

Tech Receives Grant for Parenting Academy

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The Lincoln Health Foundation has awarded a \$53,000 grant to Louisiana Tech University's School of Human Ecology to establish the Parents' Academy for Lincoln Parish Schools and Parental Health & Educational Support Network.

These programs, developed by Tech professors Heather McCollum, Mary Murimi, Jan Colvin, Amy Yates and Yeonsoo Kim, will provide parents of Lincoln Parish students with health education and family support resources.

The programs will also serve as a forum for communicating issues related to the health of children, such as nutrition and general parenting skills, child growth and development milestones.

"We are so pleased to partner with the Lincoln Health Foundation in developing this program for the families of Lincoln Parish," said Yates, director of Tech's School of Human Ecology.

"Working with the parents of Lincoln Parish to improve their families' nutritional choices, physical activities and communications provides both our faculty and students a rewarding opportunity to implement the philosophies and practices taught and learned daily within the classrooms at Louisiana Tech's School of Human Ecology."

Increasing parental knowledge of the benefits of proper nutrition and physical activity for young people is a primary objective in the Lincoln Health Foundation's strategic plan. Developed out of the plan's Healthier Living Priority Area, the Parents' Academy will work to increase physical activity, improve nutritional habits and decrease obesity.

The Parents' Academy for the Lincoln Parish Schools and Parental Health and Educational Support Network are designed to serve as a follow-up to the "Smart Bodies" program, a collaborative effort between Tech and the LSU AgCenter and Cypress Springs, Glen View and Ruston Elementary Schools.

The Smart Bodies project, also funded by the Lincoln Health Foundation, was a comprehensive health program that provided nutrition education and promoted physical activity.

According to the proposal submitted to the Lincoln Health Foundation, the primary goals of the program are to increase parenting skills and promote positive parenting skills, increase parental awareness of improving and supporting child and family nutritional choices, increase a parent's physical activity knowledge and participation in family physical activity and decrease parent's and children's perceptions of stress levels.

The School of Human Ecology, housed in Tech's College of Applied and Natural Sciences, offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs, along with opportunities for students to participate in practice and internship experiences, membership in professional organizations, field study tours and professional growth.