## Deeper Engagement

Academy is a really nice

way to partner research

- Jessica Snowden, M.D.

resources to get a bigger

COMMUNITY SCIENTIST ACADEMY **DELIVERS FOR** RESEARCHERS

ol students who graduated ed Jessica Snowden, M.D., deve

As Jessica Snowden, M.D., was preparing to recruit asthmatic children into a vitamin D study, she needed feedback on the recruitment materials.

The input had to come from her target audience, not adults, said Snowden, associate professor and vice chair of Research in the Department of Pediatrics, College of Medicine.

Snowden is leading the Vitamin D Supplementation in Children With Obesity-Related Asthma (VDORA1)

study. Arkansas is one of 15 states in the study sponsored by the IDeA States Clinical Trials Pediatric Network.

She didn't have to look far to find the perfect group to assist: high school students who had recently graduated TRI's Community Scientist Academy. The 24 Little Rock School District bang for our buck." EXCEL students in the Advanced Medical Sciences Program attended the 10-week course

conducted by TRI's Community Engagement Program. They learned about the research process and met with UAMS researchers.

The academy, typically a six-week program for adults, aims to foster community partnerships with UAMS research. It was a hit with the EXCEL students. Eight became enthusiastic participants in a focus group style meeting with Snowden, coordinated by TRI's community engagement team.

The students dove into the recruitment materials, helping Snowden better frame tricky concepts, such as communicating about obesity.

"It was insanely helpful," Snowden said. "They told me, you need to fix this part of this language and this part of this graphic. They noticed things I didn't notice at all."

Zoe Holland, one of the students, said the work **"The Community Scientist** with Snowden was meaningful. "I like being part of something that's creating change for the good," she said.

> Sixteen of the students also participated in a study related to teen pregnancy, helping assess existing teen pregnancy prevention program materials.

> The students' participation in both studies

represents an exciting new phase of deeper engagement, said Kate Stewart, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Community Engagement Program.

"We wouldn't have had those relationships without the academy," she said. "The students gained an understanding of the value of research and how they could play a role."

Kate Stewart, M.D., M.P.H

## Making a Difference

Esther Dixon.

big one, he said.

community advocacy.

## THE CPEARL AWARDEE ORGANIZATIONS ARE:

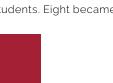
Arkansas Hispanic Health Coalition

**Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation** 

**Better Community** Development, Inc. **Difference Makers of Hot Springs** Leaping Beyond

**Our House** 





NEW CPEARL PROGRAM HELPS COMMUNITY GROUPS ADDRESS HEALTH

"We've conducted three focus groups, which tell us that access is the key," said Wade, who founded the nonprofit Difference Makers of Hot

Dixon, executive director of Difference Makers, and Wade have been refining their approach Academy in 2016 and gained insights that helped them draw a tighter focus on their wide-ranging

of Community Partners Educated as Arkansas Research Leaders (CPEARL), offered by TRI's Community Engagement Program in partnership

The CPEARL program includes a 6-week course targeting leaders at community-based

Rev. Willie Wade and Esther Dixor

Health disparities have common threads that organizations in Arkansas. It is designed to are plain to see for the Rev. Willie Wade and nurture research partnerships and teach skills that will help the organizations be more effective. The participating organizations also receive up to \$2,500 in seed funding to implement a realworld project.

Springs in 2014. Lack of access to health care Not yet midway through the program, Dixon involves many barriers, but transportation is a said it had already helped hone her survey development skills.

"I have been able to use what I learned to perfect and build on the survey that we're putting to the issue with assistance from TRI. They out now," said Dixon, who was elected to the both attended TRI's first Community Scientist Garland County Quorum Court in 2018. "It has helped us to more systematically determine our target audience."

The survey will be used to determine residents' This year they are part of the inaugural class top five health concerns. An action plan for addressing those health concerns will follow.

> Dixon and Wade said the CPEARL program had also improved their grant writing skills, helping them land a \$1,000 Blue and You grant from Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield.