



134 East Amite Street
Jackson, MS 39201
www.fndmidsouth.org

Chris Crothers, Communications Director
601.863.0483
ccrothers@fndmidsouth.org

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Grant Awarded in Leflore County for Youth Leadership Program

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI (FEBRUARY 2, 2009) In January, the Foundation for the Mid South awarded a three-year grant totaling \$90,100 through its Communities of Opportunity (COO) Initiative to the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce. The grant award will reinstate the Young Emerging Leaders of Leflore (YELL) youth leadership program.

The YELL program will bring together juniors from Leflore County high schools to develop an understanding of personal leadership styles, a sense of community responsibility, and a greater knowledge of the resources that are available to them in the Greenwood-Leflore County area. The program will provide each student with the basic tools, resources, and action plans that will help them respond to various leadership roles within their schools and communities.

Through participation in the YELL program, students will benefit from the experiences from a variety of community leaders and have access to other resources that will enhance their personal development. By the end of the program, students will have gained experience using their new leadership, teambuilding, communication, and organizational skills. Ultimately, the program's long-term goal is to help students grow into community-minded, productive citizens and achieve success in life.

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About the Communities of Opportunity Initiative

FMS believes in the ability of residents to improve communities—all that is needed is some help. In specific geographic areas, the foundation has created Communities of Opportunity to provide a spark to help residents become advocates and agents for change. By strategically attracting, coordinating, and mobilizing resources (both human and financial) locally-based, resident-driven projects can be extremely effective as a mechanism to improve the health and vitality of communities.

COO is a model for community revitalization that seeks greater impact through collaboration between residents and stakeholders to achieve sustainable, comprehensive community transformation. The Initiative challenges the manner through which philanthropy traditionally uses its assets—not just money but also its influence—to attract and align investment (and reinvestment) in communities.

About the Foundation for the Mid South

The Foundation for the Mid South is a regional foundation that serves Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. FMS invests in people and strategies that help to create the conditions where change can occur in the Mid South. The Foundation seeks to strengthen communities by attracting and mobilizing resources to improve the quality of life for all Mid Southerners.

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