



JPS launches Creativity Kitchen program

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

Continuing its focus of offering healthy foods to students, Jackson Public Schools launched "Creativity Kitchen: Chef Inspired Cuisine for Healthy Scholars" Monday at Blackburn Middle School.

The pilot program is a partnership with local Chef Nick Wallace, the Mississippi Museum of Art and the Jackson Public Schools Food Service Department.

Wallace, a Blackburn alum, will tweak current menu items and create new ones in an effort to offer students, staff, and educators tasty, yet healthier food choices. As the current

Focus is on healthier food options

executive chef and culinary curator at the Mississippi Museum of Art, Wallace brings a wealth of talent to the program. He has worked as a chef at some of the largest hotels in the nation, including the Marriott and the historic King Edward Hotel in Jackson.

"I understand both the challenge and the importance of providing healthy, exciting meals to students. Students need fuel to learn, and we want to give them high-quality, delicious, and artfully-inspired meals that propel them to achieve and perform at their very best,"

Wallace said. "My presence in the schools will also be a resource to those students who may want to consider a career in the culinary industry as an example to the next generation of how rewarding a life in the kitchen can be."

"We are so grateful Nick has volunteered to give his time," said Mary Hill, JPS food service executive director. "He has put a twist on healthy eating."

Starting Monday, students at two JPS middle



On hand for the launching of Creativity Kitchen were Patricia Willis, Blackburn Middle School food service manager (from left); Chef Nick Wallace, JoAnn Quillen, retired food manager; and Mary A. Hill, executive director of Food Service at Jackson Public Schools.

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SNAP benefits to expire

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

In a matter of months, thousands of Mississippians may lose the food assistance they receive through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.

More than 82,000 Mississippians who are adults without dependents and not disabled receive food assistance through SNAP. Formally, these individuals are referred to as able bodied adults without dependents. Of that number, more than 51,000 could lose the benefits because of the reinstatement of a three-month time limit during a three-year period to receive SNAP.

These individuals who are between the ages of 18-49 can be exempted from losing SNAP if they work 20 hours a week consistently, enroll in a job training program or participate in workfare. Actively looking for work does not exempt them.

When the United States entered a recession around 2006 and unemployment rates were high, states were allowed to receive waivers permitting these individuals not to be subject to the three-month time-limits. As the economy has improved and the unemployment rate decreased in certain states, the time-limits have been reinstated. However, if a state's unemploy-

Byram Walmart opens

Store will employ up to 300 people



Lee Maddox, store manager of Byram's new Walmart Supercenter, presents members of the store's management team Wednesday morning during the grand opening. PHOTO BY SHANDERIA K. POSEY

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

Wednesday may go down as the best birthday present ever for Lee Maddox, the store manager of the new Walmart Supercenter in Byram, located at 131 Handley Blvd.

The store's grand opening was held at 8 a.m. Wednesday and several hundred people attended the festivities.

It also happened to be Maddox's birthday.

"It has truly been an humbling experience to be so welcomed by city officials and ev-

Weekend events

On Saturday local residents are invited to A Big Family Welcome from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., which will give customers a chance to meet Lee Maddox, store manager, and enjoy fun family activities and free food samples while supplies last. On Sunday, free health screenings, store pick up demos and food samples will be available from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

everyone in town," said Maddox. During the ceremony, the

crowd also heard from Byram's Mayor Richard White, Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves and Sammy Sappington, Walmart regional manager. Also in attendance were Sen. David Blount, Hinds County Sheriff Victor Mason, two new Hinds County Supervisors Bobby McGowan and Michael Morgan, Dr. Delesicia M. Martin, Hinds County School District superintendent; Byram's Junior Auxiliary, Byram Business Association and all Byram aldermen.

Sappington noted that in his 39 years with the company, the

turnout for the Byram's store opening was the largest he's seen in years.

Area schools were represented as well. The Byram Middle School Choir performed the National Anthem along with the school's jazz band. BMS' Junior ROTC presented the colors at the beginning of the ceremony. Terry High School cheerleaders performed along with the younger Titan cheerleaders. Girl Scouts Troop 5841

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Sheriff's Dept. makes \$1M bust

By Stephanie R. Jones
Contributing Writer

On Tuesday morning Hinds County Sheriff Victor Mason stood behind a table in his office topped with more than \$1 million in allegedly illicit cash confiscated during a traffic stop Monday by some of his deputies.



Mason

It was the largest amount of money ever seized in Hinds County, according to the sheriff.

"This is history," said Mason, who has been on the job less than a month. "This is a new sheriff's department. We're going to have aggressive law enforcement."

During the news conference Mason revealed details of the bust. He suspects the money — \$1,068,860 — is related to the drug trade.

A deputy patrolling I-20 between Clinton and Bolton spotted a vehicle headed westbound being driven erratically with its three occupants looking at him. He pulled the car over. Upon questioning, Mason said the occupants' stories didn't add up and the deputy called for backup, which included the canine unit. Deputies asked to search the car and the occupants agreed

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African Children's Choir to perform Sunday at New Jerusalem

By Shanderia K. Posey
Editor

The renowned African Children's Choir will continue its tour in Mississippi with a concert at 7 p.m. Sunday at New Jerusalem Church, 5708 Old Canton Road in Jackson.

The choir consists of 18 children ages 7-11 from Uganda and other parts of Africa. They will give an 80-minute performance that will include traditional African songs and dances as well as English contemporary worship songs.

The concert is free and open to all, but donations will be



This year's African Children's Choir includes 18 children ages 11 and younger.

accepted. The free-will offering is taken at the performance to support African Children's Choir programs, such as

education, care and relief and development programs.

"People are very generous," said Heidi Moen, a tour

chaperone. "By helping these kids, you're helping thousands more in Africa. The support reaches 8,000 children altogether."

To avoid lodging expenses, the choir members and staff stay with host families in the cities where they perform.

This is the 44th African Children's Choir. The first one was created 31 years ago by Ray Barnett who had gone on a humanitarian trip to war-torn Uganda. Barnett became acquainted with a small boy who sang despite the tragedy of his surroundings.

Upcoming performances

- Jan. 29 at 7 p.m. at Highland Baptist Church, 2513 N 7th Ave. in Laurel.
- Jan. 31, at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. at Triumph Church, 36 Honeysuckle Lane in Vicksburg
- Jan. 31, at 7 p.m. at New Jerusalem Church, 5708 Old Canton Road, in Jackson.
- Feb. 3, at 6 p.m. at Central

- United Methodist Church, 1004 23rd Ave. in Meridian
- Feb. 5, at 7 p.m. at Quitman High School, 210 S Jackson Ave. in Quitman. Hosted by Clarke County Chamber of Commerce
- Feb. 7, at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. at First United Methodist Church, 602 Main Street in Columbus.

The choir varies in numbers yearly. Children must be chosen through an audition process.

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