

Abstract

The goal of this Young Scholar Program was to create a collegiate internship focused on implementing statewide *AgFoodLife* experiences, outreach, mentorship and leadership of young rural, first-gen scholars.

Background

- In June 2025, 20 7-10th grade students (ages 12 to 15; 10 males, 10 females), and 10 educators, attended a 3-day camp to learn about *AgFoodLife*.
- Programming included on-campus residential housing, touring campus and agriculture facilities; visiting laboratories on rice, apparel, poultry, ag-technology, and more; visiting with faculty and collegiate students; touring Simmons Foods Poultry Facility and Crystal Bridges, creating their . And finally, presenting and awarding students with a science white lab coat.

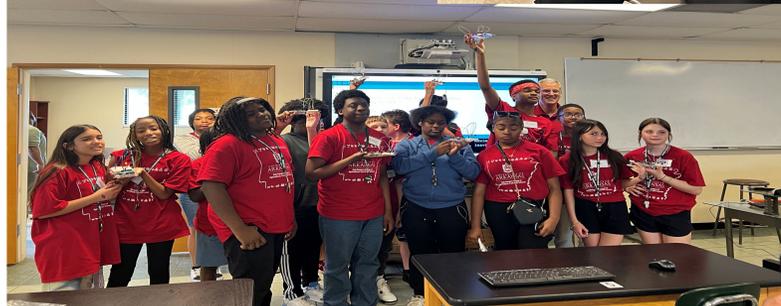


Results

- The Intern was able to develop leadership and mentorship skills by providing opportunities for young students' increased sense of belonging, developing agricultural identity, mentorship, and leadership skills.
- Students rated *AgFoodLife* as Excellent and ranked their favorite sessions as Fashion, Frying Chicken, and cooking with Crystal Bridges.
- In closing, more skilled leaders must be recruited into agricultural fields and trained through land grant colleges of agriculture.

Methods

The Young Scholar Intern implemented the *AgFoodLife* program, including welcoming and mentoring students, leading tours across campus and agriculture facilities and spaces; co-assisting in experiential activities where students were introduced to agricultural topics, including a hospitality-centered experience with the Heartland Whole Health Institute in partnership with Crystal Bridges.



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