

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER



CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Road Map To Health

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR NUTRITION, HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE
WWW.SUAGCENTER.COM

National Medical Association



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Baton Rouge, LA - The Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness and Quality of Life (COENHWQ) had the opportunity to provide a food demonstration during the National Medical Association's PrEP Rally: Careers in Wellness Fair. The event emphasized the importance of preventive health and overall wellness. Participants sampled a whole-wheat pasta dish paired with refreshing strawberry tea. Additionally, Program Manager Ms. Brittany Howard served as a panelist during the Bridging Social Determinants of Health and Community Development session.

Let's Get Social



Instagram



SUCENTEROFEXCELLENCE

Earth Day

Baton Rouge, LA—The COE participated in numerous Earth Day Celebration activities on and off campus and in collaboration with ExxonMobil.



SOUL TO SOIL



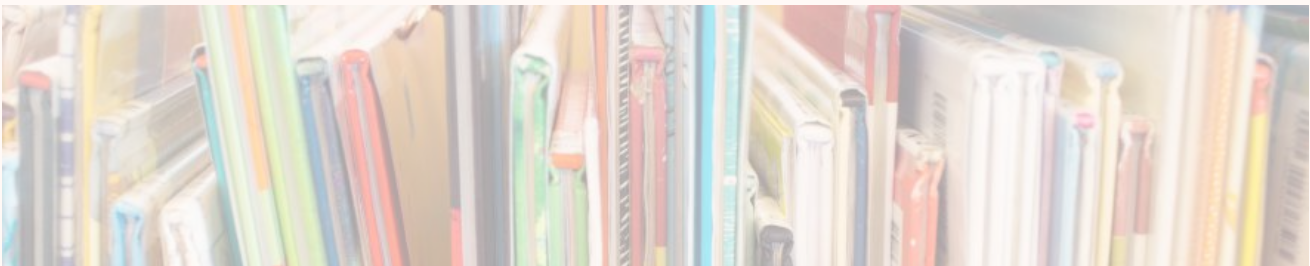
Baton Rouge, LA - The Center of Excellence hosted “Soul to Soil” at the JagFresh Farmers Market on April 30th, where participants created DIY Zen gardens using succulents, sand, stones, rakes, and miniature bridges. Participants also had the opportunity to sample a refreshing blend of green tea with orange juice, honey, and strawberry purée. The activity encouraged mindfulness and supported participants’ mental well-being.

MINDFULNESS

Literacy Meets Wellness



Baton Rouge, LA—The COE provided an engaging nutrition education session to the Girls Empowered Book Club, focusing on food and kitchen safety. Participants learned essential skills, including proper hygiene, safe food handling, and kitchen safety best practices. The experience also included a hands-on food demonstration featuring Salmon and Cauliflower Tacos with Mango Salsa, allowing participants to observe healthy cooking techniques and explore balanced meal options. In addition, participants took part in a gardening activity where they designed a Zen garden using succulents, sand, stones, rakes, and miniature bridges.





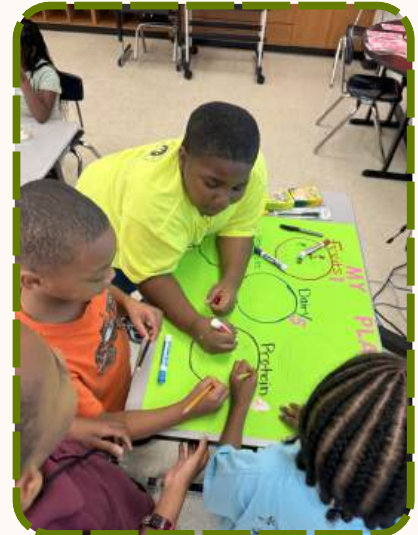
SO MANY CAMPS, SO LITTLE SUMMER



**B.A.Y.O.U.
&
NourishED K.I.D.S**



Exxon Mobil YMCA



Big Buddy Program



**Serenity Praise & Worship
Temple Camp**



Fit Kids Camp



Front Yard Bikes



**SU Speech and
Language Camp**



JagCation



**Mt. Pilgrim
Baptist Church**



SU Lab SWAG

Baton Rouge, LA - Summer camp fun is in full swing. Take a look at some of the exciting activities we enjoyed facilitating.

2026 Louisiana Anti-Hunger Day at the Capitol



Baton Rouge, LA - The Southern University Ag Center's Center of Excellence, Family and Human Sciences, and Agricultural and Natural Resources units attended the 2026 Feeding Louisiana Day at the Capitol on Tuesday, May 19th, to raise awareness about hunger that support food security across the state. The event brought together food bank leaders, partners, and advocates to educate legislators, share community successes, and advance practical solutions.

Nour^{sh}ED by the B.A.Y.O.U.



Baton Rouge, La - On Tuesday, June 2nd, the Center of Excellence partnered with the Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunities Unlimited (B.A.Y.O.U.) Program to provide participants with a hands-on learning experience focused on navigating the grocery store and making healthy, budget-friendly food choices. As part of the lesson, participants took a guided trip to Walmart to shop for the ingredients needed to prepare the featured recipes. The SU Ag Center's Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) Department harvested and donated tomatoes, yellow squash, zucchini and italian heirloom peppers.

During the session, the SU Ag Center's Family and Human Sciences NourishED K.I.D.S. (Knowledge of Ingredients for Daily Success) Youth Summer Cooking Camp joined the B.A.Y.O.U. participants to sample the freshly prepared taco bowls and practice applying what they learned about meal planning and grocery shopping. In total, the group prepared 93 taco bowls and 10 sandwiches, which were donated to two local community fridges: Little Zion Baptist Church and The Red Shoes. This effort provided support to community members while reinforcing the program's commitment to service, collaboration, and practical skill-building.

PILOT PROJECTS IN MOTION



UNIVERSITY of ARKANSAS
AT PINE BLUFF
1873

An Interdisciplinary Coalition of Early Childhood and Nutrition Sciences Presents: An Approach to Training Undergraduate Students to Implement Best Practices for Nutrition Education and Wellness in Early Learning Centers

Dr. Kimberly Haynie, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff



Project Synopsis

- Workshop series for undergraduate students designed for collaborative problem solving and development of learning activities to promote nutrient-dense food consumption in early childhood settings and enhance children's understanding of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) MyPlate nutrition guidance.

Progress (April 2026-June 2026)

- Published data from the Feeding Brighter Futures workshop in Nutrients Journal.
- Presented data at the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences conference.
- Developed and disseminated a digital survey for teachers and administrators in early learning settings.

Next Steps

- Digital survey data collection and analysis.
- Undergraduate student researcher poster presentations and publications.

Core Capabilities Gained from Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Survey tool design, development, and validation, dietary application, food safety and sanitation, and collaboration.

Publication Link: <https://www.mdpi.com/3971734>



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY



Designing of Dairy-Free Yogurt Analogs with Baby Ginger for Improved Health Benefits

Dr. Ayesha Sarker, West Virginia State University

Dr. Aaron Dudley, Virginia State University



Project Synopsis

- Research study to evaluate yogurt analog made from coconut milk and supplemented with baby ginger for its synergistic effects in maintaining gut health and reducing obesity.

Progress (April 2026–June 2026)

- Experimentation is nearly complete, and a consumer survey was conducted in May 2026.

Next Steps

- Data analysis, manuscript development, and dissemination.

Core Capabilities gained from Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Research and literature review, laboratory experimentation and data management and statistical analysis.



Assess Dietary Habits and Nutrition Knowledge to Develop Education Programs for the Management of Chronic Diseases

Dr. Samuel Besong, Delaware State University

Project Synopsis

- Research study to assess dietary patterns of ethnic foods using methodologies developed by the USDA and National Cancer Institute.

Progress (April 2026–June 2026)

- Nutrition knowledge questionnaire finds a strong retention of traditional dietary practices and documented nutrition-related diseases in the target population.

Next Steps

- Evidence-based dietary guidance to promote improved health.
- Develop food pattern equivalents to fill a missing nutrition knowledge gap.

Core Capabilities Gained from Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Survey design, development, and validation; nutrient analysis; cultural competency; data collection and analysis, food composition table and the development of a dietary assessment tool.



Interaction of Soil Microbiome and Soil Micronutrient Availability on Plant Biochemical Pathways

Dr. Babu Valliyodan, Lincoln University

Project Synopsis

- Research, teaching, and extension project examining how soil micronutrient deficiencies affect bioactive availability in plants and the resulting implications for human health.

Progress (April 2026–June 2026)

- Hydroponics study, soil microbiome study, global research, and interactive teaching experience.

Next Steps

- Experimentation and data analysis.

Core Capabilities Gained from Training and Professional Development Opportunities

- Laboratory experimentation, data management and statistical analysis, peer mentoring, and leadership building.



TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY



GROWING WELLNESS ACROSS ALABAMA COMMUNITIES



Tuskegee, Alabama – Planning is underway for hands-on nutrition education activities that will demonstrate practical ways to incorporate harvested fruits and vegetables into healthy, affordable meals. Preparations for the Fall 2026 garden season are also in progress with participants in Macon, Dallas, Sumter, Wilcox, Pickens, Butler, Russell, and Greene Counties, alongside additional community gardens planned in Perry County as the project continues to expand.



Twelve individual home gardens were established in Wilcox County, and twelve new gardens were launched in Perry County, increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables and supporting healthy eating within local communities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SU TOGETHER: MOVE MORE, EAT BETTER



Clear your mind, move your body, and tap into your wellness this summer!

Join us for weekly Monday sessions that will focus on walking.

MONDAYS, JUNE 1 - JULY 27
Time: 9:15 AM - 10 AM
Location: Fisher Hall Lawn

The dates below features additional activities that will also be available on Mondays.

CHAIR PILATES: JUNE 8
YOGA: JUNE 22
LINE DANCING: JULY 6
GEAUX RIDE: JULY 20

fAGs in Motion!

If you would like to participate in these group walks, please RSVP using the QR code or register at:
<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/qyYBy1Rte>

For any additional questions email:
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Kiyana_Kelly@suagcenter.com
or evan_egana@suagcenter.com



The funding for "COE for nutrition, health, wellness and quality of life" has been provided by USDA/NIFA126396

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SU TOGETHER: MOVE MORE, EAT BETTER

Lunch and Learn SUMMER 2026

WEDNESDAYS, JUNE 24 & JULY 22
Pinkie Thrift, Room 157
12:00 PM (Noon) - 1:00 PM



Classes:

**June 24: Juicing
Geaux Ride**

**July 22: The Pickling
Chair Pilates
Making Your Own Seasoning Blend**

If you would like to participate, please RSVP using the QR code or register at: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/yL6e488C>

FOR ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, EMAIL:
Kiyana_Kelly@suagcenter.com or brittany_howard@suagcenter.com



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PHYTOFOCUS: A Look Into the Science in Our Food

Virtual Webinar

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 | 11 AM - 12 PM (NOON-CST)

GUEST SPEAKER:
Cheri Granillo, DNP, FNP-BC
Nurse Practitioner



Dr. Cheri Granillo got her Masters of Nursing degree at Johns Hopkins University and became a Nurse Practitioner for 20 years. She recently received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in 2023 from UNCC and is passionate about the power of prevention in healthcare. With a background in primary care and a certification in Therapeutic Horticulture, she integrates science, nutrition, and nature-based interventions to promote wellness. She has worked extensively in underserved communities, focusing on disease prevention and wellness through sustainable lifestyle changes. As the Translational Nutrition Program Manager at North Carolina State University's Plants for Human Health Institute (PHHI), she helps bridge the gap between research and real-world application, developing programs that translate scientific findings into practical strategies for improving health.

Register for this seminar at:
<https://bit.ly/30c24Hv>

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FOOD AS MEDICINE: A Community-Driven Solution for Health and Dignity

Virtual Webinar

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 | 11 AM - 12 PM (NOON-CST)

GUEST SPEAKER:
Katie Cerda, MS, RDN
Director of Food Policy, Dion's Chicago Dream



Katie Cerda is the Director of Food Policy at Dion's Chicago Dream, a non-profit that combines nutritional philanthropy and last-mile logistics to address food insecurity and build community across Cook County. With an RDN and MS in Public Health Nutrition, she works to advocate for policies that support diet-related chronic disease prevention and management in low and middle-income communities. She has previously held positions in federal and city governments in direct care delivery and program management.

Register for this seminar at:
<https://bit.ly/4qf9M1b>

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Strawberry Quinoa Salad Recipe



PREP TIME: 20 MINS



TOTAL TIME: 20 MINS



SERVING SIZE: 6

INGREDIENTS:

FOR THE SALAD:

- 1 CUP (170 G) QUINOA
- 2 CUPS (480 ML) WATER
- 2 CUPS (300 G) STRAWBERRIES CHOPPED
- 1 LARGE CUCUMBER CHOPPED
- 1 AVOCADO MEDIUM
- 5.3 OZ (150 G) FETA CHEESE CUT INTO CUBES
- 3-4 TABLESPOONS MINT CHOPPED
- ½ CUP (60 G) PECANS/WALNUTS CHOPPED

FOR THE DRESSING:

- 3 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL EXTRA VIRGIN
- 2 TABLESPOONS LEMON JUICE
- 1 TABLESPOON MAPLE SYRUP
- SALT TO TASTE
- PEPPER TO TASTE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. RINSE QUINOA IN A FINE-MESH SIEVE UNDER COLD WATER TO REMOVE BITTERNESS, THEN COOK.
2. ADD QUINOA, 2 CUPS WATER, AND ½ TSP SALT TO A SAUCEPAN: BOIL, THEN COVER AND SIMMER
3. 15 MINS. REST 5 MINS, FLUFF, AND COOL.
4. CHOP STRAWBERRIES, CUCUMBER, AVOCADO, FETA, NUTS, AND MINT.
5. SHAKE TOGETHER OLIVE OIL, LEMON JUICE, MAPLE SYRUP, SALT, AND PEPPER UNTIL EMULSIFIED.
6. TOSS QUINOA WITH CHOPPED INGREDIENTS, POUR DRESSING OVER, AND MIX GENTLY.
7. SERVE IMMEDIATELY OR CHILL 15–30 MIN. GARNISH WITH MINT AND NUTS.
8. ENJOY!