

# Alcorn State reaches out to help Haiti

In April 2009, former student Ashley Rankin helped organize students, faculty and staff at Alcorn State University in a campaign to aid Haiti through the Friends of the World Food Program, a non-profit hunger relief organization.

That year, the university collected \$2,500 to send to the tiny, impoverished Caribbean nation — enough to feed children in five Haitian classrooms one nutritious meal a day for an entire year.

“My mother shared an article from the Denver Post with me about children being so hungry (in Haiti) that they were eating mud pies,” said Rankin, who graduated from Alcorn State in May 2009 and is now a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University. “I knew I needed to do something.”

When a devastating earthquake hit the tiny, impoverished Caribbean nation in January 2010, thanks to the previous work of Rankin and other Alcornites, the campus was already connected and ready to help.

The week of January 25 was designated “Haiti Week” on campus. The Delta Epsilon chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., held campus-wide collaborative events; all proceeds supported relief efforts in Haiti.

The chapter kicked off the week by selling Hope for Haiti stickers with the slogan “One person can’t do everything, but every person can do something.” Activities ranged from a fish-fry to a candlelight vigil on campus.

“The compassion and generosity of the Alcorn community is just one of the many reasons I am proud to be an Alcornite,” said senior Jalessa Wright, immediate past president of the Delta Epsilon chapter.

# MSU Maroon Habitat home finished in record time

Mississippi State University students got more than they bargained for in helping build the first Maroon Edition Habitat House last fall.

In addition to making an impact on the local community, Service DAWGS (Donating A Wonderful Gift of Service), the MSU community service organization, also took their education to a new level in combining service, teaching and learning.

Alumnus John Grisham’s book “The Painted House” was used as the reading component of the Maroon Edition — a campus-wide reading program focusing on new freshman — involving the Maroon Volunteer Center and the Starkville Area Habitat for Humanity.

“Some students told me they didn’t quite

# MUW students give back

## ■ Various service project opportunities offered

From Columbus to Kenya, community service work at Mississippi University for Women is impacting a much bigger area than organizers first anticipated.

Volunteers are helping send meals to thousands of impoverished children around the world, including those who live in the African country. Closer to home, MUW students are helping build a halfway house in Columbus for women released from prison.

Most MUW students are not required to participate in community service in order to graduate, but many choose to volunteer anyway.

The university’s Community Service Center recruits volunteers and matches them with service agencies in the community.

“One of the things we want to do is give students an outlet so they feel empowered that they made a difference in the community,” said Jessica Harpole, Coordinator of Leadership and Service at MUW.

“It helps with self esteem, which will lead to them wanting to do more services and find an area they’re most passionate about,” she added.

Each semester, MUW students can spend a Saturday volunteering in Columbus. They recently repaired a home for a senior resident who needed help.

Students also participate in mentoring programs for local children and help out at animal shelters. They’ve visited residents of local nursing homes and sorted donations at The Salvation Army.

Along the way, MUW’s Community Service Center aims to “support gender equality as well,” said Harpole.

Sending meals is part of the “Stop Hunger Now” campaign sponsored by an interna-

tional hunger relief agency. MUW students have helped package 10,000 meals of dehydrated food so far.

“Our goal is to raise \$5,000 to feed 20,000 children,” Harpole said. “One of the places they send a lot of meals to is different places in Africa. And they said that Kenya

had started sending girls to school because they get a nutritious meal.” Tomeka Reynolds, an English/pre-law major at MUW, said community service “has helped me become a more appreciative and well-rounded person.”

“Community service has helped me because it allows me to give back to people who are in need the most. Some of the people I come in contact with... have really impacted my life in tremendous ways.”

— **TOMEKA REYNOLDS**  
English/Pre-Law Major/MUW

service has helped me because it allows me to give back to the people who are in need the most. Some of the people that I come in contact with through these service projects have really impacted my life in tremendous ways,” said Reynolds, who serves as MUW’s Student Director of Community Service.

to clock 2,776 volunteer hours in order to finish the house for a Starkville-area family of five in a little less than three months.

“As we moved into the fall semester, I was a little worried about football weekends and other events impacting the level of volunteerism, but we never had to cancel a shift due to a lack of volunteers,” Dr. Heiselt said. “In fact, we were turning people away toward the end. It turned out to be a great project, benefiting both the campus and the community.”

## TO HELP

To get involved or donate to help build a home for a family in the Starkville area, contact the Starkville Habitat for Humanity at (662) 324-7008 or visit [www.starkvillehabitat.com](http://www.starkvillehabitat.com).

# THE **U** REVIEW

March 2010

# UMMC med students offer free care

GIVING BACK ON THE WEEKEND

Fourth year medical student Michael Foster says his work at the Jackson Free Clinic may not be revolutionizing health care in Mississippi.

But in the patients that he and his student colleagues see every Saturday, he believes he is making a big difference.

“We have saved individual lives,” said Foster, 26, student director of the free medical clinic in downtown Jackson operated entirely by medical students at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

The clinic was established about nine years ago after a UMMC faculty member learned that other medical schools across the country were setting up similar operations.

Now, the Jackson Free Clinic runs entirely separate from the university, operating as a non-profit funded through private donors.

About 15 students volunteer every Saturday to see patients from 12:30-4:30 p.m. under faculty supervision. Faculty volunteer their time as well.

Patients generally fall into the category of the “working poor,” Foster said.

“These are people who aren’t old enough to qualify for Medicare and whose income isn’t low enough to qualify for Medicaid,” he said. “They are working; they just don’t have jobs that provide benefits like a quality health insurance program.”

As patients usually book appointments in advance, treatment is usually for non-acute issues such as cholesterol, diabetes and heart



The Jackson Free Clinic is run by UMMC medical students, under faculty supervision, who give up Saturdays after a long week of work to see patients in need in Jackson.

disease. Occasionally, Foster said patients will walk in with immediate issues such as a case of influenza.

“Our patients – people without any insurance – would generally not go to the doctor to receive this preventative care,” Foster said. “In that way, I believe we are making a huge difference.”

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Jackson Free Clinic, operated by medical school students at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, is located at 925 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. in Jackson. For more information call (601) 355-5161 or visit [www.jacksonfreeclinic.org/](http://www.jacksonfreeclinic.org/).

# MSU Ag food drive growing

Ever wondered what happens to all that dorm room mac n’ cheese when it’s time to move out for the summer?

At Mississippi State University, students have the opportunity to get involved in their communities by donating leftover non-perishables to a food drive at the end of the year.

Although this year’s drive is in the planning stages, faculty and students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in the MSU Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, are hoping that many different student organizations will

participate.

“We want students to understand that they are more than just a student,” said Dr. Chiquita Briley, assistant professor in the Department of Food Sciences, Nutrition and Health Promotion. “They are members of the community and they have the opportunity to make a difference – even in very small ways, such as choosing not to dump out food that someone else who needs it can enjoy.”

In past drives, students have assisted in boxing proceeds so that the food can be delivered to food banks in the Golden Triangle. See **FOOD**, page 2



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## JSU offers alt ‘Service’ Break

Forget Panama City and Cancun. Thirty-six civic-minded students from Jackson State University chose to spend Spring Break 2010 doing something different: Serving the homeless and hungry in New York City. Dr. Valerie Shelby, director of the JSU Center for Service and Community-Engaged Learning, said it is shaping up to be an experience they won’t soon forget. “We live in one of the richest nations in the world and yet we have a growing number of people who go hungry. That’s alarming and we want our students to understand that they can do something about it,” she said. Each year a different social issue is chosen for the university’s alternative spring break project. Any student can sign up, but they must attend four meetings prior to the trip and there is a fee involved. This year, students are working with the NYC Food Bank and Housing Work, an organization who aids low-income people.

## Gearing up for ‘Big Event’

### ■ USM plans major service initiative next month

As the University of Southern Mississippi celebrates its 100th anniversary, organizers are working to ensure that a day of community service work becomes an annual event. More than 400 volunteers are registered so far to participate in “The Big Event”—a university-wide day of community service set for April 10. From repairing and building homes to beautifying local communities, volunteers will spend the day working to improve areas around Hattiesburg and the Gulf Coast. “Being that it’s our centennial, we really had time to reflect on why Southern Miss is here, and we came to the conclusion that it’s our community that’s allowed us to grow and prosper,” said Jessica Gilliland, a USM sophomore and “Big Event” student coordinator. “Whether it’s as small as raking somebody’s yard to building a wheelchair ramp, we want to do anything we can do to give back because our community has given us so much,” she added. Although USM offers various ways for students to participate in community service work throughout the year, “The Big Event” is expected to be the largest service initiative in the university’s history. Projects on the day’s agenda include cleaning yards, beautifying parks, working on small construction jobs, and helping churches and local schools. On the Gulf

Coast, volunteers will work with Habitat for Humanity as the agency moves residents into new homes. “We’ve had significant enthusiasm from students on having this as a marquee event of our centennial celebration,” said Brooks Moore, Associate Dean of Students at USM. “This allows them to partner with our greater Hattiesburg and greater Gulf Coast communities, a way of giving back and saying thanks and integrating into our local communities,” he added. Jennifer Payne, Centennial Coordinator, said the event will help students to connect with the community. But she added “this is much larger” than just one day. “We’ll see this becoming a campus tradition,” she said. “I’d love to see this become something we do for the next 100 years.”

— JESSICA GILLILAND  
‘Big Event’ Student Coordinator

## FOOD: 2,700 lbs donated by MSU in last two years

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area. About 2,700 pounds of non-perishable foods have been collected over the past two years. Mississippi State University students have participated in other service projects related to rectifying hunger issues in the state, including bagging 67,000 pounds of sweet potatoes over the past three years to help feed low-income families. The “Sweet Potato Drop,” as it is called, is a result of gleaned fields after produce has been collected by farmers. “Many students that go to MSU are from Mississippi,” Dr. Briley said. “I think it’s nice to know that you’re doing something to help your state. To me, that’s a really big deal.”

## DSU works with schools on health

Last year, Delta State University embarked on a mission to build a sustainable healthy living model on campus that could be replicated in the local community — and beyond. This year, the Healthy Campus/Community Initiative will continue to expand its partnership in the community through collaboration with schools and health service providers in hopes of changing culture and improving lives. The service effort is funded through a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. “The Delta, along with many other regions in our state, has been identified as high risk in many health areas including cardiovascular diseases, obesity and diabetes,” said Dr. Leslie Griffin, Dean of the Delta State College of Education. “This initiative grew out of a mutual concern about the well-being of our citizens.” A broad-based advisory committee made up of various individuals throughout the campus and community and a campus steering committee work are working together on implementation. So far, the committee has developed new health curricula for teachers, organized a robust fitness awareness campaign, installed playground fitness equipment at area schools and identified role models on and off campus to serve as champions of the initiative. Schools in the community will continue to be a major focus, Griffin said. “We are trying to build awareness in our community that we have to embrace personal goal setting and make healthy lifestyle choices,” Griffin said. “The schools and our children are the key to impacting our state in a positive way for generations to come.”

## UM offers free reading camp to area students

The fact that elementary education majors at the University of Mississippi receive field hours for their work at the Summer Reading Camp is really just a bonus. It’s the service aspect of the project — giving children the opportunity to attend a free camp that assists them in reading for fun — that is truly fulfilling, said Dr. Angela Rutherford, director of the Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction. This year the camp, which is sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruc-

### SERVICE A MUST AT VALLEY



Valley students are required to participate in at least 15 hours of community service per year, for a total of 60 hours to graduate. Transfer students must complete 40 hours.

## Service emphasized at MVSU

### ■ Grad requirements include community work

At Mississippi Valley State University, community service work is not only encouraged — it’s required in order for students to graduate. Service-learning is one other campus-based program at MVSU that provides developmental opportunities that promote personal, social, and intellectual growth, as well as civic responsibility and career exploration. Hours earned through service-learning transfer into community service hours. So every semester, students read to children, participate in clean-up projects, and work on other service-related activities as a way to earn college credit and give back to the Delta and other regions. This spring, students will spend time beautifying four Delta cities: Itta Bena, Morgan City, Glendora and Greenwood. They’ll collaborate with city officials to improve parks, restore facilities and address social needs of the region. The MVSU community service program was recognized as an IHL Best Practice in 2007.

And surveys of Valley students indicate that their service work won’t end at graduation. “Students are asked to take an exit survey after their service hours are completed. This gives us feedback on whether they would continue to give back to the community. More than 95 percent of the responses are yes, they would continue to provide services,” said Letonia Shingles, director of Community Service Learning at MVSU. Valley students must satisfy a minimum of 15 hours of community service per year, for a total of 60 hours required for graduation. Transfer students are required to complete 40 hours of service. Students can perform individual activities in their hometowns or participate in group projects on campus or in other areas. “It teaches them about meeting the environmental and social needs of the community,” Shingles said. “We have partnered with a number of sites within our region so that students will have places to provide service.”

tion and funded by the Hearin Foundation, will be offered to fourth- through six-graders at an Oxford public school on June 14-18. “This initiative gives kids something positive to do during the summer and fosters reading for pleasure,” Dr. Rutherford said. “Sometimes with assigned reading, pleasure reading gets lost during the school year.” The Center trains teachers and supplies books, but undergraduate students do most of the hands on work with campers throughout the week under supervision from university

faculty. Independent and cooperative reading is promoted through literature circles and responsive activities; the week concludes with a major, final project at the end of the week. This year, AmeriCorps members in several school districts in North Mississippi will have the option to replicate the camp, Rutherford added. For more information about the camp and other youth reading initiatives at UM, visit [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/youth/summer-reading/](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/youth/summer-reading/).