



# MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

P.O. Box 157-A, Whitfield, MS 39193  
Phone (601) 351-8018 Fax (601) 351-8364  
www.msh.state.ms.us

---

## **For Immediate Release**

February 2, 2010

Contact: Adam Moore (601) 351-8262, adam.moore@msh.state.ms.us

### **FRIENDS OF MSH THANKS LEGISLATORS WITH APPRECIATION BREAKFAST**

WHITFIELD—Mississippi State Hospital, Jaquith Nursing Home and other Department of Mental Health staff and volunteers gathered on Tuesday, Feb. 2 to honor legislators for their dedication and support of the hospital in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast.

Held at Galloway United Methodist Church, the breakfast is sponsored by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, Inc., a non-profit volunteer organization dedicated to educating the public about mental illness and the needs of the mentally ill. Originally started by former Friends president Gladys Jackson and former MSH Director James Stubbs, it was their way of thanking senators and representatives for their backing in the Legislature.

This year's event began with a quartet of two MSH staff and two JNH residents showing their own thanks by providing some live entertainment with songs, like the well-known "California Dreamin,'" to take attendees' minds off the cold weather that has gripped the area lately.

That thankfulness was again expressed by everyone else who spoke at Tuesday's breakfast.

"I want to thank each member of the Legislature for making mental health a priority," DMH Executive Director Ed LeGrand said. "I know we're facing the most difficult budget year we've seen, and I thank you for the priority you've placed on mental health."

MSH Director James Chastain noted the facility had recently undergone an accreditation survey by the Joint Commission and expected to receive a good report.

"I want to tell you we're very proud of that, and that's something that couldn't have been done without your support," he told the legislators.

Friends board members Joel Ross and Shane Hariel spoke about the passion and dedication with which MSH employees went about their work.

"I'm blessed to be a part of Friends," said Ross, president of the Rankin County division of BankPlus. "Their fundraising and the work they do make life better for patients at Mississippi State Hospital. They are passionate and dedicated in what they do."

Hariel, with Horne LLP, said he has worked with the medical industry for 20 years, and said that those in the mental health field face unique challenges – challenges that the MSH staff overcomes daily.

“It is an extreme compliment to them that they can do what they do,” he said.

The Friends organization dedicates 100 percent of its funds to support a variety of programs and activities for patients and employees at MSH. Those include an annual patient fishing rodeo, an Independence Day fireworks celebration, educational field trips, the Job Placement Program for patients and employee recognition programs.

“Our goal is not to explain mental illness in a clinical way, but we want to send the message that mental illness is a medical condition, and give patients the hope and support they need to seek treatment,” Hariel said.

*MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.*

- 30 -

**PHOTO ATTACHED:**

**THE DREAMERS – A quartet made up of two Jaquith Nursing Home residents and two Mississippi State Hospital staff members provided musical entertainment for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Legislative Appreciation Breakfast. The group sang songs like “California Dreamin’” as part of a theme designed to keep attendees’ minds off the recent cold weather.**

**GIVING THANKS – MSH Director James Chastain was only one of several speakers who thanked legislators for their support of Mississippi State Hospital and the Department of Mental Health at the breakfast.**