

'Biggest Loser' winner to help fight childhood obesity

The Clarion-Ledger

Expect to see Patrick House on the forefront fighting childhood obesity.

Now that he's the winner of NBC's *Biggest Loser*, House, 28, is preparing to share his experience and knowledge with others both in and outside his native state.

"I feel so fortunate to have been given the opportunity to go on *The Biggest Loser*, and I want to spread all of the knowledge and information that I have learned to try and help the people of Mississippi," he said via e-mail on Saturday. "I hope that I might could partner with the state Legislature and Gov. (Haley) Barbour's office to raise awareness about obesity, and make some huge changes in the statistics of obesity in our state."

House, a married father of two young boys who has been living in Vicksburg, will focus on

childhood obesity. He has accepted a position at Mindstream Academy, a school for overweight teens, in Bluffton, S.C.



House

said.

House's victory will allow him to be a role model for children, said Dr. Gerri Cannon-Smith, who has a say in childhood obesity advocacy training with the state chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Be Our Voice project.

"Anything that highlights the fact that you can do it is very helpful because so often people get a little fatalistic because

"What better way for me to fully embrace the Pay it Forward theme than by fighting childhood obesity at Mindstream Academy," he

ON THE NET

■ Patrick House's website: www.biggestloserpatrick.com

(obesity) is a chronic condition," Cannon-Smith said. "It takes quite a while to get to the point of obesity and it takes quite a while to lose weight."

House will be an effective, inspirational voice, said friend Angela Ladner, 43, of Jackson.

"He knows the children are the future," Ladner said. "He knows that we have got to really educate our kids."

Ladner, who has been associated with House's family for more than 20 years, marvels at the transformation House has undergone in the last seven months, from being down on his luck and obese to a healthier, new life and the winner of

\$250,000.

Starting the reality show at 400 pounds, House had lost 181 pounds when he was declared the winner over two others Tuesday night during the season finale.

"He just didn't want to be a competitor," Ladner said. "He wanted to win."

Being unemployed was a blessing in that it allowed House to focus on achieving his goal, she said. He lost his job as a food service representative in January.

The support of his wife, Bradley, a preschool teacher, and other family members was key, Ladner said.

His story shows that "if you are dedicated to something, it can be done," she said.

As a winner, House said, he now has responsibilities he must uphold. "I owe it to my family, the fans of the show, and fellow *Biggest Loser* alumni to maintain and keep this weight off," he said.