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125 Years of Providing Access  
and Enhancing Opportunities

## CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

### Dr. Leodrey Williams

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### Presented to:

### Board of Supervisors

### Southern University and A & M College System

"Linking Citizens of Louisiana with Opportunities for Success"

## Southern University Ag Center Leader Announce Retirement

Leodrey Williams, chancellor of the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center officially announced his retirement during the Southern University Board of Supervisors' meeting. His announcement comes after serving for the past 50 years, working with both Southern University and LSU in Baton Rouge, as well as Washington DC at the national level, in Cooperative State Research and Extension Service. Over the past 14 years he has served as the only chancellor of the Center. His retirement from the university will be effective June 30, 2015.



Dr. Williams

Washington DC where he served as the national director of the Cooperative State Research and Extension Service, making him responsible for funding extension programs at 104 land-grant universities around the country. Williams returned to Southern University and took on his previous role as cooperative extension director in 1995. Then, in 2001 Williams was asked to head then newly-created Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center. "It's been a positive impact in serving at the two land-grant institutions for an extended period. What has kept me going, is serving people," stated Williams.

Williams was hired as an agriculture specialist, five years later, he went to LSU and served as associate state agent, director of Equal Employment Opportunity and associate professor in the Department of Extension and International Education, positions he held for four years. In 1980, he became extension director at Southern University. Soon after, Williams would move to

The Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center is the 5<sup>th</sup> campus of the Southern University System was established on July 1, 2001. The mission of the Center is to conduct basic and applied research, and disseminate information to the citizens of Louisiana in a matter that is useful in addressing their scientific, technological, social, economic and cultural needs.

### Procurement Conference Attracts Small Business Owners to Network with Contractors



Jo Ann Lawrence – right, SBA Specialist, interacts with participant



Gloria London – right, CRSBD Director with N.O. based Perez Construction Co.



Eual Hall- left, CRSBD Specialist visits with conference attendee



Trailblazers lead panel discussion. L-r: Moore, Randle, and Thibodeaux



Participants in workshop concurrent session

The Center for Rural and Small Business Development held a successful Annual Procurement Conference entitled "Connecting Businesses to Contracts Conference" at Southern University's Smith Brown Memorial Union, on April 9, with nearly 300 participants. During the Panel

Entrepreneur discussion, three trailblazers who led the session were recognized. The speakers shared their individual journey to success. They were James Moore, Expert Maintenance and Construction Company; Ingrid Thibodeaux, Citi Approved Thibodeaux Construction; and Rene Randle, Unique Creation.

They encouraged participants to remain faithful, resilient and optimistic in the face of challenges in seeking breakthrough opportunities. At the end of the discussion, the speakers entertained questions from the audience.

**James Moore** with Expert Maintenance and Construction Services based in Prairieville, La and has been providing janitorial and general maintenance services since 2005 in multiple states.

**Ingrid Thibodeaux** has proven through her actions that opportunities don't happen, you create them. Both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused financial devastation and uncertainty to her family's life. As a result, Citi Approved Thibodeaux Construction Company was born and continues to thrive today.

**Titus and Rene Randle** are the owners of Unique Creations Spa and Hair Replacement and Braiding Salon, LLC. In 1995, the Randalls saw a need for expansion of their salon and, with the help of the SU Ag Center for Rural and Small Business Development, secured an additional \$50K from Hibernia Bank to accommodate further growth.

Shruti Saini, president of The Advent Group, provides engineering services in Baton Rouge, explained that she came back to the conference the second year because of the networking opportunities available here.

Participating exhibitors included: USACE, New Orleans; U.S. Department of Navy; Entergy; USDA; Weeks Marine; Textron; Dyn McDermott; Department of Energy; SPAWAR; USDA NRCS;

Southern University Purchasing; Capital One; LED; LA Secretary of State; GSA; Cajun Constructors; FDIC; TruFund; LA-PTAC; LSBDC; Manson Construction Company; EBR Fair Share; EBR Purchasing; Perez; WSI Expert Solutions; Barksdale AFB; Department of Army – Fort Polk; Chevron; Veterans Administration; Marine Corps Reserve; Minerals Management; USACE-ERDC Vicksburg; NASA, Stennis; Gibbs Construction; Mike Hooks; Core Construction; Hunt-Gibbs-Boh-Metro Joint Venture, and more.

The conference was organized by Gloria London who can be reached at (225) 771-4107 e-mail [gloria\\_london@suagcenter.com](mailto:gloria_london@suagcenter.com) or Eual Hall at (225) 771-4105 e-mail [eual\\_hall@suagcenter.com](mailto:eual_hall@suagcenter.com)

“The 11th Annual Procurement Conference was a great success. It again provided an opportunity to identify emerging businesses, cultivate their growth and sustainability by providing access to capital and numerous possibilities of obtaining contract opportunities,” said London.

The goal of the conference is always to stimulate the economy by aligning existing and potential business owners, small contractors, non-profit organizations, and others with contracting officers, and purchasing agents, as well as providing an outlet to network and exchange information and ideas. Participants who attend the conference repeatedly report their reason as the opportunity to network.

## Three Inductees Join Agricultural Living Legends at Small Farmer Conference, Graduation



The Southern University Ag Center touts the success of the five events hosted March 19-21 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Small Farmers Conference. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Sustainable Ag Urban Demonstration Farm was the perfect beginning to a wonderful series of events. Two local schools attended the ribbon cutting along with 20 farmers and several dignitaries to include Hon. Mike Strain, Commissioner, LA Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry; the Hon. Melvin “Kip” Holden, Mayor-President, EBR Parish; Representative Dalton Honore, District 63; Dr. Monique Winfield, Vice President, SU System; Mr. Flandus McClinton, Interim Chancellor, SUBR; Dr. Adell Brown, Jr., Executive Vice Chancellor and VC for Research, and Dr. Gina E. Eubanks, Vice Chancellor for Extension, SU Ag Center.

One of the students from Martin Luther King Christian Academy told his teacher that he was planning on attending college at LSU, but now he has to come to Southern for college to check on the plant he planted in the raised bed in the farm.

There are already six requests from other school groups to tour the garden.

“The evening ended with a reception that everyone enjoyed,” said Dr. Dawn Mellion-Patin, event coordinator.

On Friday, the conference moved into full gear with moderators and presenters working as a team, followed by the Louisiana Living Legends Banquet at night. The three legends honored were: Dr. Bobby R. Phills, program director for the Science Center and professor in the College of Engineering Sciences, Technology and Agriculture at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee; Mr. George Moody accepting the award for Ms. Freddie Johnson, his aunt, a retired Southern University food and nutrition professor; and Mr. Elvadus Fields, former county agent and farm management specialist at Southern University, now retired, of St. Joseph.

Terrence Marshall, Extension Agent, East Baton Rouge Parish, was the speaker and shared the history of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Morrill Act, the legislation that created the 1890 land grant institutions in an outstanding fashion.

The conference concluded with Louisiana Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute Graduation Ceremony, held on March 21 with 14 participants graduating, including Extension Country Agents, Odis Hill, Morehouse & Union Parishes; and

Thomas Legiandenyi, East and West Carroll Parishes. Terry Washington, Rapides Parish, graduated in the previous class.

The graduation speaker was Felicia Bell, graduate of Class II of the regional leadership class. And the highlight of the event was Miss Christina Gary, a seven-year old 3rd grader performing an excerpt from a sermon by Bishop Eddie Long and another from Maya Angelou's poem, "Still I Rise." Her renditions were the best tributes to our new leaders.

The first day of the conference was featured by [WAFB Channel 9](http://wafb.com) news and is available at [wafb.com](http://wafb.com)

An article entitled Three new members join Southern U's agricultural 'legends' features the Louisiana Living Legends Banquet and is available on the [LSU AgCenter](http://www.lsuagcenter.com) website. Another article in the *Drum* newspaper appears under Community Snap Shots available online at <http://www.thedrumnewspaper.info/?p=3112>. The induction was also mentioned by the *Advocate* in the Baton Area Business Honors of April 12, 2015 available online at <http://theadvocate.com/news/acadiana/11989231-123/business-honors-for-april-12>

"The Louisiana Living Legends Award is an opportunity to honor heroes with ties to the Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center for their years of selfless service," said Dawn Mellion-Patin, agricultural specialist and organizer of the small farmer conference.

These three join 15 others who have been honored with this distinction since 2005. The other 15 Living Legends include Bernestine McGee, Floyd Jenkins, Elsie Cyrus, Samuel Donald, Alonzo Chappell, Sara Sims, Pecola Scott, Willie T. Sensley, Owusu Bandele, Leodrey Williams, James McNitt, James Archie, Solon Marshall, Kirkland Mellad and Wesley Crawford.

[http://www.lsuagcenter.com/news\\_archive/2015/March/headline\\_news/Three-new-members-join-Southern-Us-agricultural-legends.htm](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/news_archive/2015/March/headline_news/Three-new-members-join-Southern-Us-agricultural-legends.htm)

The event was organized by Dawn Mellion-Patin, Ph.D., Specialist, Agriculture, and Project Director, who can be reached at (225) 771-2242.

## SU Ag Center Holds Successful National Ag Day



Some stops at the National Ag Day Event

The Southern University Ag Center celebrated National Ag Day on March 18, 2015 with the nation in observation of the value of agriculture in our

daily lives. Students from the College of Sciences and Agriculture at Southern University, Broadmoor, Glen Oaks, Tara, and Zachary High Schools in Baton Rouge were joined by Zachary Career and Technical Center and St. Helena College and Career Academy for the event. They were urged to continue the great legacy by preparing themselves to be the future faces of agricultural leadership. In addition to interacting with faculty, staff and administrators, the "Jags in Ag" college students presented posters based on their research, were judged and awarded prizes for their posters.

Participants had an opportunity to watch the 1890 video to remind them about the impact the next generation can make in keeping with the theme of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Morrill Act.

Among those who welcomed the students to the National Ag Day celebration were President Ronal Mason, SU System; Dr. Adell Brown Jr., Executive

Vice Chancellor/Vice Chancellor for Research; Dr. Gina E. Eubanks, Vice Chancellor for Extension; and Dr. Andra Johnson, Associate Professor, Urban Forestry. The event was coordinated by Dr. Renita Marshall, Associate Professor, Animal Science. Covered by the SU Digest.

## SU Ag Center Helps Ponchatoula High Unveil Spring Garden

On March 26, Ahmad R. Robertson & Louisiana Master Gardner's Sunday, Hanson, Gary Boutwell, Myra Cannino, Mr. & Mrs. Sheryl Till, John Mcleary, Louis Durand, and June McNeil demonstrated best management practices of a spring & summer garden to the Ponchatoula High School community. The students gained on-site training of plant spacing, location, transplanting, irrigation, mulching and cultivating of 40 vegetable plots. Mrs. Glenda Dufreche, agricultural teacher at the school is doing an outstanding job in preparing future agriculture leaders through the Supervised Agriculture Experience Programs.

The spring garden project consists of tasty vegetables such as tomatoes, hot peppers, squash, cucumbers, zucchini, various herbs, Swiss chard, kale, romaine lettuce, and marigolds. Gardens provide a site for hands-on learning and venue to practice the use of scientific methods. The youth are excited about eating fruits and vegetables that they grow themselves.



Ahmad Robertson demonstrates plant depth to Ponchatoula High Student

Gardens can be used to teach food safety through proper harvest, processing and storage. The primary goal of a school garden is to allow the students to grow plants from start to finish. There is no greater reward than watching a tiny seed turn into something to eat. "Plant it, Grow it, Try it, Like it."

School gardens have many benefits including learning about agriculture, teamwork, social skills, healthy food, and physical education.

The School Garden Project is a program where volunteers and the staff work together to provide youth with hands-on, fun, and research-based educational opportunities. The outcome is to help youth become competent, caring, confident, connected, and contributing citizens of character while learning about agriculture, food, nutrition, and healthy living.

Ahmad Robertson serves as extension agent in St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes and can be reached at (985) 748-5462; (225) 222-4136, or email [ahmad\\_robertson@suagcenter.com](mailto:ahmad_robertson@suagcenter.com); [arobertson@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:arobertson@agcenter.lsu.edu).

## St. Helena Parish Spring Advisory Meeting Identifies Critical Programs

On Monday March 2, St. Helena Parish held its spring Horticulture/Agriculture & Natural Resource advisory meeting. The goal of the meeting was to identify critical research and available extension programs. Eight members were elected to serve on the extension program advisory leadership council. The advisory members will take an active role in providing program direction for the Extension horticulture program in this area by identifying and prioritizing the needs of the people represented, and assisting extension faculty in implementing and evaluating educational programs designed to meet those needs.

The L.S.U. AgCenter research professors, Drs. Ron Strahan and Melanie Ivey; S.U. Ag Center professors Drs. Renita Marshall, Janana Snowden, and Kit Chin engaged the farmers and ranchers. The extension specialists gave presentations on current research and programming for 2015. They also gave updates on pasture and horticulture weed control trial test plots, disease management on horticulture crops, and new spring/summer vegetable varieties trial plots, also food safety modernization act,



Advisory board members

animal science feral hog, nutrition, and record keeping. The St. Helena and Tangipahoa USDA Specialists, Mr. Patrick Babineaux and Mr. Brandon Bates engaged the farmers on program assistance and conservation opportunities. Non Insured Crop Assistance, high tunnel houses, agroforestry, and livestock pasture management, were the key takeaways.

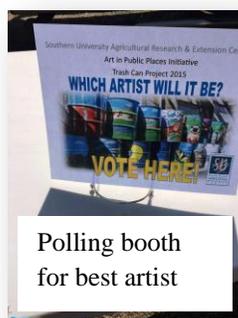
Mr. Eual Hall, Center for Rural and Small Business Development specialist at S.U. Ag Center gave advice on record keeping, marketing, and computer programs. Overall, Ahmad Robertson believes the advisory meeting was a great success.

“I’m looking forward to providing Agricultural leadership and programming for the clientele of Louisiana. Demonstration plots will be added to farming operations this year. Workshops will also be held on Roselle Hibiscus, Vegetable grafting, Edible soybean, spring/ summer vegetable production and lawn & pasture maintenance,” said Ahmad Robertson, Extension Agent, St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes.

Ahmad Robertson serves as extension agent in St. Helena and Tangipahoa Parishes and can be reached at (985) 748-5462; (225) 222-4136, or email [ahmad\\_robertson@suagcenter.com](mailto:ahmad_robertson@suagcenter.com);

## Locals Support the SHAPE Art in Public Places Initiative

The Trashcan Project is a collaborative effort between Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center, and St. Helena Advocacy for Parish Enrichment. These entities are working together to promote the town's "Art in Public Places Initiative." Studies have shown that students involved in the arts are prone to being recognized for high academic achievement, and students from St. Helena College & Career Academy are doing just that! Students worked hard on their designs for two consecutive months with the help of Nicolette Gordon, Assistant Area Agent, SU Ag Center, and Sally Robertson, Gifted & Talented Art Teacher at the St. Helena College & Career Academy.



On Saturday March 28, their artwork was on display at the Greensburg Community Market. The "Market Goers" had their chance to vote on the artist whose artwork will be displayed in the Town of Greensburg. Javier Smith came in first place with an

original eye-catching design showing great detail. Shy'Janae Hookfin secured second place with a design of Elsa from the hit Disney movie Frozen. In third place was Gerald Homes with an ink design of Kung Fu Panda.

All winners will be recognized by James Miller, President of SHAPE at the next St. Helena Parish School Board Meeting. SHAPE is an element of art pertaining to the use of areas in two-dimensional space that can be defined by edges.

## Keeping on My Tiara Tour Kicks-off to a Great Start

Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center "Keeping on my Tiara Tour," kicked off to a great start on March 12. More than 30 "Outstanding Mature Girlz" were in attendance, and they understood the message. In a day when teen girls are heavily influenced by social media with negative body images, and overt sexual content, the OMG Club strives to give that balance that is often missing.



Program participants learn healthy eating habits too

Young queens were allowed to literally keep their Tiaras on as a representation that they will not be pressured into risky behavior during this Prom Season or afterwards. Sashika

Bauchand, Regional Advocate for Aids Healthcare Foundation (AHF) was onsite to educate this group of wonderful young ladies about HIV/AIDS awareness.

Nicolette Gordon, Assistant Area Agent, SU Ag Center, demonstrated proper techniques of natural hair care to participants, and the importance of a well-balanced diet to achieve healthy hair. Rose J. Guy, Mary K Consultant, provided a mobile make-up station to educate the outstanding young ladies on caring for their natural nails and skin. At the end of each session, the girls were encouraged to visit the Salad Station to fix a cup-size salad topped with their favorite dressings.

“I really don’t like to eat salad, but after today I will try,” said Krista Madison, teen participant.

The tour is scheduled to make two more stops before concluding in Kentwood, Louisiana at the end of April. “The SU Ag Center will continue to promote the empowerment of young women, and the Outstanding Mature Girlz Club as a place where every girl should totally be!” said Gordon.

## SU Ag Center Holds Improving Information Access Conference

The SU Ag Center held a conference for communications project participants and others entitled “IMPROVING INFORMATION ACCESS CONFERENCE” on March



Elwood interacts with farmer during presentation



Conference attendees tour sustainable garden

17. This USDA/NIFA 1890 Capacity Building Grant Program funded project is focuses on developing programs and information based on clientele needs. Conference participants learned how to access available information in a timely manner for managing and marketing crops, livestock and small business; SU Ag Center & USDA resources along with local and state contacts.

The event started with an opening session at A. O. Williams Hall. Dr. Adell Brown Jr., Exec. Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Research brought welcome greetings and Dr. Gina E. Eubanks, Vice Chancellor for Extension shared information on the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Morrill Act Video presentation.

The goal of the conference was to bring our participants to celebrate National Ag week with the Center and network with participants from other parishes explained Bridget Udoh, Project Director.

Topics of discussion included Herd Health, by Dr. Renita Marshall, Associate Professor, Animal Science; Dr. Onyumbé “Ben” Lukongo, Assistant Professor, Community & Economic Dev. discussed the

profitable cattle marketing with focus on the plan for the market: where, how, and when to market; Mr. Eual Hall, Business Development Specialist, focused on starting and growing a business; Dr. Marlin Ford, Assistant Professor, Sustainable Agriculture, focused on the benefits of using native grasses and rotational grazing to establish sustainable agricultural practices for farmers and landowners; Dr. Andra Johnson, Associate Professor, Urban Forestry – discussed opportunities for small and medium-sized farmers to produce alternative feed stocks for biofuel production; Mrs. Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate - covered the different herb groups by use (sacred, medicinal and culinary), and cultivation; Vegetables seed selection, knowing when to plant what, and deciding on whether to plant direct seed or with transplants into the field were covered by Ms. Stephanie Elwood, Extension Associate.

Hibiscus discussion highlighted the health benefits/medicinal uses and by-products of Roselle

(*Hibiscus sadbariffa*) plant by Dr. Janana Snowden, Researcher, Sustainable Ag/Health & Nutrition; and

USDA Resources were shared by Ms. Allison Johnson, USDA/1890 Liaison Officer at Southern University; Reginald D. Ellis, Elmo LeBeouf, and Martin Fontenot, County Executive Directors, USDA/Farm Service Agency. Dr. Robert Rene, Southern University Office of Recruitment spoke to participants about the career opportunities available on the academic campus in Baton Rouge.

Conference attendees took home a livestock manual booklet and a special bulletin provided by the project, and other pieces of information and power point notes. The event concluded with a tour of the SU Ag Center outdoor facilities, and activities were featured on the 4:00 pm news by WBRZ TV Channel 2.

## Youth Enjoy Y.E.S. Evening with the Pelicans

On March 29<sup>th</sup>, SU Ag Center Youth Development Agents Nicolette Gordon and Krystal Sugulleh took their Youth Educational Support (Y.E.S.) program participants to the New Orleans Pelicans vs. Minnesota Timberwolves game. Right before tip-off, the 11 participants from three parishes had the opportunity to shoot hoops, and experienced multiple activities during the Pelican Fest outdoor festivities.

“Students were thrilled to attend this game, and look forward to going back next year!” said Nicolette.



Youth gather for evening with Pelicans

“We just wrapped up a six week session on conflict resolution, and what better way to reinforce cohesiveness than through a basketball game,” said Nicolette. “We’re very proud of the progress that our groups are making, and will continue to reward them for creating a conducive afterschool environment to thrive in.”

During half-time, the SU Ag Center’s Youth Educational Support Program was recognized on the Jumbotron for its many efforts in Tangipahoa, St. Helena and Orleans Parishes.

Nicolette Gordon serves as youth agent in Tangipahoa and St. Helena Parishes while Krystal Sugulleh serves in Orleans Parish.

## Orleans Parish Etiquette Program Welcomes Guest Speaker

In Orleans Parish, Assistant Area Extension Agent, Krystal Sugulleh Stewart and the St. Peter Claver Etiquette program welcomed Etiquette Expert and Chef Carolyn Shelton, a resident of New Orleans, to the etiquette program consisting of 20 students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grader at St. Peter Claver School.



Shelton, left, and Sugulleh pose with youth participants



Shelton, center, observes youth practice etiquette

Youth enrolled in the program meet once a month with their local Orleans Parish Agent. Throughout the year youth learn professional development, career development, resume building skills, leadership skills, manners and etiquette. Ms. Shelton taught youth how to properly eat soup at a dining table.

She also covered basic tips for young girls. She showed the girls how to appropriately sit in a chair slightly off of the edge while giving pointers to the males as well. Ms. Shelton spoke on several topics including; professional attire for interviews, respect and self-esteem for young ladies, respect and manners for young men and career development.

Shelton is a cookbook author, a caterer, and an advocate for opportunity among youth. In addition, to cooking demos and motivational speaking, she also has over 30 years of experience teaching manners and etiquette to youth across the United States including Houston, Chicago, Atlanta and New Orleans.

## SU Ag Center Team Assists Opelousas Homeless Shelter with Gardening

Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center employees continue to come together to promote gardening efforts with the Opelousas Lighthouse Mission Men's Shelter. Once again, on February 20, the team gathered at the Lighthouse Mission to do a spring garden workshop with a new group of residents. Basic greenhouse maintenance, irrigation



Shelter residents planting tomatoes



Residents harvesting greens

installation, and gardening techniques were the main topics at the workshop.

The mission of the

Opelousas Lighthouse Mission (OLM) is to meet homeless men at the crossroads in their life. OLM's main objective is to equip residents with the tools to

become self-sufficient and productive members of society again. Residents learn gardening, work ethics, and teamwork skills through the garden program.

They also learn about customer service and business through the OLM farmers market held inside the facility. The shelter is run by Executive Director Johnny Carrier who explains that the garden is an integral part of the Opelousas Lighthouse Mission.

“Many of our residents now understand the process of growing produce and carry it with them for the rest of their lives. It's a game changer for them,” Carrier explained.

The initial garden ground-breaking took place in 2007. An SU Ag Center Extension funded Mini Grant titled “Utilization of High Value Vegetable Crops Using Drip Irrigation for Underserved Communities” was awarded to The Opelousas

Lighthouse Mission to start the project. The garden has been under consistent cultivation and well maintained for the past eight years. The SU Ag Center Extension continues to provide technical support for any problems in the garden as well as workshops for new residents of the shelter.

The SU Ag Center team includes Yemane Ghebreyessus, PhD, Professor of Urban Forestry; Mila Berhane, Senior Research Associate; Stephanie Elwood, Extension Associate; Delane Ross, Assistant Area Agent, St. Martin & Iberia Parishes; Jasmine Gibbs, Nutrition Educator, St. Landry and Lafayette Parishes; and Charles Holiday, Research Assistant.

This year’s workshop, organized by Berhane, was made possible with funding from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). She or Dr. Yemane Ghebreyessus can be reached at (225) 771-2262.

## SU Ag Center Selected to Provide Cooking Matters Course



Cooking starts with instruction from dietitian



Teaching team and volunteer chef prep food for class



Participating families cook dinner

As part of the “No Kid Hungry” campaign to end childhood hunger in America, the “Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters” teaches participants to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier choices and cook delicious, affordable meals. Founded in 1993, Cooking Matters and thousands of volunteer instructors have helped more than 265,000 low-income families in communities across the country learn how to eat better for less.

The SU Ag Center was chosen as a site by the Baton Rouge Mayor’s Healthy Initiative program

for conducting Cooking Matters course. The participants in Cooking Matters courses and shopping tour include moms, grandparents, caregivers, children and teens who want to make healthy meals on a budget. They learn to shop smarter, use nutrition information to make healthier choices, and cook delicious, affordable meals. Currently, five families with 15 members are participating in this program for six weeks. The Cooking Course Volunteers who teach Cooking Matters courses include a chef, nutrition educator,

students, and people with a passion for good food and making a difference. Every Tuesday night, for five weeks, the families come to the metabolic kitchen at SU Ag Center and learn from 6:00 to 8:00. The class begins with the nutrition educator conducting nutrition education for 30 minutes, followed by participants cooking a healthy meal with a volunteer chef. The children are guided by one of the student volunteer to prepare healthy snacks. Finally, in the sixth week, the educators who lead Cooking Matters take the participants for a grocery store tour and shopping so they can learn that healthy food doesn't have to break the bank.

Cooking Matters has been featured by First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Campaign and

recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for excellence in nutrition education. The Walmart Foundation is the national sponsor of Cooking Matters.

The SU Ag Center team consists of Fatemeh Malekian, professor, Nutrition and Health and; Mfamara Goita, research associate; Shannon Jones Butts, student assistant ; Annie Clark, student assistant; Destiny Stewart, student assistant; Madrea Scott, nutrition educator with WIC program; Meagan Simone, chef; Lindsey Lambert, Program coordinator from Mayor's Office; and Tiffany Franklin, Extension Associate Specialist.

## Loans Enable Limited Resource Families Start Ranching Operations

Parishes Farm for Prosperity (PFP) is a Southern University Ag Center living loan program in North East Louisiana which enables minority families to start ranching operations.

Each member receives five pregnant heifers from the organization and is expected to pass on five heifers to another member in the future. The program is housed at the Oak Grove Extension Office in West Carroll Parish.

Between 2014 and 2015, 27 heifers with a value of over \$ 49,000 were passed on to new and existing members who have met the requirement for receiving the living loans. The rapid expansion of membership to the organization has prompted members to concentrate more on learning the business aspects of beef cattle production. Assistant Extension Area Agent, Thomas N. Legiandenyi, PhD, has conducted several farm educational



Loading cows into truck during the pass on ceremony

meetings with one doubling as a pass on ceremony for the heifers. PFP continues to sponsor members of the group to participate in other programs such as the Heifer International cow birthing class by paying half the cost. Business and livestock specialists have conducted workshops which resulted in increased knowledge of the ranchers on how to take care of their livestock and run their operations profitably.

The members of the program serve as early adopters of extension recommendations which they share with fellow members and the community at large, which has multiplied the efforts of local Extension programs.

Dr. Thomas can be reached at 318-559-1459 (o); 318-428-7444(o); or [thomas\\_legiandenyi@suagcenter.com](mailto:thomas_legiandenyi@suagcenter.com)

## SU Ag Center Joins Community Partners to Revitalize Baton Rouge Neighborhoods

The Southern University Ag Center along with other community partners like Exxon, Baton Rouge Green, and volunteers joined Reverend James Snowden to turn a vacant land, previously “an eye sore” into a blooming garden in a North Baton Rouge neighborhood. The reverend acquired this land by adjudication but could do nothing much with it until the SU Ag Center helped secure a grant from the Mayor’s Office. With the grant, the land was fenced around and with seeds and technical assistance from the SU Ag Center, the plot now boasts of several seasonal vegetables. The garden which is much needed in the area designated as a food desert by the US Department of Agriculture provides a place for children to play, exercise in a productive way, planting, harvesting and eating fresh carrots, cucumbers, greens and tomatoes.

The community is now picking an interest in the garden because they see positive results and want to share in the growth.



SU Ag Center staff and volunteers teach youth to plant seeds

On April 7, EBR Mayor/President Melvin “Kip” Holden joined 2,600 other mayors across the country to recognize the 2015 National Service Day at the Alpine Community Garden with speakers from various partnering entities

including Rev. Snowden. Following the press release, volunteers, children and adults from the community planted seedlings raised by staff at the SU Ag Center.

The Alpine Community Garden is located on Chestnut Street off Scenic Hwy. Rev. Snowden pastors Alpine Baptist Church and supervises the garden. The garden has breathed new life into the community and has provided healthy food and relationship with members of the community.

## Business owners in Tallulah Receive Business Development Training

The SU Ag Center and the Southern University College of Business have provided three business development training sessions to small business

owners in Tallulah, Madison Parish. The third session on QuickBooks was held April 2 with 16 participants registered for the training. Participants



Left – Batiste teaches QB. Right – Hall helps participants with QB

are always eager and excited about receiving the training. The QuickBooks class was led by instructors Linda Batiste, Director of Finance and Equal

Hall, Business Development Specialist. The sessions were organized by Sarah Sims, Extension Aide in Madison Parish.

## Research Scientist Leads Students in MANRRS to Prize Winning

Students from Southern University joined other chapters of the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) chapters for the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Career Fair and Training Conference in Houston March 26-28. Two students from the College of Sciences and Agriculture, Department of Agricultural Sciences and Urban Forestry brought home top prizes from the contests. The lineup of activities included undergraduate and graduate research poster and oral contests. Perez Pickney won 1<sup>st</sup> place and Megan Thomas won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Research Competition under the mentorship of Professor Patricia Meynsse, Agricultural Economics. In a congratulatory message, Dr. C. Reuben Walker, Chair of Agricultural Sciences and



SU students pose in Houston

Urban Forestry, thanked the students and their mentor, Patricia Meynsse, PhD, Professor, Agricultural Economics for their excellent performance at the conference.

“It is a high honor to win a national competition. MANRRS has chapters in all 50 states. These are inclusive of chapters at top ranked universities such as Oregon State, Iowa State, Louisiana State,

Tuskegee, Purdue, The Ohio State, etc.,” said Dr. Walker.

Dr. Meynsse mentors students utilizing her Ag STARS participants, a research project funded by the USDA/NIFA.

Full details about Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences are available online at <http://manrrs.org/>

## Upcoming Events

**May 16:** BOLD community leadership tour focused on conflict management, discussion, lecture and Social Media and Technology Training. Contact Kenyetta Nelson-Smith at 225-771-5598 for full detail.

**June 20:** BOLD community leadership tour focused on conflict management, discussion, lecture and Social Media and Technology Training. Contact Kenyetta Nelson-Smith at 225-771-5598 for full detail.

**June 18-20:** Youth and Family Exposition. Contact Wanda Burke at 225-771-2242.