

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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Training workshop inspires Women in Agriculture

Southern University Ag Center

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The Southern University Ag Center held the first workshop in its series of Wisteria Alliance Women in Ag training on Saturday, November 16 at the Maurice Edmond Livestock Arena in Baker. Workshop topics included understanding the basics of farm safety

presented by Dawn Mellion-Patin, Agricultural Specialist; handling small tools by Victoria McMullen-Dunn, Agricultural Science Educator in East Feliciana Parish; and making garden waste work for you by Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate.

Participants learned how to make a picnic table in their hands-on exercise. The workshop attracted about 20 participants.

Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin, Project Director, coordinates the training series. Next training is on January 11, 2014.



Dr. Mellion-Patin shows some farm safety equipment



Mrs. Dunn, right, demonstrate how to measure wood for cutting



Trainees practice cutting wood



Participants build picnic table



Building team stands behind newly completed picnic table



Builders test their finished product



Mrs. Berhane shows product of garden waste



Sample of garden waste to use in compost bin



Mrs. Christie Monroe gives a talk on safe use of farm tractor

Fall garden at Jetson Correctional Center for Youth ripe for harvest



Dr. Bandele, right, imparts hands-on gardening skills to students at JCY.

The fall garden at Jetson Correctional Center for Youth, dubbed “The Young Men’s Garden,” is progressing successfully. Early in the season, the boys harvested pumpkins for decorating their dorm rooms. This year’s pumpkin harvest was limited, but the youth plan to grow a larger pumpkin patch next year. Currently, there are two types of garden on the JCY campus. One is a raised bed style garden, and the other is a traditional in-ground row garden. The raised bed gardens have been planted with lettuce, different varieties of mustards and collards. In the traditional garden, the boys are growing lettuce, mustards, radishes, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and onions. Produce harvested from these gardens will be utilized in the campus cafeteria or sold for project income.

As part of the Horticulture Trade project, select JCY youth have participated in two field trips this year in affiliation with the Southern Ag Center. In September, four youth participated in the Back to School Summit in Lafayette, La. At the event, JCY students had an opportunity to witness motivational speakers’ presentations, tour different booths and talk to a variety of representatives about teenage issues. In the second field trip, four JCY youth participated in the 2013 Fall Gardening Workshop held at the Southern University Ag Center. Christie Monroe, project coordinator, and Owusu Bandele, retired horticultural professor/garden instructor, presented on the topic of “Incarcerated Populations” focusing on the gardens and youth at JCY. Each of the participating youth from JCY at the workshop also presented a summary of his personal experiences with the SU Ag Center Horticulture Trade classes; and how the gardens have affected their coping with feelings of anger, overall attitudes, and the possibility of working in the field of agriculture upon release. They also entertained a very thorough and intriguing question and answer portion of the presentation. Stephanie Elwood, Extension Associate of Community Gardens and garden instructor at JCY began teaching the youth from the Horticultural License Book in prepara-

tion for youth interested in taking the test. She is approaching it step-by-step with the goal that a few students will be ready to take the Horticulture License exam in spring 2014. This will benefit the youth upon release.

Ms. Kelli Hollins, Program Assistant, has been teaching marketing classes in conjunction with the SU Ag Center Horticulture Trade Class to prepare students for produce handling during and after harvest. Through these marketing classes, the youth decided to name the garden on JCY’s campus “The Young Men’s Garden.” The JCY/SU Ag Center Horticulture Trade students will have the opportunity to start working on iPads this December and January 2014. This will provide a continuation of understanding for the business phase of the garden. The youth are preparing the grounds on their campus for a fruit orchard which will consist of lemon, kumquat, satsuma, and several varieties of fig trees. The future is looking bright for the SU Ag Center Horticulture Trade Class at JCY and participating youth.

Business Development Training held in Bastrop, Oak Grove, and Alexandria

Bastrop, November 12: The Center for Rural and Small Business Development (CRSBD), in conjunction with the Morehouse Economic Development Corporation held a Business Development Training in the Bastrop Visitors' Center. The free seminar provided participants with information on how to start a small business or expand an existing business. It also provided business etiquette information and marketing techniques to promote a business.

During the seminar, Kay King with the Morehouse Economic Development Corporation welcomed the participants and SU Ag Center Assistant Area Agent Odis Hill spoke about the services provided through the Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center.

LaKeeshia Giddens, E-Learning Center Program Director, spoke about the Center for Rural and Small Business Development and its E-Learning Center. Eual Hall, Business Outreach Specialist, facilitated the Starting and Expanding a Business session; Sonja Butler, Administrative Program Assistant, facilitated the Business Etiquette session and Giddens facilitated the Marketing Techniques session.

The CRSBD will continue to partner with the SU Ag Center's field agents and economic development organizations to provide business development training within Louisiana's rural underserved communities.

Oak Grove, November 14: More than 30 current and potential small business owners attended a business development training facilitated by the Center. The seminar was held at the Thomas Jason Lingo Community Center (SU/LSU Ag Center) in Oak Grove, La., West Carroll Parish.

A welcome was provided by SU Ag Center Associate Area Agent, Carolyn Robinson and CRSBD staff members Eual Hall, Sonja Butler and LaKeeshia Giddens conducted presentations on how to start and expand a business, proper business etiquette and business marketing techniques.

Alexandria, November 18: The Center for Rural and Small Business Development held another free business training at the Rose of Sharon Baptist church in Alexandria, La. Over 30 participants attended the training that focused on the topics of starting and expanding a business, maintaining business etiquette and marketing a business. The participants learned how to start or expand an existing business, received the forms and applications needed to legally operate a business in the state of Louisiana, as well as information to ensure that an existing business continues to operate efficiently. They also received business etiquette information and marketing techniques to help promote a business.



Bastrop: Odis Hill addresses audience



Oak Grove: Eual Hall facilitates session



Alexandria: Lakeeshia Giddens explains E-Learning functions to participants

John Johnson School Garden teaches responsible living

Carol Sensley, Asst. Extension Agent in Calcasieu Parish supervised Ms. Harris's 3rd grade science class at John J. Johnson Elementary School as they planted vegetables in their school garden on November 5. School gardens foster an increased awareness of environmental issues. Students learn to respect and care for the soil, where our food comes from.

The garden will also improve students' self-esteem, behavior, social skills and interpersonal relationships. It will also help them develop life skills, including working with groups. The project provides opportunities for community involvement, including neighbors, volunteers, parents, and local businesses.



Sensley works with students in school garden

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

November 16: Tax Preparation & Estate Planning Workshop. Contact Dawn Mellion-Patin at 771-3532.

Jan. 11, 2014: Community Gardening 101, SU Ag Center, Baton Rouge. Contact Dawn Mellion-Patin at 771-3532.