



has much to celebrate.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

With jobs back to pre-recession levels, we can focus on our key competitive advantage: *our educational assets*. For a county that according to the 2010 census includes 21,906 souls, we have an abundance of educational opportunities in or near Grenada:

- **15 licensed early care and education centers** including one with 3 quality stars and one with 2 stars
- **A single, consolidated countywide school system** that continues to win recognition in many categories
- **Holmes Community College Degree Programs and Technical Training Center**
- **Holmes' Affiliation with Ole Miss and Degree Program** available
- **Grenada Adult Education Center** (unique in MS, offering GED, Adult Basic, and Literacy all under one roof)
- **Elizabeth Jones Library**
- **4 universities within 60 miles:**
 - University of Mississippi
 - Mississippi State University
 - Delta State University
 - Mississippi Valley State University

"I said, 'Somebody should do something about that.' Then I realized I AM somebody."

- Lily Tomlin

Grenada also faces however, daunting statistics: despite hard won progress in building our base of jobs and reducing the high school dropout rate, recent data show that household income from entitlements continues to climb, that roughly 30% of our county population lives below the poverty line, and estimates suggest that as much as 40% of our population may be illiterate. *No community can thrive with one third of its members not participating.*

What can we do about it? Why do we care?

Early education and child development are getting a lot of attention right now as THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT INVESTMENT a community can make in its future prosperity.

Why focus on early child development?

- At birth, the brain is $\frac{1}{4}$ adult size; by year 1, it is $\frac{3}{4}$ adult size.
- By age 3, the brain is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times more active than the adult brain. Experiences during first 3 years contribute to structure of brain.
- Window of opportunity for brain connections largely closes by age 5. If not formed by then, may never form.
- Parents who cannot read cannot teach their children to read, so the community needs to teach them, for the benefit of all.
- 21st Century jobs require ability not only to meet minimum standards but to learn and relearn, continuously.

How can Grenada afford it?

Yes, we are already strapped for funds. In terms of cold hard cash, however, do we want to produce taxpayers, or tax takers? For every \$1 invested, communities are estimated to earn future returns from \$7 - \$12, equal to or better than average stock market returns.

“A child’s experiences in the first years of life determine whether he or she will enter school ready and eager to learn or not. By school age, family and caregivers have already prepared the child for success or failure. The community has already helped or hindered the family’s capacity to nurture the child’s development.”

– T. Berry Brazelton
Pediatrician & Noted Authority
on Child Development

Where does this money come from?

- Increased tax revenues from higher employment.
- Decreased outlays for public assistance.
- Lower criminal justice and incarceration costs.
- Lower expenditure for remedial education.
- And new employers want to come to places that take education and workforce development seriously.

Where do we stand today?

The 2010 Census evidenced in Grenada County:

- 1,703 children under age 5
- 258 babies born
- 759 enrolled in licensed childcare providers
- 944 children (55% of the total) not enrolled in a licensed program
- 65% of total capacity of 1,162
- 160 people were employed in 15 licensed child care providers

What are we doing about it?

Formed in January, the GCF Education Roundtable now includes some 65 people. With support from the Committee for Economic Development (CED.org), and working with John Williams of DCA, Inc. to organize our actions, we have begun – and we invite you to join us.

Contact us at: GCFER2012@gmail.com. Here is what we are about:

Vision

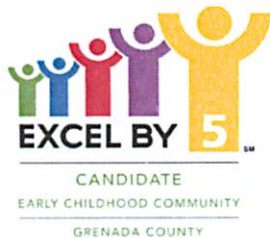
Grenada is a thriving community built on a culture of lifelong learning, known near and far as a place that actively supports the ability of every child and family to reach its full potential. Local entrepreneurs and businesses are encouraged to grow in Grenada – a place that organizations of many types, large and small, are eager to learn from and partner with, and to emulate.

Mission

The GCF Education Roundtable builds an integrated approach to learning opportunities and works to bring its benefits to all Grenada County citizens, including especially its youngest citizens and those not traditionally involved in the educational system, so they may reach their potential and flourish, and help their community to flourish, in the complex economy of the 21st century. We do this by:

- **Bringing citizens from throughout Grenada together** to constantly enrich and nurture their engagement with learning – so that we can prosper both economically and spiritually as individuals, as families and as a community.
- **Helping create partnerships in Grenada and beyond** to leverage Grenada’s most important competitive advantage: the abundance of educational opportunity it provides.
- **Working to bring citizens of all ages and backgrounds into a rich educational environment** that prepares all to reach their potential through learning to learn, and to relearn – skills on which our future prosperity rests.
- **Inspiring and motivating the community** to pursue its vision, especially with respect to our youngest citizens, by clarifying why early education and education in general are keys to Grenada’s economic success.

With deep appreciation to Grenada Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Daigneault and K-1 Principal Dr. Vivian Simmons for their support and enduring dedication. With grateful thanks as well to Mike Petro, William Knudsen & Laura Oldanie of the Committee for Economic Development; to John Williams & Steve Greeley of DCA, Inc.; to Dr. Louise Davis & the entire MSCCRR&R Team; and to Steve Renfroe, Bob Clay, & Gabrielle Phillips of Excel By 5.



Education Roundtable/Grenada County Excel By 5 Coalition

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