



The Rapides Foundation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM 11 PARISHES IN CENTRAL LOUISIANA RECEIVE
SPECIAL RECOGNITION AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST CLASS OF
*LEADERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY CENLA***

Alexandria, LA – Nineteen community leaders were recognized tonight at the inaugural graduation ceremony for the *Leadership for a Healthy Cenla* program. Participants in this inaugural class made a major commitment to participate in the program, meeting together for 12-15 hours every other month for the past year. These sessions were each held in a different parish, for participants to learn more about the communities throughout Cenla. Each member of the class was selected to participate based on their leadership skills and level of commitment to work to make a difference in their communities.

During the yearlong program, participants attended sessions to work on leadership skills, gain knowledge about issues of health and well-being and develop relationships with other participants. Training topics included community development strategies, leadership styles, communication, presentation skills, community resource development, team building and conflict resolution.

Leadership for a Healthy Cenla is part of The Rapides Foundation's Community Development Works (CDW) project. The goal of CDW is to nurture community development in parishes throughout Central Louisiana.

Joe Rosier, president and CEO for the Foundation says, "We believe the graduates of this leadership program will take the knowledge they've learned back into their communities, helping to spearhead the development of all kinds of positive projects; from healthcare and housing efforts to a variety of other programs, as well as the start-up of new community organizations."

The 2002 *Leadership for a Healthy Cenla* class will begin in January, with a new group of 22 community representatives selected from across Central Louisiana.

The Rapides Foundation is a nonprofit philanthropic organization that provides grants to organizations in an 11-parish service area in Central Louisiana. The Foundation's mission is to improve the health and well-being of the people and communities in Cenla.

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2001 LEADERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY CENLA GRADUATES

Allen Parish

Adagria Haddock
Allen Parish Tourist Commission, Oberlin

Rev. Wiley Shaw, Jr.
Bread of Life Christian Center
Oakdale

Avoyelles Parish

Lem Thomas, III
Bunkie Community Development
Corporation, Bunkie

Catahoula Parish

Dr. Billy W. Edwards
Louisiana Baptist Convention
Jonesville

Susie Swayze
Catahoula Parish Schools -
Central Office
Harrisonburg

Concordia Parish

Rev. Alex Promise
City of Ferriday

Windell Millicks
Concord Youth & Adult Community
Association, Vidalia

Evangeline Parish

Gerald Roberts
Louisiana Cooperative Extension
Service, Ville Platte

Grant Parish

Joyce Hamilton
North CentraLa Community Action
Agency, Colfax

Chawn Texada, R.N.
Grant Parish Schools,
Pollock

LaSalle Parish

Dawn Stott
Town of Olla

Joyce Willis
CenturyTel, Jena

Natchitoches Parish

Loletta Wynder
Community Volunteer
Natchitoches

Rapides Parish

Jayne Heath
CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital
Alexandria

Shirley Wade
Communities Collaborating for
Economic Development, Cheneyville

Vernon Parish

Rev. Clennon Turner
Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Leesville

Betty Westerchil
Northwestern State University,
Leesville/Fort Polk

Winn Parish

B.R. Audirsch
The Sportsman's Trading Company
Winnfield

Ethel Howell
Winnfield Kindergarten School,
Winnfield