



DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

# INSTITUTE NEWS

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES / CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SPRING/SUMMER 2007

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## **Institute Raises Over \$2,000 for New Student Research Scholarship Fund**

In June, the Institute for Community-Based Research hosted a Recognition and Scholarship Dinner that raised over \$2,000 for a new scholarship fund. The fund will support student research projects through the Institute. A volunteer committee of current and former community development students planned the event, which included a silent auction, dinner and celebration of outstanding students, alumni, faculty and staff. Over 40 faculty and staff, current and former students, and community partners attended the event at the Delta State University Alumni House.



*Eleanor Green and Carla Ross discuss bids at the silent auction*

The Institute would like to thank the many individuals and businesses whose contributions made the event possible. If you would like to contribute to the fund, please make checks payable to Delta State University Foundation with Fund #23244 in the memo line. Donations may be sent to the Institute for Community-Based Research, Box 3264, Division of Social Sciences, Delta State University, Cleveland, MS 38733.

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Prepared by Katie Kerstetter

***Congratulations to our Recognition & Scholarship Dinner Awardees:***  
Alkie Edwards (Outstanding Alumnus); Marcie Moore & Monica Rosas (Spirit of Service Award); Dreyfus Health Foundation (Partner of the Year); Dr. Alan Barton, Dr. John Green, Dr. Paulette Meikle-Yaw (Special Recognition for Excellence in Teaching); Ms. Deborah Moore, Dr. Albert Nylander, Dr. Jerry Robinson (Special Recognition for Support of Student Research).



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## Statement from the Director

As you will see in this issue of *Institute News*, the students, staff and faculty working with the Institute for Community-Based Research have been busy. A variety of projects were planned, implemented and completed.

I am particularly excited about the Institute's more direct focus on assisting community-based organizations with their capacity development, especially in relation to assessment, planning and evaluation. The ACCESS program, MDLEY evaluation and efforts on the Mississippi Gulf Coast all demonstrate what is possible when people decide to collaborate and build stronger organizations and communities.

This issue of *Institute News* also marks the end of Katie Kerstetter's tenure as an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member with the Institute. Katie helped us immensely. This organization is in a better position because of her hard work and dedication. I will always be grateful, and I am looking forward to watching Katie's promising career develop as she takes on a leadership position in this movement for sustainable, participatory and equitable development.

John J. Green, PhD  
Director, Institute for Community-Based Research

## Division of Social Sciences Welcomes 2007-2008 Hearin Fellows

With generous financial support from the Hearin Foundation, the Delta State University Division of Social Sciences welcomes five Hearin Fellows for the 2007-2008 academic year. They are: Eric Atchison, Emanuel Edmond, Regan Hall, Mechelle Wallace and Mary Kathryn Wooten. The Hearin Fellows are full-time students in the Master of Science in Community Development program, and they work with faculty members on a wide variety of applied research projects.

## Institute Staff Participate in Course on Globalization and Food Systems in Jamaica



*MSCD student Catherine Cannatella interviews two farmers in Northeastern Jamaica about their perceptions of globalization.*

For two weeks in June, Institute staff members participated with faculty and students in a DSU course on globalization and food systems in Jamaica. Led by Dr. Paulette Meikle-Yaw – a faculty member in the Division of Social Sciences – the group traveled to Jamaica, participated in workshops at the University of the West Indies, and interviewed small farmers about their experiences. Collectively, they interviewed over 130 farmers in five days and conducted focus groups with an additional 80 farmers. Students and Institute staff constructed a database and analyzed the interview data, and they presented their findings at a seminar in July.

# FEATURED PROJECTS

## **Institute Evaluates Local Health Initiatives**

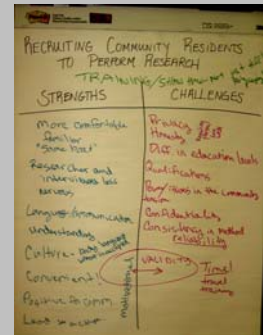
This fall, the Institute will begin its third year of evaluating the **Tougaloo College/Delta Health Partners Healthy Start Program**. Institute staff will conduct a series of focus groups to better understand the context within which pregnant women and new mothers seek health care. A report from this research will be used to inform the work of Healthy Start consortia. During the Spring 2007 semester, the Institute surveyed nursing students to inform its overall evaluation of the **Dreyfus Health Foundation/DSU School of Nursing Partners Investing in Nursing (PIN) Project**. The project seeks to expand and improve nursing education in the Delta.

## **Assessments Inform work of MDLEY Program**

The MDLEY (Mississippi Delta Leaders Empowering Youth) Program provides training and technical assistance to build the capacity of faith-based and community organizations serving youth. As MDLEY's evaluator, the Institute conducted two assessments to inform program planning. Institute staff surveyed organizations to provide a baseline assessment of their capacity and performed a community assessment to inform overall program planning. A follow-up assessment will be administered in the fall to measure changes in organizations' capacity. MDLEY is led by the Center for Community and Economic Development in partnership with the MS Center for Nonprofits.

## **Institute Builds Capacity of Students and Staff**

This spring, the Institute sponsored two projects focused on capacity development. The **Enhancing the Capacity of Nonprofit Organizations in the Aftermath of Disaster** project assessed organization resources and provided training and technical assistance to five community-based organizations on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The **Addressing Community Challenges by Empowering Students and Staff (ACCESS) Program** trained three Community Development graduate students and three nonprofit staff members to perform resource assessments through a semester-long practicum course.



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To see greater improvements in maternal and child health, we need to explore the broader community and regional contexts. This information may be used to shape local interventions and improve social, health, and economic programs.  
 --Green & Bierma, presentation to the National Healthy Start Association.

## Institute Staff Present Research at Regional & National Conferences

From February through August, Institute staff and partners presented research to the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, the Delta State University Research and Scholarship Symposium, the Rural Sociological Society, and the National Healthy Start Association. Presentations included:

- Green, J. J. "Theorizing Community Development as Collective Action and Social Movement."
- Green, J. J., Atchison, E., Kerstetter, K. & Garcia, J. "Informing Disaster Relief and Recovery: A Sociological Perspective."
- Green, J. J. & Bierma, J. "Assessing the Community Environment for Access to Maternal and Child Health Services."
- Green, J. J., Kerstetter, K., Kleiner, A., Montgomery, J. & Sarigiannis, A. "Social Assessment and Planning in the Aftermath of Disaster: Capacity Development through Community-Based Learning."
- Kerstetter, K. "Addressing Community Challenges by Empowering Students and Staff: A Case Study."
- Kleiner, A. & Green, J. J. "Cultivating Action at the Grassroots: Policies Supporting Sustainable Production by Minority and Limited Resource Farmers."



## Staff & Alumni Updates

The Institute welcomes **Ryan Betz**, who will soon graduate with a B.A. in Political Science from DSU, as the Institute's new AmeriCorps\*VISTA member. Ryan will begin his term of service in September. Current VISTA member **Katie Kerstetter** will be leaving the Institute at the end of August. She plans to work with the Institute as a consultant from her new home in Maryland.

**Ashley Hesker** will join the Institute as a new Graduate Assistant for the Fall 2007 semester. Ashley, who recently enrolled in the MSCD program, will be assisting with the Healthy Start and MDLEY program evaluations.

**Alkie Edwards**, a 2005 graduate of the MSCD program and a consultant with the Institute, is in the process of creating a new organization to help Mississippi residents improve their quality of life. The **Mississippi Community Development Group** will provide planning, education, and technical support; facilitation of citizen participation; community-based research; and collaboration throughout the state.

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