they built a pen for them.

During this project, students learned about the poultry industry, its impact on the state’s economy, the incubation period of eggs, and career choices in the agricultural and food sciences.

As a result of this project, India Jackson became the first student from Orleans Parish to participate in the State Fair of Louisiana Youth Livestock Show held in Shreveport. “This was a great experience and I hope it continues after I graduate,” said Jackson. She competed with 45 other youth from across the state and aspires to become a veterinarian.

On the business end of the project, students used chicken waste to make a compost mound. The compost was used to fertilize a sunflower garden on the northwest corner of the campus. The group

cut the sunflower heads and harvested the seeds for roasting.

The highlight of the project was the opportunity for students to participate in the harvesting of the broilers. Some of the project participants were selected to visit the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Baton Rouge. Upon their arrival at the Southern University poultry unit, Curtis Chisley, Livestock and Meat Specialist, lectured on incubators, types of chicken breeds and their uses for meat, eggs or show. He also informed them that 40% of adults in the United States work in an agricultural related career.



**Students harvest chicken on SU campus**

Paul Thomas initiated the harvesting process by giving the students safety rules. Each student was encouraged to participate in the slaughtering of the broilers. The students also had an opportunity to visit the beef farm where

they participated in cattle branding under the supervision of Assistant Research Farm Superintendent Linus Harleaux and other Experiment Station employees. They learned about the purpose of branding, and the different types of livestock branding techniques,



**Mr. Harleaux assists student with cattle branding at SU Experiment Station**

including hot and freeze. Renita Marshall, D.V.M., enlightened the students on herd rotation, parasite control, mixed species grazing of cattle and goats.

The day ended with a visit to the meat technology laboratory where students observed a real slaughter room. “This is an experience we will never forget and hope we get to do it again next year,” they said.

## **St. Helena Parish Receives Grant to Confront Childhood Obesity**

The SU and LSU Agricultural Centers in St. Helena Parish have been awarded a “Confronting Childhood Obesity” grant. This grant from the Louisiana 4-H Foundation mini-grant program is designed to provide resources and opportunities for community partners as they work to develop and implement programs aimed at reducing childhood obesity.

The program objectives through this grant are to increase: youth, adult and community partnerships utilizing positive youth development practices in addressing health issues, in particular childhood obesity; the number of youth/adults reached through learning experiences addressing childhood obesity; awareness of personal behaviors relative to obesity in youth/adults.

This grant will be incorporated throughout St. Helena Parish through the collaboration of community partners, including the St. Helena Parish school system, police jury, sheriff’s department, Turner Chapel A.M.E. Church, the Council on Aging and nursing homes.



**Students learn about leafy greens**

Healthy Living Week, Multicultural Food Week and a Health Fair are types of programs anticipated in this grant. Schools will incorporate the grant into health classes in which students are taught to practice a healthy lifestyle.

Youth agent Angela Myles and the LSU/SU AgCenter staff look forward to partnering with the community in helping to reduce childhood obesity and live better, healthier lifestyles.

## Broadmoor High School Students Experience Agriculture at SU Ag Center

The Broadmoor High School 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade business class visited the Southern University Ag Center on January 21. The students wanted to learn about agriculture and the impact it has made over time.

Robert “Bob” Rene, SU Office of student recruitment and admissions. The students learned that now is the time to prepare for the ACT exam and how to do so. They asked many questions that they would not normally be able to ask at recruitment nights.

Andra Johnson, associate professor of Urban Forestry, enlightened the students on educational career

paths in agricultural and food sciences. He also spoke about volunteering now in areas of interest in an effort to gain necessary experience.

The students participated in hands-on lab activities with Renita Marshall, D.V.M. in the area of animal science. The students had an opportunity to observe different parasites under the microscope while learning how these organisms affect the goat industry.

Daniel Collins, professor of Urban Forestry, guided students in diagnosing different diseases in trees.

The last activity for the day was a riding tour of the Southern Uni-

versity Campus. “I never realized how many different things you can do in agriculture without even going into a field or living on a farm. Mrs. Monroe and everyone here made it fun and exciting. It is something to really consider now,” said LeTricia, one of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Christie Monroe, Livestock Show Manger/Assistant Specialist of animal Science, organized the event.

## Southern University Ag Center Nutritionist Certified



Nutrition Education Assistant Melody Coco of Avoyelles Parish was one of 12 graduates from the Master Nutrition class in Alexandria

on January 12. This achievement followed the completion of a program organized by the LSU AgCenter.

The Master Nutrition program is modeled after the very popular Master Gardener program. After taking six five-hour sessions last fall, Master Nutrition volunteers

were certified to teach basic nutrition and food safety lessons to the public. Many of the volunteers will work with head start programs, elementary schools and senior centers in the community.

LSU AgCenter faculty trained these volunteers in the areas of wellness, exercise and fad diets, the MyPyramid food guidance system, dietary guidelines, serving sizes, nutrients, food labels, meal planning, modifying recipes and food safety. Each volunteer also performed 15 hours of service and passed a competency

test to become certified.

LSU AgCenter Regional family and Consumer Sciences Coordinator Quincy Cheek said to participants, “The goal is a healthy Louisiana. I have big plans for you.” Cheek also added that she’ll offer continuing education to the Master Nutritionists quarterly.

For more details, please visit: [http://text.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/news/headline\\_news/LSU-AgCenter-certifies-12-Master-Nutrition-volunteers-.htm](http://text.lsuagcenter.com/en/communications/news/headline_news/LSU-AgCenter-certifies-12-Master-Nutrition-volunteers-.htm)

## Staff activities

**Bridget Udoh**, communications specialist, conducted a focus group session to launch a USDA project which seeks to study the best strategy to strengthen communications between limited resource clientele and the SU Ag Center. Limited resource producers and business owners in Louisiana will identify their preferred type and mode of information as they learn multiple ways to access accurate and timely information for decision-making and ultimately increase profit.

The three-year project will involve 100 participants from ten Louisiana parishes. The first focus group session which recruited eight participants was held in St. Martin Parish Library, January 25. Other team members who assisted in facilitating the focus group included, Oscar Udoh, coordinator for Planning and Evaluation, Andra Johnson, associate professor, Urban Forestry, Candace Semien, consultant, and Charles Butler, Jr., doctoral student, Urban Forestry.



**Udoh, left, interacts with focus group participants**

**Sarah Sims**, Extension Aide, Madison Parish, invited SU Ag Center County Agent Chris Robichaux, PhD, St. Martin/Iberia Parishes, and County Agent Terry Washington, Rapides Parish, to conduct an educational workshop for 56 Tallulah Elementary School gardeners in Madison Parish targeting the School Garden Project participants. The youth learned about plant structure such as root, stems, leaves, flowers and seeds. They participated in an exciting activity of transplanting seedlings. Each student, under the direction of Washington and Sims, learned how to carry out the transplant. The student gardeners also held their first fall green sale which was a big success.



**Washington interacts with students**

**Sims** conducted the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday Lunch & Learn Diabetes Awareness which attracted 39 participants to the monthly program. This educational program was sponsored by Southern University Ag Center, Dr. Ronal Wyche, M.D. of Outpatients Medical Center and Assistant LaKeisha William, Terri Crawford, and LSU Ag Center. Participants were made aware of the dangers of Diabetes. As a result of the program, a series of diabetes educational workshops will be held on every Tuesdays beginning January 18<sup>th</sup>, from noon-5:30 p.m. at LSU/Southern University Ag Center extension office.



**Cross section of 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday meeting**

She also held an in-service workshop on childhood obesity in which eight teachers participated. She used the “Healthy Me” Curriculum Munching & Reading through MyPyramid to teach the problems caused by childhood obesity; changes that can be made; ways to encourage classroom activities; ways to improve school health; and tips for parents. Each teacher participated in hands-on activities that they can use in the classroom to promote reading and fitness.



**In-service training participants**

## *Upcoming Events*

- February 1**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- February 5**, Louisiana Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute: Lafayette. Contact: Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-2242
- February 8**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- February 15**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, parent educator, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- February 22**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, parent educator, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- March 1**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, parent educator, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- March 3-5**, 68<sup>th</sup> Annual State Livestock Show, M.A. Edmond Livestock Show Arena, Baton Rouge. Contact: Christie Monroe at 225-771-2242
- Mar 5**, Louisiana Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute Graduation Ceremony, SU Ag Center, Baton Rouge. Contact: Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-2242
- March 8**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, parent educator, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- March 15**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, parent educator, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- March 17—19**, Louisiana Small and Minority Farmers' Conference, Baton Rouge. Contact: Dawn Mellion-Patin at 225-771-2242
- March 22**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- Mar 23 – 27**, Ag Institute East Coast Tour and Graduation, North Carolina A & T State University/ Washington DC. Contact: Dawn Mellion Patin
- March 29**, parenting class on Family Stress, La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237
- March 29**, Seventh Annual Connecting Businesses with Contracts Procurement Conference. Contact: Gloria London, (225) 225-771-2242 or 771-4107

*Upcoming Events contd.*

**April 2**, 39<sup>th</sup> Annual State and National Rabbit Show, M.A. Edmond Livestock Show Arena, Baton Rouge.  
Contact: Christie Monroe, 225-771-2242

**April 2**, 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Broiler Show, M.A. Edmond Livestock Show Arena, Baton Rouge. Contact: Christie Monroe, 225-771-2242

**April 5**, parenting class on Family Stress - La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237

**April 8-10**, 41<sup>st</sup> Annual State and Regional Horse Show, M.A. Edmond Livestock Show Arena, Baton Rouge.  
Contact: Christie Monroe, 225-771-2242

**April 12**, parenting class on Family Stress - La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237

**April 19**, parenting class on Family Stress - La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237

**April 22**, parenting class on Family Stress - La JET, Baton Rouge. Contact: Delores Johnson, (225) 771-2242 ext. 237