



March 2014

Topic of the Month

Does your coalition have an event /activity planned to coincide with spring or Easter?

We will hold our annual “Hop the Trail to Bunny Land” on March 29. There will be Easter themed, developmentally appropriate activities for children birth to five. We will also have “Bunny Land” for our children, which will be an area for interaction and active play manned by volunteers from the Biloxi High football team. The city of Biloxi will partner with the coalition to provide materials, volunteers, and snacks and drinks. The IP Casino-Resort- Spa will provide books for the children. Beau Rivage Resort & Casino will provide give-aways and volunteers, including a costumed Easter Bunny who will be available for photos. **-Susan Hunt, Biloxi Coalition**

The DeSoto County Earth Day Celebration will be held on the weekend following Easter (Saturday, April 26). We are planning to set up a booth with an activity to represent the Hernando Excel by 5 group. **- Gia Matheny, Hernando Coalition**

We have an Easter Extravaganza program that is coordinated by Kiwanis, Jackson County Head Start and members of the Moss Point-Pascagoula Junior Auxiliary. It is scheduled for March 29, 2014 from 9 am until 12 noon! This is a wonderful event dedicated to the preschoolers of the area. They can even have their picture made with the Easter Bunny! **- Connie Jo Williams, Pascagoula Coalition**

In Central Clarke County, we are planning our second annual Fire Safety Event to coincide with a community-wide Easter egg hunt, which the coalition will also host. **- Elisa Mayo, Central Clarke County Coalition**

Each April, LOU Excel by 5 participates in a community Party in the Park for children and their families. The event is held to coincide with Child Abuse Prevention Month. The coalition provides a booth with developmental activities for children 0-5. We also talk to parents and provide information on ages and stages, early intervention, and healthy nutrition. Also, starting this year, we plan to initiate an EXCELebration each spring to build community awareness of the importance of the birth to 5 year time frame, support families in promoting healthy development, and celebrate families and children. Based on the success of and feedback from our first official EXCELebration, we are planning an event that will offer -- and model for families -- developmentally appropriate, simple activities for children 0-5. Each booth will have an activity, ideally one that can be easily replicated at home. There will also be fire trucks, police cars and dogs, singing, reading, dancing, storytelling -- with some activities inside and some outside. We'll hold the event in close proximity to the Northwest MS Child Care R&R Center (Family Resource Center) in Oxford. We will promote the Center and hope to provide tours. **-Kathy Sukanek, Lafayette, Oxford, University Coalition**

On April 12 from 9:30 until 11, the Gulfport Excel by 5 Coalition will be supporting the City of Gulfport's Easter Egg Hunt by sponsoring an art project to commemorate the day. The project will be an egg basket that will be filled with Easter eggs made by the child's finger print. Different ink pads will be available for students to make their "eggs" and they will have a keepsake of their day at the Park. **-Cynthia Walker, Gulfport Coalition**

Each spring, the Pine Hill Festival is held in downtown Wiggins. The Stone County Excel By 5 coalition will once again participate in this community-wide event by providing activities for young children and information for their parents. **- Judy Bechtel, Stone County Coalition**

