



The Black Belt Bulletin



Building a Healthier Black Belt - H.O.P.E. Superstars



Janice Maxine Jones, left, represents H.O.P.E. Ambassadors at back-to-school event with other Pickens county Ambassador, Paris, right.

The Health, Outreach, Promotion and Education (H.O.P.E.) grant awarded to the BBCF has successfully exceeded all benchmarks and expectations during their first year of service! With the goal being to communicate and educate members of local communities while emphasizing COVID-19 vaccines and the importance of contact tracing, BBCF H.O.P.E. Ambassadors have proven to be formidable stewards of Black Belt health. Since March 2023, the H.O.P.E. Ambassadors have gone from reaching 3,500 community members to reaching over 20,000 contacts throughout the 12 counties BBCF serves!

While collaborating with the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Workforce Development Councils, The University of Alabama School of Medicine, and many others, it is the H.O.P.E. Ambassadors themselves that have been at the forefront of this highly successful effort. Every Ambassador has taken charge of their responsibility to their individual community and served with valor in the face of the pandemic. Reaching 25 contacts per week (5 per day) is the standard expected of each H.O.P.E. Ambassador in order to achieve the grant's overall quota total.

Two of the H.O.P.E. Ambassadors have been recognized as "Superstars" by their peers and the BBCF leadership. Having gone "the extra mile" **Lucette Fletcher** (Greene County) and **Janice Maxine Jones** (Pickens County) are considered model Ambassadors for their willingness to exceed weekly quotas consistently since the implementation of the grant and for their ability to reach their fellow community members and gain their participation in the survey process.

When asked about the keys to her success in making 10-15 contacts per day, Lucette Fletcher stated, "being sociable and liking to help people is key. If I don't know the people in the neighborhood, I reach out to community and religious organizations and ask to attend their events. I will go wherever the people are including the Post Office and Dollar General. Being an Ambassador is a great opportunity to learn and to meet new people. It gives me confidence and joy to help people. I end each day by uploading the surveys I have collected into the computer and making plans for the next day's work."



Lucette Fletcher, left, poses for photo with H.O.P.E. banner at event in Greene County with fellow Ambassador, Stacey, right.



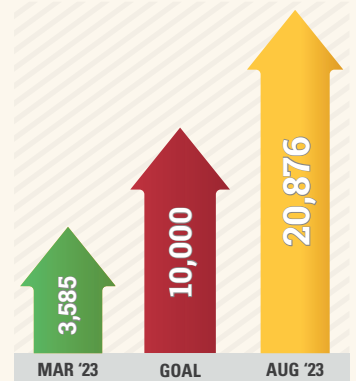
Janice Maxine Jones

Janice Maxine Jones' motto is "Any event where people are, I'm going to have my clipboard – baby I got it!" Ms. Jones engages in an Ambassador technique called "posting up", that is to go places people frequent, such as the Dollar Tree, and survey shoppers as they leave the store. This only requires her clipboard and a willingness to engage, which comes naturally for Ms. Jones, as she is a self-described "people-person". She also regularly represents the BBCF H.O.P.E. program at community events such as Back-to-School celebrations, local Youth basketball games, and church gatherings, where she has become known for always having her clipboard with her and taking all opportunities to make a new contact. These techniques help to fulfill her personal goal of collecting 10 surveys per day. Ms. Jones says she does the work because "It's something that needs to be done and in the long run it will help our county and contribute to building a healthier Black Belt." She also enjoys the exposure that it provides for the Black Belt Community Foundation and the ability to represent the organization in making positive change.

BBCF H.O.P.E. directors Samantha Ledbetter and Wendell Paris, Jr. salute all of their Ambassadors, "they are the lifeblood of our program and the reason for our success".

- EXCEEDING - EXPECTATIONS

The H.O.P.E. Ambassadors have increased the number of educational contacts they've made from 3,585 in March 2023, to the current 20,876! This significantly surpasses the original goal of 10,000 contacts that was set forth at the beginning of the program. Each contact represents a survey entry into the database from which we can run reports and analyze results to better meet the needs of area residents. All 24 H.O.P.E. Ambassadors have contributed to this **482% increase** in contacts over the last 5 months and we commend them for their hard work and perseverance.



H.O.P.E. Ambassadors making educational contacts with community members and completing surveys.