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## BE YOU Recap

The Be You (BU) program is a student-led statewide tobacco prevention program. It is the first of its kind for the state of Mississippi. It is a privilege and honor to assist with running this program. There were many great highlights that made this program a success for its first year such as the youth leaders, the schools, and Regional Coordinators.



LaTasha Rice - Program Director

What I consider to be the heart and soul of the Be You (BU) program are the Youth Leaders. The Youth Leaders brought a different appeal to their schools. Hearing the message to stay away from tobacco was better received coming from

someone in the same age bracket as opposed to it coming from an adult. For example, the Youth leaders had great ideas for the Great American Smokeout events. Some schools organized assemblies, others went class to class educating their peers, and one school organized a balloon release. With these events, it really showed the creativity the Youth Leaders brought to the table. Some proved to be etiquette speakers, some top

notch negotiators, and for others, this was the first time they spoke in front of people and they learned the art of being proficient. All in all, they were ready, able and completed the tasks at hand with ease. I was more than proud of their representation of the program and wish them well.

The schools were identified by certain criteria to make sure we were serving a needed population. According to the CDC.gov, each day, about 2,000 people younger than 18 years smoke their first cigarette. Each day, over 300 people younger than 18 years become daily cigarette smokers. This is what we want to prevent. That is why we were so proud to have the schools from at risk populations participate in this program. We were well received by all the schools and we are so appreciative for that.

Lastly, the face of our program to the schools and community are the Regional Coordinators. Their basic involvement allowed the program to run smoothly and the relationships that they built with the Youth Leaders were above and beyond what we asked. They truly showed a passion for their job and exhibited professionalism like no other.

We embark on our second year with the Be You (BU) program and will continue to raise awareness of anti tobacco messaging among teens. I am super excited that we have added the vaping anti messaging to this year's program. We look forward to new partnerships, new schools, and new Youth Leaders to continue our mission of a tobacco and vape free Mississippi.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LaTasha Rice'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

LaTasha Rice, Program Director

## BE YOU Success Stories

### Northern Area

Sharde McClure is the Regional Coordinator for Northern Mississippi. The following is her Be You success story: The Youth Tobacco Prevention Program shed light on myths and truths within the tobacco world. Students were exposed to facts, provoking them to make decisions about their actions or to never start a habit. This peer led program gave students in the Northern Region a chance to be themselves and choose the path they would take based on the facts presented to them about tobacco. On November 19, 2019, our Youth Leaders presented students



Sharde McClure - Regional Coordinator for Northern Mississippi

with harsh facts in their Tobacco 101 presentation, about RJ Reynolds, founder of a tobacco company along with their thoughts and targeting of

minority youth. During this activity students expressed their emotions on hearing the truth behind the tobacco industry's key targets. One student explained how she did "not realize there were so many chemicals in cigarettes" and how she was going to share with her family, so her mother could stop smoking.

Many of the students did not realize that they had a bull's eye on their backs. This baffled them to the point they started to question the pretense that smoking is cool and the realization was

overwhelming. During that time, a student named Marco Greer, an 11th grader at West Tallahatchie High School, who smoked cigarettes occasionally, decided to act On Pledge Day. That day he decided to not only pledge not to smoke for a day but for the rest of the week. Greer has worked alongside our Youth Leaders since that very day helping where needed. He is as excited about spreading the truth about tobacco as the ambassadors are.

The Youth Tobacco Prevention Program has given students a choice to decide if smoking is right for them. Students at every school exclaimed how learning Tobacco Facts from their peers has opened their hearts up to being themselves and not following the crowds. The students voted on how they felt about the slogan "Be You" and what it meant to them. Students have decided to take matters into their own hands and choose to be tobacco free!

### Central Area

Melissa McGee-Collier is the Regional Coordinator for Central Mississippi. The following is her Be You success story: South Delta High School Youth Leader Shadea Freeman shared the story of her Uncle who has been a heavy



Melissa McGee-Collier - Regional Coordinator for Central Mississippi

cigarette smoker as long as she could remember. Although she desired for him to stop smoking, she only had general knowledge about the dangers of cigarette smoke. She was not able

to explain to him and to those around him how smoking and breathing in second hand smoke could lead to health problems. Through the BE YOU Youth Tobacco Prevention Program, Shadea learned some detailed information about the dangers in which her uncle, family, and friends were being exposed. She began to share what she was learning with her uncle and expressed her concerns for his health. Her uncle listened and has gone from smoking half a pack of cigarettes per day to only one per day. He is working on stopping completely.

## Southern Area

Edward Clark is the Regional Coordinator for Southern Mississippi. The following is his Be You success story: Throughout the year our youth



Edward Clark - Regional Coordinator  
for Southern Mississippi

leaders worked hard to educate their peers on the dangers of tobacco.

As Erica Daniels, one of the youth leaders for the BU program for Amite County High

School, was presenting on the dangers of tobacco there was one male student that was really attentive to the presentation. After the session he admitted that he was not aware of all the hazardous chemicals that were in cigarettes and that his mother was a cigarette smoker. He then asked if he could take the literature home to share with his mother. We are pleased that a student was willing to educate himself so that he could help his mother start a path of being tobacco free.

## BE YOU High School Graduates

BE YOU wishes to offer our congratulations to our youth leaders on their great accomplishment of graduating high school. These youth leaders have done an excellent job in representing their high school and BE YOU Tobacco Free. We wish them the absolute best on all their future endeavors.

### Cleveland Central Winona Secondary

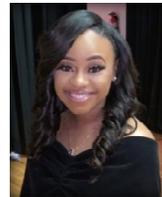


Hunter Simmons



Carson Holly

### Charleston High School



Shakiya Truly



Caleb Buckley

### South Delta



Shadea Freeman

### West Tallahatchie



Karon Hooper



Eboni Jones

### Port Gibson



Devin Cook

## Simmons High School

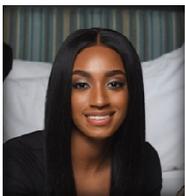


Haley Cage



Jena Bradshaw

## West Harrison



Tuende' Seymour

## Provine High School



NaTalya McNeil

## Amite County



Erica Daniels



LaBarrius Nathaniel

## South Pike High School



Amia Miller



Kaleigh Nathaniel

- When in public spaces wear a cloth face covering.
- Practice Social Distancing when in crowded places and maintain at least 6 feet from others.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and water is not available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

To learn more about staying safe and healthy, visit [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).



## Contact Us

Contact us with your questions, concerns or testimonies. For additional updates on the Youth Tobacco Prevention Program, follow us on social media.

**Caffee, Caffee & Associates Public Health Foundation, Inc.**

- ☎ 601-336-7212
- 🌐 [www.ccaphf.org](http://www.ccaphf.org)
- 📘 B U Tobacco Free
- 🐦 @BUTobaccoFree
- 📷 B U Tobacco Free
- 👤 B U Tobacco Free

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## How to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

Everyone can play a role to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 such as: