



THE CSLC COMMUNITY VOICE

"In relentless pursuit of perfection in education and knowledge"

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Phone: (662) 834-0905 • Fax: (662) 834-0906 • www.communitystudentlearning.org

From the Executive Director's Desk



Greetings! Happy New Year to each of you: our clients, parents, youth, donors, supporters, friends, and community members! Despite challenging pandemic times, we are prayerful this will be your and our best year yet.

As always, I am excited, yet humbled, to share CSLC's activities and updates with you in our **CSLC Community Voice** newsletter. You play a major part in many of the successes of these activities, and for that, we are eternally grateful. We are only as successful as you help us to be by working together to serve each other.

We are happy to report that 2022 has been a blessing thus far despite the losses our community and state have suffered due to the uptick in COVID-19 as well as other losses. Our heart-felt prayers are with you who have suffered the loss of a loved one. We personally know the devastation.

We continue to follow federal health guidelines (wearing masks, temperature checks, sanitizing, etc.). Remember, we are here "in relentless pursuit of perfection in education and knowledge" to serve you!

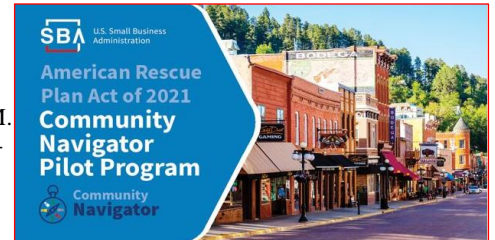
Beulah Greer

CSLC Co-founder & Executive Director

CSLC received a \$2.5 million SBA Community Navigator Pilot Project (CNPP) grant and 'hit the ground running' to serve!

The administration and staff of the Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) were humbled and elated to be awarded one of 51 Small Business Administration's (SBA) new Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) grants in the amount of \$2.5M.

"Oh, we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve as one of the 51 grantees nationwide to help navigate, build, and connect small businesses to available and valuable SBA and other government resources," said CSLC Board President Leslie Greer in an article about the announcement published in *The Mississippi Link*. The announcement was made late October 2021 by U.S. SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman. The CNPP will provide a total of \$100 million in funding to 51 organizations that will work with hundreds of local groups to connect America's entrepreneurs to government resources, so they can recover and thrive." Funding was awarded by SBA in three tiers (with level-specific descriptions): Tier 1, eight awards max \$5 million; Tier 2, 11 awards max \$2.5 million; and Tier 3, 32 awards max \$1 million. The CSLC, located in Lexington, Miss., was awarded at the Tier 2 level.



Thompson

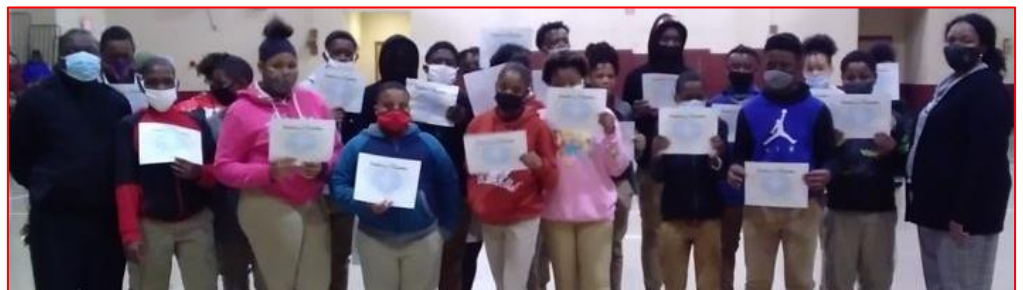


Greer

"I applaud the Biden-Harris Administration and my fellow congressional leaders for their visionary foresight in establishing the Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) initiative via the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and Administrator Guzman," said U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson.

CSLC's CNPP is called, Mississippi Opportunities for a Vital Economy (MOVE). Greer said CSLC, the CNPP Hub in Mississippi is humble to partner with North Central Planning Development District (NCPDD) and other Spokes. The CSLC CNPP hubs and spokes "hit the ground running" Dec. 1, 2021. They have already served more than 250 small business owners, helped them secure more than \$100,000 in SBA COVID-Targeted and Supplemental grants, and has hundreds of thousands pending in EIDL low-interest loans. (See *CSLC SBA CNPP community outreach highlights on page 3.*)

Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, HOPE pivots to huge success!



CSLC HOPE Community Engagement Specialist Martez Greer (left) and HOPE Facilitator Lucretia Holmes (right) are shown here with some of the participating S.V. Marshall Middle School youth who successfully completed the Love Notes curriculum implemented by HOPE. A vast number of the students were absent during the photo presentation due to pandemic-related and other reasons.

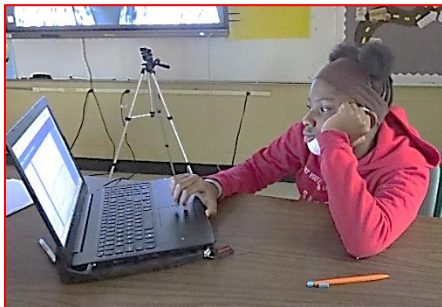
Although the COVID-19 Pandemic heavily impacted the CSLC Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPP) Health Optimization and Prevention Education (HOPE) project, its administrators, management, staff, community/core partners, including students, managed to pivot to a great success, Dec. 31, 2021! HOPE, using the Dibble Institute's evidenced-based curriculum, *Love Notes*, effectively impacted more than 1500 Holmes County Consolidated School District's (HCCSD) sixth through 12th-graders, across a 2.5-year period, on how to develop positive, safe, and healthy adolescent relationships. TIER, our evaluators, have completed their report, and it will be included in the end of project final progress report in March 2022.

(See more HOPE highlights on page 2.)

CSLC TPP HOPE, a huge success! Project Highlights



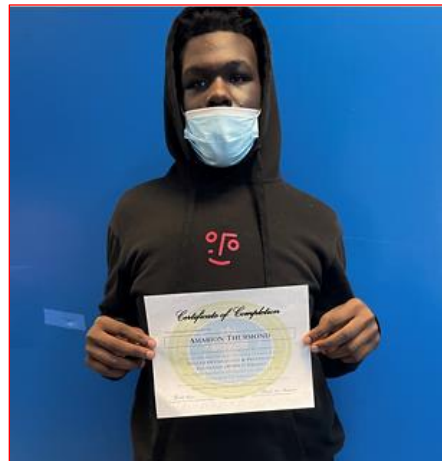
Lucretia Flowers Holmes, TPP Facilitator HOPE Program, is seen here presenting the HOPE at SV Marshall Middle School. She said it was a rewarding experience to see the students eager to learn about building relationships and being able to demonstrate how relationships can start fast and end fast if you don't have good communication and share your expectations. In the picture above, left, you see that the students are completing a personality chart to determine which personality compares to their own personality and to better understand each other because they know that knowing each other's personality is a key component in long lasting relationships – relationships built on trust, honesty, commitment and respect. In the second and third photo, she shares lesson overview as well as other key aspects to help them develop healthy relationships. She is assisted by HIPPY Coordinator Lubertha Banks (seated).



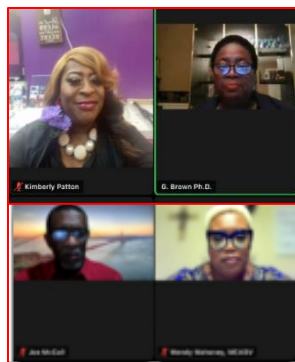
A William-Sullivan Middle School student looks engaged as she completes the CSLC HOPE post-survey after completing the curriculum's final lesson.



William-Sullivan Middle School students work in their journals during one of the session activities of one of the Love Notes' 13 lessons. Also shown are some of the students displaying fast food gift cards as a part of their award for completing the HOPE project. The are joined by their Principal, Dr. K. Peterson in the background. Students completing HOPE received a gift card and certificate.



This Graduates Within Reach Academy (GWRA) student is one of more than 30 completing the HOPE project this fall. He displays his Certificate of Completion.



Wendy Mahoney, (lower, right), Executive Director for the Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence was featured presenter during a special adult segment on Dangerous Love. Others sharing on the topic were Rev. Joe McCall and Kimberly Patton who shared her testimony.

CSLC HOPE project holds an informative pre-World AIDS Day virtual observance

Mallory CHC's chief clinical officer raises HIV/AIDS awareness with valuable info

Special to The Mississippi Link

While the COVID-19 pandemic is center stage and alarming public health today, it is also important to remember that HIV and AIDS remain a major global public health issue as well. Dec. 1 has been World AIDS Day since 1987. This year's theme is "Ending the HIV Epidemic: Equitable Access, Everyone's Voice."

It is a day of solidarity, representing an opportunity for people worldwide who are affected by HIV to share their stories and experiences, to remember those lost, and to highlight efforts on every front to end the HIV epidemic (cdc.gov).

In an effort to give more voice to awareness, the Community Students Learning Center's (CSLC) Health Optimization and Prevention Education (HOPE) project of Lexington, Miss. recently collaborated with Mallory Community Health Center (MCHC) to hold a pre-World AIDS Day virtual informational HOPE is federally-funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Population Affairs (OPA) Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) in core partnership with the Holmes County Consolidated School District (HCCSD) and MCHC, and other community partners. The pro-

World AIDS Day activity was a part of HOPE's parent/community component called "Let's Talk Relationships." "HIV/AIDS awareness plays an integral role in the overall safety and well-being of adults and youth," said presenter, Mallory's Chief Clinical Officer Keita Brown-Jones, DNP, AGNP, C. "Increased awareness promotes safer sex practices, encourages individuals to get tested and gain a greater understanding of the virus," she continued. "Brown-Jones's presentation included some eye-opening statistics on people living with HIV in Holmes County, Miss. See a five-year data review below."

• 2015: Holmes County ranked 10th for HIV infections in MS with 21.8 percent of the population living with HIV.

CSLC

Continued on page 3

HOPE's Adult Component held two major awareness sessions during the recent semester: One dealing with World AIDS Day and the other, on Domestic Violence, titled, Dangerous Love. Both were featured in The Mississippi Link Newspaper and both were well attended. Above, is a clipping from that paper.

CSLC SBA CNPP introduces its services to the community at local carnival

In its efforts to hit the ground running, the Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) SBA Community Navigator Pilot Project (CNPP) Mississippi Opportunities for a Viable Economy (MOVE) served as an exhibitor at the Mallory Community Health Center's World AIDS Day Carnival, Saturday, Dec. 4. During the Carnival the CSLC SBA CNPP staff secured 65 names of business owners and potential business owners interested in SBA CNPP services and assistance. Below are several pictorial highlights from their CNPP community outreach:



Above, CSLC SBA CNPP staff, a SPOKE partner, and a volunteer set up and managing the information table at the carnival in preparation to share the services and assistance available to small business owners and to potential business owners through the CSLC SBA CNPP MOVE project.

CSLC News & Information Briefs

The **U. S. Department of Justice** has awarded **\$976,579** in Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY 21 Preventing School Violence: BJA's STOP School Violence Program funds to Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) located in Lexington, Mississippi. Community Students Learning Center will use funds to help reduce risk factors and increase protective factors to prevent school violence with training for local law enforcement officers, school staff, students, family, service providers, partners, and youth-serving professionals in Holmes County. *For more information contact Mrs. Beulah Greer, Executive Director, Community Students Learning Center at (662) 834-0905.*

- The CSLC SEEDS (Strategies for Emergency Empowerment for Delta Students) assisted the Life Help Therapist establish a calming room at Goodman – Pickens Elementary for students with mental health and behavioral problems. SEEDS as of this writing, is also in the process of completing a very successful 18-month progress report for the SEEDS program to SAMSHA.
- CSLC SBA CNPP recruited and provided technical assistance to more than 250 small business owners make application for the COVID – 19 EIDL loan and grant program. This EIDL program was administered by the SBA as part of the American Rescue Plan. The program ended 12/31/2021. CSLC, Knowledge Info LLC, and Fresh Start LLC serving as CNPP SPOKES helped business owners receive over \$100,000 in grants and well over \$150,000 in loans during the month of December 2021. CSLC CNPP Spoke Partner Martez Greer of Fresh Start Enterprise, LLC reports that he has gotten many appreciative comments from individuals who are grateful to learn about the SBA CNPP. “That was nice of you looking out for me and sharing this. I really thank you for that,” Deacon Andrew Brown told him.
- WEM Consulting Group was among CSLC SBA CNPP Spokes that hit the ground running December 01, 2021. “The Community Navigator Pilot Program is blessing for anyone in business or desires to be in business,” said Willie McGriggs, owner and consultant. **FREE** help with their business or business idea is already helping hundreds of people. WEM has designed a series of Business Training Presentations available to any/all Community Pilot Program Participants. “Brainstorming for A Better Business” is the subject title for this series. January’s theme was “Networking”. Trainings are offered twice each month, second Tuesday’s at 7:00 p.m. and third Saturday’s at 10:00 a.m. Simply text CNPP to 601.954.2429 to become a registered participant.

CSLC HIPPY UPDATES: A Big Thanks!



CSLC Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngster (HIPPY) Coordinator Lubertha Banks and staff are proud to report that 32 families are enrolled in the 2021-22 term. On behalf of those families and administration, a big HIPPY thank you goes out to local, areas businesses for contributing additional needed supplies, donations, gift cards, etc. Thank you: Mac’s Grocery and Howell & Heggie Drug Co. of Durant; and Sunflower Grocery, Dollar General Market, Family Dollar and Jitney Pharmacy, Supervisor Lenard Hampton of Lexington; Lebanon Church, Pastor Walter and Sister Eva Eskridge, Mrs. Lillie Green, Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence and Beatrice Mckinney. And, of course we are profoundly grateful for our annual corporate donor: BankPlus Mississippi. “We thank God for each of you helping our HIPPY kids to be school-ready,” expressed Banks. She also announced that HIPPY now has Booster Club, led by parent Maggie Stingley, President, to help with ongoing fundraising.

HIPPY staff participates in professional development the third Tuesday monthly at 2 p.m. with Carla Mowell, our U.S. HIPPY International contact.

If you would like to help our HIPPY kids and their families prepare them for “big school,” your donations are very much needed. Call (662) 834-0905.

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Community Students Learning Center

333 Yazoo Street
 Lexington, MS 39095

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