

HEALTH & WELL-BEING @issue

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION SPRING 2023

 THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

Opportunity Youth

Reconnecting Cenla and Beyond Graduation
connect young adults to education, jobs

IN THIS ISSUE

- Beyond Graduation Program | 2
- Reconnecting Cenla Grants | 6
- Leading for Better Instruction | 8
- Foundation Airs Healthy Behaviors Campaign | 11
- The Orchard Foundation APLUS Grant | 12
- CLIP Graduates | 14
- Youth Volunteer Summer Service Grants | 15
- Symposium Save the Date | 16



Above and

Photo above: Buckeye High School graduate Logan Foster considers his NSU Beyond Graduation coach Sonya Johnson "one of the biggest helps and influences in college."

On the cover: Natchitoches Central High School graduate Arboni Brown is assisted by Bossier Parish Community College Coach Kelsy Davis Lott on the Natchitoches campus.

BEYOND GRADUATION

The Rapides Foundation's Beyond Graduation project is designed to ease a student's transition from high school to a local two- or four-year university or technical community college. The transition can be so overwhelming that many young people nationwide abandon their postsecondary goals during the summer months following high school graduation.

"We discovered that a high number of Central Louisiana high school seniors apply to a university or community college, but a large percentage of that number don't actually enroll in college for the fall semester after they graduate from high school. We are trying to close that gap of students who applied to but never enrolled in postsecondary education," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

Through a grant to Career Compass of Louisiana, the Beyond Graduation project funds college coaches to help Central Louisiana students apply for college, keep up with the required paperwork and deadlines after they are accepted, and have a positive and successful college experience once they arrive.

Career Compass of Louisiana, a nonprofit education organization, has a longstanding working relationship with the Foundation. As part of a 2012 grant under the Foundation's Career and Postsecondary Readiness Initiative, Career Compass already provides postsecondary coaching services to middle school and high school students throughout Central Louisiana. The Beyond Graduation project extends Career Compass' coaching services to help high school graduates transition to a two- or four-year university or technical community college.

Beyond Graduation addresses the high number of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor pursuing an education. The Foundation's goal is to reconnect these young people to the education and workforce pipelines so that they succeed and contribute to their communities. Beyond Graduation is a retention strategy to keep students in the education pipeline, while a second Foundation project, Reconnecting Cenla, is a reconnection strategy to connect young adults to education and job opportunities (see page 6).

"Research tells us that unless we reconnect young people to education and employment services during their teen and early adult years, they will have lower incomes, be less likely to gain meaningful employment in the future, and have poorer health outcomes than their peers," Rosier said.

Beyond Graduation was piloted in LaSalle, Natchitoches and Rapides parishes through a partnership with the public school districts, Central Louisiana Technical Community College, Northwestern State University, LSU of Alexandria and Bossier Parish Community College's Natchitoches campus. It will be expanded to all nine parishes in the Foundation's service area this fall. A Career Compass coach works at each partner institution, giving students a familiar face in their new surroundings.

The first group of 297 Beyond Graduation students began working with their college coaches in the Spring/Summer of 2022. A second group started working with their college coaches in Spring 2023.

Beyond Graduation participants apply for the program or are referred by their high school's



Kaley Whatley, left, a graduate of Jena High School, gets help from her LSUA Beyond Graduation coach, Ashlee Hatwig.

Career Compass counselors, teachers or guidance counselors. Priority is given to students who would be the first in their families to attend college. Other factors include family income, grades and the willingness and potential to succeed. Once selected, the student works with the Beyond Graduation coach at the postsecondary institution they plan to attend.

The Beyond Graduation coach helps students navigate through the paperwork that is required after college acceptance. This includes applying for dorms and meal plans, declaring a major, ordering books, signing up for orientations, registering for classes and submitting the FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid that determines a student's eligibility for financial aid.

"There are a lot of steps and obstacles that a high-risk student may decide 'maybe I'll just sit out and tackle this later,' but they never do," said Dr. Chris Maggio, Beyond Graduation Project Manager. "During the spring and summer, we help make sure that every 'i' is dotted and every 't' is crossed. They have a person they can call or text to help them through it. We help them through that important transitional period and we try to break down all the obstacles that are there."

Beyond Graduation students say they appreciate the personal attention and accountability that they get from their college coaches.

Buckeye High School graduate Logan Foster is in the nursing program at NSU. A first-generation college student who graduated with a high GPA, Logan applied for Beyond Graduation because he saw the benefit of getting extra help for his college experience.

His Beyond Graduation coach, Sonya Johnson, helped him get academic scholarships, and she encouraged him to get involved in everything NSU has to offer – like clubs, a fraternity and the President's Leadership program -- as long as it doesn't take away from his studies.

"I'd say Ms. Sonya has been one of the biggest helps and influences in college. Even before school started, in the summer, she was making sure I had all my forms filled out before the deadlines were even set. She made sure I was on top of my game and she held me accountable. I like to refer to her as my NSU mom. She makes me feel like I am always welcome in her office and if I have any questions, she is always there to help," he said.

"I don't think I would have become so involved as fast as I did if it wasn't for her. Talking to her and getting a perspective let me understand it's OK to take advantage of every opportunity that is given to you as long as you manage your time with academics."

Kaley Whatley, the first in her family to attend college, is a graduate of Jena High School. She became part of Beyond Graduation after deciding

BEYOND GRADUATION

she wanted to attend LSUA to major in nursing.

Her Beyond Graduation coach, Ashlee Hatwig, helped Kaley fill out the FAFSA, get scholarships and financial aid, register for classes and get into a dorm. Once fall classes started, Hatwig would check in on Kaley to make sure her needs were being met and to remind her of approaching deadlines.

"At LSUA, people are always there to help, but it's good to know I have one person that I can go to," Kaley said.

LSUA's Beyond Graduation students were treated to a "VIP-type" orientation in the summer, before the start of the fall semester. It gave the dozen Beyond Graduation students extra time and more personalized attention to tour the campus and to learn about financial aid, the registration process, student organizations and scholarship opportunities.

"Beyond Graduation has been a big help to me because there is so much that goes on. They are there to help us with anything that we need, especially when you're 18 years old and just getting out into the world. I've been very thankful that I've had people like Beyond Graduation to help me along the way," Kaley said.

Arboni Brown is a Natchitoches Central High School graduate who is in the cosmetology program at Bossier Parish Community College. Arboni has low vision because of a rare medical condition, so it can be difficult for her to read the fine print in textbooks.

Her Beyond Graduation coach, Kelsy Davis Lott, helps Arboni with some of her assignments by reading the material aloud to her. Davis also provides the support Arboni needs to tackle her new surroundings as a college student. "I told her I would advocate for her," Davis said.

Arboni said she enjoys the personalized attention. "She really makes me feel so comfortable, and with my disability, she's willing to help me whenever I need it." After she graduates in December 2023, Arboni plans to eventually open her own salon. "I want to work in my own building and make money."

Maggio said he wishes every student was able to have the extra layer of resources that Beyond Graduation provides. "We are not only helping students get into college, but we are already seeing where our students are utilizing our services and communication with their coach and these retention services. I can see where these retention services are going to pay dividends down the line."



FIRST BEYOND GRADUATION GRADUATE

Meleisha McKinnie, shown with her Beyond Graduation College Coach Annalyn Burch, is the first graduate of the Beyond Graduation Program. Meleisha completed the Patient Care Technician Program from Central Louisiana Technical Community College.



Foundation Awards \$1.8 million in Reconnecting Cenla Grants

The Rapides Foundation has awarded \$1.8 million in grants to six organizations under a new program that addresses the high number of Central Louisiana young adults ages 16 to 24 who are neither in school nor working. The Reconnecting Cenla Program Grant seeks to reconnect these young people to meaningful education and employment opportunities in the region.

Grants were awarded to Ben D. Johnson Educational Center, Central Louisiana Technical Community College, Eckerd Connects, LaSalle Community Action Association, LaSalle Economic Development District and Rapides Parish Police Jury.

These six entities will serve as anchor organizations that will lead community-based systems of partner organizations to identify, recruit and navigate disconnected youth to education and employment opportunities. Disconnected youth are often called “opportunity youth” because of their potential to succeed and contribute to their communities.

“Research has shown that young adults who

experience disconnection have significantly lower incomes, are less likely to gain meaningful employment in the future and have poorer health outcomes than their peers,” said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. “These community collaborations are designed to create strategies that address barriers these young adults face when reengaging with education and employment services.”

Reconnecting Cenla complements the Foundation’s Beyond Graduation Project, a retention strategy launched in 2021 to ensure students stay within the education pipeline by assigning coaches to counsel students who enter postsecondary institutions after high school. Both programs are funded under the Workforce Skills and Talent Development component of the Foundation’s Economic Development Initiative.

Each Reconnecting Cenla Program grantee was awarded \$300,000 over a three-year period that began April 1. The grant also will fund technical assistance from national experts in the field of opportunity youth who will work closely with the organizations as they develop their projects.

Grant program seeks to reconnect 'Opportunity Youth' to education, jobs

THE FOLLOWING RECONNECTING CENLA PROGRAM GRANTS WERE AWARDED:

Ben D. Johnson Educational Center plans to expand its *Legacy Workforce Development Program*, which provides training and certification courses covering foundational job skills, digital and financial literacy, effective communication strategies and industry-based certifications to underserved populations in Natchitoches. The center will work to grow its network of referral, resource and employer partners to help participants obtain social services, job training and employment.

Central Louisiana Technical Community College will create the *Cenla Outreach, Engage and Reconnect Project* to establish a range of key stakeholders to grow capacity and effectiveness with engaging opportunity youth throughout Central Louisiana. The project will utilize a Carl Perkins-funded website, Career Waves 6, to highlight resources within the community and create a communication network. The project will grow partnerships with grassroots organizations by training local ambassadors on the features of the website and navigate youth to services.

Eckerd Connects will work with existing and new community partners to build a system of care for opportunity youth in Rapides and Vernon parishes. The Eckerd Connects *Opportunity Youth Program* will engage, empower and energize opportunity youth to address the barriers to successful education and employment. The project also will

focus on building an infrastructure to connect referral sources to community partners who provide educational services and employment opportunities. Eckerd will provide direct services and strengthen local connections in communities to connect more youth to opportunities so that they can live in a sustainable manner.

LaSalle Community Action Association and its partners will create the *Catahoula Youth and Young Adult Enrichment Program* in Catahoula Parish. The program will identify, recruit, assess, educate and train at least 150 young adults to become economically stable through the creation of a local and regional system of service providers. The system will provide outreach and a portal for disconnected youth to enter, be assessed and connected to services, including training, that will improve the likelihood of a successful transition to sustained employment.

The LaSalle Economic Development District will serve as anchor organization for *Reconnect LaSalle: Youth Embracing a Greater Future*. The mission is to connect these young adults with local and regional entities that can assist them to embrace a greater future by entering the workforce or obtaining higher education. The project will develop strategies to increase awareness of available local resources and information. Other components include facilitating round table discussions with area agencies, organizations and local youth.

The Rapides Parish Police Jury's Youth Empowerment Services Project will expand its existing outreach and services for young adults. The project will include hiring service navigators to recruit disconnected youth from Rapides Parish and connect them with resources within the American Job Center and from external partners.





Leading for Better Instruction Class of 2023

Eleven Central Louisiana public school administrators have completed a three-year instructional leadership program that aims to improve classroom instruction and student achievement. Leading for Better Instruction is a training curriculum for administrators developed for Central Louisiana by the University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership. It is funded by The Rapides Foundation and administered by The Orchard Foundation.

The goal is to develop instructional leaders, not just managers, to lead schools throughout Central Louisiana.

"It's all about instructional leadership," said Marjorie Taylor, Executive Director of The Orchard Foundation. "The Center for Educational Leadership theory of action is that student learning is not going to be improved until the quality of teaching in the classroom improves, and that

doesn't happen until you have leaders who are able to identify what high-quality instruction looks like. Principals need to know how to lead for instruction and not just be a manager. They need to be instructional leaders, and the goal is to improve instruction to impact student achievement."

Leading for Better Instruction Year 3 Cohort

- **Melanie Fontenot**, Allen Parish
- **Pamela LeBoeuf**, Allen Parish
- **Lauri Phillips**, Allen Parish
- **Ashley Ducote**, Avoyelles Parish
- **Vicki Clinton**, Grant Parish
- **Amy Merrell**, Grant Parish
- **Terrie Taylor**, Grant Parish
- **Virginia Hopewell**, Vernon Parish
- **Kayla Hopkins**, Vernon Parish
- **Dylan Solice**, Vernon Parish
- **Susan Teegardin**, Vernon Parish

The administrators participating in Leading for Better Instruction represent four Central Louisiana school districts.

Their work ended on March 13 with presentations before their peers and district supervisors. The presentations focused on an identified problem of practice in their schools and districts, and it represented the culmination of their learning experience.

Leading for Better Instruction is part of The Rapides Foundation's Education Initiative. The initiative seeks to increase the level of educational attainment and achievement as the primary path to improved economic, social and health status.

"One of the core strategies under the Education Initiative has been to provide professional development and leadership opportunities for teachers and school leaders. Research tells us that strong school leadership and instructional strategies ultimately lead to improved student achievement," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation.

The Rapides Foundation brought Leading for Better Instruction and its companion program, Aspiring Leaders, to Central Louisiana more than 10 years ago. Aspiring Leaders is a two-year program designed to train teachers with aspirations of becoming administrators. Graduates of Aspiring Leaders typically move on to the three-year Leading for Better Instruction program after being promoted to administrative positions, although it is not a requirement.

In Leading for Better Instruction, participants studied developing a learning-focused culture; deepening their ability to observe and analyze instruction; using an inquiry model to analyze the needs of students, teachers and leadership; identifying an area for improvement; implementing an improvement plan and measuring its impact; and designing a system of professional development tailored to the specific needs of teachers.

The group met five times during each school year. The sessions included visiting host schools for classroom observations and other practical work. In the third and final year, participants used what they learned to implement a school-wide

improvement plan unique to their own schools. Examples include increasing student engagement, focusing on literacy and improving overall student achievement.

"They are a hard-working group who are serious about their learning," said Diane Marcantel, Professional Development Associate for Leading for Better Instruction. "Each year in LBI they have accumulated numerous leadership skills that they have practiced and replicated in their schools. This has made them effective administrators who are very intentional about implementing these skills every day."

The program gives superintendents a pool of highly qualified candidates for administrative positions. At the same time, it gives participants the confidence to pursue principalships, knowing they are better prepared for the instructional leadership aspects of the job. Leading for Better Instruction also gives participants a group of colleagues to turn to as they navigate their new administrative positions.

Many of the recent graduates went through Aspiring Leaders, were assistant principals when they started Leading for Better Instruction and were promoted to principalships during their training. They said they felt confident and prepared.

Amy Merrell was promoted to principal of Pollock Elementary after the holidays when the school's longtime principal retired.

"With me just starting at a new school as a principal, it was extremely helpful. When you are an assistant principal, you are not really an instructional leader. You are doing all the busy work to free up the instructional leader. And when you are at a busy school, you don't get to see a lot of what the principal does. So had I not had Leading for Better Instruction, there is no way I would have even known where to begin. Leading for Better Instruction just sets you up as a leader to be able to do this."

Merrell's assistant principal, Vicki Clinton, is



*Amy Merrill
Principal
Pollock Elementary*

Leading for Better Instruction

also in her Leading for Better Instruction class, so the two administrators get to compare notes and share ideas to improve their school.

"Aspiring Leaders built me as a mentor teacher and when I got to Leading for Better Instruction I was really able to focus on my instructional leadership and train people to do what I had learned in Aspiring Leaders. I came into Leading for Better Instruction already knowing how to script and already knowing how to define that focus area and finding 'look-fors.' I understood what they were saying in the sessions and I understood the purpose behind everything, so I was able to dive into my whole Instructional Leadership team," she said. "The work we do in Aspiring Leaders and Leading for Better Instruction is so meaningful, it applies to what we do every day. We know the purpose behind our work, and that is important."



*Susan Teegardin
Principal
Leesville Elementary School*

Susan Teegardin is in her first year as principal of West Leesville Elementary School.

"I have learned so much from my participation in Leading for Better Instruction. Focusing on effective instruction has allowed me to go into classrooms with one goal and one purpose: improving academic success. My focused classroom observations allow me to focus on what needs to improve," she said. "This experience has given me the skills needed to develop into a leader, making decisions daily to move toward improvement. My experience and the knowledge I gained in these three years has allowed me to take what I have learned and help teachers improve their practice. I have seen great results from targeted feedback cycles."

Teegardin appreciated the opportunity to get hands-on experiences in other schools and from other educators throughout Central Louisiana.

"I think just being able to share what I have learned with others has benefited our school. I work alongside two coaches and my assistant principal, who is in Year One of Leading for Better

Instruction. We are always sharpening our own skills and collaborating on what we can do to improve instruction based on our area of focus. I spend a lot of time reflecting. As a team, we reflect on what is working and what isn't, and we make changes that strengthen our area of focus. We have made a lot of changes this year, but they were necessary for our students to grow. It is taking time to rebuild a culture of reading."



*Pamela LeBoeuf
Principal
Oberlin High School*

Pamela LeBoeuf is in her first year as Principal of Oberlin High School. She too attended Aspiring Leaders before Leading for Better Instruction.

"As a Math Coach, I was honored to be able to participate in Aspiring Leaders. This was a great experience! Leading for Better Instruction gave me the confidence I needed to get into the classroom and give notable feedback to teachers. By giving factually-based feedback our teachers began to grow in their learning, resulting in our students moving forward. This program also gave me the reassurance I needed when applying for the Assistant Principal, then the Principal's position."

Like other participants, LeBoeuf appreciated the practical experience she gained from attending the two programs.

"Through the work that we completed in Leading for Better Instruction, I have learned to become more focused, and this has kept our school more focused. This program gives one direct support and feedback for our real-life situations," she said. "What's amazing is there are times we discuss things in Leading for Better Instruction and then we come back and the superintendent will visit and say 'this is what we are going to move toward,' and it's exactly the things that we had talked about and discussed in the program. It validates what you are and it validates what you are doing. This program is something that you live and use. It benefits your students, it benefits your teachers and it benefits your school as a whole. And you can utilize the skills that you learned there and use it at any school that you go to. That's what makes it so valuable."





The Rapides Foundation Airs Healthy Behaviors Counter-Marketing Campaigns

The Rapides Foundation is airing two multi-media marketing campaigns as part of its Healthy Behaviors Initiative, which addresses healthy eating, active living, tobacco prevention and control, and substance and alcohol abuse prevention. The Healthy Behaviors Initiative is an integrated, comprehensive, multi-level and multi-target initiative that focuses on health behaviors with the goal of having a meaningful impact on chronic disease prevention in the region.

The Foundation developed the See How I Face Tomorrow (SHIFT) campaign to address the prevalence of substance and alcohol use among youth and young adults in Central Louisiana. The campaign, which highlights the stories of young people from the region, was designed based on feedback from youth and young adults who wanted to hear real stories from people around their age.

The SHIFT website – www.cenlashift.org – features video stories of individuals who have overcome addiction, as well as links to resources that young people, parents and educators can use to find treatment or support for alcohol or substance use. The campaign demonstrates the

impact of alcohol and drug use while showing the value of parental and community support to help youth and young adults who may be thinking about or actively using alcohol or drugs. The campaign uses outdoor advertising, and digital, cable and broadcast platforms.

The Rapides Foundation launched its Treat Yourself Cenla campaign with the objective of positively impacting the Central Louisiana region by providing resources to help improve three key health status factors: eating better, moving more and breathing freely.

The goal of the Treat Yourself Cenla campaign is to change the way people use the phrase “treat yourself.” More often than not, the phrase is used as a justification for unhealthy choices. Instead, The Rapides Foundation wants to change the narrative and inspire people to eat better, move more and breathe freely.

Residents of Central Louisiana were also used in the development of the Treat Yourself Cenla campaign, and will be featured across multiple media channels, including social media, digital, billboards, television, and its website, www.TreatYourselfCenla.org.





Plaucheville Elementary is one of the two Full-Service Community Schools in Avoyelles.

U.S. Department of Education grant to transform two Avoyelles Parish Schools

The Orchard Foundation, the education arm of The Rapides Foundation, has been awarded a five-year, \$2.5 million U.S. Department of Education grant that will be used to transform two Title I Avoyelles Parish schools – Simmesport’s Riverside Elementary and Plaucheville Elementary – into full-service community schools. The grant was recognized locally on February 9 during official announcements at both schools with community leaders and project partners in attendance.

Community schools meet the unique needs of the neighborhoods they serve by leveraging local nonprofit, private sector, and agency partnerships to bring services into school buildings. This includes services such as high-quality tutoring, health, mental health and nutrition services, and high-quality early learning programs, among others, for students and the community. Studies have found that well-implemented community schools can lead to improved student and school outcomes.

The Orchard Foundation grant was one of 42 Full-Service Community Schools grants announced in January. This year’s grant competition was the

largest in the history of the program.

“The Orchard Foundation is honored to be a recipient of one of the U.S. Department of Education’s Full-Service Community Schools grants designed to increase social, emotional, mental health, and academic support for students, educators, and families. I am proud to say that our award is the first in Louisiana through the Full-Service Community Schools program. Through our partnership with the Avoyelles Parish School Board, we look forward to the opportunities that will be created through this funding in the communities of Plaucheville and Simmesport,” said Marjorie Taylor, Executive Director of The Orchard Foundation. “We know that schools are the heart of our communities, and by transforming these two elementary schools into Full-Service Community Schools, the collaborative practices will lead to improved student and school outcomes. We are excited about the opportunity to bring together partners in this community to deliver pipeline services to students and their families.”

The Orchard Foundation grant will fund the Avoyelles Parish Lifting Up Students (APLUS)

project, which includes conducting a broad-based needs assessment, building relationships with partners and fostering community engagement, and hiring a full-time coordinator at each school site to leverage the findings of the needs assessment and steer the project's implementation.

APLUS project goals are to provide in- and out-of-school support for students, address well-being, and address out-of-school barriers to learning through partnerships; provide expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities through evidence-based strategies; bring parents, families and community members into the school by making the school a hub for services, providing centralized supports for families, and offering adults desired educational opportunities; and build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility for each community school.

"We are so excited to be a part of the APLUS school-community grant for Plaucheville Elementary and Riverside Elementary Schools. This

grant directly supports our vision of developing partnerships to provide innovative opportunities for our students, families and communities," said Avoyelles Parish Schools Superintendent Karen Tutor. "We are sure this grant will give Avoyelles Parish Schools the structure to build creative, supportive, comprehensive services for our families in these communities. This grant will encompass student support services, enriched learning opportunities, family and community engagement activities, and collaborative leadership practices. We expect it to be an opportunity to include our students, families, staff, and our communities in fun, supportive, learning activities – learning opportunities for all of us. In turn, we expect our students to gain the confidence and foundation to be more successful and dream bigger dreams for their life. This is such a great opportunity for us! Avoyelles Parish Schools will definitely benefit from this partnership with The Orchard Foundation and we are delighted to be a part of the APLUS transformation into full-service community schools."



Full-Service Community Schools Grant will fund Avoyelles Parish Lifting Up Students Project



Riverside Elementary is one of two sites for the APLUS project.



2022 graduates begin teaching careers in Cenla



Ten individuals began their careers as middle school math and science teachers in the fall of 2022 after graduating from the Central Louisiana Instructional Partnership, a paid teacher residency program administered by The Orchard Foundation. They were recognized at a graduation and pinning ceremony at Northwestern State University in December.

The goal of the CLIP project is to improve student achievement in nine rural, high-needs school districts in Central Louisiana by preparing highly qualified educators to teach in the critical shortage areas of science and math.

Applicants selected for the CLIP program complete a 15-month accelerated graduate program of study culminating in a Master of Arts in teaching degree from Northwestern State University and a professional teaching certification. CLIP residents receive a stipend to cover the expense of tuition, as well as an annual stipend of \$36,000 during their residency.

While completing their graduate coursework, CLIP residents work alongside a trained and experienced mentor teacher throughout the academic year in a high-needs middle school identified by the nine partner public school districts. When they complete the program, graduates are placed in a school where they receive two years of support with an induction coach. CLIP graduates agree to teach in high-needs middle schools for at least three years following graduation.

CLIP Graduates and their Areas of Certification

- **Reagan Isman**, Allen Parish, Science
- **Alyssa Sumbler**, Allen Parish, Science
- **Shante Williams**, Grant Parish, Math
- **Latoya Hayes**, Natchitoches Parish, Science
- **Amber Raggio**, Natchitoches Parish, Science
- **Brooke Warren**, Natchitoches Parish, Math
- **Julia Jones**, Rapides Parish, Science
- **Whitney Stewart**, Rapides Parish, Science
- **Pauline Love**, Vernon Parish, Science
- **Patricia Gunter**, LaSalle Parish, Science

CLIP is funded by a \$4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Quality Partnership Program, plus \$8 million in-kind matched funding from project partners. The Orchard Foundation, the education arm of The Rapides Foundation, serves as the lead organization for CLIP. Project partners include the nine Central Louisiana school districts; NSU's Gallaspy College of Education & Human Development and College of Business & Technology-Computer Information Systems; Urban Learning & Leadership Center; EvalWorks; and The Rapides Foundation.

The recent graduates were members of the third CLIP cohort. Members of the fourth and final cohort will graduate in 2023.



Youth Volunteer

Summer Service Grants Awarded

ORGANIZATIONS WILL IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES



The Rapides Foundation has awarded Youth Volunteer Summer Service Grants to six organizations to provide community-based service opportunities for Cenla youth ages 11–18.

Grants were awarded to B–22 Sports Complex, the Clifton–Choctaw Reservation, Helping Hands Youth Center, Limitless Christian Academy, United Way of Central Louisiana and United Way of Southwest Louisiana. Each organization was awarded \$5,000 to implement their project over the four-month period from May 1 to August 31.

The Youth Volunteer Summer Service Grant is part of the Foundation's

Social Environment Initiative, which seeks to address social capital by supporting leadership and nonprofit development, and increased community engagement. The grant supports the Foundation's My Civic Life program, which provides linkages among students, schools and nonprofits for community service, builds leadership skills, promotes achievement of the LDOE Community Service Diploma Endorsement and fosters a commitment to being engaged in the community and making volunteerism a lifelong habit.

The grant is designed to provide participating partners with funds to incorporate community service clubs into local summer programs. Youth in the clubs will participate in a minimum of six service projects throughout the summer.

The community service clubs will follow the Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) model, which is designed to serve the needs of the community; engage teams of youth in volunteer service projects that are challenging, rewarding and educational; foster the development of critical thinking, project planning, collaboration and teamwork skills; promote a greater understanding of diversity in their community; and inspire youth to a lifetime ethic of service.

YVC is a nationally recognized community service nonprofit, and The Rapides Foundation is the only YVC affiliate in Louisiana. Through Central Louisiana school-based YVC Clubs funded by the Foundation, more than 1,200 high school students have completed more than 18,000 community service hours since fall 2016.



SAVE THE DATE



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION SYMPOSIUM

An annual gathering around a topic of importance.

2023 Focus: **OPPORTUNITY YOUTH**

Thursday, September 7, 3:00 p.m.

Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center, Alexandria, LA

ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH IN CENLA

The Rapides Foundation has launched efforts to address the high number of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor pursuing an education.

This group of young adults has been referred to as "Opportunity Youth" because of their potential to succeed and contribute to their communities, and also as "Disconnected Youth" because they are disconnected from meaningful education and employment opportunities. Research shows that young adults who experience this disconnection have significantly lower incomes, are less likely to gain meaningful employment in the future and have poorer health outcomes than their peers.

Join us to hear from a panel of experts as we define Opportunity Youth, outline the challenges in working with this group of young people, identify best practices among strategies and note what is working in other places.

This program is free of charge, but registration is required. Register to attend in person or by Zoom beginning in July at www.rapidesfoundation.org.



THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION

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

President/CEO:

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

Editorial Team:

Tammy Moreau
Kathy Gunn
Raven Smith

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
grantinfo@rapidesfoundation.org



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
ALEXANDRIA, LA
PERMIT NO. 20

