

HEALTH & WELL-BEING @issue

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION SUMMER 2021



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

Developing Entrepreneurs



IN THIS ISSUE

- Business Acceleration System | 2
- The Rapides Foundation Symposium | 6
- Cenla Execbuilders | 8
- Math To Build On | 11
- Grants Awarded | 13
- CDW Learning Lab | 16

TURNING IDEAS INTO BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BUSINESS ACCELERATION SYSTEM PROVIDES ONE-ON-ONE COACHING TO CENTRAL LOUISIANA ENTREPRENEURS

A program funded by The Rapides Foundation has the goal of stimulating the Central Louisiana economy by helping local entrepreneurs transform their ideas into successful businesses that bring more money and jobs to the region.

Business Acceleration System is a comprehensive and coordinated entrepreneurial system that provides training, technical assistance, coaching and mentoring support services for local entrepreneurs and small businesses. In 2020, those services included helping local businesses navigate the unexpected challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic and in many cases, businesses were able to increase their profits by broadening their customer

base by selling products and services online.

Through its Economic Development Initiative, the Foundation provides a grant to Louisiana Central, formerly the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance, to administer the program.

The goal of the Foundation's Economic Development Initiative is to raise the household income of people living in Central Louisiana by improving the region's capacity to produce higher-wage jobs for all income levels and generate more wealth in its communities. This supports its mission of improving the health status of Central Louisiana.

"Research shows that healthy economies with low unemployment rates and higher-wage jobs provide people with the means to purchase medical insurance, make better

On the cover: BAS client Geneva Burrell gets regular coaching services from Executive Director Gary Perkins.



“BAS is built with passionate entrepreneurs who are more interested in helping each other and sharing information about their businesses rather than taking from their peers.”

Neelaj Shah, E-Commerce Marketer and Seller

trying to grow a business they can sell or pass on to the next generation. “These are the drivers for the economy,” Perkins said. “We are growing the next generation of entrepreneurs.”

The underlying principle of its work is that building from within, building on the power of people in Central Louisiana, can create more jobs and more wealth than any other approach. Since the program’s inception, there have been almost 1,400 jobs created in the region by BAS entrepreneurs.

Once accepted into the BAS coaching program, entrepreneurs are assigned one of four coaches who help identify and develop the client’s strengths, mitigate weaknesses and capitalize on growth opportunities. Plans are customized for each coached client based on their current needs and level of business expertise. Topics covered range from financial management to marketing to human resources, depending on where the entrepreneur is in their business venture. “We give you what you need when you need it,” said Perkins, who serves as one of the four BAS coaches.

Clients meet with their coaches monthly, communicate almost daily and collaborate with other entrepreneurs to achieve the best results. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to bring in money from outside the region to stimulate the economy. That means thinking of creative ways to attract customers and clients from all over the world and staying ahead of the competition.

Neelaj Shah was invited to become a coached client after he wandered into the BAS offices to inquire about loading docks in the Alexandria area. In that chance meeting, Shah realized BAS could help him prosper as an e-commerce marketer and seller. In turn, BAS recognized Shah’s potential to attract customers from all over the world.

He became a coached client in early 2020, just as the pandemic hit. He worked virtually with his coach and interacted with his peers through Zoom meetings. Clients learned about Paycheck Protection Program opportunities and shared their experiences as they navigated the uncertain times.

“That’s my favorite thing about BAS. There is somebody in the group who knows someone you want to know or you need to know for your own business’s continued growth and success,” Shah said. “From contacts as basic to finding who owns a particular local business within your niche to contacts

healthcare choices and live healthier lifestyles,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. The Economic Development Initiative was created in 2007.

BAS uses a multi-faceted approach that includes coaching, expert technical assistance, classroom learning and web-based instruction. BAS clients are evaluated to determine development priorities and BAS coaches help to design customized learning plans for each entrepreneur.

Today, BAS provides one-on-one coaching to approximately 65 entrepreneurs in Central Louisiana. They are selected through an application process headed by BAS Executive Director Gary Perkins.

In addition to its coached clients, BAS reaches hundreds more small business owners by offering free business-related trainings and resources to the general public. Last year alone, 748 participants attended the 42 trainings that BAS offered.

In the application process for potential coached clients, BAS looks for entrepreneurs who have the potential of selling products outside of the region and state, employing Central Louisiana residents, increasing their revenue and who are



that can help entrepreneurs understand complex sales tax collection requirements or international export laws, tariffs and regulations, someone in BAS is in the know. These valuable contacts and connections truly expedite some of the more difficult parts of starting a business that can turn into major expensive time sinks, allowing entrepreneurs more time and energy to spend on building the core parts of their own businesses.”

Shah enjoys that BAS follows an abundance mentality. “The more you give, the more you receive. The more a participant contributes to the group ... the more peer participants can help by sharing their own experiences. Although at first sight, sharing such confidential and business-critical insights sounds detrimental, BAS is built with passionate entrepreneurs who are more interested in helping each other and sharing information about their businesses rather than taking from their peers.”

BAS emphasizes the importance of thinking ahead, and it’s one reason why many local businesses were able

to survive and exceed expectations during the coronavirus pandemic.

“We constantly talk to our entrepreneurs about change – about how the way you are doing things today is not how you are going to be doing things in two or three years from now. You have to look two or three years down the road,” Perkins said. “All of a sudden, in 2020, that became a huge reality. You didn’t have two or three years; you had next week. The entrepreneurs who prepared for change, prospered.”

When the pandemic temporarily shuttered most businesses in March of 2020, BAS helped current and former clients discover ways to stay afloat.

“They had business owners calling for help, asking for guidance,” said Ashley Stewart, Director of Programs for The Rapides Foundation. “2020 was a very busy year trying to assist all of their clients with the unexpected challenges due to social mitigation and business closures. This speaks very highly of the quality of the program, to know that when clients are in a bind, they know BAS is a resource and that BAS has

“I would recommend the BAS program to anyone that wishes to launch a business because they are going to coach you along the way.”

Geneva Burrell, Excel Driving Academy Owner



the expertise to provide them some assistance.”

Excel Driving Academy Owner Geneva Burrell got ahead of the competition by figuring out how to offer required classroom instruction online for her students. As a BAS coached client, she was already gaining knowledge about marketing, finances and tracking data to move her business forward. When the pandemic hit, she worked with Perkins and stepped outside her comfort zone.

“We sat dormant for a while and when things began to open up to a very small degree, Gary and I talked about what we could do differently that could help move the business forward so that we don’t stay stagnant,” she said. “If anybody had told me that I would have been doing virtual classes, I would have told them there was no way. But now I tell people if I could do it, anybody could. Gary encouraged me. He was the one who pushed me.”

Not only was Burrell able to continue providing driving instruction to her students, she gained customers from other parts of the state who were eager to gain their 30 hours of required classroom instruction remotely. That ability to get a

jump on the competition allowed Burrell to thrive during a time when many businesses were struggling.

“I think where I stood out is that I was the only one in this area offering classes virtually. At the time, a lot of parents may have been a little apprehensive about allowing their students to come into a classroom setting,” she said.

When driving students complete their classroom instruction, they are required to take eight hours of instruction behind the wheel of a vehicle. Excel Driving Academy began offering its behind-the-wheel training when some COVID-19 guidelines were lifted. Students and instructors wore masks and gloves, and they drove in cars that were thoroughly sanitized after each use.

“I would recommend the BAS program to anyone that wishes to launch a business because they are going to coach you along the way,” Burrell said. “They are going to give you the tools and the resources that you need in order to be successful as long as you are willing to follow the program and follow through.”



BAS

Central Louisiana entrepreneurs and business owners interested in becoming a coached client through Business Acceleration System are asked to contact BAS Executive Director Gary Perkins at 318-880-6332.

To learn more about BAS and its business-support resources, videos and workshops, visit Louisiana-Central.com/BAS. All BAS services are offered free of charge.

SYMPOSIUM 2021

September 1

Annual Symposium to Focus on Pandemic Impact to Student Learning



Douglas N. Harris, Ph.D.

Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics and the Schlieder Foundation Chair in Public Education at Tulane University

The Rapides Foundation's eighth annual Symposium will be held Wednesday, September 1, from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria and will focus on the impact and implications of the coronavirus pandemic on schools and student learning. Educators, business and community leaders, and interested parents and community members are encouraged to attend.

The Symposium presentation will be "The COVID Comeback: How Schools Responded to the Pandemic and What Comes Next for Central Louisiana." Featured speaker for the Symposium will be Dr. Douglas N. Harris, Professor and Chair of the Department of Economics and the Schlieder Foundation Chair in Public Education at Tulane University, as well as Director of the Education Research Alliance for New Orleans and Director of the National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice.



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

3:00-4:30 p.m.

Randolph Riverfront Center

707 2nd St. Alexandria, LA

(Also available on Zoom webinar)

SYMPOSIUM **2021**



“It’s especially important for all of us to understand the impact the pandemic has had on our schools and student learning so we can determine which actions will be needed as we move forward.”

Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation

The presentation will address how schools have responded to the worst public health crisis of the past century and what can be done right now to turn things around, as well as explore what the future holds. Dr. Harris will provide a national perspective based on his research and some local analysis of the state of education.

The Foundation presents the Symposium each year as a way to gather around a topic of importance and to recognize the creation of The Rapides Foundation on September 1, 1994. For 2021, the Foundation wants to put the spotlight on the pandemic’s impact on student learning.

“As a health foundation, we are trying to improve health status, so much of our work is in improving access to healthcare and promoting healthy behaviors,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

“But we also know that educational attainment is critical to population health, so 40% of the Foundation’s funding goes to education. It’s especially important for all of us to understand the impact the pandemic has had on our schools and student learning so we can determine which actions will be needed as we move forward.”

Event participants can attend in person at the Randolph Riverfront Center or attend online through the Zoom webinar platform. The Symposium is free and open to the public but registration is required. Registration can be completed by visiting rapidesfoundation.org/symposium. Event participants who attend in person must agree to follow any statewide pandemic guidelines required of the event venue in place on the date of the event.

The mission of The Rapides Foundation is to improve the health status of Central Louisiana, and over its 27-year history the Foundation has sought to support that mission by developing initiatives and strategies intended to impact the region for decades to come.

The Foundation focuses its work in three strategic areas: Healthy People, to improve access to healthcare and to promote healthy behaviors; Education, to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status; and Healthy Communities, to improve economic opportunity and family income, and enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations.

Since the Foundation’s creation in 1994, it has disbursed just over \$233 million in grants. The Rapides Foundation serves a nine-parish area in Central Louisiana consisting of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes.



**EVENT IS FREE, BUT REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED:
[RAPIDESFOUNDATION.ORG/SYMPOSIUM](https://rapidesfoundation.org/symposium)**



CDW Trainer Sue Schleifer leads Cenla Execbuilders participants in a session on Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution.

CENLA Execbuilders Develops Nonprofit Executives

Seven Central Louisiana nonprofit leaders are attending a seven-session executive leadership development program to learn various aspects of the job with the goal of improving their organizations and ultimately their communities.

Cenla Execbuilders, a program of Community Development Works, provides a unique opportunity for executive directors in Central Louisiana, regardless of experience level, to become more effective in their roles as leaders of local nonprofit organizations. The program 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 PARTICIPANTS OF CENLA EXECBUILDERS ARE:

- **Joseph Buzzetta**
Executive Director, Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition
- **Sally Cowan**
Executive Director, Cenla Community Action Committee, Inc.
- **Jerald "Jerry" Egbert**
Executive Director, Life Assisting Fellowship Corporation
- **Mitzi LaSalle**
Director of Donor Relations, Evergreen Life Services
- **Donna Lindsey**
Executive Director, The Centennial Cultural Center, Inc.
- **Jacqueline Murray**
Executive President, Veterans Place Organization
- **Quentin Murray**
Vice President and Chairman, Veterans Place Organization

Cenla Execbuilders participants attend seven sessions to become more effective in their roles as nonprofit leaders.

After they graduate in September, the participants will join a group of 56 Cenla Execbuilders alumni.

Cenla Execbuilders started in 2012 as a complement to the Cenla Boardbuilders program, a successful training program for individuals who are interested in becoming nonprofit board members or for sitting board members seeking additional training. Cenla Boardbuilders began in 2004 and has more than 200 alumni.

Both programs are offered free of charge and are part of The Rapides Foundation's Social Environment Initiative, which provides an integrated approach to enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective nonprofit leaders and organizations. The goal of the initiative is to improve the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations so that they will operate with greater success as they work to achieve their missions. Community Development Works implements most of the activities under the initiative.

The Foundation created Community Development Works to offer nonprofit management training, capacity-building and leadership programs to nonprofit organizations, communities and individuals to develop their ability to respond to the opportunities around them.

"The capacity within a community to address issues of concern is of ultimate importance and is key to improving and developing the region," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "Community Development Works offers nonprofit capacity building, training sessions, technical assistance and other programs to help all nonprofits, regardless of whether they are a Foundation grantee."

Cenla Execbuilders participants have varying levels of experience and they come from different types of nonprofits. But they all share a desire to increase their knowledge in order to improve their organizations and help their communities.



Participants attend 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.

The topics for the 2021 cohort are: Understanding Leadership Roles and Responsibilities; Nonprofit Operations and Implications; Strategic Planning and Thinking; Fund Development and Public Relations; Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution; Team Building and Mentoring; and Leading and Managing Change. The group began its work with an orientation in April. They graduate on September 24.

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.



“In terms of an organized curriculum, something like Cenla Execbuilders is rare to come by, especially for nonprofits.”

Joseph Buzzetta, Cenla Homeless Coalition
Executive Director

Participant Joseph Buzzetta has been Executive Director of the Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition for two years and says Cenla Execbuilders is giving him a wealth of information he can use. With a background in social work and direct client services, he especially appreciates the intense training on administrative topics.

“Cenla Execbuilders has given me a whole bunch of new tools in my tool belt that I can utilize to help the agency run more efficiently and help the employees to do their jobs a lot easier, and that’s only going to translate to better outcomes for our homeless community,” he said. “Ultimately if your administration isn’t running well, that’s going to trickle down to your employees and the client, and so to shore that up on the top end, it’s going to be that foundation that helps us to

achieve our goals of getting people off the streets and into housing.”

Buzzetta said he enjoys hearing ideas from the rest of the group. “With me being a new director, I can soak in as much experience as I can from the other people in my cohort. They have a lot more experience in administration than I do, so it’s been good to see their perspective.”

Would he recommend Cenla Execbuilders to others?

“There are a lot of trainings specifically for administrators ... but in terms of an organized curriculum, something like Cenla Execbuilders is rare to come by, especially for nonprofits. And something like Execbuilders is going to cost beaucoup amounts of money when you find a good one. So not only is it good quality material, it’s actually affordable for a nonprofit because it’s free,” he said. “I recommend it because one of the things a lot of new directors experience is that feeling of not knowing, which makes your job a lot harder. Being equipped with this knowledge has made the last couple of months easier for me because it helped me to know where I can direct my time.”

Anyone interested in being a part of the Cenla Execbuilders program can call CDW at 318-443-7880 or submit an application on the CDW website: communitydevelopmentworks.org/execbuilders.





New Program Develops Math Skills **IN YOUNG CHILDREN**

Edith York and her mom, Ella York, read a book at a Math to Build On workshop taught by Jamila Farris, Early Childhood Program Coordinator for The Orchard Foundation.

A program offered by The Orchard Foundation has the goal of preparing kids for kindergarten by helping young children understand math concepts long before they enter a classroom.

Math to Build On is a math literacy program intended to complement the Foundation's reading literacy program called Read to Soar. Both consist of a series of hands-on workshops for children ages 5 and under and their parents or guardians. Workshops are offered free of charge to residents living in The Rapides Foundation's nine-parish service area.

The Orchard Foundation, the education arm of The Rapides Foundation, coordinates Math to Build On to help prepare young children for school success by raising awareness of how to add math skills into everyday interactions and activities within the home. Through the workshops, children develop and strengthen math skills through reading and activities, and families learn how to continue and reinforce the learning at home.

When they complete the program, children get a certificate of participation and a Math to Build On bag. Families receive five books each session they attend. If a family attends all eight sessions, they will have 40 new books to adorn their home library, while the parents come away with tips and resources

that help them teach their young ones.

The Orchard Foundation developed Math to Build On following the success of Read to Soar. Since Read to Soar was launched in 2018, close to 700 children from throughout Central Louisiana have attended workshops. In all, 14,449 books have been distributed to more than 500 families that participated in the sessions. Math to Build On was launched in October 2020 and has already served almost 100 children in the first nine months of the program, distributing 1,890 books to participating families.

Math to Build On is part of the School Readiness component of The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative. The School Readiness component focuses on increasing kindergarten readiness through the support, expansion or establishment of high-quality early childhood programs to support the teacher-child and family-child interactions.

"Studies show children who attend some type of early childhood program before kindergarten are more likely to complete high school and go through their entire school careers without repeating a grade," said Marjorie Taylor, Executive Director of The Orchard Foundation.

Each of the eight Math to Build On sessions focus on a different topic area and are designed to be fun, giving parents



Angeleisha Butler watches her daughter Abrielle Berry take part in an activity at a Math to Build On workshop.

Math 1 to Build 2 On 3

and caregivers a chance to bond with their kids in a learning environment. Sessions include music, dancing, crafts and refreshments.

Sessions follow early childhood education best practices and are specifically tailored for Central Louisiana. Each session focuses on early-level math skills, such as identifying shapes and patterns, counting, recognizing numbers, understanding spatial relationships and learning comparisons.

One of the strengths of the program is that parents and guardians come away with tips and resources that help them teach their young ones long after the sessions are over. Parents who completed the Read to Soar program reported they had confidence to share and read books with their children at home, resulting in an increase in the development of home reading routines.

"We want the parent to be able to bring the education into the home, and we want them to have the skills to continue this throughout the child's life, even as the child

advances in school," said Rebekah Simpson, Program Manager for Early Childhood for The Orchard Foundation.

Another strength of the program is that it accepts infants and babies. A baby may not be able to speak, but he or she can absorb the concepts presented in Read to Soar and Math to Build On.

"A lot of parents don't realize what a baby can do. Whether reading or math, hearing those words and conversations the first year of their life is huge. If you have a baby and you are calling shapes by their name, the baby is slowly building that knowledge," Simpson said.

The Orchard Foundation offers Math to Build On and Read to Soar workshops at various locations and times throughout Central Louisiana. The workshops are free, but registration is required. Spaces are limited to 15 families per session, so residents are urged to register early. Visit www.theorchardfoundation.org to see workshop dates and registration information.



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION AWARDS

\$5.3 MILLION IN GRANTS



The Rapides Foundation has awarded \$5,330,475 in grants for projects that support the Foundation's mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana. The grants were awarded in the grant cycles between October 2020 and May 2021 and support work under the Foundation's Initiative Strategic Plans. Since the Foundation's creation in 1994, it has disbursed just over \$233 million in grants.

The Foundation focuses its work in three strategic areas: **Healthy People**, to improve access to healthcare and to promote healthy behaviors; **Education**, to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status; and **Healthy Communities**, to improve economic opportunity and family income, and enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations.

To view the Foundation's available funding opportunities, visit our website and click on the "Grants" tab.

AWARDED GRANTS ARE:**EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITIES****COVID-19 Relief – The Food Bank of Central Louisiana \$150,000**

To assist with healthy food needs in Central Louisiana caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Disaster Relief and Recovery – Central Louisiana Nonprofit and Faith-based Hurricane Relief Fund \$17,631

To reimburse nonprofit and faith-based organizations for expenses incurred due to providing hurricane relief efforts to individuals and families within The Rapides Foundation's nine-parish service area.

- Cenla Community Action Committee \$2,819
- Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries, Inc. \$5,000
- Families Helping Families \$1,881
- Redefined Project \$2,931
- Veteran Place LLC \$5,000

HEALTHY PEOPLE**HEALTHCARE ACCESS****CMAP Express \$571,090**

To provide free or low-cost prescription medications to uninsured and underinsured patients through a Central Fill Pharmacy and Patient Assistance Program.

CMAP Express \$221,714

To coordinate, recruit and schedule appointments on a mobile cancer screening unit offering breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening to the uninsured and underinsured residents in the Foundation's service area, and to support efforts to

increase cancer screenings by raising awareness through a Community Health Advisor program.

Integrated Behavioral Health Assessment and Planning Grants \$35,000

To support an assessment within a community or school-based health center of the current level of integration of behavioral health services and the development of a center-level improvement plan.

Grants were awarded to:

- Access Health Louisiana for Woodworth Community Health Center \$10,000
- Iberia Comprehensive Community Health Center, Inc. for Vernon Parish Community Health Center \$10,000
- Winn Community Health Center for East Grant Community Health Center \$10,000
- Winn Community Health Center for Winnfield Primary School-Based Health Center \$5,000

LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport \$130,000

To provide a mobile screening van for free cancer screenings to uninsured and Medicaid community members throughout the Foundation's nine-parish service area.

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

2021-22 Healthy Behaviors School District Partnership Grants \$331,050

To implement a work plan of healthy behavior activities designed to prevent and reduce tobacco use, substance and alcohol abuse, and overweight/obesity by focusing on changing policy, social norms and environments in the school district. Activities are conducted district-wide, with the following school districts participating: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn.

Central Louisiana AIDS Support Services \$30,000

Technical Assistance grant to support the development of an evidence-based substance and alcohol abuse prevention model for adolescents and teens.

CMAP Express \$439,000

To provide funding for the Healthy Lifestyle Program, which provides demonstration and education on proper nutrition and physical activity for good health aimed at fighting

chronic diseases in Central Louisiana at the community and individual levels through one-on-one counseling with registered dietitians and an exercise specialist, as well as development and distribution of nutrition and fitness education materials.

CMAP Express \$47,000

To support a community-based program that helps educate people about the importance of stopping smoking and all tobacco products. In partnership with the Smoking Cessation Trust, CMAP provides one-on-one and group counseling and medications to assist with quitting tobacco.

Healthy Behaviors Mini Grants \$240,058

To support community-driven solutions aimed at preventing and reducing obesity by improving access to physical activity opportunities within the community.

The following organizations received grant awards:

■ **Acadian Elementary School \$25,000**

To support installation of a walking track to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community surrounding the school.

■ **City of Alexandria \$25,000**

To support installation of a walking trail at Johnny Downs Sports Complex to improve access to physical activity opportunities.

■ **Town of Cheneyville \$25,000**

To support the installation of playground equipment at a town park to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community.

■ **Louisiana College \$25,000**

To support installation of fitness equipment and walking trail surface improvements at the Parrish Fuller Fitness Trail to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the surrounding community.

■ **Louisiana District Pilot International \$25,000**

To support installation of exercise equipment at Dogwood Park in Leesville to improve access to physical activity opportunities.

■ **Louisiana State University of Alexandria \$25,000**

To support expansion and revitalization of community recreational resources on campus to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community.

■ City of Pineville \$25,000

To support upgrading of playground equipment to improve access to physical activity opportunities at Kees Park.

■ Pineville Junior High \$25,000

To support repair of the walking track at PJH to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community.

■ Rapides Parish Library \$11,058

To improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community through the installation of story strolls at the McDonald (Glenmora) and Wettermark (Boyce) library branches.

■ T.R.E.E. House Children's Museum \$4,000

To support the installation of playground mulch to improve access to physical activity opportunities.

■ Town of Tullos \$25,000

To support the installation of playground equipment at Memorial Play Park and Walking Trail to improve access to physical activity opportunities for the community.

EDUCATION

2021-22 District Grants for Effective Schools \$1,500,000

To support district-wide school improvement plans aimed at increasing educational attainment and improving student achievement in the nine public school districts in the Foundation's service area. Grants were awarded to the following school districts: Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

2021-22 Youth Volunteer School District Grant \$55,750

To increase civic engagement and leadership skills among high school students through implementation of youth volunteer clubs at participating high schools using a best practice model developed by Youth Volunteer Corps. Grants



increasing the number of high school graduates that transition to postsecondary institutions by developing a coordinated system between K-12 and postsecondary partners that provides extensive assistance throughout the senior year, the summer after graduation and during college studies.

Central Louisiana Technical Community College in partnership with Rapides Regional Medical Center \$75,000

Workforce Development grant to support a 24-week program for newly or currently practicing nurses to obtain surgical nurse technician certification.

Central Louisiana Technical Community College in partnership with Gilchrist Construction Company \$61,182

Workforce Development grant to address needs to further educate existing and new leaders, and create a mentorship program to recognize leadership qualities in existing employees.



The Rapides Foundation serves a nine-parish area in Central Louisiana consisting of Allen, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Grant, LaSalle, Natchitoches, Rapides, Vernon and Winn parishes.

The CDW LEARNING LAB has a new home!

The Community Development Works (CDW) Learning Lab has relocated to the second floor of The Rapides Foundation building in Suite 201. The Learning Lab is a resource center that provides people with the tools and resources they need to support citizen-led community development efforts. Do you need to research program models and statistics, identify funding and volunteer opportunities, or just want to stay current on best practices? The CDW Learning Lab is here for you.

To learn more, contact the Learning Lab at 318-443-7880 or 800-803-8075, or reach out to CDW Training Specialist Felicia Walker at felicia@cdworks.org.



LearningLab

Suite 201

THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

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

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