(Continued from page 1.)

promoted community well-

ness, food security, and edu-

cational enrichment and suc-

"M Partner was the op-

portunity of a lifetime for

a small town with limited

resources like Lexington to

be provided with the exper-

tise and collaboration with

the best and brightest of the

university's campus," Mayor

were able to attain commu-

nity goals and complete proj-

Health and Wellness

Promotion

McCrory worked closely

with Ovuokerie Addoh, as-

sistant professor of health

and kinesiology; Rachael

Larkin, an exercise science

major from Haymarket, Vir-

ginia; and Taylor Sanders,

a doctoral student in health

and kinesiology from Madi-

son, to compile the appli-

cation and supporting data

for the Healthy Hometown

award. They met in Lex-

ington and on campus and

corresponded extensively to

The award recognizes the

strides that Lexington has

taken to improve commu-

nity health, including trails

for walking and biking, and

a weekly farmers market.

The proposal for the Healthy

Hometown award included

a community garden and

to enhance municipal recre-

ation facilities. The \$50,000

create the materials.

ington."

M Partner

difference." port educational initiatives cludes. in Lexington. During sumkins Family Center.

cause Hills is a graduate of the ideas discussed in initial Holmes County Consoli- community meetings come dated High School and had to fruition through the comparticipated extensively in mitment of our community the center's programming and campus partners. as a high school student. Returning as a CEED Innova- all who contributed to the tion Scholar and M Partner successes of the M Partner intern, he led workshops on pilot phase in Lexington." resume writing, interview skills and identifying career pathways.

Consistent with the ethos of the McLean Institute, Hills embodied the example of education as a path to economic advancement while offering tools for others to follow in his footsteps. Finally, in partnership

with the Boys & Girls Club of Lexington, the North Mississippi VISTA Project has placed summer associates and a yearlong VISTA member in Lexington since June 2018. All these VISTA members are from Lexington and have a direct connection with the Boys & Girls Club, many as recent graduates.

In 2018 and '19, two summer associates provided literacy and math instruction

efforts to provide quality activities, recording learntraining and support to edu- ing gains in 77 students. The cators across the state. Her yearlong VISTA member commitment and dedication is developing relationships to improving literacy in Mis- with parents and local busisissippi have truly made a nesses to support the club, and these partnerships will The McLean Institute benefit the organization even used other strategies to sup- after the VISTA term con-

"The city of Lexington mer 2019, Hills completed welcomed the University of a summer internship in Lex- Mississippi with open arms,' ington with the Nollie Jen- said Laura Martin, M Partner director and associate direc-This was a particularly tor of the McLean Institute. meaningful placement be- "It has been exciting to see

"We are deeply grateful to

Anniversar

October 15 - J. J. and Christy Pritchard October 16 Eric and

Andrea Adams October 18 Jeff and

Angie Martin, Chandler and Dani Ramsey

October 20 Aden and Kristen Wigley

October 21 - Justin and Laura Rennhack

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award and recognition provides financial resources and momentum to further strengthen its presence and develop parks and recreation operations through marketinfrastructure.

"We are grateful for the and customer surveys. work of Mayor McCrory, Dr. School of Applied Sciences. 'This partnership exemplifies our commitment in applied sciences to learn, lead and serve where human science and service intersect.

Robin McCrory said. "We "We look forward to a longstanding relationship with the city of Lexington ects that will leave M Partner and a more healthy and vifootprints forever ingrained brant Lexington commuthroughout the city of Lexnity."

> Also during the 2018-19 academic year, Addoh taught graduate-level seminar that organized a health fair in Lexington as a culminating project. The health fair was scheduled to coincide with the spring festival and included free screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI, along with help interpreting the figures and lifestyle changes to support healthy habits.

The health fair was postponed because of inclement weather, which created an opportunity to collaborate with the Community Student rage sale and fundraiser.

Food Security

Market provides healthy, local produce to residents and for area farmers and growers. During the summer of installation of a splash pad 2019, Kymberle Gordon, a doctoral student in nutrition from Canandaigua, New

York, served as an M Partner intern with the market to ing, interviews with growers

Gordon also worked with Addoh and his team," said the Holmes County Herald Peter Granjean, dean of the to place information about the market in the paper and produced recipe cards to distribute at the market in partnership with the local extension agent and the UM Medical Center's Holmes County Hospital. To raise the profile of the market among local youth, the Boys & Girls Club of Lexington organized a field trip to the market; this was an opportunity to use connections between the M Partner intern and VISTA members serving with the Boys & Girls Club.

In summer 2020, recent UM graduate Curtis Hills served as a public service intern for the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, working to build the infrastructure of the Lexington Food Pantry in his hometown. Hills, who had served as an undergraduate innovation scholar with the institute's Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development initiative, as well as an M Partner intern, Learning Center's annual ga- helped with planning for the new nonprofit and assisted with mobile food distribu-The Lexington Farmers tions, which reached 600-700 households each week.

"Lexington gave me so serves as a source of revenue much growing up, and I felt lucky to have had the opportunity to work alongside the Lexington Food Pantry this summer," Hills said. "It is no secret that Lexington and the entire Holmes County community needed more hungerrelated resources before the pandemic.

"LFP offered an invaluable resource in their weekly food distributions that impacted over 650 families weekly. The COVID-19 pandemic, with all its darkness, brought a lot of shining light to families in Lexington."

Educational Enrichment and Success

A top priority for local stakeholders was improving the percentage of students reading on grade level by the end of third grade. In 2013, Mississippi passed the Literacy-Based Promotion Act, which emphasizes reading skills, particularly from pre-K to third grade.

Angela Rutherford, UM professor of teacher education, director of the Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction and state coordinator for the Region 7 Comprehensive Center, and Angelia Crawford, literacy teacher at CELI, worked with the Holmes County Consolidated School District to create a Comprehensive Literacy Framework to support the district. The framework provides

elementary and secondary school teachers with research-based tools to improve students' reading lev-"The work of the Center

for Excellence in Literacy Instruction has helped transform elementary schools in Mississippi," said David Rock, dean of the School of Education. "Dr. Ruther-

308 Court Square in Lexington. No ford has led a multitude of phone calls, please. and organized enrichment

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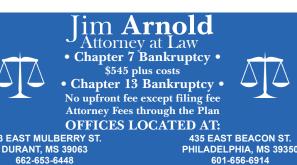


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