

1890 Community Reachout



2006 - 2007
1890 Community
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Greetings to the 1890 Land Grant Community! This is the inaugural edition of a newsletter from the 1890 Community Development Program Team. We will share information about the exciting work being conducted with our 1890 Land Grant Programs and Partners. This first issue focuses on leadership and the feature article describes how Tuskegee University is building local leadership capacity within Leadership Macon County.

The 1890 Community Development Program Team was reconstituted in April 2006 with a long-term goal that communities and their youth, individuals, and families will have enhanced economic and social well-being. This will be accomplished by focusing on four objectives to guide our work.

Objective #1 - To equip individuals with workplace readiness skills and resources to improve their economic status.

Objective #2 - To equip people with skills and resources that allow them to reduce debt, increase savings, and build assets.

Objective #3 - To increase the capacity of communities to enhance their economic growth through small business development.

Objective #4 - To increase the leadership capacity of community members to individually and collectively identify and address existing and emerging challenges and opportunities.

We would love to hear from you and about your work in one of these four aspects of community leadership development. Please contact any of us and share your experiences, successes, and resources. And call on any of us if we can be of support to you.

Best wishes for a successful program year!

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Value-Added Leadership: The Goal of Leadership Macon County

"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."

-- Booker T. Washington

Background of Leadership Macon County

The groundwork to establish a leadership program in Macon County began in 2002, when a small group of interested citizens discussed the logistics of organizing a Leadership Macon County Program. A concerted effort was made to promote the program as a countywide initiative. A representative from the group contacted leaders within each community and presentations were made to each of the four municipality/city/town council meetings. All municipalities were receptive to creating Leadership Macon County and willing to nominate individuals to participate in it. Work by the original group ended at that point for lack of an agency or organization to take on the tasks to move forward.

In fall 2002, Envision 2020's Human Relations Task Force identified establishment of leadership programs in other counties, including Macon. The effectiveness of leadership programs in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery counties had been at the heart of important human relations and economic changes in those counties. From the onset, graduates of those three programs, as well as those from Leadership Alabama, have been responsible for the success of Envision 2020. Believing that the value of leadership development is immeasurable, under the leadership of Jon Dow, members of the Human Relations Task

Force decided that those same opportunities should be made available to Macon Countians.

In November 2004, a team of Envision 2020 board members, along with members of Envision's Human Relations Taskforce, began meeting at Tuskegee University. The objective was to take the development of Leadership Macon County from vision to reality. Working in conjunction with the Tuskegee University Continuing Education Program, an orientation for the Leadership Macon County Steering Committee took place on April 21, 2005; and the first leadership training class began with a weekend retreat on January 27, 2006.

Leadership Macon County is chaired by Dr. Henry J. Findlay, the director of program development in the Tuskegee University's Division of Continuing Education, and co-chaired by Judge Dale Segrest, former Circuit Court Judge and now practicing attorney.

The Curriculum for the Training Class

Good decision-making starts with good information. Therefore, during the nine-month training program, the Leadership Academy focused on understanding the different issues that impact Macon County and the leadership skills

needed to add value to the community. The classes started with a weekend retreat, followed by eight monthly classes and ended with another weekend retreat and graduation. The Curriculum included the following modules: (1) General Nature of Leadership, (2) Economic Development, (3) Education Issues, (4) Local Government, (5) Youth and Youth Development, (6) Health/Human Services, (7) Judicial Issues, and (8) Quality of Life.

Profile of Macon County

Macon County, a rural community has many challenges that span the social, educational, and economic dimensions of the community. Among the problems are unemployment, poverty, health disparities, and educational challenges. Macon County, like other rural counties is faced with distinctive challenges that may require a unique combination of leadership skills to add value to the community.

Value-added Leadership for Community Development

The leadership class completed the nine-month curriculum and graduated on October 27, 2006. The class indicated that the top five characteristics associated with leadership were: serving others, integrity, problem-solving, decision-making, and team building.



Aubrey Ford (R), Macon County District Judge makes a point to the class as E. Paul Jones, District Judge and Dale Segrest, Former Circuit Court Judge look on – all three were guest lecturers for the class session on Judicial Issues

In summary, the class concluded that serving and influencing others and doing so with integrity should be the cornerstone of leadership. The class is already embarking on a project to help solve the health problems facing the county.

Testimonials from Class Members

Dr. Velma Blackwell, Associate Provost for the Continuing Education Program and Administrator for the Cooperative Extension Program, was also a member of the class. She stated, “Through these monthly classes, class members come to know more about the total community and understand one another.” She further stated that, “A goal of the training is to prepare and encourage its graduates to engage in greater individual and group action in order to contribute to the betterment of the community.”



Back Row: LR: Gwendolyn Harris, Omar Neal, Alberta Simons, and Miles Robinson; Front Row: LR: Judge Dale Segrest, Co-chair(not member of class), Dr. Henry J. Findlay, Co-chair, Johnnie Harrison, Febreu Holston, Attorney Katy Campbell, Dr. Ellis Hall, Dr. Edith Powell, Benjamin Rackley, Dr. Ralphenia Pace, Dr. Velma Blackwell; (Missing from picture: Dr. Eloise Carter and Michael Johnson)

Ms. Alberta Simon, a retired community social worker, and Ms. Gwendolyn Harris, a financial management specialist with the Tuskegee University Small Farm Rural Resource Development Center, were members of the inaugural leadership class. Mrs. Harris said, “I have learned a lot. Some negative things are being cleared up. I want to get involved in



Dr. Ellis Hall, guest lecturer for the session on quality of life, makes a point on how to create wealth to enjoy a better quality of life in retirement as Dr. Ralphenia Pace, the other guest lecturer for the session looks on.

my community and contribute in any way that I can.” Ms. Simon added, “I feel more informed about the public school system after a presentation by Superintendent Willie Thomas. He provided a lot of information we needed, but didn’t have.” Superintendent Thomas, who facilitated the second Academy session, was also a member of the Leadership Class.

Mr. Omar Neal and Dr. Ellis Hall were also members of the first Leadership Class. Neal is president and CEO of “You Got the Power”, and Dr. Hall is a retired Tuskegee University professor and community leader. Both are affiliated with the Macon County Coalition for Community Advancement (MCCCA), with Hall serving as the Organization’s president and Neal serving as coordinator of the organization’s Unified Prevention Systems Program.

According to Neal, “The Leadership Academy is the best thing that could have happened in Macon County. The Academy is allowing its participants to examine the attributes and opportunities that are related to leadership, which include vision, exploring strategic plans for specific issues, and galvanizing the community for program involvement.”

“We can be a catalyst for change in the culture in Macon County”, Dr. Hall said. He places a premium on the value of assessment, and the time the Academy is devoting to identifying community needs. “You have to know where you are and where you are going to know where you think you ought to be,” Dr. Hall added.

Through the preparation of leaders, “We want to change the culture and the way people think about the community,” said Dr. Findlay. Dr. Hall said “the leaders can help make the community more supportive of the public education system. It is a mindset that leadership and accurate information can help change,” Dr. Hall maintains.

Dr. Hall sees “spin offs” from the progress that program leaders can make. With an appropriate focus on the public schools, Hall sees an improvement in student performance and a subsequent decline in drug abuse and teen pregnancy and an increase in real estate values.

On the quality life in Macon County, Dr. Ralphenia Pace, Professor & Head of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Tuskegee University and a member of the class stated that “Good nutrition and healthy lifestyles are the keys to prevent all kinds of diseases. If we

practice good nutrition by eating the right color fruits and vegetables and exercise regularly, we can significantly delay many diseases.”

To graduate from Leadership Macon County, participants in the program must attend at least 80 percent of the monthly classes. The \$550 tuition is payable by the class members, while some of them are supported by sponsoring organizations.

For additional information about the Leadership Macon County, contact Dr. Findlay at 334.724.4316.

Resources for Leadership Development in the 1890’s

Profiles: 1890 Leadership Programs

Highlights from presentations in Atlanta at the 2003 conference for 1890 Cooperative Extension Programs. Contact information for individual programs is listed with each program description.

Community Voices

This acclaimed program started within the 1890 system fills an important need for Cooperative Extension outreach to limited-resource audiences. Contact **Dr. Claudette Smith** at North Carolina A&T for more information.

Leadership Plenty

The LeadershipPlenty® curriculum introduces basic civic skills that guide graduates in identifying problems in their communities and implementing an action plan to resolve problems. For more information contact **Gae Broadwater** at Kentucky State, **Yvette Robinson** at Virginia State, or **Bo Beaulieu** at the Southern Rural Development Center.