Accomplishments

**Youth Leadership Book Drive**

Graduates of the 2015 Pulaski County Youth Leadership program, “Youth Leadership in Action”, donated 323 books to Hawkinsville pediatrician, Dr. Sandra Kopacz. The students completed a four month curriculum last spring designed by the UGA J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development. The goal of the program is to give teens a greater awareness of community issues and identify ways they can contribute to community problem solving. The group decided to hold a book drive in area schools and other locations to collect books for preschoolers. They hoped the books would help the children prepare for school success and learn to love reading. The leadership class partnered with Dr. Kopacz, who will distribute the books to preschoolers at well-child check-ups. Dr. Kopacz’s son, Walter, is a graduate of the program.

_Below: YLA students delivering books to Dr. Kopacz’s office._

Ongoing Efforts

**Middle Georgia STEM initiative kicks off**

Led by the 21st Century Partnership, a community initiative to support Robins Air Force Base, a group of stakeholders were brought together on Sept. 16 to develop a plan to meet the growing need for engineering and computer professionals in the region. Stakeholders from the military and civilian
employers met with representatives from educational resources to begin conversations about encouraging STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) interest in students, and attracting qualified workers to the area. This meeting laid the groundwork for detailed analysis of STEM workforce history in the community as well as the development of accurate projections of future demand. The group will meet again in November to continue this effort. Houston County Schools, as well as representatives from Mercer University, Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, and Central Georgia Technical College participated in the initial discussion.

**Archway & UGA College of Public Health assist with Community Health Needs Assessment**

As part of the Pulaski County Archway Partnership’s Community Health priority, the UGA College of Public Health (CPH) is working with Taylor Regional Hospital to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment. Dr. Marsha Davis, CPH Associate Dean for Outreach and Engagement, held an initial meeting with the community’s advisory committee for the project on Sept. 23. At the meeting, Dr. Davis outlined the process to the group that consisted of representatives from Taylor Regional Hospital, Bleckley Memorial Hospital, Pulaski County Family Connection, the City of Hawkinsville and the Archway Partnership. The group reviewed a survey designed by CPH that will be distributed throughout the community in October with a goal to reach 500 participants. The group’s next meeting will be Oct. 15, when a larger Community Engagement Committee will be brought together to provide input into the Hospital’s Community Engagement Strategy. This process is part of the Affordable Care Act and must be completed by March 2016.