

ROAD MAP TO HEALTH

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR NUTRITION, HEALTH, WELLNESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE



What's New

COE SYMPOSIUM

ASCEND

N.C A&T WALMART SCHOLARS

WESTDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL GARDENING PROJECT

SCOTLANDVILLE GARDEN

The Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life (COENHWQL) held its 2023 Symposium on March 27–28, 2023, at the Southern University Smith-Brown Memorial Union.

The theme of the symposium was "Promoting Healthy Communities," which sets the direction of the COE goals and objectives. It served as a platform to deliver innovative research results and the latest trends and developments in the fields of nutrition, health, wellness, and quality of life.

"This first health disparities conference of 2023 offered a special opportunity to bring together professors, researchers, staff, students, extension professionals and paraprofessionals, community members, and scholars from around the nation," said Dr. Fatemeh Malekian, Project Director for NHWQL and Director of the Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Wellness at the SU AG Center.



This symposium featured a rich program, including a speech by the acting Director of USDA/NIFA, Dr. Dionne Toombs, a keynote speech delivered by Alma Stewart, the CEO of Louisiana Health Equity, and other speakers from USDA/NIFA, local and state agencies, private organizations, community members, and faculty from other 1890 universities such as Tuskegee, NC A&T State University, and the 1890 Universities Foundation. Various presentations showed innovative ways that the information provided can lead to improvements in their program designs, facilitation, and ability to seek federal and private funding. Another highlight of our program was the Eliminating the Stigma: Changing the Narrative Around Mental Health presentation. Ms. Ashlyn Harrison led an outstanding presentation with open dialog on identifying systematic barriers and shifting the narrative in our communities.

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At the event, participants benefited from the opportunity to engage with exhibitors that provided a variety of health and wellness programs. They set up tables with information, giveaways, and on-site education for the overall well-being of our participants. Organizations that participated included Ochsner’s Smoking Cessation, Pennington Biomedical, and the Geaux Get Health Clinic Program at Our Lady of the Lake. A highlight presenter and exhibitor was LLENA (AI), an ideal source for high-tech technology that helps diabetics recognize what, when, and where to eat to balance their daily management.

Additionally, Southern University dietetic interns provided an onsite food demonstration for guests. They prepared banana and blueberry smoothies, trail mix, and fruit parfaits. These quick, healthy snacks gave participants a burst of energy and insight into economical snacks.

"We are in a unique position to work as a team to establish a COE nutrition center, which supports the tripartite land grant’s mission of research, teaching, and extension to contribute solutions to improve the health and well-being of underserved and minority populations," added Dr. Malekian.

For additional information about the Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life, contact Dr. Renita Marshall, Co-Project Director for NHWQL and SU Ag Center Vice-Chancellor for Academic and Student Services and Associate Dean of the College of Agricultural, Family, and Consumer Sciences, at renita_marshall@suacenter.com.

ASCEND

for Better Health

On January 31, 2023, we partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to host the first of a series of listening sessions hosted by USDA’s Agricultural Science Center of Excellence for Nutrition and Diet for Better Health (ASCEND for Better Health). The session gathered a diverse audience of local community members, partners, and leaders, where they were able to discuss how the community at large deals with food, the misinformation about it, and the lack of access to healthy choices. It was a well-attended event of power-packed information and a great continued effort at bridging the gap between diet, nutrition, and health issues in the community and what can be accomplished through a collective effort between USDA and the Southern University Ag Center.



Student Scholar Highlight

This 10-week summer REEU in Crop-to-Food Innovation will help me to connect fundamental science discoveries with their translation to better comprehend the steps from crop trait genesis to commercialization of new food items based on those unique features. I will be involved in research projects that involve collaborations across two or more components of our Crop-to-Food Innovation Pipeline, which will allow me to gain a broader perspective on their research projects and appreciate the steps from product inception to prototype development to application evaluation. As part of the training, I will complete a 1.5-week Biotechnology Training Camp that will provide us as students with an overview of fundamental laboratory skills and knowledge such as basic molecular biology methods, routine microbiology, and biochemistry applications. In addition, the program will offer complimentary professional development and leadership skills training in science communication, outreach, and entrepreneurship.



Student Scholar Destinae Davis

Tuskegee University

During the spring 48 raised-box gardens (8,16, 6, 18) were established in elementary schools in four Black Belt counties in Alabama a variety of spring vegetables were planted to include, zucchini, squash, tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, and sweet corn. Sweet potatoes were also planted which will be ready for harvesting in October/November, this starchy root is a rich source of beta carotene, fiber, and other nutrients.

Individualized Container/raised-box garden in Alabama Black Belt counties:

The participants who planted gardens in the previous year are continuing with their gardens planting a variety of fruits and vegetables. They are re-planting using the resources provided by the project and more, in addition to the number of garden reported previously. Furthermore, in this new phase thirty-six blue berries trees were planted and two strawberries. The participants are planting a variety of vegetables and are engaging in developing new recipes based on the vegetables introduced in this project such as Brussel sprouts and Swiss chard. The group's motivation and enthusiasm have continued. This project focuses on individualized gardens in each community, in application, however it has components of a community effort. In each community there is a leader who keeps the information flowing and shares concerns with the project director. This project will also look at the chemical composition of the vegetables planted in containers/raised beds and those conventionally grown in the next arm of the project.

Below are pictures of the schools, students and gardens



FIGURE 1. STUDENT IN MACON COUNTY PREPARING GARDEN BEDS FOR SPRING GARDENS



FIGURE 2 A: STUDENTS FROM SOUTH GIRARD SCHOOL WORKING ON GARDEN BED



FIGURE 3. STUDENTS FROM EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SHOWING GARDEN BEDS, HOLDING A FRESH HEAD LETTUCE HARVESTED FROM THE GARDEN AND ADMIRING THEIR EGG PLANTS GROWING

WESTDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL GARDENING PROJECT

The Center of Excellence at Southern University has partnered with Westdale Middle School to create an after-school gardening program. The Center of Excellence team planted a variety of fruit trees with students at Westdale Middle School. The trees were donated by Senator Regina Barrow, and the grant was led by Dr. Calvin Reuben Walker and Marlin Ford. COE team members Cornelius Jackson and Mike Diego Walker also gave a hands-on demonstration to the students. The students have learned how to stake tomatoes and transplant watermelons to the rows. The students are successfully growing corn, tomatoes, bell peppers, carrots, eggplants, watermelon, and various herbs. This project is successfully funded through Walmart's Center for Racial Equity.



SCOTLANDVILLE GARDEN



January 26, 2023

Produce such as collards, green onions, and chives have been harvested at the Scotlandville CDC Garden. Yesterday, Student Scholar Destinae' Davis, Garden Expert Cornelius Jackson, Expert Liaison Mike ' Organic Diego' Walker, Project Coordinator Brittany Howard, Ms. Pat Leduff, and Ms. Simone of Scotlandville CDC worked together to pack the produce and dropped it off at the community center for members of the community to pick up at their convenience.

March 7, 2023

Our Center of Excellence partnered with the Scotlandville CDC, LSU Black Women's Empowerment Initiative, LSU AKAs , and midcity redevelopment for Black Girl Day of Service. They harvested the remainder of the winter crops including greens, cabbage, green onions, chives, thyme and oregano. All crops were bagged and brought to the center for community members to get at their convenience. Please join us on March 18th for our next garden day!

On Saturday, April 1st, the Center of Excellence participated in the Scotlandville Meet your Neighbor. During the event, Extension agent Cornelius Jackson led Garden day and Project Manager Brittany Howard helped participants create make-your-own parfaits. A special thanks to Walmart Foundation Center for Racial Equity and the 1890 Universities Foundation through the COENHQL for their funding towards the newly built sidewalk located at the Scotlandville Garden.

This project is successfully funded through Walmart's Center for Racial Equity.

N.C. A&T

The Walmart Health Disparity Scholars



Left to Right: Ryli Hagler (Junior, Child Development and Family Studies), Hannah Hovey (Sophomore, Food and Nutritional Sciences), Jayona Hymphrey (Junior, Child Development and Family Studies & Family and Consumer Sciences), Dr. Shengmin Sang (PI), Femi Omoniyi (PhD student, Food and Nutritional Sciences), Joshua Fletcher (Sophomore, Food and Nutritional Sciences)





This spring semester, the Walmart Health Disparity Scholars at N.C. A&T worked collaboratively with the NCAT Pathway 2 Human Lactation Training Program and clinic on creating informational videos to educate nursing mothers as they complete their intake forms. The videos addressed the following topics:

- Key Vitamins and Minerals for Breastfeeding**
- Breastfeeding Benefits for Babies**
- Breastfeeding Benefits for Mothers**
- Nutritional Considerations for Breastfeeding Mothers**
- Nutrition during pregnancy**

The videos have been submitted for further review and should be updated on nursing mothers' intake forms sometime during the summer. Meanwhile, the group prepared educational flyers that focused on nutrition for nursing mothers. The scholars also toured the clinic and gained insight into its operation.

Additionally, the scholars met with the director of the Greensboro Urban Ministry Partnership Village, a transitional housing community for individuals and families rebuilding self-sufficiency after experiencing homelessness (www.greensborourbanministry.org), to develop ways in which the team can promote healthy eating patterns in their residents. The scholars led a presentation that gave an overview of functional foods and their benefits to the village residents on the day that they received food from the distribution center. Nursing students from Elon University were also there to provide blood pressure and blood sugar checks for the residents, coordinating with the scholars so more residents were reached.

