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# Introducing gardening

## Schools in DeSoto sow seeds for success

Special to My Life

Posted April 28, 2011 at 10:55 a.m.

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Children in the Prime Time after-school program at Shadow Oaks Elementary School received assistance from staff, Master Gardeners Pam Selby and Tom Wall, and State Farm agent Stephanie Morrison as the herb garden was prepared

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) was celebrated at seven elementary schools on April 14 during the Prime Time after school program. "Sowing Seeds of Success" is a school garden project of the DeSoto County Community Health Council, a component of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi's Get A Life! initiative to fight childhood obesity.

The GYSD project was led by Master Gardener Pam Selby, a member of the Community Health Council. She was assisted at the sites by lots of volunteers, children and the after school program staff. Master Gardeners

and planted as part of Global Youth Service Day and the DeSoto County Community Health Council's "Sowing Seeds of Success" project. Also in attendance were MS Riverkings' Sheldon and Derek Landmesser, team captain, Mayor Nat Baker and his grandsons and Jesse Pool, librarian at the M. R. Dye Library.



Master Gardener Ruffin Borden delivers an herb garden to Southaven Public Library. As a community service project of Global Youth Service Day, each of the DeSoto County branches of the First Regional Library received an herb garden to display along with posters and information for the public on the benefits of growing herbs.



Lynda Austin, Ruffin Borden, Sharon Buske, Joyce Haslip, Jan Knight, Betty Lee, J.R. Owens, Bettie Pruitt, Norm Scott, Pam Selby, Anthie Sutterfield, Tom Walls, and Peggy Young volunteered to transport garden mix to the locations as well as provide assistance with the project at each site.

Jim Robinson, Executive Director of the Olive Branch Family YMCA, which manages the Prime Time after school program, and member of the Community Health Council, spent countless hours building raised beds and delivering garden mix. Raised vegetable and herb gardens were planted at each school and a potted herb garden was prepared for delivery to each of the First Regional Library branches in the county. As people visit the libraries, they will be able to read the posters and information prepared by the children on the benefits of growing herbs. This is the children's way of sharing lessons learned.

GYSD would not have been a success without the sponsors who gave of time, money and materials. They include members of Team Depot (Horn Lake Home Depot volunteers), Entergy, Nature's Earth of Southaven, Four Seasons Garden Center, Quality Landscape and Garden Center, City of Horn Lake, Lowe's of Southaven and Olive Branch, and the DeSoto County Community Health Council. National sponsors include Youth Service America, United Healthcare Heroes, and State Farm Foundation.

Not only did the volunteers from the Horn Lake Home Depot donate to and participate in GYSD on April 14, they also sent out a team on April 20 to four schools that had requested raised vegetable beds and built two beds at each school. The store provided the material, labor and seeds/plants. Team Depot members included Cindy Coffman, Tracie Sassums, Charleen Milton and Jamie Reynolds. Kudos to their community involvement and support for our children.

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Stephanie Morrison (foreground), a State Farm agent in Horn Lake, plants herbs with children at the Prime Time after-school program at Shadow Oaks.



Mayor Gene Alday and Walls Elementary Principal Becky Kelly joined students Landyn Melton (front row, left), Andrew Harper, Taylor Lindsey, Mikayla Brown; Edward Johnson (second row, left), Tanner Smart, Bruce Baldwin, and Robert Wells, from the Prime Time after-school program, to celebrate Global Youth Service Day by planting Seeds of Success in their raised beds.



Elected officials from throughout the county were invited to participate in GYSD. We saw Mayor Greg Davis at Hope Sullivan Elementary, Mayor Nat Baker at Shadow Oaks Elementary, Mayor Chip Johnson at Oak Grove Elementary, Mayor Gene Alday at Walls Elementary along with Walls Alderman Lynda Austin, and Olive Branch Alderman Pat Hamilton at Pleasant Hill Elementary. Stephanie Morrison, State Farm agent in Horn Lake, brought her gloves and helped the children plant herbs at Shadow Oaks Elementary. Shadow Oaks Elementary even had a special visit from Sheldon, Mississippi Riverkings' mascot and Derek Landmesser, team captain.

Schools which have raised gardens are Oak Grove Central, Center Hill Elementary, Lewisburg Elementary, Pleasant Hill, Shadow Oaks, Walls and Lake Cormorant Elementary, Southaven Intermediate, Horn Lake Elementary and Horn Lake Intermediate.

"This is a wonderful way to introduce our children to gardening and the responsibilities that go with it as well as teaching them to eat nutritional food," said Pam Selby.

Each school site will have at least one vegetable garden and one herb garden. Health Council members, Master Gardeners and other volunteers will be encouraged to work with the schools and site supervisors of the after school programs to see that the gardens are well maintained and reap a harvest.

"Connecting people who care with causes that matter is the mission of the Community Foundation, and working with GYSD and people who care like all of the volunteers, the schools and the after school program with a cause that matters, school gardens and our children's health, we (CFNM and the Community Health

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Students of the Prime Time after-school program at Pleasant Hill Elementary School worked to prepare and plant the first raised bed with herbs. Other beds will contain various vegetable plants.

Council) are proud to sponsor this project," said Peggy Linton. For more information on the Community Foundation and Get A Life! go to [cfnm.org](http://cfnm.org) or call (662) 449-5002.

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Mayor Greg Davis, Yvonne Herring of Entergy, Master Gardener Peggy Young and members of the DeSoto County Community Health Council along with Prime Time staff celebrated Global Youth Service Day with children of the Hope Sullivan after-school program at their herb garden.

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