

HEALTH & WELL-BEING @issue

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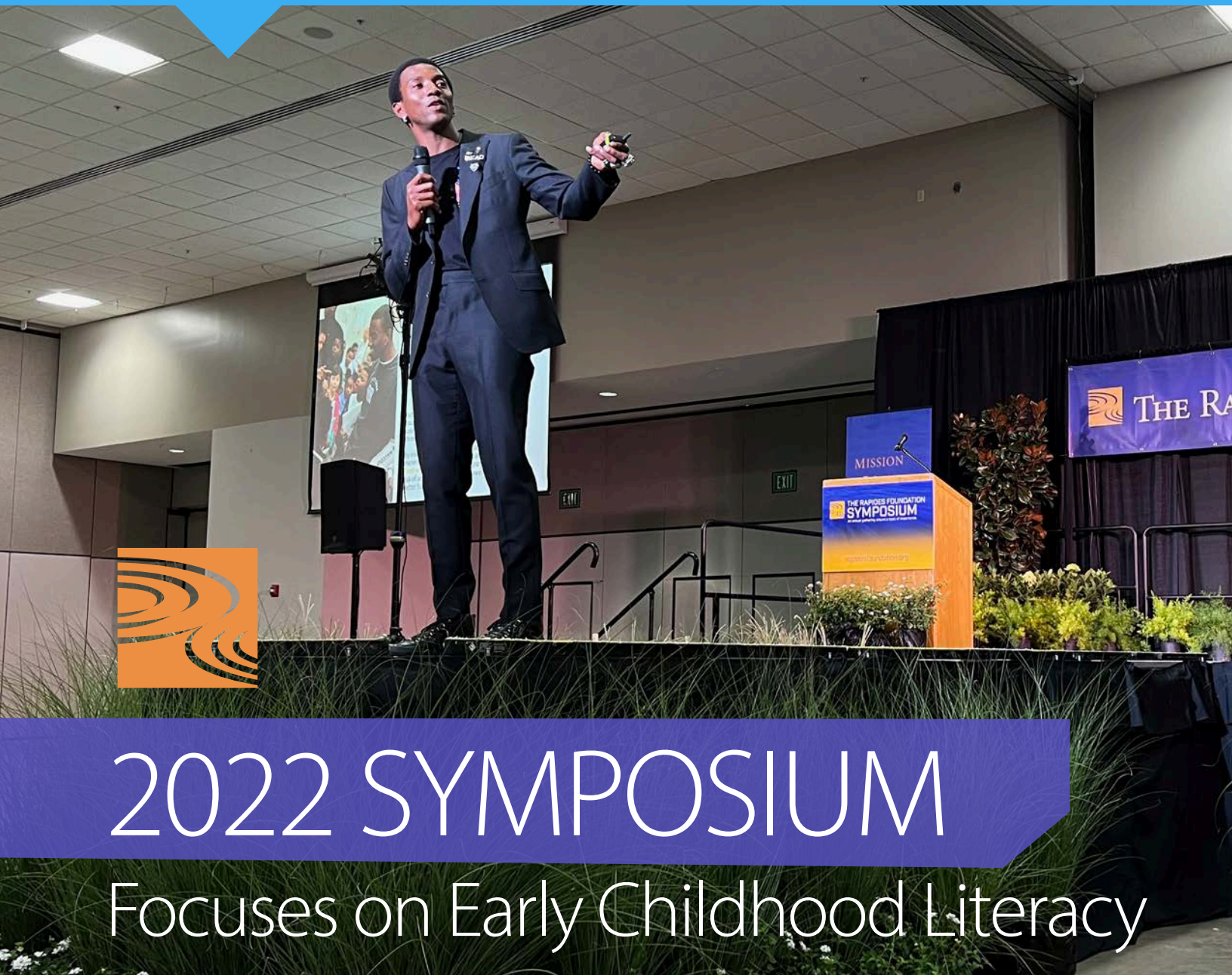


THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

Sharing the Power of Reading

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2022 SYMPOSIUM

Focuses on Early Childhood Literacy

Each year The Rapides Foundation presents a Symposium as a way to gather around a topic of importance and to recognize its September 1, 1994, creation. The focus of the 2022 Symposium was Early Childhood Literacy and featured Super Bowl Champion, author and Share the Magic Foundation Founder/CEO Malcolm Mitchell sharing his personal story about the transformational power of reading.

“The importance of early childhood literacy has been raised as a critical issue for many years at the local, state and national levels,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. “The Foundation’s School Readiness work focuses on increasing kindergarten readiness because children who attend high-quality early childhood programs before kindergarten are more likely to complete high school

and go through their school careers without repeating a grade.”

The Foundation allocates 40 percent of its spending to its Education Initiative to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status. The work is implemented in the areas of School Readiness, Effective Schools, and Career and Postsecondary Readiness. The mission of The Rapides Foundation is to improve the health status of Central Louisiana, and large-scale improvement in educational attainment across the region is necessary for improved health status.

The Rapides Foundation’s ninth annual Symposium was held in the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria.

Ben Close, M.D., chairman of The Rapides Foundation



Super Bowl Champion Malcolm Mitchell delivers his presentation, "Read to a Better Future," at the 2022 Symposium.

Board of Trustees, opened the event, emphasizing the importance of early childhood literacy as a topic that is critical to the Foundation's mission. He said most people may recognize featured guest Malcolm Mitchell "as a Super Bowl Champion with the New England Patriots, but today we want to hear about the powerful work that he does with his foundation, Share the Magic."

Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation, provided an overview of the Foundation's work, which focuses on three areas: Healthy People, Education and Healthy Communities. The Foundation's programs and initiatives are guided by evidence-based research and community assessments, and follow its mission of improving the health status of Central Louisiana.

"Why does a health foundation work in the area of



“With higher levels of education and training, people are better able to have higher incomes, health insurance, purchase a home and educate their children. All of those contribute to improved health outcomes.

Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation

education? The answer is simple. As a health foundation, we know that access to care and healthy behaviors are important. But we also know that over time, the level of educational attainment is a strong driver of health status in a community. With higher levels of education and training, people are better able to have higher incomes, health insurance, purchase a home and educate their children. All of those contribute to improved health outcomes,” he said.

Rosier said the Foundation's School Readiness Initiative strives to prepare young children for school success and to improve literacy skills. Students who are not reading at grade level by the third grade will struggle academically and are among the most vulnerable to eventually drop out of school. In Central Louisiana, 60 percent of third graders are at risk for academic and literacy challenges.

In his presentation, Read to a Better Future, Mitchell described his own literacy challenges in the hopes of inspiring others. "I decided to tell you that truth because it is my hope to encourage you, to inspire you, to motivate you and to try to get kids to understand the value of education, to try to get communities to understand the value of education, to try to get states to understand the importance



Symposium presenters included Ben Close, M.D. (left), Chairman of The Rapides Foundation Board of Trustees, and Louisiana Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley.

of education.”

Mitchell grew up in Valdosta, Georgia, and attended the University of Georgia where he was a top 10 all-time wide receiver. He was drafted by the New England Patriots in 2016, and became a Super Bowl Champion in February 2017. Long before his football career took off, Mitchell struggled with reading, which in many cases can lead to harsh consequences like poverty, incarceration and failure to complete high school. He changed his trajectory when he developed a love of reading in college.

“My biggest challenge was reading. It wasn’t until I got to the University of Georgia that I realized I had made a very big mistake in neglecting my education,” he said. He sought to teach himself to read. “It was very difficult. Sometimes embarrassing. But once I got through that process and truly understood the power of books, my life was never the same.”

He began to love reading, and even joined a book club after a chance meeting with a middle-aged woman in a local bookstore. He was the only man and by far the youngest in the club.

“Reading set me free. This gave me hope beyond my immediate circumstances, that I had hope outside of football. I thought to myself, ‘I have to tell everybody I know.’ Some

of my friends, when football ended, they did not have hope. They had no understanding of what else the world had to offer,” he said.

In 2016 he established Share the Magic Foundation to transform children’s lives through literacy just like his life had been transformed. Share the Magic Foundation has reached more than 400,000 students across the country and internationally through Read with Malcolm Literacy Initiatives.

“I believe kids can actually read their way to a better future. The most empowering tool you can offer to a human being is the ability to read, and they will start solving their own problems because that is what happened to me,” Mitchell said.

The 2022 Symposium concluded with Dr. Cade Brumley, Louisiana Superintendent of Education, who discussed the state’s emphasis on reading and literacy under his leadership. “We have taken literacy and reading for granted for way too long. We just assume that kids will show up for school and just magically they will learn how to read. Unfortunately that philosophy does not work,” he said. “Together I believe we can have a reading revival. It starts for us with a few simple initiatives, and first and foremost among those is teaching our kids how to read.”





READ WITH MALCOLM

Central Louisiana Students Participate in Reading Rallies with Super Bowl Champ Malcolm Mitchell

Malcolm Mitchell reads his book "The Magician's Hat" to students across Central Louisiana.

Students across Central Louisiana participated in "Read with Malcolm" Reading Rallies as part of a three-day Geaux READ Tour presented by Share the Magic Foundation and The Rapides Foundation. Almost 3,500 students attended the rallies presented in nine schools August 29-31.

The Reading Rallies were led by Malcolm Mitchell, an author, Super Bowl Champion and Founder/CEO of Share the Magic Foundation. Mitchell, who considers a love of reading to be his greatest achievement, founded Share the Magic to transform children's lives through literacy.

At the Reading Rallies, each student received a copy of Mitchell's book, "The Magician's Hat," and participated in a high-energy, pep rally-style assembly that included a read-along and magic show.

Mitchell's energy was contagious as students clutched their books and excitedly followed along while he read from the pages. Educators say the enthusiasm continued long after the

event and Mitchell's message had a lasting impression.

"Malcolm's visit was so inspiring! Our students were engaged from the minute they walked into the gym. The magician was great, and having Malcolm read the book was magical," said Karen Tutor, Avoyelles Parish Superintendent of Schools. "He was so patient and because he had every child read with him, our children experienced research-based reading activities. He did the best job with phonemic awareness I have ever seen in a group activity. Our children kept up and then they got to take the book home. That was so great! Every child should have their own books at home!"

The Geaux READ Tour was in connection with The Rapides Foundation's ninth annual Symposium held on September 1. The Symposium, attended by members of the community, focused on Early Childhood Literacy and featured Mitchell's presentation, Read to a Better Future.

Since founding Share the Magic Foundation, Mitchell and his organization have reached more than 400,000

2022 SYMPOSIUM



Central Louisiana students from nine parishes participate in Reading Rallies led by Super Bowl Champ and author Malcolm Mitchell.

students across the country and internationally through Read with Malcolm Literacy Initiatives.

His mission is to inspire young people to read by bringing book ownership to students in Title I schools and under-resourced communities. Whether a student is a striving reader or learns differently, Read with Malcolm literacy programs – both in school and virtually – provide inspiration and motivation, and carry the message that reading is the key to achieving one's goals.

"Thank you to The Rapides Foundation for making it possible for me and my Foundation to share the magic of reading with so many children on the Geaux READ Tour," Mitchell said. "This is a very special event and a very important message: that in order to succeed you have to read. I was very excited to see the kids at each stop on the tour and I look forward to seeing everyone in Central Louisiana again soon."

In his three-day tour, Mitchell spread the message of the power of reading to students in nine elementary schools in nine different Central Louisiana parishes:

- West Leesville Elementary, Vernon Parish
- Colfax Elementary, Grant Parish
- Weaver Elementary, Natchitoches Parish
- Winnfield Primary, Winn Parish
- Olla Elementary, LaSalle Parish
- Jonesville Elementary, Catahoula Parish
- Oakdale Elementary, Allen Parish
- Huddle Elementary, Rapides Parish
- Bunkie Elementary, Avoyelles Parish

"This was the best program we've had in years! Malcolm brought it down to the students' level and spoke to them from the heart," said Necie Barker, Principal of Jonesville Elementary in Catahoula Parish. "He and his team are doing great things for our kids. Thanks for pouring into the children of Jonesville Elementary."

Susan Teegardin, Principal of West Leesville Elementary in Vernon Parish, said students were still carrying around their copies of "The Magician's Hat" long after the Reading Rally.

"That says a lot about the impact the rally had. That book became a treasure to our students," she said. "This was such a positive experience for our students. When Malcolm shared his love of reading with our students, I think it inspired them to read more. The energy in the room that day was contagious! They were amazed that they met a Super Bowl champion that struggled with reading at a young age. This was such a powerful lesson on how tenacity and perseverance led to success."



MACKENZIE SCOTT DONATES \$14 MILLION TO THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION



The Rapides Foundation has received a one-time, unrestricted gift in the amount of \$14 million from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott. Foundation President and CEO Joe Rosier said the gift will allow The Rapides Foundation to deepen its mission to improve the health status of Central Louisiana.

Scott is a billionaire philanthropist and author who pledged in 2019 to give away the majority of her wealth in her lifetime. She is the former wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.

"We are extremely grateful that MacKenzie Scott believed enough in the mission and grantmaking strategies of The Rapides Foundation that she would make this significant gift," Rosier said. "In the same way that we have approached development of our grantmaking strategies in the past, we will be intentional and deliberate about the best way to use this funding so that it translates into improvement in health status for Central Louisiana residents."

The Rapides Foundation works in three strategic areas to improve the health status of Central Louisiana – Healthy People, Education and Healthy Communities. Since its creation in September 1994, the Foundation has awarded approximately \$240 million in grants to address the social and behavioral determinants of health affecting the region's residents.

"Our work focuses on root issues impacting health status – access to healthcare, healthy behaviors, education and income," Rosier said. "The disparities and gaps in each of those require that our work involve those affected by a history and culture of poverty, illiteracy and low-wage employment. The health status of the region can only be measurably and significantly improved by eliminating those disparities and gaps."

Through its Healthy People priority area, the Foundation seeks to improve access to healthcare and to promote healthy behaviors. The Foundation's Education priority area works to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status. And through the Healthy Communities priority area, the Foundation works to improve economic opportunity and family income, and also to enhance civic and community opportunities for more effective leaders and organizations.

"This gift to support the work of The Rapides Foundation affirms that the strategic priorities implemented in support of our mission are viewed by others as worthy of additional investment. We appreciate that validation and will use these funds to strengthen our work on the core generational issues facing our region, while always improving our approach," Rosier said.





SCHOOL READINESS

Programs prepare Cenla children for school success

The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative recognizes the importance of preparing children for kindergarten. Children who enter kindergarten "ready to learn" are more likely to go through their school careers without repeating a grade, and they have higher graduation rates and increased employment opportunities when they become adults.

The initiative's School Readiness component offers several strategies to ensure children are prepared for kindergarten, including institutes designed to improve the quality of early childhood education centers in Central Louisiana and workshops that show parents how to teach their young children at home.

The School Readiness component is the newest

component of the longstanding Education Initiative, which seeks to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status. This focus on the birth to 5 age group complements work already being done in the initiative's Effective Schools component, which focuses on enhancing the instructional core in the nine public school districts by supporting instructional leadership and professional development.

"Our focus to improve early learning is working with teachers and staff at Pre-K, Head Start and Childcare Centers to better prepare them to work with the children and to improve their quality rating. In our community-based programs, we work with parents with children ages 0 to 5 in

the areas of reading and math,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

The School Readiness component was launched several years ago in response to Louisiana legislation that transferred early childhood programs to the Louisiana Department of Education. The statewide move gave parents a central location to find services, and it implemented a quality rating program for early childhood providers – similar to the way K-12 schools are rated. The goal is to ensure that Louisiana children receive quality educational experiences in childcare settings.

The Orchard Foundation, the education arm of The Rapides Foundation, administers programs under the School Readiness component.

Professional Development for Teachers and Leaders

The earliest work under this focus area consists of professional development institutes designed to help early childhood educators meet the new set of performance and academic standards set forth by the state. These institutes cover Teaching Strategies Gold, the state’s Birth to Kindergarten assessment tool; and Teachstone CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) Observation Reliability training, which prepares an observer to assess the quality of teaching in the classroom.

In 2022, The Orchard Foundation began offering two early childhood center director coaching programs: the Instructional Leadership Institute and the Business Leadership Institute. Both are designed to improve the quality at childcare and head start centers throughout the region, and they are offered remotely to help accommodate

the long, busy schedules of childcare center directors and staff.

“We want to ensure that when children are in childcare, they are receiving a quality educational experience, which will lead to them being kindergarten ready when they enroll in school,” said Marjorie Taylor, Executive Director of The Orchard Foundation.

Participants in the Instructional Leadership Institute learn how to bring high-quality instruction into their center. The Business Leadership Institute is designed to help directors with the business side of operating a childcare center.

“Running a childcare center is running a small business too. The Business Leadership Institute is about laws, about how to put things into place, how to make your center more professional and what to expect from employees,” said Rebekah Simpson, Program Manager for Early Childhood at The Orchard Foundation.

Participants of both programs meet twice a month, once as a group and once in a personal coaching session. Both institutes give childcare center directors a unique opportunity to share ideas and successes with other directors throughout the region and not see one another as competition.

“The Instructional Leadership Institute really parallels directly what we have been doing with the Effective Schools component for years, and it all ties back to our mission to improve the educational attainment level of the students in Central Louisiana. We know that in order to do that, it starts in the classroom, and it’s not just K-12 anymore. It’s lower than that,” Taylor said. “The curriculum of course is going to be different for early childhood, but you still have instructional quality, professional development, and child interaction in the



Michelle Smyth (left), Director and Owner of TOTally Kids Childcare Center and Assistant Director Gracie McQueen participate in the Business Leadership Institute for Early Learning Leaders.



Rebekah Simpson, Program Manager for Early Childhood at The Orchard Foundation, leads a training session for Literacy Specialists who present Read to Soar and Math to Build On programs.

classroom environment. All of those key things are the same.”

Early Childhood Literacy

The early literacy programs under this component recognize that a child’s first teacher is his parent or guardian. Read to Soar and its companion program, Math to Build On, consist of workshops for children ages 5 and under and their parents or caregivers. These family sessions help develop and strengthen a culture of reading at home by educating parents, building a child’s home library and increasing awareness about community resources to help ensure the child has the tools for school success.

Children earn a certificate of participation and up to 40 books for their home libraries. Read to Soar focuses on literacy while Math to Build On helps children develop math skills through reading and activities. Both programs show parents and caregivers how to continue and reinforce the learning at home.

The Orchard Foundation has distributed more than 18,000 books to children who attended these workshops, which take place in various locations throughout Central Louisiana.

“We get a lot of feedback where the kids hold the parents accountable. The

kids hear the stories in class and go home and ask their parents to read the story they heard in class. When their kids are asking them to do it, parents are going to be more likely to follow through and develop that in the nighttime schedule,” Simpson said. “Remember, as a parent or a caregiver, you are your child’s first teacher and you are your child’s teacher for life.”

These programs also help ensure that children will master their reading skills by the time they enter third grade, a crucial year for literacy development.

“We’ve come to know that if a child is not on reading level by the third grade, they are already way behind and are going to have challenges going forward,” Rosier said. “So these early literacy programs are in the community that involve the parent and the child at a very early age to start them on that road to literacy.”

Kagan Structures for Little Ones

For many years, The Orchard Foundation has offered Kagan Institutes for educators in Central Louisiana. Kagan workshops are focused on increasing student engagement through the teacher-child interaction.

Because these institutes have been so successful, The Orchard Foundation decided to expand and offer Kagan in the early childhood setting. It worked with Kagan to develop a Kagan Structures for Little Ones training institute that can be used for teachers of 3- and 4-year-old children and for students in kindergarten through second grade.

“This is another parallel to our K-12 work. We’ve trained thousands of people in the school districts in Kagan Learning and we’ve seen benefits,” Taylor said. “We took the success of that and found the author of Kagan Little Ones. It’s customized for our region.”



Instructional Leadership and Business Leadership institutes are offered virtually so that childcare center staff can join the training from their centers at convenient times.



The team from JiggAerobics lead activities to get students moving during Youth Summit breaks.

Central Louisiana Students Attend 11th Annual **YOUTH SUMMIT ON HEALTHY BEHAVIORS**

Students and teachers from 53 schools participated in The Rapides Foundation's Youth Summit on Healthy Behaviors, an annual event where participants learn how to become advocates for healthy choices and policy change in their schools and communities.

This year's summit was made up of six regional in-person events held in multiple parishes throughout Central Louisiana during the month of October. About 550 students and teachers from nine Central Louisiana parishes participated in the summit events held in Pineville, Natchitoches, Leesville and Oakdale.

New Orleans native, hip-hop artist and motivational speaker Dee-1 opened the events virtually, delivering a keynote that used his life experiences to talk about why he chose a path of healthy behaviors that includes avoiding alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Dee-1 was also the featured speaker at the 2021 Summit.

The Youth Summit on Healthy Behaviors is an event for teachers and students participating in the Foundation's Healthy Behaviors School District Partnership Grant to learn about creating healthy changes at school.

"We recognize that schools are an important part of most young people's lives and therefore provide a critical setting for many prevention and intervention efforts under our Healthy Behaviors Initiative," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "The goal is to provide students, staff and teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to make better and informed behavior decisions leading to healthier lives."

The Summit included sessions on healthy eating and active living, substance and alcohol abuse prevention, and tobacco prevention and control. Within each session, students received important information on each topic and then had the opportunity to brainstorm ideas for advocating healthy behaviors in their schools and communities. This is

Youth Summit on Healthy Behaviors

the 11th year the Foundation has presented the Summit.

Staff from the Louisiana Public Health Institute and the Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living provided information on tobacco and vaping as well as training on leadership and advocacy in an interactive presentation focused on Tobacco Prevention and Control. After the presentation, students spent time planning the Take Down Tobacco event that will be implemented at their school in spring 2023 as part of their grant activities.

The team from JiggAerobics led the Healthy Eating and Active Living session as well as exercise breaks. JiggAerobics is a global fitness brand that combines "jigging," an energetic Louisiana dance style, with numerous

plyometric exercises for a total body workout. Their hands-on, high-energy presentation included fun, lively music designed to increase healthy eating, active living and positive thinking, and action planning.

The Substance and Alcohol Abuse Prevention session was led by Thomas Walden Jr., a retired Special Agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration. With over 30 years of local and federal law enforcement experience, his presentation provided Central Louisiana students with an understanding and awareness of the physical and social impact of the misuse and abuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and tobacco products, as well as the impact and consequences that result from daily choices – both positive and negative.



Top left: Retired DEA agent Thomas Walden Jr. leads a session on Substance and Alcohol Abuse Prevention; Bottom left: LaSAS student Allison Mitchell gives an interview; students from Bunkie High School (top right) and Central High School in Catahoula Parish (bottom right) are among the hundreds who attended the Youth Summit.



2022 Leaders complete CENLA BOARDBUILDERS Program

Fifteen individuals graduated November 4 from the 2022 class of Cenla Boardbuilders, a program aimed at developing emerging leaders for service on boards of local nonprofit organizations.

The annual program is administered by The Rapides Foundation's Community Development Works program.

Cenla Boardbuilders is open to professionals identified by their employer as up-and-coming leaders with a desire to become involved in their community, to nonprofit board members wanting an orientation to their new role on a board, and to individuals who are looking for higher-level volunteer opportunities.

Participants choose between two learning tracks: Track I is for newly seated board members with limited service experience who are only seeking training; Track II is for individuals with no previous board service who are seeking training in preparation for nonprofit board service and help to connect with local nonprofits.

The 2022 program ran from August through October and consisted of sessions about the roles and responsibilities of being an effective board member: Nature of Nonprofit Board & Responsibilities; Fund Development; Fiduciary Responsibilities; and Leadership.

The program included a networking lunch and a recruitment session that gave Track II participants and nonprofit leaders a chance to connect. These networking opportunities allowed participants to learn about different organizations that meet their interests, and it gave nonprofits the chance to recruit new, energetic board members.

"The Rapides Foundation believes it is absolutely necessary that nonprofits have board members who are trained in their roles and responsibilities, and who have the skills needed to contribute to the board," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "The community leaders who graduate from this program will immediately bring valuable skills to the table for the nonprofits they serve."

The following individuals completed the 2022 Cenla Boardbuilders Program:

TRACK I: CURRENTLY SERVING ON A BOARD

Kabi Boothe, Board Member, Nonprofit Partner: Harrisonburg Service League.

Patrick Braquet, Vice President, CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Health System, Nonprofit Partner: Central Louisiana Homeless Coalition.

Cenla Boardbuilders Program 2022



Brandon Wilkinson

Susan Ward, Inventory Maintenance, Ward Ace Hardware, Nonprofit Partner: Montessori Educational Center.

Selinsky Whitehead, Military Veteran, Nonprofit Partner: Enrich Louisiana.

TRACK II: SEEKING BOARD SERVICE

Taylor Dauzat, Director of Mental Health & First Year Experience, Louisiana Christian University.

Clarice Franklin, Owner, New Season Salon and Day Spa.

Kay Harris, Self-Employed.

Steve Maltempi, Retired.

Trey Mayeux, Manager-MISO Policy & Rates, Cleco.

Michael A. Moto, CEO, Healing Hands & Hearts Behavioral Health.

Lisbeth Pollock, Owner, Peruvian Delight.

Martha Powell, Executive Director, The Extra Mile Region VI Inc.

Meredith Rennie, Executive Director of the Center for Calling and Career, Louisiana Christian University.

Karen Slatten, Program Director, Cenla Voices.

Brandon D. Wilkinson, Operations Manager, Cameron Ashley Building Products.

The 2022 graduates join a group of 239 Cenla Boardbuilders alumni.

Brandon Wilkinson of Alexandria works a full-time job and serves as co-founder and deputy director of operations of Enrich Louisiana, a nonprofit that brings specialized job training, resources, and aid to communities and residents in Louisiana. He enrolled in Cenla Boardbuilders because he is interested in board service, and he wanted to gain a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the individuals who serve on the Enrich Louisiana board.

"I wanted to learn more about what they are responsible for because that will allow me to have a better working relationship with them and understand some of the

challenges they have. On the flip side, I do want to do more in the community. I think Boardbuilders will help me in my growth," he said.

One of his board members is also taking the class, so Wilkinson and the board member compare notes after each session. "It gives us talking points on a lot of different things. We come to the class together and after class we meet with each other and kind of pick each other's brains based on how we understood and received the message, and then bring that back to the rest of the staff and the rest of the board. It has helped us all grow."

Kabi Boothe serves on the board of the Village of Harrisonburg Service League, a nonprofit that promotes the well-being, personal growth and enlightenment of its residents through health and wellness initiatives, youth participation programs, community involvement, enjoyment programs and other general activities.

Boothe took a CDW grant writing webinar last spring after seeing it advertised on Facebook. After the class, she started getting correspondence about other CDW offerings and jumped at the opportunity to become part of the Cenla Boardbuilders Class of 2022. The Village of Harrisonburg Service League is the first board she's ever served on, so the sessions are providing her with added knowledge she can bring back to the nonprofit, and that will ultimately benefit residents of the small town of Harrisonburg.

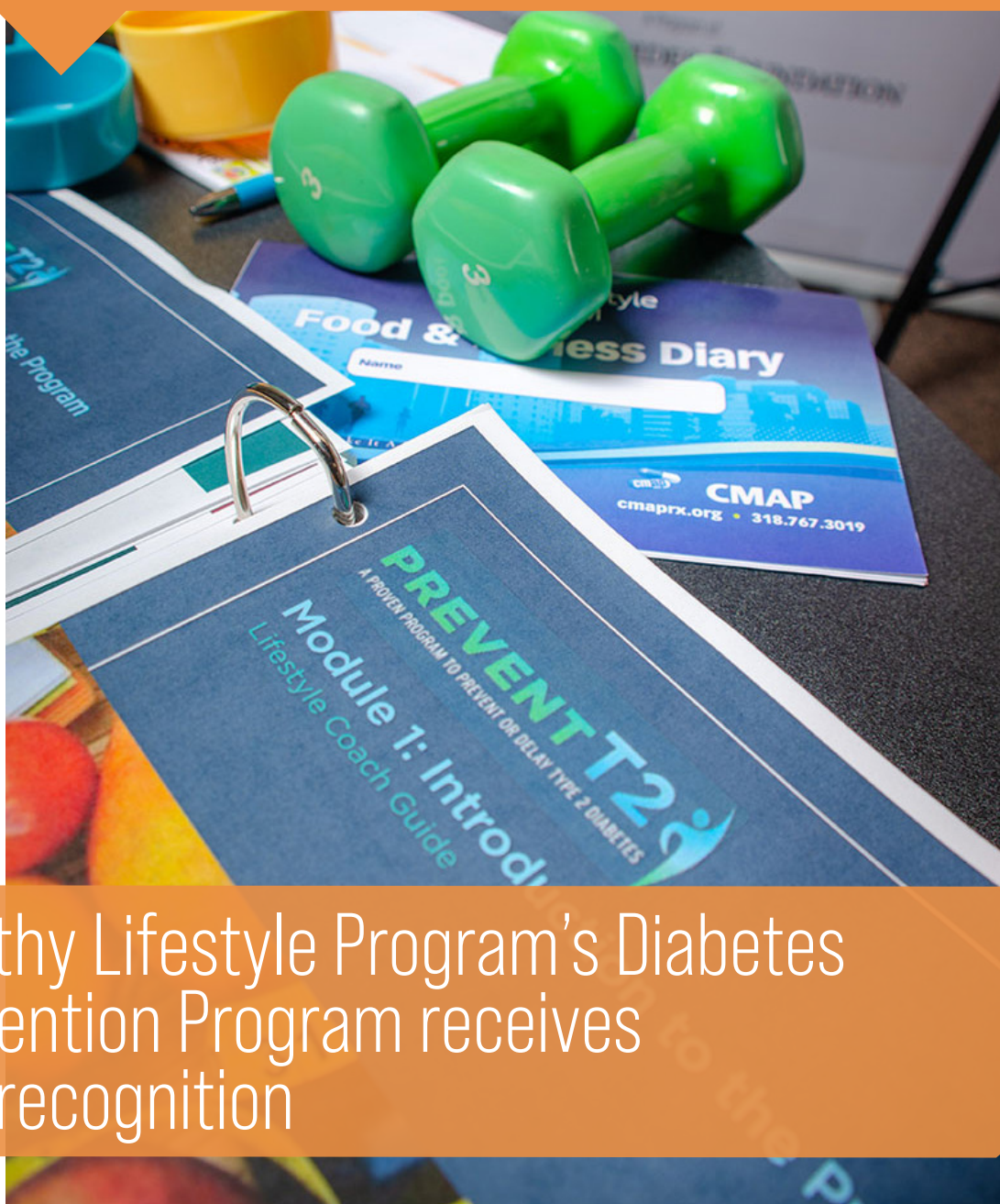
She appreciates the networking opportunities and plans to take advantage of future CDW training sessions and opportunities.

"I would recommend it to anybody who is interested in being in the nonprofit sector," Boothe said. "Most nonprofits are trying to do what we can to improve people's lives. Louisiana is not a place overflowing with extra income, so all of these resources can help make a difference."

For more information about Cenla Boardbuilders or to learn how to participate in the 2023 program, call CDW at 318-443-7880 or toll-free at 800-803-8075, or email Felicia Walker at felicia@cdworks.org.



Kabi Boothe



Healthy Lifestyle Program's Diabetes Prevention Program receives CDC recognition

The Healthy Lifestyle Program has been recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for its ability to effectively deliver a proven type 2 diabetes prevention lifestyle intervention. CDC only recognizes programs that meet high-quality standards.

The Healthy Lifestyle Program is recognized for its PreventT2 diabetes prevention program, a yearlong support group for Central Louisiana residents who are at risk for developing diabetes. It began offering the CDC-approved program in 2021. The first group completed its work while three additional support groups began in 2022. Plans for 2023 are to offer PreventT2 in three more parishes.

The PreventT2 program offers a proven approach to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes through modest lifestyle changes made with the support of a coach and one's peers. 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.

PreventT2 groups meet for a year — in one-hour weekly sessions for the first 16 weeks, then once or twice a month for the rest of the year to maintain healthy lifestyle changes. The Central Louisiana groups are led by Healthy Lifestyle Program staff, who have been trained to use the CDC-approved PreventT2 curriculum and have the knowledge and skills needed to effectively deliver the program.

(continued)

Healthy Lifestyle Program's Diabetes Prevention Program



Healthy Lifestyle Program staff

Healthy Lifestyle Program staff began the application process for the CDC recognition a year ago. The lengthy process included tracking results of its first PreventT2 cohort and sending data to CDC every 6 months to show that they are having an impact on preventing or delaying type 2 diabetes.

To gain CDC recognition, organizations must show they can meet CDC standards, including having trained lifestyle coaches who can help build participants' skills and confidence to make lasting lifestyle changes.

"Having the CDC recognize our work in helping to prevent type 2 diabetes is a great honor and truly emphasizes the commitment of the Healthy Lifestyle Program staff," said Wendy Roy, Executive Director of the Cenla Medication Access Program, which oversees the Healthy Lifestyle Program. "We will continue to provide Central Louisiana residents with this high-quality lifestyle change program that will help them lose weight, manage their blood sugar and affect their overall health."

To become part of a PreventT2 group, residents must have prediabetes but not have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. To see if PreventT2 is right for you, call the Healthy Lifestyle Program at 318-767-3019.



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

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

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