

MTSU Center for Health and Human Services Newsletter



*Better Health and Well-Being
for Tennesseans and That of the Nation*



EXPLORATION

"ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW IS THAT IT'S POSSIBLE."

—Unknown

The Center for Health and Human Services (CHHS) has had an incredibly busy fall.

As the center continues its work to promote better health and well-being for all, through projects and research with local, state, and national reach, the focus on quality continues. While focusing on doing quality work with our existing portfolio, we are again in the season



Cynthia Chafin,
M.Ed., MCHES® CHHS
associate director for
community programs

of opportunity seeking and exploration. In particular, we are actively seeking funds to continue some currently funded CHHS projects that will soon end or that have recently ended.

Two of those projects focus on needs in our campus community—mental health and chronic disease prevention. Every academic year brings new students, so there is an ever-present need for funding to continue these efforts with a new group of students, especially in these areas which support student health and well-being. The CHHS team has strategized and developed some incredible

ideas that might be added to new grant proposals to enhance the current activities. We are excited to see what the future holds!

We also are planning for expanding STEMsational Ag: The Virtual Farm into a new phase with content in multiple languages and an added technical assistance component. Early discussions are taking place to implement opioid use disorder research in other rural Tennessee

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communities, similar to what is currently being implemented in Wilson County through our Rural Communities Opioid Response Program grant, which is detailed below. Lastly, we have been collaborating with the School of Nursing and other community partners on a proposal that is anticipated to be submitted next spring and addresses current needs of the health care workforce specific to long-term care facilities and nursing homes.

With our current portfolio of research, projects, and programs that focus on substance use, obesity and diabetes prevention, foods and agriculture, environmental health, and workforce development, we continue to strive for the highest quality as we make a difference in the lives of Tennesseans and others throughout the nation in these initiatives that have both a Tennessee and national footprint. CHHS looks forward to continuing to serve the public in these important areas.

For those who are not familiar with CHHS, please take an opportunity to visit the [center's website](#) to read more about our work. Previous editions of the CHHS newsletter are posted there, as is additional information on some of the many projects, programs, and research of the center.

Recent CHHS highlights include:

- **Opioid prevention implementation funding—** CHHS recently received a **\$1 million** Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) grant to implement activities and secure needed resources in rural Wilson County communities to address the opioid epidemic over a three-year period. This funding from the Health Resources Services

Administration (HRSA) provides a transition from activities begun in October 2020 under a planning grant from HRSA. CHHS, our campus partners, and Wilson County community partners represented by [DrugFree WilCo](#) look forward to continuing to fight the opioid epidemic and make a difference in the health and lives of Tennesseans. This project was highlighted in the [fall 2021 CHHS newsletter](#), for those who would like to read more.



In wrapping up the earlier planning grant, which ends February 2022, we are planning a training opportunity in December 2021 for Wilson County substance use treatment staff on current billing practices for treatment options for those with opioid or substance use disorders (OUD/SUD). We are also planning six training opportunities in January 2022 for over 350 invited law enforcement officers in Wilson County to learn about new treatments for individuals with opioid and substance use disorders as well as current research in the field. We have a lot of work ahead of us and look forward to it! The work done in Wilson County through this grant may serve as a model for other counties in the state, particularly for data management and tracking of opioid overdoses and deaths. CHHS will continue to work with the [MTSU Data Science Institute](#) as a partner in this important work along with the [Department of Health and Human Performance](#). Future plans include applying for funding in 2022 to address psychostimulants as an overlapping area.

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These efforts will be in partnership with [DrugFree WilCo](#) and will supplement current and future opioid prevention efforts in the county.

- Our 2021 partnership with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation continues to thrive**—CHHS' recent grant to address environmental health and water quality from the [Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation](#) (TDEC), which began in February with involvement from several partners including the MTSU [Center for Environmental Education](#), MTSU [Department of Environmental Health and Safety Services](#), MTSU [School of Agriculture](#), and members of TDEC's Nutrient Reduction Task Force, continues to thrive. Work continues on a toolkit, and multimedia campaigns for identified target audiences focusing on water quality and nutrient reduction are being finalized. The TDEC partnership was featured in the [fall 2021 CHHS newsletter](#) as the "Community Partner Spotlight" and featured project.



and water quality from the [Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation](#)

- Campus-focused mental health awareness grant ends**—CHHS wrapped up its third year of a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant, which supported the Mental Health First Aid program on campus. Since the program's 2018 launch, 1,095 students, faculty, and staff have been trained in Mental Health First Aid. Of those participants, 857 were faculty members or students training to work in one of the helping professions, and 238 were campus staff or community members, resulting in 1,218 referrals to mental health services both on campus and in the

community. CHHS is seeking continuation funding to carry the project beyond October 2021 and also is embarking on a corporate and individual sponsorship campaign to solicit dollars to fund a limited number of mental health training programs on campus until a larger grant can be secured. A funding opportunity has been identified that is expected to post in spring 2022, though dollar-for-dollar matches are needed for the application to be considered. Departments on campus who may be interested in supporting this application are encouraged to reach out to CHHS.

- COVID-19 funded agriculture and STEM education project continues**—Work continues on creating agriculture, health, and STEM-focused materials for teachers, parents at home placed in educator roles unexpectedly, and home-school families in an 11-state area for grades K–14. The effort is funded by a Rapid Response Research on COVID-19 grant that CHHS was awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in the midst of the pandemic. The successful grant application was made in partnership with MTSU [School of Agriculture](#) Fermentation Science faculty. The project launched in October 2020, and tremendous work has been done through efforts of the MTSU team along with stakeholders in the 11-state area. The project team is working diligently to deploy 12 modules comprising 52 units, publishing at intervals throughout the year in support of agriculture, health, and STEM education. The project launched in October

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of 2020 and tremendous work has been done through efforts of the MTSU team along with stakeholders in the 11-state southeastern USDA region.

As of December 2021, there are 14 units available with more in the pipeline to publish soon. Recently, a content editor and accessibility specialist was hired to assist with the tremendous effort involved in preparing content and materials on this scale for dissemination in a multistate area. In November 2021, project staff shared information on the project at the annual meeting of the Rural Health Association of Tennessee in Pigeon Forge.

STEMsational Ag: The Virtual Classroom offers K–14 learners from the Southeast region of the U.S. the opportunity to learn about the exciting world of agriculture through educational materials developed by experts.

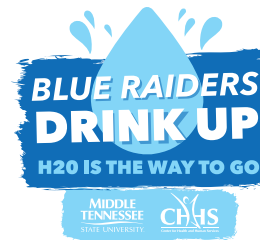


It is available at no cost, and teachers, learners at school, and learners at home have an engaging selection of units to explore. Learners can choose to investigate the amazing life of bees,

what chickens truly like to eat, what it takes to make a pickle, and myriad other interesting agriculture topics. All units are connected to National Agriculture Literacy Outcomes and are available online, via USB, or printed hard copies. Those interested in exploring the units can visit mtsu.edu/STEMsationalAg to create a free account for access to all the units. Learn more about this project in the [spring 2021 CHHS newsletter](#).

- **Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students enters its third year—**

This obesity and diabetes prevention project funded by the Tennessee Department of Health's Project Diabetes initiative has provided opportunities for thousands of



MTSU students through twice monthly campus activities (virtual during COVID-19), access to free counseling sessions with a registered dietitian and/or health coach,

personal training scholarships, and cooking classes. Since the launch of Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students two years ago, the program has gained tremendous momentum and is highly sought out by the MTSU student body. From July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2021, the CHHS team educated more than 2,660 MTSU students on the importance of reducing the consumption of sugary beverages. Blue Raiders Drink Up continues to offer a wide variety of activities such as cooking classes, counseling sessions with a registered dietitian and/or health coach, and 24 educational events per year where students learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Learn more about this project at our [website](#) or in the [summer 2020 CHHS newsletter](#), and later in this quarter's newsletter.

- **Workforce Training and Development: Infant Death Scene Investigation and Safe Sleep project virtual classroom to continue for 2021–22 year—**

With support from University College, CHHS has provided training to more than 34,000 first responders and more

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than 1,700 public health and social services professionals since 2004. Infant Death Scene Investigation training is required for first responders under Tennessee's Sudden Unexplained Child Death Act. As part of the training, responders also learn about sudden unexpected infant death and safe sleep for infants. The externally funded Safe Sleep project offers additional training opportunities for other public health and social services professionals. Over the last year, the training transitioned to a virtual classroom format due to COVID-19, which was a challenge but ultimately very successful with the support and hard work of University College. Trainers and speakers, including the state medical examiner, have historically provided an interactive day-long training for first responders. Transitioning this interactive training to a virtual format that in many cases was unfamiliar to the intended audience was quite the challenge, but it was successful and is being looked at as a model to continue to

complement live trainings when those resume. The virtual option has many benefits, including accessibility to training for first responders across the state who may not be able to travel even without COVID-19 restrictions, increasing opportunities for participation. The project was featured in the [summer 2021 CHHS newsletter](#), for those who would like to learn more. The project has filled a gap in much-needed provider training within the first responder community and within health and social services fields. Virtual training will continue for the 2021–22 grant year.

- **Partnerships and collaborations continue—** We love new partners! CHHS continues to identify collaborators and partners both on and off campus to be involved in CHHS projects, programs, and research. Look for more updates via this quarterly CHHS newsletter, the CHHS website, and social media.

*Cynthia Chafin, M.Ed., MCHES® CHHS
associate director for community programs*

Want to donate to further the work of MTSU's CHHS?

MTSU CHHS operates primarily through external funding. To continue our mission of promoting health and well-being for all Tennesseans and that of our nation, we need financial resources to continue our work. We operate from public and private grants as well as sponsorships and donations.

{ **Please consider a donation of any size, which will go directly to CHHS.** }

Visit mtsu.edu/chhs, click on Donate Now, and specify that your donation is for CHHS. The site accepts MasterCard, VISA, and American Express.

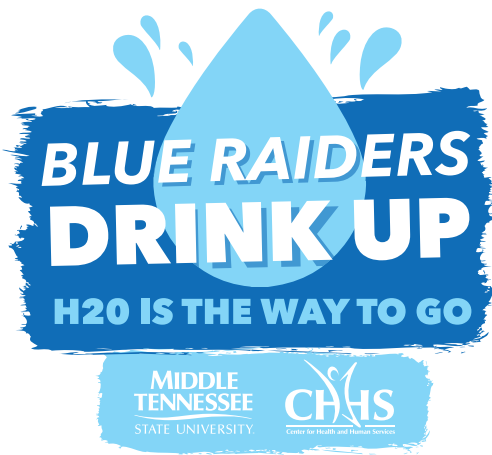
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Project Spotlight

Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students

Since July 1, 2019, MTSU's Center for Health and Human Services has used exciting and engaging activities to teach students to make wiser beverage choices and live healthier lifestyles. This project, **Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students**, was implemented with a three-year, \$444,000 grant awarded to CHHS through the Tennessee Department of Health's ongoing Project Diabetes initiative.



The purpose of the project is to reduce excess weight as a risk factor for diabetes through prevention activities, as well as to implement policy changes on campus that support healthy living. As of December 2021, the project is halfway through its third of three years and has been an incredible success.

As part of the grant activities, students have learned the importance of reducing consumption of sugary beverages as a primary

focus. Activities have included cooking classes and counseling sessions with a registered dietitian, health coaching sessions, and 24 educational activities per year where students have learned how to live healthy lifestyles, including making wise beverage choices as part of a balanced diet. Scholarships to fund personal training sessions have been offered, with 10 students each academic year receiving scholarships. All students seeking health services have had their body mass index checked and when appropriate have been referred to a registered dietitian, health coach, or personal trainer. Nine water refill stations have been installed across campus over a three-year period, and all incoming students receive maps of where these stations are as part of Convocation activities. Current students receive **maps** through educational activities taking place throughout the year.

Follow CHHS on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to learn more about the activities taking place through June 2022 and to follow the great messaging created by and for students. This project is funded under an agreement with the state of Tennessee's Project Diabetes initiative.

A sample of the map is shown on page 7.



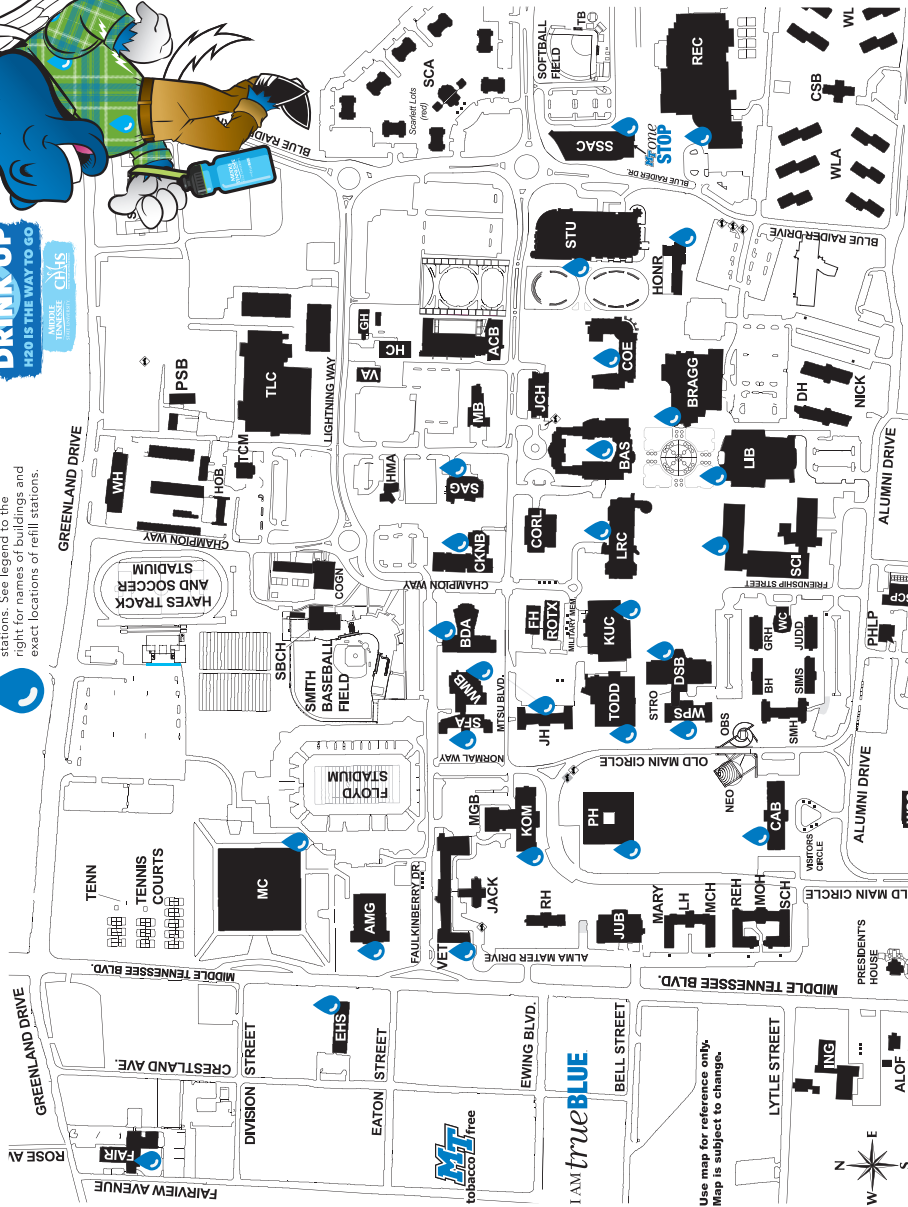
BLUE RAIDERS DRINK UP

Water Refill Stations Map

@MTSU_CHHS



Building with water refill stations. See legend to the right for names of buildings and exact locations of refill stations.



- AMG** Alumni Memorial Gym
1-First Floor, 3-Second Floor*
- BAS** Business and Aerospace Building
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor, 1-Third Floor
- BDA** Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- BRAGG** John Bragg Media and Entertainment Building
1-Second Floor
- CAB** Corps Administration Building
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- CKNB** Casen-Kennedy Nursing Building
2-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- COE** College of Education Building
1-First Floor
- DSB** Davis Science Building
2-First Floor
- EHS** Ellington Human Sciences Building
1-First Floor
- FAIR** Fairview Building
1-First Floor
- HONR** Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building
1-Second Floor
- JH** Jones Hall
1-First Floor, 1-Third Floor*
- KOM** Kirksey Old Main
1-First Floor
- KUC** Keathley University Center
1-Second Floor
- LIB** James E. Walker Library
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- LRC** Ned McWhorter Learning Resources Center
1-First Floor*
- MC** Murphy Center
4-First Floor*
- PH** Peck Hall
1-Second Floor
- REC** Health, Wellness, and Recreation Center
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- SAG** Stark Agriculture Center
1-First Floor
- SCI** Science Building
1-First Floor
- SFA** Saunders Fine Arts Building
1-Second Floor, 1-Third Floor*
- SSAC** Student Services and Admissions Center
1-First Floor, 1-Second Floor
- STU** Student Union Building
1-Second Floor
- TODD** Andrew L. Todd Hall
1-First Floor*, 1-Second Floor
- VET** Voochie Engineering Technology
1-First Floor
- WMB** Wright Music Building
1-First Floor, 2-Second Floor*
- WPS** Wise-Pattan Science Hall
1-First Floor

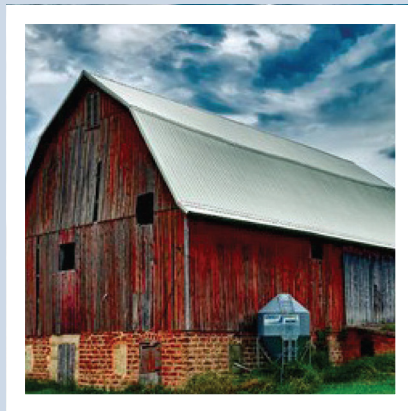
This program is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee.
 * Funded by Blue Raiders Drink Up
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Whom Do We Serve?

The Center for Health and Human Services collaborates with MTSU faculty and staff, and public and private organizations and partners, to develop and implement local, regional, and statewide programs, projects, and research activities designed to improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans and of the nation. Did you know that much of our work involves off-campus initiatives? One of the more

common misconceptions about CHHS is that we solely serve the campus community. While some of our efforts do focus on our campus, the majority of our work is done in communities across Tennessee, some of which serve as models for other states. Our projects have touched all 95 Tennessee counties, with some involving multistate partnerships and others having national impact.



Ash Abro and Rose Chilsen, recent Dietetics graduates and former CHHS staff.

CHHS Campus Resources

MTSU Mental Health First Aid

Over the last three years, 1,111 have been trained through MTSU Mental Health First Aid. Learn more at mtsu.edu/chhs!



Mental Health
FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

To support continuing Mental Health First Aid workshops beyond fall 2021, CHHS is seeking grant opportunities as well as individual and corporate sponsorships and donations. Information on how to donate is available on the [CHHS website](https://mtsu.edu/chhs). Please include a notation that funds are for Mental Health First Aid.

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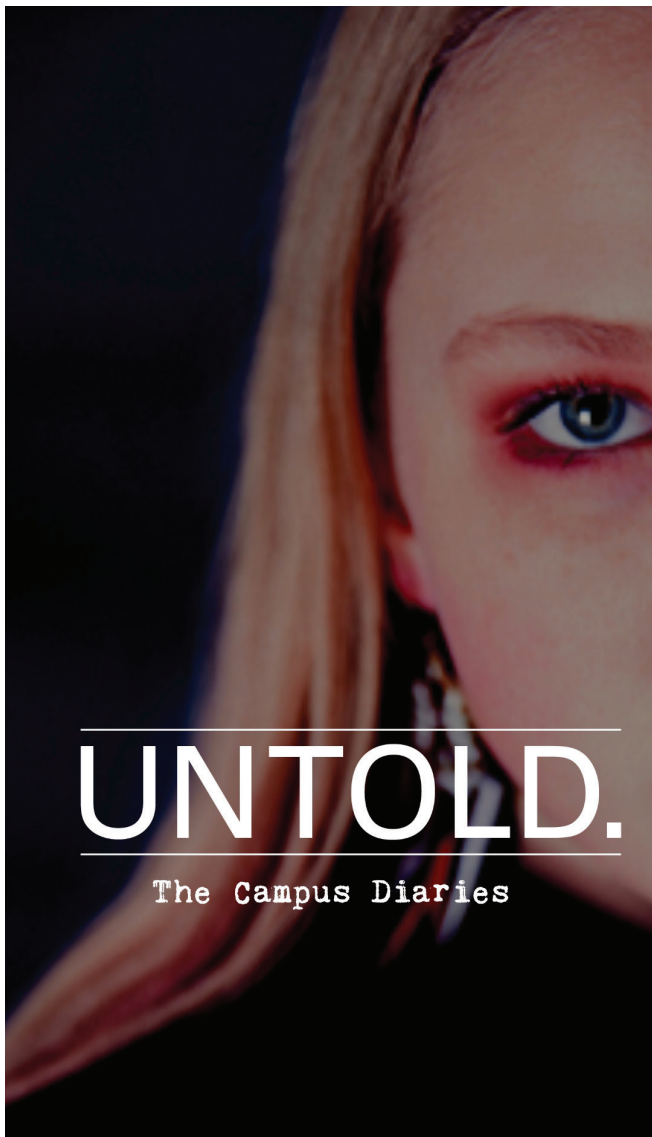
CHHS Continues Partnership with Global UNTOLD Project to Support Students' Mental Health

CHHS sat down with UNTOLD Project founder Karen Shayne to talk about Campus Diaries, the mental health awareness project created on the MTSU campus during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 by one of our own students.

CHHS: "We've shared with readers before about Campus Diaries, but for those who are reading for the first time, can you share a quick summary of what it's all about?"

Karen Shayne: UNTOLD. The Campus Diaries was born from the heart of an intern here at MTSU. While working on a spring 2020 internship for UNTOLD, we were all faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and a complete shutdown. As we all pivoted, our intern proposed a project and called it "UNTOLD: The Campus Diaries." It was designed as a mental health awareness campaign solely for the campus community. It was absolutely perfect. The concept was an online blog submission, completely anonymous, and in a "Dear Diary" format designed to resonate with any student who has faced a challenge, crisis, or difficult period through their college years. Through this online submission, they would be able to share their feelings, stories and challenges of campus life, celebrations of achievements, and their hopes for future opportunities. It also showcases the need for enhanced mental health awareness on university campuses. It was a perfect marriage of creativity. Like other facets of the existing UNTOLD Project, the student's voice could be heard through the art of both conversation and written word. The Campus Diaries allowed for unspoken and silent topics to be given a safe (and anonymous) place, free of judgment, where shared experiences help fellow students through their own hardships. It was a brilliant proposal, and we went for it. We absolutely had NO IDEA what was about to hit us.

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UNTOLD. The Campus Diaries *continued from page 9*



UNTOLD Project Co-founders Karen Shayne and Lorna Dancey, also UNTOLD Project photographer

CHHS: “MTSU CHHS is so excited that our campus was the pilot site for this project. Can you share how you have expanded since then as well as more on what’s ahead with expansion?” (Note: Can lead into the book here and how you are partnering with CHHS to get funding so that every new freshman can have a copy. Also talk about other schools and what you are doing.)

Karen Shayne: UNTOLD. The Campus Diaries literally look on a life of its own. We never expected—especially during COVID—just how many students would start sharing stories. Since the beginning, The Campus Diaries began to grow—even globally—capturing the dramatic impact of student voices.

The Campus Diaries project expanded in 2021 to showcase selected, anonymous student essays in a traveling exhibit that is displayed in high-traffic sites on campus. The UNTOLD team is currently partnering with universities to bring this exhibit to campuses around the world and positively impact mental health in student communities.

Then, in early 2021, another intern assigned to the project began sharing how much they felt a book for the campus community would be beneficial. So again, thanks to an idea, in early 2022, UNTOLD: The Campus Diaries is coming out as an amazing book. This project is a beautiful collection of the unedited entries by those anonymous students combined with dramatic photography. Who knew, right?

CHHS: “What about the fabulous photography? Can you share with readers more about the photography and the photographer?”

Karen Shayne: I love sharing this story. Lorna Dancey and I met in 2019 through the introduction of a mutual friend who saw we had the same passion for storytelling. Lorna Dancey is a photographer, writer, and storyteller from Alberta, Canada. Her work is poignant, and the compelling projects she creates are all compassion-based. She has an incredible determination to help each and every person through her lens, and storytelling lays the foundation for her work. We work so beautifully together, even though we are in two different countries. Our desire together is to be advocates for the silent voice to be heard. We want to build a bridge, not just between two countries through story sharing but to invite a sense of unity among all nations to inspire hope and healing. For Lorna and me, it’s about giving hope, but also helping to create a domino effect for positive change, harmony, and mutual compassion.

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UNTOLD. The Campus Diaries *continued from page 10*

CHHS: “How does the photojournalism exhibit planned for next spring connect to Campus Diaries?”

Karen Shayne: Lorna and I are incredibly excited that UNTOLD: The Campus Diaries will kick off its traveling exhibit in early 2022 at MTSU. Literally, this is the kickoff for the entire Campus Diaries campaign. This exhibit showcases 24 stories and the beautiful photography from The Campus Diaries project. The exhibit itself is three 7-foot-tall towers. It’s breathtaking. Both of us can’t wait to start our journey right where it began—MTSU.

CHHS: “What about your experiences with having MTSU interns assist with the project over the last 2 years. What has that experience been like?”

Karen Shayne: “Enlightening” would be the word that best describes this experience. After all, it was an intern that came up with the idea and an intern that told us we should have a book. Both Lorna and I approach life with an open mind to create change. That’s what the MTSU students have shown us—to keep our minds open at all times. We owe so much to MTSU and the UNTOLD interns. And . . . we might have given them a little dedication in the book. After all, they deserve all the recognition in the world. Funny thing, they may never know how many lives they have helped and also changed. But I guess that’s all about being #TrueBlue, right?!

[UNTOLDPROJECT.org](https://untoldproject.org)

Staff Spotlight

Kayla Huff

Kayla Huff serves as the on-campus registered dietitian working with Health Promotion, Student Health Services, and the CHHS Blue Raiders Drink Up grant. Huff came on board with the Blue Raiders Drink Up team in March 2021 and has fit into the family wonderfully. She received a Bachelor of Science in



Kayla Huff

General Dietetics from Eastern Kentucky University and completed her dietetic internship at Lipscomb University in Nashville.

Huff became interested in nutrition through her own personal battle with an eating disorder. “Nutrition impacts all aspects of life, so it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle; however, when it becomes obsessive, it can be more harming than good,” she said. She is extremely passionate about dismantling the diet industry through promoting “Health at Every Size” and fostering a positive relationship with food and body image.

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STAFF SPOTLIGHT *continued from page 11*

Huff's favorite aspect of the Blue Raiders Drink Up program is "the accessibility it provides to students that they may not have otherwise. Students have access to a registered dietitian



Kayla Huff and Tigg, her rescue dog

and health coach for no cost, when outside of this program, either one of these services can cost over \$100." Since Huff started with the program, she has educated over 89 MTSU students and held over 110 dietetic one-on-one counseling sessions.

When asked what advice she

has for incoming MTSU freshman, Huff said: "You need to put as much work on fostering a good relationship with yourself as you do with school and other individuals." Huff is an empathetic, optimistic, and curious woman with such a bright future. Her favorite quote comes from Peter Pan: "Think of happy thoughts and you will fly."

Huff currently mentors a high school student working on her senior thesis. As for fun, she says "as long as I'm with my dog [a rescue pittie], I'm happy!"

Graduate student Joe Doughert, who has been counseled by Huff, said, "She was both compassionate and thoughtful in her instruction and has offered me words of encouragement through the whole process. Since we all began working together in March, I have noticed positive change in my mental health, my energy, and my general outlook on life."

The staff who works with her will tell you that she is kind, positive, and thoughtful. She has such a bright light, and you can't help but smile when you see her! CHHS is very fortunate to have Kayla Huff on our team.



Taylor Armistead and Kayla Huff at the Mental Health Fair sharing Blue Raiders Drink Up information and education

(See page 16 for Kayla's top three holiday tips for stress-free holiday eating.)

New Employee

Laurie Necasek, M.S.W.

Hello MTSU! I am so excited to be a part of the University. This fall I started working on a grant project with CHHS called STEMsational Ag: The Virtual Farm. My role on the project is serving as an accessibility specialist and content editor for an online course that is aimed at educating learners in grades K–14 about STEM



in agriculture. I am working hard to add content to the course while making it accessible for learners with diverse abilities. Working on The Virtual Farm project allows me the opportunity to provide engaging and accessible

content to young learners and their families, as well as educators.

I have a diverse career background that includes working in both social work and higher ed. I started my career as a clinical social worker, working in the field of mental health. I then

transitioned into higher ed as a disability counselor, where I worked in a community college and supported and advocated for students with disabilities. Later, I moved into an instructional design role and used my experience in the disability field to develop a specialty in accessible online course design. I am passionate about creating accessible online content for users with diverse abilities, and finding solutions to accessibility barriers is my specialty.

On a personal note, I live in the Charlotte, North Carolina, area. I've been contributing to this project remotely. I live with my husband of 5 years, our 2-year-old daughter, and our 9-month-old son. Our lives are very busy with children so close in age and as young as they are, but we are very grateful and enjoy all the moments as a family! I also love traveling to the North Carolina beaches and mountains, cooking healthy meals for my family, and staying active with the kids outdoors. I also enjoy listening to music of all varieties and watching interesting shows and movies. I love a good psychological thriller!

I look forward to meeting and working with you in the MTSU community!

"Exploration is curiosity put into action."

Don Walsh, American oceanographic explorer and marine policy specialist

Intern Spotlight

Nicolle Scheel Lam

Public health has been a fascination for me since my first introduction a few years ago. In spite of the passage of time, my fascination has not dulled but rather developed into a raging passion. As a graduate intern at CHHS, I had the opportunity to work with community partners that provided me with learning



opportunities and enriched my experience with meaningful skills. It is hard to believe that in such a short period of time, I have been able to assist CHHS with two major publications, the Bereavement Support Services

Guide and the Allied Health Directory. Both publications are extremely relevant for the community, and it is imperative that they provide current information to those in need of resources. In the process of updating and revising these publications, I was able to communicate directly with professionals in the health and human services field. I will always have a special place in my heart for the Bereavement Support Services Guide, as it provides a list of SIDS and other bereavement support services across the state and can be used by families and caregivers who have experienced the loss of a child and by professionals who work with bereaved families. As Mother Teresa once said, "We ourselves

feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

Additionally, I had the pleasure of working with Karen Shayne and Lorna Dancey on their global storytelling movement, UNTOLD. Entering the public health profession, I was not aware of the journey I was about to take, but I am certain that I was ready for it. I needed to get away from my comfort zone and experience the world to become the person I intended to be. This internship allowed me to see the importance of community involvement, leadership, and engagement with professionals.

I have an acquainted conviction that a new professional chapter in my life is beginning. I had conversations with remarkable people at CHHS and I could not be happier that I chose this career path. I have no doubt that this internship allows students to prepare themselves to be a highly qualified professional and learn in a healthy environment. Cindy's well-founded strong values, leadership style, and professionalism brings out the best in others. I built a strong foundation during my internship that prepared me for a wide variety of career paths in the public health field. I feel a sort of delicate curiosity for what comes next. I am overwhelmed by the fact that this internship is coming to an end. My internship at CHHS gave me not only academic achievement but also the desire to pursue personal goals. I am continuing this journey enthusiastically with the power to transform the world as this experience has transformed me.

CHHS Team Member Promoted



Christina Byrd

Congratulations to Christina Byrd, M.P.H., CHES® who recently interviewed for and was offered the first full-time CHHS project coordinator position. Byrd was introduced to CHHS as a student intern in 2017 and later was hired part time, working on several CHHS projects and grants while she earned her Master of Public Health degree in the Department of Health and Human Performance. CHHS is pleased to have Byrd as a full-time staff member and values her ongoing contributions to the important public health work of the center.

Campus Partner Spotlight

Student Health Services

The Center for Health and Human Services is halfway through the last year of a three-



Rick Chapman

year partnership with Student Health Services as part of its Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students grant from the Tennessee Department of Health's Project Diabetes funding. As part of this grant, 313 students have received one-on-one dietetics counseling from a

registered dietitian, 243 have worked with a trained health coach, and 10 students per year have received personal training scholarships, all through Student Health Services and Campus Recreation. Students visiting health care providers at Student Health Services are screened for body mass index (BMI) and other

factors that might put them at risk for diabetes and other chronic disease and are referred as appropriate for individual counseling. CHHS is grateful to Student Health Services Director Rick Chapman and Lisa Schrader, director of Health Promotion. Continuation funding is being sought to continue these much-needed services for students beyond June 2022.

"Our partnership with CHHS on the Blue Raiders Drink Up grant has given our medical providers high quality referral options housed conveniently within our clinic. It's great when they can tell students about the support a dietitian or health coach can offer them and then walk them right up to that person for a warm handoff. It also allows for exceptional follow-up care for the students."

—Rick Chapman

CAMPUS PARTNER SPOTLIGHT *continued from page 15*

“I am so thankful for the additional resources and programming we’ve been able to offer as part of the Blue Raiders Drink Up grant,” said Schrader. It had long been a goal of mine to provide nutrition and dietetic consultations to students, as well as



Lisa Schrader

financial support for fitness resources for students, and Cindy and her staff at CHHS were able to bring those goals to fruition. It’s hard to believe we are in the final year, but I know we have documented that a need exists and that students are interested in the services the grant has offered. The

provision of individualized nutrition guidance and one-on-one health coaching has remained robust

even through the pandemic, and I love telling students about the opportunities for such services at no cost to them.

“Over the 13 years that I’ve worked at MTSU, I’ve seen an increase in student interest in nutrition and wellness. Unfortunately, there is a lot of conflicting information out there about those topics, so students seek out and soak up facts provided to them from sources they trust like their student health clinic. Kayla does a great job of meeting students where they are in their relationships with food and working with them towards healthy, productive next steps. It is my belief that if we can set students on a solid foundation for healthy living now, while in the midst of so much transition in their lives, then it will be much easier for them to continue those healthy patterns into their future as other pieces of their lives begin to settle.”

—Lisa Schrader

Kayla’s Top Three Holiday Tips for Stress-Free Holiday Eating



We asked registered dietitian Kayla Huff, who provides dietetics counseling for students as part of Blue Raiders Drink Up at Student Health Services, for her thoughts on how to have less stress about eating and food this holiday season. Here’s what she had to say:

How to Stress Less This Holiday Season

We have officially entered the holiday season of 2021. What?! Everyone knows the holidays looked a little different last year, so there is understandable anticipation for the next few months now that the world is, somewhat, back to normal. You may already be experiencing anxiety in regard to holiday

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HOLIDAY TIPS *continued from page 16*

parties, work potlucks, cookie swaps, and so much more. Some of the tips and tricks I have seen in the past regarding holiday eating include “wear your tightest pants to leave less room for food” and “save up your calories for what you want most.”

You may expect me to follow suit with these “recommendations”; however, I want to encourage you to do the exact *opposite* of the above. I’m a big list maker, and as a higher ed employee or student, you may be as well. So, here are my top three holiday tips for you to consider:

1. Nothing Is Off Limits

When you were little, and your parents told you that you couldn’t have something, didn’t that make you want it all the more? The same works with food. If you go into a dinner saying, “I’m not going to have any pie,” this mentality will only last so long before you are knee-deep in half the pie. Instead of having a limiting mindset, allow yourself to have what you want. When we change our mindset surrounding food (i.e., not setting limitations), we are much less likely to overindulge/binge/make ourselves sick, because it takes the pressure off giving all your energy to avoiding food.

2. Eat Normally

A common theme I see is “saving calories” for holiday meals. This can look like not eating breakfast the day of or having minimal intake the day before a big meal. Another is over-exercising to “create more room.” Each of these actions is part of a restrictive mindset, and as we learned from point No. 1, any type of restriction can lead to overindulgence or a binge. In addition, coming into a meal essentially starving can lead to decisions you wouldn’t typically make and lessens the ability to discern fullness and hunger cues.

3. Food Is Part of the Experience, Not the Only Experience

Food is a major focus during the holiday season. While it is definitely part of the season, it should not be the only focus. Being preoccupied with what you can and cannot eat can diminish the enjoyment of time with family, special experiences, and creating memories. Food is there to add to the experience, not control it.

Allow yourself to feel more freedom around the food this year so you will have more room to laugh, talk, and enjoy the season.



Community Partner Spotlight

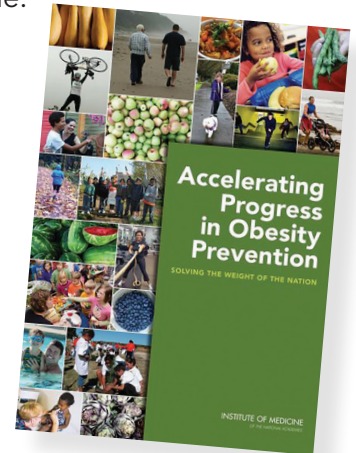
Tennessee Department of Health, Project Diabetes

The MTSU Center for Health and Human Services is grateful to the Tennessee Department of Health’s Project Diabetes team, which supports the work of our Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students project. Without their support, we would not be able to serve the thousands of students who have been served by this project.

Project Diabetes is a state-funded initiative administered by Tennessee Department of Health that awards grants to community partners whose projects focus on reducing excess weight and obesity as risk factors for the development of Type 2 diabetes. Grant activities are geared toward interventions that are applied before there is any evidence of disease.

Currently funded projects such as Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students

are required to draw upon the prevention goals and strategies identified in the report *Accelerating Progress in Obesity Prevention: Solving the Weight of the Nation* issued by the National Academy of Medicine, formerly known as the Institute of Medicine. Priorities for this funding cycle focus on the first two goals of the report, including making physical activity an integral and routine part of life and creating food and beverage environments that ensure that healthy food and beverage options are the routine, easy choice.



Thank you, Tennessee Department of Health for making the Blue Raiders Drink Up: Healthy Choices for Healthy Students project possible!



Collaboration with the MTSU Data Science Institute Continues

CHHS is pleased to have Sara Shirley and Jeffrey Stark with the Data Science Institute as new members of the team working on the data and evaluation component of the CHHS Rural Communities Opioid Response Program grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Both are working under the direction of Ryan Otter, director of the

Data Science Institute. Work has begun on developing data collection protocols as well as an interactive data dashboard for local community resources, and a prototype for a real-time dashboard to report drug overdose deaths, which will be presented to the local community coalition that is served by this grant.



Ryan Otter



Sara Shirley



Jeffrey Stark



Data Science

The Center for Health and Human Services
is a proud partner of the Positive Aging Consortium.



Positive Aging Consortium

Please save the date for the first

POSITIVE AGING CONFERENCE 2022

Please Join Us

FRIDAY, JUNE 10, 2022

Miller Education Center
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Look for registration to open in April.
For more information, visit mtsu.edu/pac.

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