

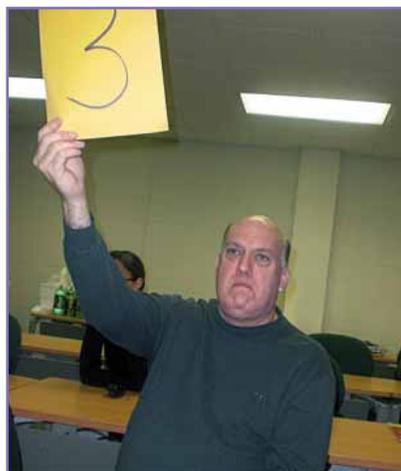
# MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

MID-ATLANTIC REGION SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN

## VIRGINIA WIC HOSTS OFF-SITE MEETING

**O**n January 22, the Virginia Division of WIC and Community Nutrition Services held an off-site division meeting. Each work group presented their accomplishments for the year in their own method. The presentations ranged from beauty pageants and game shows to musicals and prose. The meeting was not all fun and games, though, as we also included mandatory training elements and a workshop on the bestselling book, "The Fred Factor." We also invited individuals from other offices within the Virginia Department of Health to present on topics relevant to the Division. This meeting was an outlet for creativity and lighthearted fun, and the atmosphere fostered a comfortable learning environment. Virginia WIC knows that learning can be fun. ■



**CREATIVE PRESENTATIONS** – The Virginia WIC meetings were full of interesting presentation including one by Operations Liaison Mike Burns (photo on right) and another by Breastfeeding Coordinator Rebecca Shively (photo on left).

## MAKING LEADERSHIP MATTER AT NEW JERSEY WIC

By Janice Pedota, MBA, MS, RD

**D**uring the spring of 2008, New Jersey WIC Services conducted regionalized VENA/customer service trainings for all WIC local agency staff. At these trainings, local agency staff identified additional training needs. A significant number of local agency staff identified that management and leadership skills development trainings were desired. In response to this request, NJ WIC Services hosted a two-day Management and Leadership Facilitative training in November 2008 for WIC coordinators, nutrition supervisors and office

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## PENNSYLVANIA'S SHENANGO VALLEY WIC CHILDREN RECEIVE DONATED CHRISTMAS GIFTS

By Lauriethel Bloodsaw, Outreach and Retail Store Coordinator

**T**he Southwest Garden Economic Development Corporation in Farrell, PA, selected Shenango Valley Urban League WIC Program to be the recipient of Christmas gifts for all the WIC Program children. This was the first year the corporation provided this community service to the WIC Program and the staff were grateful. All the gifts were wrapped and labeled for a boy or girl and included the age. The parents and the children were overjoyed to receive these special and unexpected gifts! ■



**IT IS BETTER TO GIVE** — Sickle Cell Coordinator/Office Technician Kimberly Lampkins presents holiday gifts to Jessica Boatwright and her daughter, Jasmine.

## SPRING 2009

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## NEWS FROM THE USDA: MARO'S "CHANGING SEASONS, CHANGING WIC" STATE DIRECTORS' MEETING CONVEYS CHALLENGES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

In keeping with the theme of this year's meeting, "Changing Seasons, Changing WIC," the challenges facing public managers in 2009 and beyond were highlighted during the November 18-19 meeting held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Hamilton, New Jersey.

MARO Regional Administrator Yvette Jackson welcomed attendees and shared opening remarks on the Regional WIC state of affairs. Patricia Daniels, Supplemental Food Programs Division Director, addressed national issues and 2009 national priorities. Regional WIC Director Diana Limbacher and staff presented information-packed sessions devoted to new and revised Program regulations and important WIC updates.

Topics included the new food package, Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment, vendor management, funding, information technology, and Program promotion. The meeting provided a forum for cross-program coordination as Food and Nutrition



REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR YVETTE JACKSON



SFP REGIONAL DIRECTOR DIANA LIMBACHER

Service staff representing Financial Management, Civil Rights, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the Special Nutrition Programs were on-hand to discuss cross-program collaboration and partnership opportunities. The agenda included a discussion of re-engineered Field Operations' responsibilities and Regional coordination efforts for disaster response and recovery. There were also many

opportunities for State representatives to share experiences and successes on new state initiatives, best practices, and technology advances.

Overall meeting evaluations provided excellent feedback regarding information sharing and the use of creative, innovative presentations by WIC staff to recognize states for their successes. Kudos to all involved in a successful annual meeting! ■



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### WEST VIRGINIA'S LOGAN COUNTY WIC HELPS KEEP SANTA HEALTHY

During the month of December, West Virginia's Logan County WIC Program educated families on benefits of low-fat milk for their children over two years of age. Samples of whole, 2%, 1%, skim, and super skim milk were offered during one of their group nutrition discussions.

The focus was to get participants to taste each, encouraging substitution of milk with higher fat content, to a lower fat choice. To help enthruse children to try tasting, staff enlisted some help from Santa (played by Annie Rose), who told them that since "he" drank so much milk (to wash down all those cookies) while delivering presents, he appreciated getting the low-fat milk so that he could be healthier and help keep his cholesterol down.

WIC Nutritionist Yvonne Mauk explained the importance of making healthy choices for snacks, such as serving lower-fat cookies made with whole grains and fruit instead of sweets containing lots of sugar. The West Virginia WIC's *Carlos & Clarice Mooove to Lowfat Milk* booklets were given out while Santa read from it. Both parents and children enjoyed Santa, samples and gifts. Learning ways to be healthy was fun! ■



**EVEN SANTA PREFERS LOW-FAT MILK** — WIC participants in Logan County got a surprise when Santa visited the clinic to urge them to taste low-fat milk.

## DC WIC EMBRACES STAGES OF CHANGE

By Akua Woolbright, PhD, Public Health Nutritionist and Breastfeeding Coordinator and Gwendolyn West, CCE, IBCLC, RLC, DC WIC State Agency

On January 15-16, the District of Columbia WIC Program held the two-day annual training in Maryland's state-of-the-art Training Center. This year our theme is: "Embracing Stages of Change" as part of our efforts to motivate and prepare our staff for various food package, breastfeeding, VENA, and policy implementations. Much of the first day was dedicated to VENA and included presentations on critical thinking, rapport building and breastfeeding and health outcomes.

Gwendolyn R. West, CCE, IBCLC, CLA and Akua Woolbright, PhD, conducted an informative and inspiring presentation on "Establishing Rapport to Promote Breastfeeding." They told the group that rapport building starts on the "inside" of each of us. We have to want to relate to each other, and we have to believe that it is possible. If we take the time to look inside others, chances are we will often find out that we have some things in common. This realization paves the way for real connections and bonds to happen.

We can start the process by addressing ourselves first, and examining ways we can do the following: (1) Believe that change in ourselves and others is possible; (2) Adopt positive attitudes about life, work, and others; (3) Be the change we want to see in the world and others; (4) Make small changes within ourselves; and (5) Initiate small changes in our places of work. We move in this direction by identifying and addressing our own emotions, limitations, frustrations, fears, habits, thought processes, belief systems, behaviors, and reactions. Real change is about addressing our own internal feelings and attitudes.

After we have practiced incorporating these core values we can start to see positive changes in our relationships and interactions with others. To prepare yourself for positive outcomes, you might start each day with a meditation, prayer, positive reading, breathing exercise, physical exercise, yoga, quiet time, or whatever settles and calms you. Start your day by doing something that clears

your head so that you can focus on positive thoughts and intentions for the entire day.

***Stress Buster Tips:** Take a break and do a brief breathing exercise, exhaling negative thoughts and emotions and inhaling positive ones. Stand over the sink with the water running. Let the sound of the water relax you, and actively imagine ill feelings going down the drain. A modification of this exercise involves flushing negative emotions down the toilet. You can use your breaks to briefly recall a positive experience or favorite vacation spot. Be in this space for a moment. Finally, laughter (even when faked) is the best medicine. Find a place where you can be alone, and just laugh deeply until your sides hurt. If faking it is too much of a stretch for you, bring in a CD of your favorite comedian and listen to it during your breaks. Talking with a co-worker who makes you laugh is also helpful. When you laugh "happy" hormones are released, making you feel better.*

Our attitudes about our jobs, our lives, changes that we face, and others carry a lot of power and can dictate how we approach people and the things we have to get done. The good news is that at any moment, we can choose to feel differently about something (or someone) and in so doing create a new set of experiences, interactions and outcomes. We each have the power to: BE the change we hope to see in the world, as well as in others; EMBRACE the belief that change, in ourselves and others, is indeed possible; and LIVE by the concept that it takes two people to argue, but just one person to stop an argument.

These basic concepts can lead to more positive and productive relationships in our personal, and professional, lives. In WIC, even when a co-worker or participant is being difficult, we have the power to "choose" to remain calm, pleasant, polite, professional, and helpful. By changing who we are on the inside, we can develop the lenses that allow us to see things from the other person's per-

spective, and consider that they may be having a bad day, dealing with some bad news, expecting to be treated poorly, or a number of other possibilities. Our focus should remain on the participant and on being our best selves despite what is going on around us. By doing this, we will be able to treat our participants with respect and understanding, which will lead to a closer bond and better rapport.

*"Your behavior communicates a lot. What are you saying?"*

The goal is for us to always:

- Try to identify with the participant
- See things from their perspective
- Find commonalities (we may be more alike than we realize)
- Approach people with "open curiosity"
- Allow time for them to vent and share
- Be nonjudgmental
- Start where THEY are, and move from there
- Go the extra mile
- Give extraordinary customer service
- Kill them with kindness
- Offer a smile, it goes a long way

We work hard each day to serve our participants, so let's commit to doing our jobs in ways that honor them and us. You may not be able to achieve a complete change in yourself or your work, but the key is to start where you are and to do what you can. Making absolutely no change will guarantee that you will have the same exact attitudes or be in the same exact situation this time next year, while taking one simple step can move you in the direction you want to go. We can create more positive experiences for our participants, and ourselves. The power is ours. The time is now. ■

## ALL AROUND PA'S SHENANGO VALLEY URBAN LEAGUE WIC PROGRAM

By Elizabeth Lampkins, LPN, WIC Director

### Holiday Wishes

Shenango Valley Urban League WIC staff took part in the decorating of their office doors for the Christmas Holiday. The children loved to look at all the door decorations! There were doors wrapped up like a present, gingerbread men, and even Santa with his elves, which was decorated by Valerie Dixon, Nutrition Aide.



### A Nutritious Adventure

Shenango Valley Urban League WIC staff decorated their nutrition educational board with a treasure hunt. The boat was called the S.S. Nutrition and N.R. Gee was the Captain's name. Each treasure hunt stop on the map uncovered the secrets to a balanced diet. The buried treasure was the Pyramid with the correct food groups.

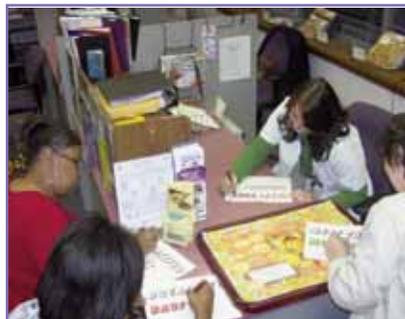


### Getting The Message

Every month, some Shenango Valley Urban League WIC staff help with creating the Breastfeeding theme board by coloring, drawing, and laminating. In the photo at right, Nutrition Aide Valerie Dixon,



Competent Professional Authorities Gabby Thomas and Jessica Waskin, and Breastfeeding Coordinator Doreen Scarmack are busy at work! The other photo depicts a Christmas theme that was used in December, with stockings hung with each infant's name. ■



## PUERTO RICO WIC SUPERVISOR EARNS NUTRITIONISTS AND DIETITIANS' CHOICE AWARD FOR 2009

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist, Puerto Rico WIC Program

The Puerto Rico Department of Health and the WIC Program are honored to join in the recognition given to Gueisha Bermudez-Torres, Supervisor of Nutrition, WIC Region Ponce, for receiving the 2009 Presidential Award for the Nutritionist-Dietitian in the State Government, which is given by the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Puerto Rico. This distinction awards her diligence, effort, commitment and excellence in the performance of work for the Puerto Rican community.

She is recognized by her participation in and organization of Community Services beyond her responsibilities in the WIC Program. For 20 years she has emerged as Nutrition Services Supervisor in WIC Program, Ponce Region. She is a pioneer in the services of private practice and has been the leader of the South Chapter of the College of Nutritionists and Dietitians of Puerto Rico. She is also certified as a lactation, diabetes and kidney conditions educator.

All of us at the Puerto Rico WIC Program feel proud and honored to work with such a dedicated professional. Congratulations to Gueisha Bermudez-Torres! ■



GUEISHA BERMUDEZ-TORRES

## WIC HAS A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME IN GAITHERSBURG, MD

By Charlene Pe-Gerharz, Director  
CCI-Montgomery County WIC Program

On October 1, 2008, the dream of CCI's Gaithersburg (MD) WIC Clinic staff was finally realized when they moved to a new location. While the new facility is located in the heart of "Old Towne" Gaithersburg, it provides ample free parking for participants, staff and visitors and is accessible via public transportation.

The space is 4,500 square feet, surrounded by windows, and designed to provide improved clinic flow for certification activities. There is a huge classroom for group nutrition education classes, breastfeeding promotional activities, facilitated group discussions, and targeted nutrition education activities to address specific needs of participants. There is also a dedicated breastfeeding room, where breastfeeding moms can comfortably feed their babies in a breastfeeding-friendly environment; as well as several lab/office combination rooms, a large waiting room, and a separate break room for staff with modern amenities (to make them feel at home!).

Participants as well as visitors have commented on the very pleasant atmosphere and much safer clinic environment. With this much improved, spacious facility, CCI-Gaithersburg has an even greater opportunity for providing quality services to an ever-growing population. ■

*Making Leadership Matter continued from page 1*  
management staff.

At this customized training, 50 attendees, led by Mark Kremen of Training Unlimited, Inc., engaged in interactive learning activities that focused on leadership qualities, team building, staff empowerment, and effective communication skills. The two-day workshop concluded with the attendees developing individualized action plans for continued leadership success in their workplace.

The training was interesting and fun, but most importantly, informative. The evaluations were overwhelmingly positive and attendees stated that the highlight of the trainings was the group discussions and exchange of ideas and solutions for management and leadership challenges they share. ■

## MEET DELAWARE WIC'S NEW EMPLOYEE

By Carolyn Sudler, Management Analyst III

**M**y career started right here in this building (Blue Hen Corp Center, Dover, DE), in 1997 at Aetna Health Care. I worked there as a Claims Benefit Specialist for the Special Project Unit. I was responsible for adjudicating complex health insurance claims. The knowledge I gained from Aetna led me to the State of Delaware, Department of Health and Social Services. In 2004, I was hired as a Medicaid Services Specialist for the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance. My primary responsibility was the management of the Delaware Hospice Program. I was responsible for ensuring eligible Hospice clients were receiving all palliative care benefits available. In May of 2008, I expanded my career to the Department of Labor as a Management Analyst II. I participated in the implementation of the new health care payment system for the Office of Workers' Compensation. Because the health care payment system was new, I had the opportunity to "mold" and create guidelines, policies, and procedures related to the new program.

I have learned a great deal about the WIC Program in the few weeks I have been working here. As a Management Analyst III, I am responsible for the management of the current WIC data system as well as the implementation of a new data system.

I began my training observing at the WIC clinic in Dover. I was very impressed with the staff and their knowledge of the WIC Program. It was very interesting observing the interactions between the Nutritionists/Social Services Technicians and the clientele. While working in such a fast-paced environment, they took the time to educate each client about the new Food Packages that were recently changed.

In getting to know my new co-workers, I discovered the many dedicated years several staff members have invested here. Many have worked for WIC for well over 15 years — that alone says a lot about the WIC Program and what a wonderful place it is to work! I am anxious to begin my journey here and I am looking forward to learning and contributing to the WIC Program, and all aspects of my position, for many years to come. ■



CAROLYN SUDLER

## VIRGIN ISLANDS WIC PROGRAM TAKES PART IN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OUTREACH AT THE ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL FAIR IN ST. CROIX.

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

**T**he Annual Agricultural Fair in St. Croix (VI) is held every year in February and it is a place to showcase agricultural produce, such as live-stock, plants, local fresh fruits and vegetables and indigenous dishes. This fair has grown now to a big three-day event held on President's Day weekend and many other vendors showcase their wares, including the telephone company and the oil refinery.

This year, the health department, under the theme "Wellness is our way of Life," sponsored a tent and performed health screenings such as cholesterol and blood pressure testing and administering immunization shots. WIC participated with a table providing outreach information about WIC, nutrition education pamphlets and even had a game about guessing portion sizes of popular foods.

More than 50 individuals received information from the WIC table at the fair. ■



**READY, WILLING AND HIDING —** WIC Nutrition Aide Linora Perez (hidden by sign) holds up a poster while preparing WIC's table at the Agricultural Fair.



**PATIENT PEOPLE —** Patrons wait for services at the Agricultural Fair.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S CABELL WIC EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN AN EMPLOYEE "BIGGEST LOSER" CONTEST

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

**W**IC strives in disease prevention and promoting a healthy lifestyle for families. As WIC employees, it is important that clients see us as positive role models and can turn to us for advice on how they can fit a healthy lifestyle into their busy lives.

Valley Health Cabell (WV) WIC Registered Dietitian Jackie Archer launched a wellness program for WIC and Valley Health employees approximately five months ago. Jackie began the program by starting a "biggest loser" contest. Eleven employees completed the first 10-week contest. Each employee paid \$1 per week for the weigh-in. If they gained weight during that week they paid an additional \$1. The winner was the person who lost the biggest percentage and they received all of the money that was collected during the contest.

Hazel, a Valley Health employee, won the first contest. Many of the employees wanted to continue the contest so we restarted the contest for another 10 weeks. Our second contest winner was Clara Cremeans, a WIC office assistant. Clara participated in both contests and lost a total of 32 pounds by the end. In addition to the weight loss, Clara received more than \$125 in cash that was collected during the second contest.

In addition to the contest, team members offered support to one another during pot luck parties as well as lunch and learns during each 10-week program. Thanks to the support of many employees in the Valley Health organization, both contests were successful. We hope to continue promoting workplace wellness in the future. ■



**"BIGGEST LOSER" IS A BIG WINNER** – WIC Office Assistant Clara Cremeans (left) won the employee "Biggest Loser" contest launched by WIC Registered Dietitian Jackie Archer (right).

## MARYLAND'S MID-SHORE WIC TRAINS SIX NEW BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELORS

By Carol Smith, IBCLC, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator  
Mid-Shore WIC Program

**I**n early November, six young mothers, along with three of their babies, attended a three-day *Using Loving Support in Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Training Program* at Mid-Shore WIC's Denton office. Facilitated by Lactation Consultants Carol Smith and Flossie Rollhauser (Anne Arundel County WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator), the interactive training focused on best practices for helping WIC clients breastfeed their babies, including "breastfeeding basics" and effective counseling methods such as active listening and use of open-ended questions.

Three of the attendees, Melinda Robinson, Fernanda Mordente, and Katie Yockey, are breastfeeding peer counselors for the Mid-Shore WIC Program; Maria Gonzalez is a peer counselor for the Anne Arundel County WIC Program. Two mothers from the Mid-Shore area, Sarah Cohoon and Jamie du Hoffmann, also completed the training. Gabriella, age 2 months, James, 3 months, and Lily, 6 months, assisted with their intimate knowledge of breastfeeding and made the training more fun for everyone. ■

## NEWS FROM PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTHWEST

By Leisa Shawley  
CASW Information Technology Manager

### Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Awards

**C**ommunity Action Southwest WIC Program, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Coalition, solicited nominations for a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Award. WIC participants nominated three Washington County employers to receive recognition as Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces because they have made the extra effort to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding mothers. These employers are The Washington Hospital in Washington, PA; Wal-Mart of Washington, PA; and Mental Health Association in Bentleyville, PA.

The award was funded by the US Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Women's Health. The awards were presented by Rosa Snyder-Boyd, MS, IBCLC, WIC Director at Community Action Southwest. Congratulations to these employers, who have made a difference in the lives of breastfeeding mothers and their babies!

### Holiday Spirit in Action

**K**aren Ringer, WIC Clinic Specialist for Community Action Southwest, purchased over more than 90 mittens and decorated a "Mitten Tree" during the month of December. She said, "What a joy it was to watch the children pick out a pair of mittens." CASW thanks Karen for her generosity and caring nature toward her clients! ■



**A TREE OF WARMTH** — WIC children selected mittens from the tree during December.

## LINCOLN COUNTY (WEST VIRGINIA) WIC AND LINCOLN STARTING POINTS PARTNER TO PROMOTE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE DIET OF YOUNG CHILDREN

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD Nutrition and Outreach Coordinator

In November, WIC did a presentation at Lincoln County Starting Points on increasing fruits and vegetables in children's diets. WIC discussed the importance of each of the different colored fruits and vegetables. We also encouraged parents to use fruits and vegetables as educational tools such as learning colors of different fruits and using them for counting. We reviewed with the participants upcoming changes to WIC food packages and how that might help increase fruit and vegetable consumption in their households. In addition, we made the "toss it up" salad recipe to encourage fresh vegetables. ■



*YUMMY – Vegetables are easy to introduce with the "toss it up" salad, which is being enjoyed by young WIC participants.*

## PUERTO RICO WIC NUTRITIONIST REVEALS HOW FATHER'S SUPPORT INCREASES INITIATION AND DURATION OF BREASTFEEDING

Vilma Ortiz-Santiago is a nutritionist in the Puerto Rico WIC Program Nutrition Division. As part of her master's degree requirements of Maternal and Child Health Program, Graduate School of Public Health, Medical Sciences Campus, University of Puerto Rico, she investigated the relationship between the support provided by the infants' fathers and the initiation and duration of breastfeeding in a group of parents whose children participate in the WIC Program.

The sample consisted of 126 fathers of infants participating in the WIC Program. The investigation results were that the breastfeeding initiation can be affected by self-efficacy, beliefs and knowledge of fathers regarding breastfeeding. On the other hand, exclusive breastfeeding is positively affected by fathers' attitudes and beliefs and their knowledge about breastfeeding. The infants' fathers' support is part of the confidence, the mutual help, during the process of breastfeeding. The fathers' beliefs with relation to paternity and paternal responsibilities determine his behavior towards the exercise of the decision to breastfeed. This is influenced by the culture, opinion and beliefs of the significant persons to the mother, but the partners being the most important. Fathers have an impact on the incidence of breastfeeding through their participation and influence on the infant feeding practices. Regardless of race, level of education or marital status, women who said that their partners preferred breastfeeding for their infants, initiated breastfeeding.

The thesis counselor, Dr. Ana Parrilla-Rodriguez, presented the investigation results in the Poster Presentations of the 13th Annual International Meeting of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine "Breastfeeding: The Road to Health" in October, 2008. The thesis was awarded with the second place of poster presentations.

The results obtained in the investigation serve as basis to consider the initiative to integrate partners of the pregnant and breastfeeding mother in all breastfeeding initiatives and educational plans in our WIC Program.

For more information, you may contact Vilma Ortiz-Santiago at [viortiz@salud.gov.pr](mailto:viortiz@salud.gov.pr). ■



**VILMA ORTIZ-SANTIAGO**

## FACILITATION SKILLS TRAINING FOR NEW JERSEY WIC SERVICES STATE NUTRITION STAFF

By Trish Zecca, MS, Public Health Consultant | Nutrition, NJ WIC Services

In FFY 2008, New Jersey WIC Services State nutrition staff held meetings to discuss local agency training related to VENA implementation. The plan was for three days of regional trainings for all local agency staff on the following topics: Rapport Building, Critical Thinking and Health Outcome Based Assessment. The first day of training would be conducted by Cathy Carothers and Kendall Cox from Every Mother Inc. while the remaining trainings would be led by State nutrition staff.

State nutrition staff determined that they needed to enhance their own skills in order to deliver effective training to the local agencies. Staff collaborated with their Human Resource Development Institute to customize a two-day, Training Facilitation Skills course to help prepare state staff to lead the VENA competency trainings.

During the course, staff learned how to facilitate adult learner activities using the actual VENA curriculum content and built competencies needed to conduct an effective training program. The instructor, Dr. Amy Ackerman, modeled effective facilitation behaviors, shared training tips and demonstrated interactive activities and techniques to engage participants. During day two of the training, each staff person was videotaped leading an interactive group activity and provided feedback from the instructor and participants on their use of the recommended presentation and facilitation skills. Leaders were evaluated on their ability to effectively use visual aides and media, communicate directions clearly, guide the discussion, summarize feedback, answer questions effectively, stay within established timeframes and hold the interest of the group.

State staff utilized the techniques learned during the course to completely revamp the planned trainings to include more interactive activities and hands-on skills practice for participants. State staff, in teams of two, led 36 day-long trainings for 400 local agency staff over the course of six weeks. Attendees included nutritionists, coordinators, and breastfeeding and support staff. The Training Facilitation Skills course gave State staff the extra confidence, platform skills, techniques and credibility necessary to conduct a very successful training program for the local agencies. ■

## FARMERS TO WEST VIRGINIA SHENANDOAH WIC: THANKS FOR BEING THERE!

In an effort to boost redemption rates for Farmers' Market vouchers, Shenandoah's Mineral County and Berkeley County WIC offices dispatched its staff to go to the farmers to set up voucher distribution.

As a result of this on-site action, the agency had a state-high 95% redemption rate. Shenandoah Farmers' Market Coordinator Beth Taylor said that this is a sure way that the vouchers will be used.

Local Agency Director Mitch Greenbaum manned the mobile unit at Berkeley County's Orr's Farmers' Market, where \$750 worth of vouchers was spent in two days. The participants were extremely grateful to come out to the farm and actually pick berries, and other fruits and vegetables. Some parents shared that this was the first time their child saw where the fruit was grown.

Sometimes the staff has to brave the heat, rain and wind, but in the end the experience is rewarding and fruitful. ■



*GOING TO THE PEOPLE — WIC Employee Beth Taylor greets WIC participants at the Farmers' Market to distribute benefits, assist them with shopping for fresh fruits and veggies, and supporting partnerships with local farmers.*



*CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES — WIC participant Jessica Aldridge receives her Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers and purchases her items all in one location.*

## PENNSYLVANIA'S YORK BUSINESSES SUPPORT YORK COUNTY WIC PROGRAM

By Barbara Graham, Administrative Services Coordinator

Local York County businesses supported the Community Progress Council, Inc. (CPC) WIC Program in York, PA during Christmas. Belco Credit Union contacted Barbara Graham at CPC to donate 325 brand new teddy bears from the Hershey Bears Teddy Bear Toss for the WIC children.

Dallastown Medical Practice also donated new hats and gloves for participants and the York Literacy Council donated books for the WIC children for Christmas. CPC made goodie bags for the parents with a WIC key chain, coupon for Clorox products, WIC pen and pencil, WIC note pads and a WIC magnet with the phone number and name of their local WIC office. Many thanks to these York County businesses for supporting their local WIC Program! ■



**A BEARY GOOD DAY** — *Shyann Estep receives her teddy bear.*



**BEAR HUG** — *Rudolph Creekmur III gives his teddy a bear hug.*

### NEW JERSEY'S ST. JOSEPH'S WIC PEER COUNSELOR OFFERS HOLIDAY WISHES

The following poem was written by Jezmarie Aponte, a Peer Counselor at St. Joseph's WIC Program in Paterson, NJ. She distributed it to all of her co-workers.

*To All My WIC Girls,*

*This holiday poem is for all of you,  
Who are so wonderful at what you do.*

*You greet each mother and child,  
With a warm loving smile.*

*And every time you accept a family,  
You instantly make them grateful and happy.*

*You hand them their WIC checks,*

*And your kindness they're sure to never forget.*

*So on this very special holiday of gratitude and giving,*

*Don't just be grateful that you are living.*

*Be thankful to work where you are helping families  
get on a healthy good start.*

*And feel blessed that you all have such understanding  
and caring hearts.*

*I personally am grateful to be working with you all.*

*Nothing you do is unrecognized or small.*

*I am thankful to know so many beautiful women,  
Who chose to have this job that helps mothers and children.*

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!**

### CHANGING THE CULTURE FOR BREASTFEEDING AT NEW JERSEY'S ST. JOSEPH'S WIC

By Opal Horvat

The St. Joseph's Healthcare System WIC Program in Paterson, NJ, recently made some changes to how breastfeeding promotion and support services are delivered and we are seeing results beyond our expectations. We designated a private room that has a rug, curtains on the windows, a couch and a glider and can seat eight women at a time. Breastfeeding DVDs play continuously either silently or on low volume.

When breastfeeding dyads or pregnant women come in for services, they are seated in this room. We ask the moms to take their babies out of their carriers and hold them. Naturally, the babies start rooting. We are able to help them with any questions or problems. We notice the mothers watching the videos and mimicking them. For example, some moms have removed babies' clothing down to the diaper. This has become a social time where one mom can learn from another. We are able to provide individual breastfeeding help and complete the assessment tool for each woman. Breastfeeding discussions spring up spontaneously and the pregnant women are learning from the breastfeeding women.

It is beautiful to see how pregnant women are being influenced to breastfeed by being exposed to other women breastfeeding their infants. We are changing the culture for the women who come to this office. The pregnant and new moms can see the normalcy of breastfeeding throughout the agency. We hope this will empower them to breastfeed wherever they go. ■

## HOLIDAY PHOTO COLLAGE FROM COMMUNITY PROGRESS COUNCIL, INC., IN YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

By Barbara Graham, Administrative Services Coordinator

The Teamsters Union Local 776 and the CPC York WIC Program have collaborated together for the last 16 years to make sure 3,028 WIC children had a joyous holiday. The teamsters again this year gave a wonderful holiday party for some of the WIC children, who may not receive gifts without the teamster members purchasing gifts for them. The selected participants went to the Teamsters Union Hall to sign up their chil-

dren age seven and younger for the Angel tree. The teamsters' members take the names from the tree and purchase items the parents specified for their children. Then a party is organized where Santa distributes the gifts and each child has their picture taken with Santa to give to their parents as a gift. The WIC staff (Santa's helpers) volunteer to make cookies for the holiday party and the children's take home goodie bags. ■



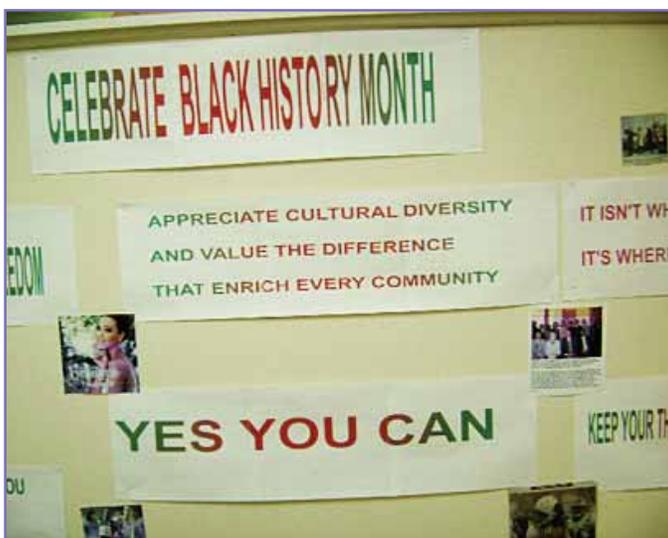
*SPECIAL MOMENT — Teamster representatives Mandy Day and Kittie Hake accept a plaque of appreciation at the CPC, Inc. annual dinner. What a great partnership this has been!*



*ELVES — Santa's helpers at the "Christmas for Kids Holiday Party."*



*HO HO — Santa (Art) at the Teamster Union Local 776 of York County "Christmas for Kids Holiday Party" on December 6, 2008 at the Union Hall.*



*CELEBRATING HISTORY — CPC York WIC Program made a wall display to celebrate Black History Month.*



*BOO — Halloween at the Community Progress Council (CPC) York WIC office was a scary site as well as fun! The WIC children and parents enjoyed the WIC staff dressing in costumes. Pictured are Nutritionist Olivia Sabo, Secretary Jennifer Borges, WIC Director Beverly Wilson, and Clinic Manager Rhonda Dixon.*

## DC WIC Has VENA FEVER!

By Cheryl Funanich, MAEd, RD, LDN, and Anne Spaulding, MPH, RD, LD,

In January, the District of Columbia WIC State nutrition staff implemented a successful VENA training by focusing on a simple concept of “practice what you preach.” The basic formula was to provide information, ask feedback questions, listen and assess the audience’s knowledge, beliefs, and attitude about VENA. Our VENA presentation outlined rapport building, critical thinking, and health outcomes. We used VENA training resources available through the WIC Works website, R.I.T. materials (videos and documents), and training materials from other state agencies such as Texas and Maryland.

The positive energy resulted from presenters and attendees (CPAs and techs) working together. We worked to sharpen critical thinking skills through case studies and role play, relax through meditation techniques, and focus on health outcomes by viewing WIC VENA training videos. Even though the attendee’s VENA post-test revealed an average score of 94, everyone had a 100 percent score that day for their positive attitude toward implementing VENA.

The training day ended with an energetic group activity assessing everyone’s motivation regarding VENA. When asked to creatively answer in five minutes “How DC WIC will change in 2009?” each group created a jingle involving the implementation of VENA. There was excitement in the air, cheer, singing, rapping, and overall group support for VENA as DC WIC local agencies (Children’s, Howard, Mary’s Center, and Unity)

announced their following marketing themes:

- “VENA WIC’s New Year’s Resolution!”
- “VENA is the very best at treating customers with respect when they come into WIC. They get nutrition knowledge for better health.”
- “VENA...motivates...encourages...empowers individuals and communities to discover a healthier lifestyle change.”
- “You can change whatever U want to. You can change whatever U need to.”
- “VENA 4 health is the way 2 go....”
- “Motivate families for Change to improve health outcomes!”
- “VENA is the change we want to see in ourselves.”
- “Yes we can make a change. By letting our participants lead the way, we are implementing VENA starting today. Yes we can make a change. VENA is here to stay!”

DC WIC Director Gloria Clark congratulated everyone’s VENA victory and affirmed that VENA is here to stay! ■

## MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 1. Erie, PA. April 23.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 2. Erie, PA. April 24.
- NJ WIC New Food Package Training. Burlington, NJ. April 29.
- NJ WIC New Food Package Training. Newark, NJ. May 7.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 1. Pittsburgh, PA. May 5.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 2. Pittsburgh, PA. May 12.
- NJ WIC New Food Package Training. Camden, NJ. May 12.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators’ Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. May 14-15.
- NJ WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 1. Trenton, NJ. May 29.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 1. Harrisburg, PA. May 21.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 2. Harrisburg, PA. June 16.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 1. West Chester, PA. June 2.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Training Part 2. West Chester, PA. June 23.
- NJ WIC New Food Package Training. Trenton, NJ. July 28.
- NJ WIC National Farmers’ Market Conference. Atlantic City, NJ. October 12-16.
- Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo (FNCE). Denver, CO. October 17- 20.
- The deadline for the Summer issue of MARWIC TIMES is May 15, 2009. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures used. 5” x 7” digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC PROGRAM RECOGNIZES DEPARTING BREASTFEEDING PEER COUNSELOR

By Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD, WIC Outreach and Nutrition Coordinator

West Virginia's Valley Health WIC Program recognized Teresa Rickman at its staff meeting with an appreciation and service award. Teresa began her service to WIC over 15 years ago with the breastfeeding peer counselor program became an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. Teresa would go above and beyond for her breastfeeding moms and has even come in on weekends to get breast pumps to provide to moms in need. Teresa has been an asset to WIC and breastfeeding moms.

Teresa recently completed her bachelor degree at Marshall University and plans to use her degree for social work. Co-workers will miss Teresa and so will our breastfeeding moms. We appreciated Teresa's hard work, dedication, and time she provided to the WIC Program. ■



*A SAD GOODBYE — Teresa Rickman will be sadly missed as Valley WIC celebrates her dedication to the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, and wishes her the best in her career advancement.*

## HARVEST TREATS AT PENNSYLVANIA'S ACHD/McKEESPORT WIC

Allegheny County Health Department WIC Nutritionists Denise Konrad and Angela Bhattarai wanted to offer healthy food choices for kids on Halloween! They prepared cereal treats for the participants seen in the WIC office. It was a great way to interact with the children and demonstrate that healthy foods taste good! ■



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