



Diversity Works

Office of University Partnerships

Minority-Serving Institutions Developing Partnerships, Building Communities

VOL. 5, ISSUE 4

Grantee Project Builds Capacity, Promotes Green Technology

Teaching, research, and community service are Rust College’s threefold education functions. Each year, through its community service component, the college seeks funding to address the various challenges confronting residents of the rural Holly Springs, Mississippi, community in which it is located. In 2007, Rust College decided to focus its efforts on combating substandard housing, promoting green technology, and capacity building for small-volume builders. But such efforts required funding and resources.

The college applied for and received a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD’s) Office of University Partnerships (OUP). It tasked the Rust College Community Development Corporation (RCCDC)—a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity established in 2003—with developing and then executing project activities. In 2007, RCCDC launched the Building Green for Low-Moderate Income Customers project to introduce progressive *green* building practices and support the construction and sale of energy-efficient houses.



Resident presented with keys to new home. From left to right: Dr. Ishmell Edward, Rust College Vice President; Dr. David L. Beckley, Rust College President; Ms. Fannie Warren, homeowner; and Mr. Clencie Cotton, RCCDC director.

Building Capacity for Builders

A unique component of the project focused on developing, promoting, and supporting the capacity of small local builders or businesses to integrate new products, techniques, and sustainable green practices to produce affordable, energy-efficient homes. In turn, this ability would help the contractors remain competitive in an industry increasingly focused on green technology.

RCCDC’s strategy for accomplishing this task was to recruit small-volume production builders—licensed by Mississippi—for training and certification as Green Building Professionals. In collaboration with the Mississippi Home Builders Association, a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design/United States Green Building Association curriculum was developed.



A newly constructed energy-efficient home.

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Mobile Training Classroom Helps Communities Combat Transportation Barrier

Thirty-five thousand people live in the rural and economically distressed communities of Edcouch, Elsa, La Villa, and Monte Alto along the southernmost border of Texas known as the Delta Region. A major cause of the area's socioeconomic problems is the lack of affordable transportation and a public transportation system. The nearest large city is 25 miles away, and the transportation barrier puts access to information, resources, and training out of reach for a majority of the residents. The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) is working to mitigate the transportation issues and to expand services and outreach to residents in these rural and isolated communities.



Kids learn about diabetes by watching the Dinobetes presentation in the mobile unit.

With funds from a 2008 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) program grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), UTPA established the Mobile Community Development Initiative (MCDI). This initiative incorporates the use of an air-conditioned mobile training classroom equipped with laptop computers and Internet access to provide a variety of resources and training to the residents of these communities and to bridge the information gap.

“MCDI provides microenterprise training; youth financial literacy education; fair housing lending practices education; diabetes, obesity, and nutrition education; and job-skills resources, information, and training,” said Michael Uhrbrock, project director. “Training is offered on these topics monthly in the mobile unit at community sites. Residents gain convenient access to information, resources, and training.”

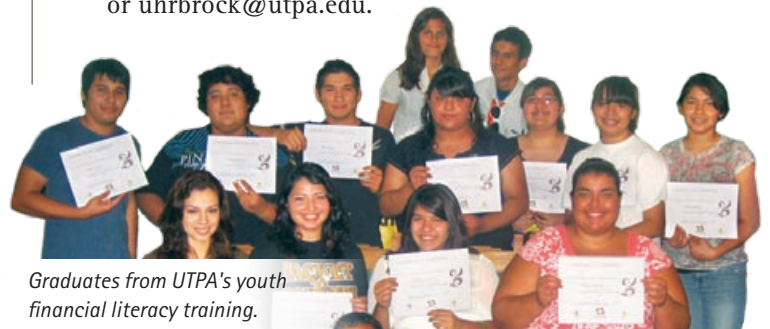
Uhrbrock is assisted by a committed team of professionals such as Ismael Delgado, who develops the curriculum and conducts the training; Hermelinda Vasquez, who conducts local outreach and sets up trainings in the colonias and rural communities; Albert Ybarra, who drives the mobile unit to and from events and sets up laptops and equipment at the training sites; Dr. Hector Diaz, a UTPA professor who guides the data collection process and assesses the level of project effectiveness; and Cristina Trevino, the field instructor who meets with and mentors three graduate students from the UTPA Social Work program who are participating in the project. The graduate students help conduct outreach, develop program materials, and organize community events.

Through MCDI, the university hopes to achieve the following outcomes over a 3-year period:

- 45 adults will receive microenterprise training.
- 300 adults will be offered job skills and career development opportunities.
- 300 adults will receive information on fair housing lending practices.
- 135 youth will complete a Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Money Smart financial literacy program.
- 9 UTPA graduate students will earn their master's degrees in social work.
- 450 people will receive information on border health issues such as diabetes, obesity, and nutrition.

“We have had a good response from the community thus far. Since October 2008, we have reached out to residents, provided information, and trained more than 500 persons in these rural communities,” Uhrbrock noted. “The people that we have met have been very appreciative of the project.”

For more information on the University of Texas-Pan American's Mobile Community Development Initiative, contact Michael Uhrbrock, project director, at 956-316-7185 or uhrbrock@utpa.edu.



Graduates from UTPA's youth financial literacy training.

New Clinic Improves Access to Healthcare, Targets Substance Abuse

The University of Hawaii–West Oahu (UHWO) and its partner, the Waiʻanae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), are improving the quality of life for residents in the Waiʻanae Coast community. The Mālama Recovery Services (MRS) program, which provides drug rehabilitation services, is one way they are achieving this. Now, through the construction of the Mālama Recovery Services Clinic, they will have a permanent place to house the MRS program, expand its services, and improve access to healthcare.

Substance abuse and dependence is prevalent in the economically distressed Waiʻanae community. The MRS program, which currently occupies a satellite clinic in Nanakuli, provides treatment for these residents in a variety of modalities based on the needs of each client, including individual, group, and family counseling services. By relocating to a permanent clinic on WCCHC’s main campus, MRS will be able to provide substance abuse services at other clinics on the main campus. The move will also facilitate referrals between clinics: MRS clients can have greater access to medical services provided by WCCHC and WCCHC patients referred to the MRS program will have increased follow-up due to the visibility of the new clinic on the main campus.

“The clinic being constructed on the grounds of WCCHC’s main campus with funds from UHWO’s Alaska Native/ Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities (AN/NHIAC) grant will consist of a total of 2,040 square feet of space,” said Dr. June Aono, UHWO AN/NHIAC principal investigator. “It will be used to provide clinical services for an expanded drug rehabilitation program, initiate vocational rehabilitation as part of the drug recovery program, and provide training facilities for the staff as well as student interns. We wanted to expand our service-learning programs to share our knowledge and experience with the community. Our student interns can now actively participate in the drug recovery program,

and our professors are able to perform community service by offering workshops and training sessions to the staff and clients.”

With the new clinic, UHWO and WCCHC expect to increase follow-up on referrals to outpatient substance abuse treatment from medical and other service providers. The clinic will provide outpatient and aftercare substance abuse treatment and nonresidential specialized services on a scheduled basis for individuals with substance abuse issues. Professionally directed evaluation and case management will also be provided. The program will provide recovery services to clients with less problematic substance abuse-related behaviors than would be found in a residential or day treatment program. It will provide between 6 and 8 hours per week of face-to-face treatment per client, with a minimum of 1 hour of individual counseling per month per client. The clinic will operate from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Fridays.

The staff at Mālama Recovery Services Clinic has more than 30 years of combined experience treating individuals with addictions. All of the clinical staff are certified substance abuse counselors with training and supervision in providing culturally competent care to men and women with substance abuse issues. In addition, the program manager and clinical manager are licensed in Hawaii as clinical psychologists and are responsible for the overall management of the MRS program—including administrative and clinical supervisory responsibilities—to ensure the provision of quality client care.

For more information on the Mālama Recovery Services Clinic and Mālama Recovery Services program, contact Dr. June Aono, University of Hawaii–West Oahu, at 808-454-4735 or jaono@hawaii.edu.



Partially completed Mālama Recovery Services Clinic.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of University Partnerships
451 Seventh Street, SW
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“The college sponsored eight small-volume production builders to the Green Professional Builders Training course, and all of them completed the training and received certification as Green Building Professionals,” said Clencie L. Cotton, RCCDC director. “The recruitment, training, certification, and accreditation of local small-volume production builders as green builders provide them with a marketing advantage that increases their competitive advantage and makes building green available to the broader community.”

To date, the following outcomes have been achieved:

- Eight small-volume builders have been trained and received certification as Green Building Professionals by the Mississippi Home Builders Association under this project.
- The green building curriculum is currently being offered for builders in Mississippi.

- Two homes have been completed and sold to qualified low- to moderate-income residents.
- Completion of two other homes is expected by August 15, 2010.

In addition, all of the builders received training in the financial management of green building projects and practices and received a separate certification in this area. One of the contractors who participated in this activity was the successful bidder for the first two homes to be constructed under the Building Green for Low-Moderate Income Customers project.

For more information on Rust College’s Building Green for Low-Moderate Income Customers project, contact Clencie L. Cotton, director of the Rust College Community Development Corporation, at 662-252-4590 or clenciec@yahoo.com.

HUD’s Office of University Partnerships (OUP) provides grants to institutions of higher education to assist them and their partners with the implementation of a broad range of community development activities, including neighborhood revitalization, housing, and economic development. This newsletter, *Diversity Works*, highlights the efforts of grantees in OUP’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities grant programs and includes a variety of interesting projects, compelling grantee profiles, and other valuable resources for minority-serving institutions.