

# GREENSBORO ECHO

VOICE OF RURAL AMERICA

## WAR ON OBESITY BY FRANK TAYLOR



Mississippi ranks number two in the nation in Type II Diabetes, number one in the nation in heart disease related health and number one in the nation in obesity. That's right; we are our nation's fattiest state. Mississippians love fried chicken, pork chop, collards, and turnip greens with a hunk of fat-back meat for flavor. Oh yea, and let's not forget about our favorite entree fried hog chitterlings for Sunday after church throw down with Mama's sweet tea or red kool-aid and a cupboard of desserts. Yes, as a young boy, I would eat a whole chicken with two regular plates of collar greens, a half skillet of corn bread and a third of chocolate cake with 96 ounces of ice cold sweet tea. Folks, this was good eating in Louisville, Ms. Clearly, I have health issues because of my poor eating habits; therefore, I am



working feverishly to create a good health regiment. Presently, I weigh 247 pounds at 6'4''; with a target of 230 pounds by February 2007. Therefore, I am joining with Winston County Self Help Co-op's Youth Garden Project to help reduce weight.

Winston County Self Help Co-op Youth Group is working holistically to resolve Winston County's health crisis through its youth garden project. Dorothy Harper Youth Director stated that the youth have planted an acre of collards, cabbages, turnips greens, rutabaga and kale in our community garden to help promote good health. This is a combined effort between youth, parents, grandparents and other supporters. Obesity has reached an epidemic proportion in our community; therefore, we are making a collective effort to change the attitudes by working together as a team to tackle obesity. Our garden project promotes exercise and land stewardship; creates community pride and build stronger family units to help combat social-ills affecting our youth mentally and physically.

"We have a united front with our youth, parents and grand-parents assisting in planting, maintenance and harvesting activities". This gives par-



ents and grandparents an opportunity to assist by demonstrating good work ethics. We are striving to create a working environment of hope for future generations.

We are partnering with our local extension office personnel to provide technical support for marketing and preserving fresh vegetables. We are planning a canning class to teach young parents methods of preserving turnips and collards greens. Also, we will provide cooking instructions for preparing nutritious meals to help reduce health threats, such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and others.

WCSHC is committed to help save rural America.



## For every beating heart:

### *Education is important in fight against No. 1 and No. 3 killers-heart disease and stroke*

Jackson, MS - Did you know that heart disease kills more people in America each year than any other disease? And that stroke is a leading cause of disability and the No. 3 killer? What is even more troubling is that many people do not know that they are at risk for developing and dying from heart disease and stroke. Cardiovascular diseases and stroke are Mississippi's No. 1 and No. 3 killers.

Tobacco smoke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, physical inactivity, obesity, and diabetes are all risk factors for heart disease. These risk factors are modifiable. That means if certain behaviors are changed you can reduce your risk for heart disease. There are certain risk factor that can not be changed like gender, increasing age and heredity (including race). African-American men and women are at a greater risk for developing heart disease.

Although reducing your risk factors for heart disease or stroke and increasing your overall health may seem like a tough job, it is not as tough as you may think. For starters, it could be as simple as a healthy diet. Physical activity is also an important part of becoming heart healthy.

The U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health says: Physical activity helps prevent and treat heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity and osteoporosis. It also helps control other major heart disease risk factors such as high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. If you've been inactive or have medical problems, check with you doctor before beginning. The doctor can help you find a program suited to your needs and physical condition.

It's also important to know the warning signs of heart attack so that you can act quickly when they occur. Acting quickly can be the difference between life and death. The warning signs of heart attack include:

**Chest discomfort.** It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

**Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can included pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

**Shortness of breath.** This feeling

often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can occur before the chest discomfort of even alone.

**Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat nausea or lightheadedness.**

For more information about heart disease and stroke and the warning signs contact the American Heart Association at 601-321-1200.

The American Heart Association is the largest voluntary health organization working to prevent, treat and defeat heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases. These diseases devastate millions of people of all ages and kill more than 930,000 Americans each year. To fight them the association supports research, education and advocacy, and helps heart disease and stroke patients. Over 22.5 million association volunteers and supporters are at work in their communities helping their friends, neighbors and loved ones live longer, better lives.

## KIDS IN THE KITCHEN BY SANDRA JACKSON

The Future Generation 4-H club under the leadership of Ms Jean Harper participated in a Nutrition Workshop on September 30, 2006. The workshop was held at the Winston County Extension Service conducted by 4-H Program Associate Sandra Jackson. The purpose of the workshop was to teach youth about the many hazards in the kitchen, and ways to prevent them. There were also other topics discussed during the workshop table setting, table manners, and the importance of hand washing. After the youth finish the safety rules and other topics they were ready to "Cook up a storm-recipes prepared by the youth chili, with lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese for the topping, and poke cake

## SARE Focus Group Project Review

Members of the Winston County Self-Help Cooperative (WCSHC) met with Dr. Anna Kleiner of Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) on September 18 to discuss the results of focus group session held in Winston County last March. The SARE-funded focus group project is a collaborative planning effort between SLU, Delta State University, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Heifer Project International, Morehouse Parish Black Farmers and Land Owners Association and the Northeast Louisiana Black Farmers and Land Owners Association. The project is designed to explore existing and potential marketing outlets for minority and limited-resource producers in Mississippi and Louisiana; challenges associated with expanding these markets, and resources needed to increase the potential for sustainable agricultural production. The members of WCSHC discussed several possible local projects reflecting their ideas as focus group participants, such as increasing youth involvement in agriculture and in the broader community, identifying and accessing feed assistance programs for livestock during this drought season, exploring the feasibility of developing a processing plant and a cannery, expanding cooperative marketing for vegetables and other products through farmers markets and other outlets (e.g. Heifer), and obtaining grant-writing assistance for several community initiatives. The group will soon be identifying one or two priority projects it would like to pursue as the next step following the focus group planning process.