



# The Black Belt Bulletin

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## SPOTLIGHT ON - HALE COUNTY GRANTEE -

Healing Steps Movement, Inc., BBCF Community Grantee from Hale County, recently utilized grant funding to put on a Mental Health Youth Summit to increase mental health awareness within Hale county. Healing Steps Movement, Inc is hard at work with their grassroots effort to reach people in the community, especially the youth, when it comes to mental health.



This event was a youth summit geared towards teenagers in Hale County with the theme of 'Mental Health Matters'. Guest speakers offered information as well as words of encouragement - telling youth to seek help if they are in a mental distress or if they knew someone who was suffering.



Several vendors also attended the event that included counselors, mental health professionals, as well as groups that advocate for suicide prevention. BBCF Hale County Community Associates were also in attendance to support this local grantee organization that is making a difference in their community! The youth summit was fun, engaging, and packed with top-notch speakers, useful information, and great reinforcement tools.



Photos show scenes from the Mental Health Summit including attendees, activities, and vendor tables - thanks to Healing Steps Movement for providing photos. Source: wbr.com (7/1/24)

## Staff Retreat Sharpens Skills to Better Serve Community

How do you grow skills, plan the future, and revitalize a staff that works tirelessly, year-round, to serve the community through disasters, victories, emergencies, unmet needs and celebrations? The Black Belt Community Foundation believes its annual staff retreat is the perfect opportunity for staff to enhance their skills, envision the future, and support their wellness needs. BBCF President and CEO, Felecia Lucky stated, "We shall



BBCF President, Felecia Lucky, left, welcomes staff to the opening session of the 2024 Staff Retreat. At this session, she also shared organizational expectations & desired outcomes.

emerge from this retreat empowered and prepared to create a purposeful impact in the Black Belt at a heightened level" as she welcomed the staff and management team and set the expected outcomes of the retreat.

From July 17-19, BBCF and Head Start staff were engaged at the Hotel Effie in Miramar Beach, FL. Attendees participated in workshops, discussions, planning sessions, and structured wellness activities. The theme of the retreat, "Renew, Refuel, and Reimagine", mirrored the engagement between BBCF staff, professional staff developers, consultants, and guest speakers. On the first day of the retreat, staff were led through a review and analysis of BBCF History that included a timeline building activity and a workshop on leading change, led by Katherine Tyler Scott, Managing Principal of Ki ThoughtBridge, LLC.

Later in the retreat, facilitator Kelly Ryan led an "all hands on deck" session engaging the staff on addressing "The BBCF of Tomorrow". This critical topic was especially important given BBCF's current celebration of 20 years and planning for the next 20 years. During this session, staff were asked to answer the question, "what will you commit to do to be a better steward of this work, a steward of yourself, each other, and BBCF." Answers varied depending on job duties, but all agreed that we must nurture the



Consultant Kelly Ryan



Staff received a BBCF 20th Anniversary journal to take notes in during the retreat.

sense of teamwork and unity that this working retreat has provided us as we move forward in pursuit of our vision of a transformed Black Belt, where all of our people live and work in healthy, prosperous, inclusive, educated, creative and giving communities.

In addition to the intensive work sessions, staff were able to engage in wellness activities (yoga, games, ice-breakers, a boat ride) and enhance their interaction with one another as team members. Chris Spencer, BBCF Community Engagement Officer, summed up the retreat as "a blessing to our staff that will uplift us as we try every day to bless others throughout the Black Belt."



Group photo of BBCF and Head Start staff during the 2024 Staff Retreat in San Destin, FL.