



# HEALTH & WELL-BEING @issue

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION SPRING 2022



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

## Healthcare Occupations Program Grants Awarded

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# \$3.4 million

## In Healthcare Occupations Grants Awarded

**T**he Rapides Foundation has awarded seven grants totaling \$3,392,313 to help meet the healthcare workforce needs of employers in Central Louisiana. Grants have been awarded to four postsecondary institutions serving students in the Foundation's service area: Central Louisiana Technical Community College, Louisiana Christian University, LSU of Alexandria and Northwestern State University.

The multi-year grants were awarded through the Foundation's Healthcare Occupations Program, which seeks to increase the number of healthcare graduates prepared to meet the basic level of licensure or certification required by employers for initial hire of high-demand healthcare occupations.

"Access to quality healthcare services is important to reduce health disparities and improve health status," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "We know that the shortage of qualified healthcare professionals is often cited as one of the main barriers to people receiving care. These grants will address the issue by increasing the number of health professionals who graduate and are prepared to provide critical healthcare services within the region."

The Healthcare Occupations Program Grant supports nonprofit, accredited colleges and universities to add and expand current healthcare program offerings and concentrations to meet the critical workforce needs of local employers, and specifically addresses shortages in the three



occupational fields of nursing, behavioral health and allied health.

The Rapides Foundation first offered the Healthcare Occupations Program Grant funding opportunity in 2016 as a result of its analysis of the healthcare workforce landscape in the region and awarded six grants totaling \$2.1 million. After updating its healthcare workforce analysis in 2021, the funding opportunity was opened again and in February 2022 the Foundation's Board of Trustees awarded seven grants totaling \$3.4 million. This brings the total amount of grant funds awarded under this funding opportunity to \$5.5 million.

The grant opportunity is offered under the Foundation's Healthcare Access Initiative and is in support of its mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana. Through its Healthcare Access Initiative, the Foundation addresses the supply and demand gap in the healthcare workforce and builds the capacity of regional postsecondary institutions to meet healthcare workforce needs.

#### THE FOLLOWING HEALTHCARE OCCUPATIONS PROGRAM GRANTS WERE AWARDED IN FEBRUARY 2022:

- Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC) received two grants totaling \$2 million to establish the Central Louisiana Rural Nursing Network and the Central Louisiana Rural Allied Health Network. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System will provide \$2 million in matching dollars from the Rapid Response Fund to support the projects.

CLTCC will lead a consortium of Louisiana Community Technical College System (LCTCS) colleges to expand and advance nursing and allied health education and training throughout the Foundation's nine-parish service area. Partnering with CLTCC in this effort are Bossier Parish Community College, Fletcher Technical Community College, South Louisiana Community College and Southwest Technical Community College. The Nursing Network project will add a Practical Nursing evening course at the Winnfield



These grants will address the issue by increasing the number of health professionals who graduate and are prepared to provide critical healthcare services within the region.

Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation



## A total of \$5.5 million Healthcare Occupations Program grants have been awarded since 2016.

campus, expand its LPN to RN traditional program to the Natchitoches campus and expand its LPN to RN online program to the Alexandria, Ferriday, Winnfield and Avoyelles campuses. The Allied Health Network project will focus on expanding several different allied health career programs across multiple campuses. The rural nursing network project is expected to produce 80 nurses annually and 200+ allied health graduates are expected over the term of the allied health network grant.

- Louisiana Christian University was awarded \$396,753 for two projects. The Social Work Behavioral Healthcare Education and Workforce Improvement project is a joint effort of the BSW and MSW Programs to recruit, train and retain future licensed social workers in Central Louisiana, specifically in the behavioral health arena. The program offers BSW stipends to senior social work majors as a way to ensure the student pursues the MSW degree in the behavioral healthcare specialization. Those receiving the stipend at the MSW level will receive necessary financial support for their education and clinical training. Over the three years, the project is expected to graduate 75 master level social workers with a Behavioral Healthcare specialization and a commitment to work in the nine-parish service area for two years after graduation.

The second project increases the number of licensed nursing graduates by focusing on strategies to retain, graduate and prepare traditional and accelerated nursing students to pass the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX).

- LSU of Alexandria received a grant in the amount of \$223,960 to fund its ASN Accelerated Momentum for Completion and Holistic Achievement project. The project will include a three-pronged approach to providing emotional, social and academic support for students, which should lead to on-time completion of the Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree.
- Northwestern State University received two grants totaling \$771,600. One of the grants will establish a sonography education program to increase medical sonographers for high-need areas in the region. NSU's second grant supports interventions for at-risk students in the ASN program by providing mentoring, emotional intelligence development and student support services. The project is expected to improve the retention of ASN students from freshman to sophomore year and ultimately increase the number of nursing graduates ready to enter the workforce.







# Healthy Lifestyle Program

## Offers Personalized Counseling for Better Health

*Pam Jones, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, provides nutrition counseling to Healthy Lifestyle Program clients.*

**T**he Rapides Foundation's Healthy Lifestyle Program is celebrating its 10-year anniversary working one on one with Central Louisiana residents. More than 3,500 people have taken part in this free nutrition and physical activity counseling service administered by CMAP.

The goal is to give residents the knowledge and resources they need to lead healthy lifestyles after they graduate from the six-month program. A registered dietitian and an exercise specialist work with each client to offer customized demonstrations and education on proper nutrition and physical activity for good health.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program accepts Central Louisiana residents ages 5 and older who have been referred by their doctors. The program is offered free of charge as part of The Rapides Foundation's Healthy Behaviors Initiative.

"In working toward our mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana, the Foundation recognizes

that behaviors are a large driver on premature death and illness," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "Our goal in creating the Healthy Lifestyle Program was to provide residents with the nutrition and exercise tools and knowledge they need to avoid disease and sickness."

Clients are referred to the program for a variety of reasons. Some need to lose weight for their health. Others have medical problems like high blood pressure, gastrointestinal disorders, food allergies, high cholesterol, fatty liver disease or diabetes that can be improved with healthy lifestyle changes.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program provides residents with resources and behavior changes they can take with them and share with their families. The Foundation recognizes that behavior change is generational, so one of the goals is for children and grandchildren of clients to learn and adopt these healthy behaviors.





*Lydia Kozlowski, Healthy Lifestyle Program Exercise Specialist, works one on one with clients.*

Central Louisiana physicians appreciate the program because it gives them somewhere to send their patients for follow-up and consistent nutrition and exercise education. Doctors point out that diseases become easier to control when patients modify their diets and increase their physical activity, two key components of the Healthy Lifestyle Program.

### HOW TO BECOME PART OF THE PROGRAM

The first step to join the program is to get a referral from your doctor, who will assess your need to make a lifestyle change and your readiness to change. Your doctor will send the referral to Healthy Lifestyle Program staff.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program has a network of Central Louisiana physicians who participate in the program, so it's likely your doctor has already heard of the program. If not, ask him or her to contact the Healthy Lifestyle Program for a referral form. Healthy Lifestyle Program staff can also assist in contacting your healthcare provider for the referral.

If you don't already have a doctor or health insurance, the program recommends you visit an HP Long clinic for help establishing a doctor and getting a referral to the program.

### HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Once enrolled, clients will be scheduled for a 60-minute consultation with a Healthy Lifestyle Program registered dietitian. The dietitian will assess the needs of the client, and work with the client to make realistic and healthy goals, such as learning what the food groups are, weight loss strategies, healthy meal planning and preparation, and how to be more physically active. Clients also learn how to manage their specific medical problems.

The dietitian tracks a client's progress throughout the program, assessing their eating habits, behavior changes, weight and inches lost, as well as growing in their knowledge on proper nutrition and physical activity.

Once the client's goals are established, the Healthy Lifestyle Program's exercise specialist will monitor and track the client's progress. The exercise specialist serves as a health coach who meets with clients routinely to ensure the client's plan is being followed, to keep clients motivated and to provide them with tips and accountability. The exercise specialist also provides clients with individualized, easy-to-follow exercise routines.





# Healthy Lifestyle PROGRAM

In most cases, meetings are held at the CMAP office located in the parish where the client lives.

Throughout the program, clients learn how to make healthy shopping lists, how to read labels, how to combine foods for nutrition benefits and creative ways to increase their daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Clients also learn safe exercises to increase physical activity. All exercises and nutrition plans are customized for the individual client so no two plans are the same.

Clients who have completed the program reported they lost weight, ate healthier, and experienced improvements in their overall wellness. Clients also reported more energy, lower blood sugar levels, better sleep and lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

To keep clients engaged, the Healthy Lifestyle Program offers incentives such as measuring tools, meal plans, recipes, private Facebook group support, exercise equipment, T-shirts and portion plates.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program is piloting group exercise classes for its clients. In addition, it offers community walking clinics for the general public to learn walking tips and to get information about the Healthy Lifestyle Program.

After the six-month program ends, clients are given the option of entering a six-month maintenance program where they meet with their dietitian and exercise specialist once a month. They receive encouragement, support and resources that will help them continue their healthy lifestyles long after they complete the program.

Christine Eding joined the Healthy Lifestyle Program in October 2020 and continued with the six-month maintenance phase. A year later, in December 2021, she saw the results of her hard work. After a checkup with her doctor, she learned her A1C levels, which measure blood sugar and can indicate diabetes, were down.

"My A1C went down to a 6.7! I have been working on my weight and learning to eat more correctly. Thanks to Healthy Lifestyle, I have started accomplishing my goals."



Healthy Lifestyle Program staff members, from left, are Lydia Kozlowski, Exercise Specialist; Stephanie Heinen, Administrative Assistant; Pam Jones, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist; and Kira Davidson, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Healthy Lifestyle Program Coordinator.



Kira Davidson, a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, is the Healthy Lifestyle Program Coordinator.

# Proven Approach to PREVENTING DIABETES

**T**he Healthy Lifestyle Program is offering support groups for Central Louisiana residents who are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. The 12-month lifestyle change program, PreventT2, will be brought to four parishes in 2022 and offered to residents who have been referred by their doctors.

Guided by a trained lifestyle coach, participants meet in groups to learn the skills they need to make lasting changes that will help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes, such as losing a modest amount of weight, being more physically active and managing stress. People with prediabetes, defined as having higher than normal blood sugar levels, are 5 to 15 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than people with normal blood sugar levels.

The PreventT2 program is part of the National Diabetes Prevention Program, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Healthy Lifestyle Program offered a pilot PreventT2 support group in spring 2021, with the first group of participants completing their work in April 2022.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program is a component of The Rapides Foundation's Healthy Behaviors Initiative, which addresses tobacco prevention and control, substance and alcohol abuse prevention, healthy eating and active living. Since its creation in 2011, the Healthy Lifestyle Program has offered one-on-one nutrition and physical activity counseling to Central Louisiana residents. Thirty-one percent of the clients referred to the program have type 2 diabetes.

It began offering the diabetes prevention program after recognizing the high numbers of Central Louisiana residents who are at risk of developing diabetes and seeing the benefit of offering support groups to reach more individuals at a time.

According to national statistics, likely one-third of adults 18 years or older have prediabetes and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. More than eight in 10 of those individuals do not know their risk.

Research shows the risk can become greatly improved with a few lifestyle changes such as losing weight, being





physically active and managing stress. PreventT2 is based on research that showed that people with prediabetes who lost 5 to 7 percent of their body weight (10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person) by making modest changes reduced their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58%.

For the program, participants meet weekly for 1-hour group sessions for 16 weeks. Then, sessions are held biweekly and then monthly to maintain healthy lifestyle changes. Participants meet in groups of up to 20 and are guided by a trained lifestyle coach. Lifestyle coaches are trained to use the CDC-approved curriculum and have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively deliver the program. The CMAP Patient Assistance Program Specialists, who are located throughout Central Louisiana parishes, are being trained to lead sessions in 2022. Participants learn how to eat healthy, add physical activity to their routine, manage stress, stay motivated, and solve problems that can get in the way of healthy changes. The program's group setting provides a supportive environment with peers who are facing similar challenges and trying to make the same changes.

Sessions include private weigh-ins and structured lessons. Participants submit food and activity trackers and learn how to maintain the knowledge they gain from each session.

Plans for 2022 are to offer four cohorts in Central Louisiana parishes, beginning in Avoyelles Parish in the spring. Other cohorts will be located in Rapides, Vernon and Allen parishes.

Participants in the pilot group reported losing weight and lowering their A1C levels. The A1C test, which measures average blood sugar levels over the past three months, is one of the commonly used tests to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes. In addition, participants reported feeling better, having more energy and learning lifestyle changes they can maintain for the rest of their lives.

When Michelle Janet of Pineville joined the program in 2021, she was overweight and grieving the unexpected death of her husband to a heart attack. Her doctor recommended she take part in the PreventT2 program because she had become prediabetic. She also wanted to stay healthy for her teenage son, who had already lost one parent.

"It gave me motivation to get out of my easy chair and stop drowning my sorrows in food," she said.

After joining the program she lost 80 pounds, lowered her A1C and managed her depression. She became engaged to be married, started working again, bought new clothes and took a trip to the mountains. More importantly, she knows she is healthy for her son.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am to be in the program. Without it, I would have continued on the weight spiral I was on."

The curriculum was easy to follow and covered the topics of nutrition and physical activity. Janet keeps the session handouts in a book so she can refer to them frequently. She also enjoyed the creative ways to burn calories.

"Something new I learned was that exercise could be fun, and chair workouts are really workouts," she said. "I would definitely recommend this program to any person looking to change their prediabetes status for the better. I am so grateful."

Participant Ruby Dupas of Alexandria called the program a blessing. In addition to losing more than 40 pounds, she feels better and is sharing her knowledge about healthy foods and exercise with family and friends.

"I lost the weight that I wanted to lose. The results exceeded my expectations. The program works. All you have to do is set a goal, put your mind to it and be determined."

Like most people, Dupas has been on diets before but eventually gained the weight back. She points out that PreventT2 is a lifestyle change, not a weight-loss program. "It's working and I feel so good."

She has learned how to resist foods that are not healthy for her, and is drinking more water than before. She plans her meals and grocery lists so that healthy foods are readily available. Dupas also enjoyed learning creative ways to increase her daily physical activity, such as dancing with her grandkids and walking more on the treadmill.

A retired cook, Dupas is now enjoying making healthy versions of some of her favorite recipes. She cooks with an air fryer, uses more seasonings and makes simple substitutions to reduce the salts, fats and sugars in dishes.

"With God, all things are possible. I would recommend this program to anyone who puts their mind to it."

### TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PREVENTT2 DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM, YOU MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING:

- 18 years or older;
- Overweight (BMI greater than 24; greater than 22 if Asian);
- Diagnosed with prediabetes, gestational diabetes or have risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes;
- No previous diagnosis of type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

To participate, call the Healthy Lifestyle Program at (318) 767-3019 for more information.

[rapidesfoundation.org](http://rapidesfoundation.org)





## 2021 Cenla EXECBUILDERS GRADUATION

**S**even Central Louisiana nonprofit leaders graduated in November 2021 from Cenla Execbuilders, a Community Development Works training program that provides a unique opportunity for executive directors to become more effective in their roles as leaders of local nonprofit organizations.

### THE 2021 GRADUATES OF CENLA EXECBUILDERS ARE:

(Left to right)

**Mitzi LaSalle**, Director of Donor Relations, Evergreen Life Services

**Donna Lindsey**, Executive Director, The Centennial Cultural Center, Inc.

**Joseph Buzzetta**, Executive Director, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition

**Sally Cowan**, Executive Director, Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc.

**Quentin Murray**, Vice President and Chairman, Veterans Place Organization

**Jacqueline Murray**, Executive President, Veterans Place Organization

**Jerald "Jerry" Egbert**, Executive Director, Life Assisting Fellowship Corporation

The program is free and open to new or experienced executive directors in Central Louisiana. It uses a combination of intensive training, professional coaching and peer networking opportunities grounded in adult learning methodologies. By developing and improving leadership skills, participants have the opportunity to become part of a close-knit community of skilled leaders and increase their capacity to lead high-performing organizations.

The 2021 graduates attended seven full days of intensive, leadership training over a four-month period. The training is designed for participants to develop skills to lead nonprofit organizations and manage the ever-changing environment in which nonprofits operate. Training topics are presented in a systematic order to reinforce the knowledge and skills from the previous sessions.

In addition to attending the seven training sessions, participants can request personal coaching services delivered by expert trainers. These personalized coaching sessions are offered at no extra cost to Cenla Execbuilders participants.

The 2021 graduates join a group of 56 Cenla Execbuilders alumni.







## Leaders complete CENLA BOARDBUILDERS 2021 PROGRAM

### Recruitment underway for 2022 program

**E**leven Central Louisiana leaders graduated in November 2021 from Cenla Boardbuilders, a leadership development program for interested community members who want to become active on local nonprofit boards.

Through Cenla Boardbuilders, a program of Community Development Works and The Rapides Foundation, participants are trained through a series of sessions on the roles and responsibilities of an effective board member.

“Graduates of this program are equipped with the expertise and knowledge to serve on boards immediately, which strengthens nonprofits as they work to achieve their missions in Central Louisiana,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

The 2021 program included virtual sessions covering the nature of nonprofit boards, fiduciary responsibilities, fund development and leadership. It included virtual networking sessions that allowed Track II participants to meet with staff of various nonprofits. The November graduation ceremony was the first time the graduates had gathered in person.

The 2021 graduates join a group of 228 Cenla Boardbuilders alumni.

If you are interested in participating in the 2022 Cenla Boardbuilders program, contact CDW at 800-803-8075 or visit [communitydevelopmentworks.org](http://communitydevelopmentworks.org).



#### THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS COMPLETED THE 2021 CENLA BOARDBUILDERS PROGRAM:

##### TRACK I: CURRENTLY SERVING ON A BOARD:

**Brittney Armwood**, Loan Partner, Guild Mortgage Company, former nonprofit board member.

**Brenda Brechtel**, Regional Representative, Central Louisiana Area Health Education Center; Nonprofit Partner: Avoyelles Youth Coalition Organization.

**Patricia Brown**, Senior Administrative Assistant, Veterans Place Organization; Nonprofit Partner: Veterans Place Organization.

**Jacqueline Murray**, Director/President, Veterans Place Organization; Nonprofit Partner: Veterans Place Organization

**Quentin Murray**, Vice President/Board Member, Veterans Place Organization; Nonprofit Partner: Veterans Place Organization.

##### TRACK II: SEEKING BOARD SERVICE

**Sarah Ceballos**, Administrative Director, Louisiana Central.

**Mandi Guillory**, Director of Marketing and Business Development, Alexandria Emergency Hospital.

**Teresa Louis**, Finance Director, The ARC Rapides Inc.

**LaTessa Mathews**, Support Services Manager, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition.

**Grace Semones**, Instructor of Mathematics, Louisiana State University at Eunice.

**Sarah Swain**, Facility Administrator, Alexandria Emergency Hospital.

# SAVE THE DATE

 **THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM**  
An annual gathering around a topic of importance.

**2022 Focus: Early Childhood Literacy**

**Thursday, September 1, 2022; 3:30 p.m.**

Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria, LA

## READ TO A BETTER FUTURE

**C**hildren who struggle to read are subjected to harsh consequences including poverty, incarceration and failure to complete high school. Malcolm Mitchell grew up with similar challenges, but during his freshman year of college, a newly developed love of reading changed his trajectory. In his presentation, Malcolm focuses on the transformational power of reading through his personal story and literacy-based research. Central to his message is self-empowerment, cultural relevancy, and reading as a super power.



**Featured Speaker: Malcolm Mitchell**  
Super Bowl Champion, Author and  
Founder/CEO of Share the Magic Foundation

 **THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION**

The Rapides Foundation continues  
a legacy of community healthcare  
initiated in 1903.

President/CEO:

Joseph R. Rosier, Jr., CFA, CPA (Inactive)

Editor / Writer:

Tammy Moreau

Contributing Writer:

Kathy Gunn

For additional copies or to be added  
to the mailing list, contact:

The Rapides Foundation  
1101 Fourth Street, Suite 300  
Alexandria, LA 71301

Tel: 318-443-3394

1-800-994-3394

Fax: 318-443-8312

[www.rapidesfoundation.org](http://www.rapidesfoundation.org)  
[grantinfo@rapidesfoundation.org](mailto:grantinfo@rapidesfoundation.org)

  
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