

MARWIC

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

PUERTO RICO WIC DIRECTOR HONORED WITH "VALUES OF THE YEAR IN HEALTH" AWARD

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist

Puerto Rico WIC Director James O. Rivera Miranda was recently honored with the "Values of the Year in Health" Award, given by the Senate of Puerto Rico.

The Honorable Senate of Puerto Rico, along with its President, Hon. Thomas Rivera Schatz, and Vice President Hon. Margarita Nolasco Santiago, honored "Values of the Year in Health" award recipients on December 3 in the Hall of the Senate Presidents of the Capitol.

They recognized a select group of professionals committed to the health of our country. Among those honored was Miranda, cited for "promoting initiatives in nutrition through messages and educational campaigns." ■



IT'S AN HONOR — Puerto Rico WIC Program Director Jaime O. Rivera Miranda (center) is flanked by Health Commission President Senate Hon. Angel Martinez "Chayanne" (left) and Senate Vice President Hon. Margarita Nolasco Santiago.

MARYLAND'S CCI-WIC IMPROVING OUTREACH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS

By Rose S. House, RD, LDN, Nutrition Education Coordinator, CCI-Montgomery County

This past fall, Maryland WIC's Community Clinic, Inc (CCI) launched a new and improved website. A portion of this website is dedicated for WIC to assist current participants, potential participants, vendors and health care providers.

The new CCI-WIC website provides helpful information for people who want to apply for the Program, as well as referral forms for community organizations or healthcare providers who want to refer people to WIC. Participants who are already enrolled can get useful information, such as authorized foods and vendor locations. The website pro-

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VIRGINIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATES IN EVENT PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

USDA Power Panther and Virginia WIC Program's Franny the Foxhound were special guests during an obesity prevention event held January 20 at the Virginia State Capital. The event, Healthy Youth Day, promoted physical activity and health with Virginia's legislators. Over 250 public school children, Virginia Department of Health and several University mascots participated in the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) sponsored event.

VA's first lady, Maureen McDonnell, during her keynote address, shared ways that the Governor's family has achieved active, healthy lifestyles through sports and recreation.

VDH's obesity prevention program, CHAMPION, provided pedometers for each of the participants and demonstrated to the youth how to use the pedometers to track daily physical activity. VDH also sponsored two special guests - the VA WIC program's Franny the Foxhound and the USDA's Power Panther mascot - to spread messages about healthy lifestyles. ■



CELEBRITY CITING — VA WIC Program's Franny the Foxhound hugs VA's First Lady Maureen McDonnell.



GROUP HUG — Donna Seward, Director of the VA WIC Program (center), celebrates the inaugural Healthy Youth Day with USDA's Power Panther and VA WIC Program's Franny the Foxhound.

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Focusing on the FNS priority to end childhood hunger by 2015, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and WIC State Agencies formed "The MARO WIC Partnership Committee to End Childhood Hunger by 2015." The primary goal of the Committee is to improve WIC Program access and to increase WIC participation in the Mid-Atlantic Region. The desired key outcomes are:

- Improved Clinic Infrastructure that Supports Increased Participant Capacity
- Improved Access to WIC, FMNP, and SFMNP
- Motivated Clinic Staff Accommodate WIC Clients' Needs
- Mid-Atlantic State WIC Agencies Reach Greater Numbers of At-risk Women, Infants, and Children

The Workgroup's immediate focus is to find effective solutions to the following barriers: ineffective phone, call center, and appointment scheduling systems; limited office hours, participant volume

exceeding clinic capacity and infrastructure; low staff morale, and lack of effective prescreening tools. Subgroups have been created and are researching best practices in WIC and other agencies as well as other service providers. The Workgroup developed a regional matrix of statewide toll-free numbers, web-based prescreening tools, effective auto-dialers systems, efficient open access scheduling systems and call centers, and extended hour solutions.

An important component of this partnership is to provide funding to WIC State agencies to make needed program improvements. States were asked to access current program access needs and to submit proposals for regional operational adjustment (OA) funds. We were pleased with the level of response from State WIC Programs throughout the region.

Here are a few examples of how MARO States will use these funds to improve customer service:

District of Columbia plans to use OA funds to purchase a new mobile WIC unit. During FY 2008 and FY 2009 the DC WIC mobile unit provided services at eight different sites, reached residents living in medically underserved areas and enrolled over 2,000 participants. However, a new unit is now needed.

New Jersey's OA project, *Relocation, Integration and Expansion of NHCAC WIC Program*, will create a North Hudson County One-Stop WIC Program site by merging the Union City and West New York sites into one centralized facility. The increased space and consolidated resources will allow more participants to be served and enhance WIC services offered to clients.

Another one of the NJ's OA projects involves implementing an automated appointment reminder system that hopes to decrease the number of missed appointments and potentially increase caseload in St. Joseph's 17 sites.

NJ's OA project, *Weekend Hours for Passaic WIC Program*, will expand WIC services to include Saturdays in Passaic and the surrounding communities. This will allow better appointment opportunities for working moms and full-time students, decrease waiting times for certifica-

tion appointments, and provide for 1,560 additional appointments per year.

Pennsylvania's WIC Program will be developing a "Rural WIC Community Service Hub" using its awarded OA funds. This plan involves acquiring and renovating a centrally located site near five existing rural satellite clinics. The new clinic will allow for expanded hours of operation, increased caseloads, and coordination of services with other programs from the Community Action Partnership of Cambria County (CAPCC) Local Agency.

PA's OA project, *Demystifying The Maze*, involves the renovation and co-location of Lawrence County WIC clinic with the Adagio Health Inc. Local Agency's medical office in order to increase referrals to other social service programs. This initiative will ultimately foster improved customer service and community relations, in addition to bolstering staff efficiency and morale.

Puerto Rico is receiving OA and Infrastructure funds to better serve the WIC population. One of PR's OA plans involves implementing an automated call system that will deliver appointment reminders to WIC applicants/participants. The system will use the existing database in order to segment customers, monitor resource availability, and deliver each contact to the most appropriate resource at the clinic, region, or central office levels. In addition, this project will assess the feasibility of leveraging the automated system as a pre-certification tool.

PR will receive Infrastructure funds to extend hours in all of its clinics twice per week and establish one "satellite" clinic in each of its seven regions. This nine-month project, which will allow for Saturday clinic operations and one extended weekday per week, is projected to incrementally increase participation in all of the island's 93 clinics.

West Virginia WIC participants in Wetzel and Tyler counties will finally have a "Place to Call Their Own" thanks to FY 2010 OA funds awarded to the WV WIC program. The funds will allow WV to purchase a modular office in Paden City that will improve services by providing a safer, healthier work space and a reorganized clinic structure.

For a full list of FY 2010 OA Projects,



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please refer to the Mid-Atlantic Supplemental Food Programs Partner Web Community located at <https://www.partnerweb.usda.gov>.

In order to find practical solutions for ending childhood hunger, the Mid-Atlantic Regional WIC Program has established an electronic mailbox to capture ideas and suggestions. We invite all of you to take a few moments to submit your thoughts to the following address: wiccustom-erservice@fns.usda.gov. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH LINCOLN COUNTY WIC DOES PRESENTATION ON HEALTHY HALLOWEEN TREATS

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

In October, West Virginia's Lincoln County WIC office teamed with Lincoln County Starting Points to provide caregivers of pre-school age children information on healthy Halloween treats. Since Halloween is a time children receive mixed messages about healthy foods, we decided to focus on ways we could provide healthier snacks and to help combat mixed messages children may receive. We discussed negotiating a time frame candy would stay in the house, such as two weeks after trick-or-treating, and then it would be trashed. In addition, WIC offered other suggestions, such as setting curfews on how long children would stay out for trick-or-treating and limiting the amount of candy children could eat per day.

We also focused on healthy treats adults could pass out, such as fresh fruits, pre-packaged apple slices and carrot sticks, raisins, pretzels, granola bars, and non-food treats such as pencils, crayons, stickers, and temporary tattoos. In addition, we discussed the importance of good oral hygiene during this time due to the increase in carbohydrates in the diet.

At the end of the session, the caregivers and children made healthy trail mixes with whole grain cereals and other foods to show how healthy treats can be simple and fun to make. ■

SUPPORTING STAFF THROUGH CHANGES WAS THE FOCUS OF TRAINING FOR DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WIC STAFF

By Alexandra Bender, Community Health Intern

On January 27 and 28, staff from the District of Columbia WIC Program attended a two-day training program in the Maryland WIC training facility designed to help us recommit to our shared vision/mission statement and share best practices and lessons learned related to the new food package. Unlike the four previous trainings conducted in 2009, this training was used to check the progress of food package change implementation and to introduce the plan for studying Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) feasibility.

DC WIC Director Gloria Clark was the ring-leader for the two-day event. She described the need for each staff member to reassess the utility of their favorite items in their "tool bags" in order to make room for new valuable and unique items to help them throughout their work at the WIC clinic sites. Ms. Clark and State staff focused on expanding resources in said tool bags to enable clinic staff to feel more empowered in explaining the new changes to participants.

Guest speaker Dr. Maya Rockymore, Director of the Leadership for Healthy Communities in DC, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, addressed the current state of childhood obesity in the District. Dr. Rockymore spoke of the importance of policy changes and how government officials have the power to change lives. Policy is the main focus of Dr. Rockymore's work. She used this opportunity to elaborate on the importance of staff working together to improve the quality of life for the individuals we serve.

Dr. K. Aleem-Hilton, an organizational management consultant for the Metro Transit Authority, spoke about the importance of good customer service when dealing with clients. Her main points were to listen, reverberate, empathize and communicate. We acknowledged that sometimes sensitive situations arise, but this is no excuse to side-bar good customer service. As part of her talk, Dr. Aleem-Hilton led groups as they brainstormed about who their internal and external customers are in addition to the customer's expectations, leaving staff with a better understanding as to the members of their support system.

As part of the customer service and VENA initiatives, name tags were created for both DC State and local agency staff. The name tag policy is meant to help staff display a more personable manner resulting in enhanced rapport-building with clients.

All staff members received a Survival Kit which included a compilation of all materials created to assist them with the New Food Package and the VENA initiatives. Each kit contained updated materials, many of which were available in both English and Spanish to better reach the substantial Hispanic population of DC.

Along with pre-existing tools for the tool kits, new plans were announced to embark on switching check distribution to EBT. Staff was informed of the many benefits of EBT, such as the participant's ability to purchase items individually instead of using an entire check containing multiple items. EBT will allow mothers to have greater freedom when choosing food items to be purchased during grocery trips. In addition to client benefits, WIC staff will have a greater ease in adjusting foods at the client's request and the ability to monitor food purchasing trends. The current system challenges staff when participants request food package changes, sometimes resulting in false void check claims. According to Ms. Clark, upgrading to the electronic system is still at least three years away.

Finally, DC staffers were excited to hear of the first fully breastfeeding mother of twins' food package issued during January. State and local agency staff discussed the details and complexities of the food package along with tips and tools for guiding participants.

The topics covered during the two-day event were created to add tools to each member's tool bag and better improve customer relations with their participants. Leaving the event, many of the staff appeared more confident in their abilities and showed support for the future of DC WIC, predicting a fruitful road ahead. ■



HEAR ALL ABOUT IT -- DC WIC State Nutritionists Cheryl Funanich (left) and Anne Gaines discuss updates on the new food package.

NEWS FROM PENNSYLVANIA'S SHENANGO VALLEY URBAN LEAGUE, INC. WIC

By Elizabeth Lampkins, Project/WIC Director

Open Houses Promote the New WIC Food Package

Pennsylvania's Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. WIC Program held Open Houses at two primary clinics on September 16 in Farrell; and September 23 in Oil City. These were great opportunities to provide participants, WIC partners, and the community information about the new WIC foods that were available to WIC participants effective October 1.

Recipes using the new foods were available for everyone to sample.



SMOOTH — EFNEP Advisor Jana Sharp (left) made fruit smoothies that Holly Byerly (right) and her son, Logan sampled at the Farrell office.



TASTING THE GOODIES — WIC participant Colleen Sterner (left) samples foods at Oil City office along with Holly Corey, CPA/CM (center) and Elizabeth Lampkins, Project/WIC Director.

Recipes included Cold Whole Grain Brown Rice Salad, Tofu on Wheat Bread, Tortilla and Peanut Butter Triangles, and punch with Juicy Juice.

Holiday Cheer

The Shenango Valley Urban League, Inc. WIC staff wanted to provide holiday cheer in these tough economic times and had a prize drawing at two of their clinic sites. Raymond Ondic received a large Christmas stocking stuffed with gifts donated by staff members. The gifts included health preventive items such as hand sanitizers, wipes, tissues, bubble bath, liquid soaps, and educational and fun toys and games for the children. ■



LUCKY WINNER — Raymond Ondic was the winner of a large stocking stuffed with holiday items.

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS MEDICAL CENTER WIC HOSTS IRON CHEF CHALLENGE FOR STAFF

By Amanda Reyes

As October 1 was set for New Jersey's implementation date for the new food packages, Jean Malloy, Director of NJ WIC, provided words of encouragement via a letter to local agencies. Trinitas Regional Medical Center WIC provided a unique training experience for staff members as they had a face-off competition to create original recipes that featured the new WIC foods.

Inspired by "Cook By the Seat of Your Pants," Nutritionist Amanda Reyes created a program that would utilize the ingredients from the new WIC food packages. The program was designed to help staff become more knowledgeable about the new WIC food packages in addition to raising their awareness of the challenges our participants encounter in meal planning with a limited budget, ingredients, and utensils. In addition to the pantry filled with only WIC-approved food items, the heating sources available to staff were limited to microwave ovens, hot plates, and a toaster. Staff was assigned to teams led by a nutritionist with the responsibility of creating part of the four-course meal — appetizer, salad, entrée, dessert, and beverage to be eaten later in the day. Each team worked together to create original recipes.

The feast consisted of eight simple dishes reflecting various cultures: Stuffed Tuna Mushrooms, Open-Face Sardine Toast Points, Mixed Green Salad w/ homemade Italian dressing, Fruit Salad Spanish Style Compote, Falafel Mediterranean Style, Cucumber-Tomato Salad, Japanese Tuna Salad, Brown Rice, Southern Salmon Croquettes and Caribbean Plantains and Pear Apple Crisp. To quench the thirst, a choice of Peanut Butter Punch, WIC Vitamin Drink and Berry Soy Smoothie accompanied the dishes. Each team presented their dish and discussed the difficulties they encountered in cooking with limited resources, utensils and foods. The learning experience began while shopping. The staff became more confident in their own Iron Chef Challenges. This hands-on experience was very meaningful as they acquired a new appreciation and awareness for our WIC clients and the new food packages. ■

Maryland's CCI-WIC continued from page 1

vides participants access to healthy, kid-friendly recipes, contacts for community resources and links to other nutrition websites.

The website is available in English and Spanish to accommodate the majority of the CCI-WIC community.

Future plans for the website include expanding outreach efforts to participants through current social media outlets, such as Twitter and Facebook, by linking to the CCI-WIC webpage on these sites. CCI-WIC welcomes everyone to become a fan and/or join the group, *CCI-Women, Infants and Children Program* and follow us on Twitter, *CCIWICProgram*. Please pass the word on to everyone you know, so that CCI-WIC can reach out and assist as many people as possible.

Check out CCI-WIC's website at www.cciweb.org. All comments, suggestions and feedback are welcome. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S RANDOLPH-ELKINS WIC COLLABORATES WITH LOCAL COLLEGE ON CIRCLE OF LOVE SUPPORT GROUP

Teresa VanHorn, a nursing student with Davis and Elkins College, received grant funding for a collaboration project with West Virginia's Randolph-Elkins WIC Program establishing a breastfeeding support circle. As breastfeeding rates in West Virginia fall below the national average, the overall goal of the project was to improve maternal and child health by promoting a longer duration of breastfeeding.

The support circle group was open to expectant parents and breastfeeding families enrolled in the WIC Program and throughout the community. Four meetings, featuring refreshments and door prizes, were hosted at the Elkins, WV WIC clinic. "Breastfeeding Basics," a slide show presentation by local pediatrician Dr. Mary Boyd, kicked off the series. Davis and Elkins College professor, Dr. Ruth Tunick, presented "Stressed Out" in conjunction with a fruit smoothie party for session two. The third workshop focused on going back to work, including a five-minute make-up party. In conclusion, baby slings were made during session four, "Breastfeeding in Public."

Teresa and WIC staff encouraged the participation of the "Circle of Love" group to continue meeting beyond the dates of this project to further develop an on-going support group. The focus of sharing and networking among families is a proven strategy to support lifestyle changes, including those needed for longer duration of breastfeeding. ■



MORAL SUPPORT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE — The "Circle of Love" breastfeeding support group is a collaborative project between Davis and Elkins College and WV's Randolph-Elkins WIC Program.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY WIC REACHES OUT TO LATINO COMMUNITY

By Bonnie Mellott, Pennsylvania WIC Education/Outreach Coordinator

Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, Outreach Coordinator for PA's Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program, is committed to working closely with the Latino population in Allegheny County. La Jornada Latina, the first Spanish newspaper in Pittsburgh, interviewed her and wrote an article about WIC participation, benefits, and WIC exhibiting in a Latino Health and Information Fair in May 2009. The 3½-hour fair was a huge success with approximately 45 vendors and over 1,000 participants. Carol provided a table of WIC information and enlisted Jennifer Dugan, dietetic intern for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center Shadyside, to translate for her during the event.

Dr. Diego Chaves-Gnecco is one of the founders of the health fair and runs a free clinic in the Southside section of Pittsburgh. Carol has been working with Dr. Diego for the past two years and they have collaborated on classes for pregnant and post-partum moms and their babies. This is a wonderful partnership and a great outreach opportunity! ■

WILLING TO SERVE: ONE WAY VIRGIN ISLANDS WIC SERVES SPANISH-SPEAKING POPULATION

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

Serving our Spanish-speaking participants effectively is one of our continuing goals and accordingly, Virgin Islands WIC uses various methods to accomplish this goal. Recently, our WIC staff teamed up by scheduling a few Spanish-speaking moms who attend the Charles Harwood Clinic, to come for WIC services one morning and arranged for our bi-lingual nutrition aide, Linora Perez (a 29-year WIC worker), who serves in our Sunny Isle WIC clinic, to spend the morning at the Charles Harwood clinic to interpret for these moms.

Staff also uses the services of a Spanish translator who works for Virgin Islands Perinatal Inc., a collaborator program with the Department of Health, but due to a previous assignment, this individual could not provide the service to the participants on their scheduled appointment date. WIC staff also communicates with Ms. Perez telephonically to provide Spanish translations.

The "willing to serve" motto continues as VI WIC commends Doris Mae Williams, a nutrition

aide at the Charles Harwood clinic, who recently retired in December 2009 after working for 30 years with WIC, but agreed to return and provide 75 hours of service until her replacement is on board. We want to wish Mrs. Williams the best in her retirement when we actually let her go. ■



ALWAYS TEACHING — Bilingual Nutrition Aide Linora Perez (seated, right) instructs WIC participant Orquidea Cepeda (seated, left) how to identify and shop for the WIC-approved, low-fat powered milk that is favored by many of our Spanish speaking participants.



LEARNING FROM THE BEST — Lissette Martinez (seated, left) is served by Doris Mae Williams (seated, center) and Linora Perez (standing).

THE RICHARD O'TOOLE PEDIATRIC FUND ASSISTS PITTSBURGH AREA WIC FAMILIES

By Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, Outreach Coordinator
Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program

Richard O'Toole, Jr. established The Richard O'Toole Pediatric Fund named for his late father who was a noted pediatrician in Pittsburgh. Mr. O'Toole has organized new farm stands in Allegheny County located near two WIC offices in Downtown Pittsburgh and at the Focus on Renewal office in McKees Rocks. His primary aim is to bring nutritious fresh fruits and vegetables to families at risk for poor nutrition. Mr. O'Toole has named his effort "Markets on a Mission" that provides education to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder that affects pregnant women and their unborn children. The effort is also helping WIC participants eat better as poor nutritional status may increase during pregnancy.

Mr. O'Toole provides free reusable shopping bags that have the Pediatric Logo to WIC families for transporting their produce. All produce is locally grown at Kailen Farm in Franklin Park in Allegheny County. A variety of fruits and vegetables including corn, beans, pumpkins, apples, tomatoes, eggplant and lettuce are available one day a week at the WIC locations. Mr. O'Toole also offers the WIC families tips on storage, preparation and serving. For more information on the organization, visit www.stopfasd.org. ■



PUERTO RICO WIC BIDS FAREWELL TO LONG-TIME EMPLOYEE

By Alma Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist

Gladys De Jesus, Nutrition Supervisor from Puerto Rico's Fajardo WIC Region, retired in December. Gladys' career achievements during her 30 years with WIC earned her the admiration of her coworkers. In addition, her musical gifts — acting and composing — were always expected as part of the PR WIC Program's staff trainings.



GLADYS DE JESUS

We wish Gladys great joys in her new life of retirement. ■

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW FOOD PACKAGE AT NEW JERSEY'S PLAINFIELD WIC SITE.

By Sarah Reilly, Nutritionist, Plainfield WIC Program

New Jersey's Plainfield WIC Program has had a wonderful response to the new food package. The participants were very excited about the new changes, especially the introduction of the cash value voucher. The Plainfield WIC nutritionists have taken extra measures to implement new education tools to assist the clients to understand the health benefits of the new package change. Group nutrition education classes were scheduled for all WIC participants during check pick-up to emphasize the changes in the new food package. Bulletin board displays were created and placed in waiting areas to help clients understand the new items and how to use them. A second bulletin board was created at the WIC entrance to display the use of the cash value voucher. This board was created to demonstrate the cost efficiency of the cash value voucher and stretching the money. Pictures and items were printed out to give a visual description.

Each client has demonstrated their increased knowledge of the new foods and has been in favor of the changes. They are thankful for the addition of the cash value vouchers. The clients have been very receptive in adaption to the new food package and the addition of whole grains. It was a great surprise and encouragement to all of the nutritionists that clients not only adopted the whole grain food package, but that they are very enthusiastic about the purchasing of whole grain items. We have heard nothing but positive feedback and are pleased with the client participation and knowledge expressed during this whole process. We are encouraged that our nutrition education is paying off, and that our clients are starting to understand the value of good nutrition and healthy foods. ■

DENTAL ASSISTANT AND HYGIENIST VISIT LOCAL WEST VIRGINIA WIC

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

West Virginia's Valley Health Cabell WIC establishes nutrition education goals each year. One of our goals for this fiscal year is to promote proper oral healthcare and hygiene for children 0-5 years old. A dental assistant, Amanda, and hygienist, Jennifer, from Dr. Edmonds' office periodically come and speak to our child nutrition education class. They demonstrate how to brush and floss children's teeth properly. In addition, they discuss how to prevent tooth decay. Finally, they do an activity with the class on good and bad foods for teeth. Having guest speakers from local dental offices provides our participants with a new perspective on the importance of healthy foods and how they can reduce the risk of tooth decay. ■



NEVER TOO EARLY TO LEARN — Dental professionals visit the Valley Health Cabell WIC Clinic to teach children and parents about proper dental care.

PUERTO RICO WIC CELEBRATES THREE KINGS DAY

By Alma L. Ortega, Outreach Nutritionist

The Puerto Rico WIC Program participated in the Hispanic celebration of Three Kings Day, hosted by the Office of the First Lady of the Governor House “La Fortaleza.”

Numerous families assisted to pick up free toys for their children on January 6, in Muñoz Rivera Park at San Juan, Puerto Rico. There were diverse stations of the governmental agencies that participated.

The PR WIC Program was housed in the Department of Health tent, where staff presented nutrition pamphlets and gave training cups and t-shirts to the pre-school children. These items contained a message to promote health and fitness as part of the purpose of the activity. It read: “good nutrition + physical activity = healthy lives.” The strategy to print the message on these items was that when the little ones wear the t-shirts or drink from the cups, they will be portable mini-banners.

Three Kings Day was a great opportunity for WIC to inform the public of all it provides. The message of the day promoted better nutrition and physical activity for families, as well as to encourage sustained and structured habits as children grow older. ■



***FIT FOR A KING** — A WIC participant shows off his shirt and the training cup, while mom looks on.*



***MAY I HELP YOU?** — WIC employee Carmen Hernandez offers information to families visiting the WIC table.*

FOOD PACKAGE TRAINING AT PA'S FAYETTE COUNTY

The Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. WIC staff in Uniontown, PA provided local retail store training to educate them about the revised WIC food packages.

Pictured (left to right) are Betty Zackal, WIC Director; Debbie Wilson, Retail Store Coordinator; and Sheena Abraham, Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Coordinator. ■



“FRUITS & VEGGIES – MORE MATTERS” AT WEST VIRGINIA’S RANDOLPH-ELKINS WIC PROGRAM

During the month of September, clinics in West Virginia’s Randolph-Elkins WIC agency provided vegetable juice tastings to participants. The goal was to promote increased use of vegetable juice and decreased consumption of higher sugar fruit juices.

Many children were willing to taste the juice, and even more surprised to find they liked the juice. As a matter of fact, one young boy offered his promotional title of vegetable juice as “pizza juice.” Group nutrition education included use of the juices in cooking as well as ways to use vegetable juice in the diet. Recipe cards were also provided for various fruits and vegetables. ■



***CHEERS** — Youngsters (left to right) Sadie Bowers, Addie Rexrode and Jay Bowers take advantage of the vegetable juice samples offered by Trish Halterman, registered dietitian with the Pendleton County WIC Program.*

DELAWARE WIC PROGRAM HOSTS ANNUAL STAFF TRAINING

On October 30, the Delaware WIC Program conducted its annual staff training at Delaware Technical Community College in Dover, DE.

Delaware WIC Director Joanne White welcomed more than 50 WIC staff members, as well as FNS Mid-Atlantic representatives: Regional Director Diana Limbacher; Regional Nutritionist Delores Stewart, MARO CR/EEO Director Ellen Shannon and MARO CR/EEO Specialist Michelle Sazo. Joanne introduced the following new staff members: April Johnson, Administrative Assistant; Carolyn Sudler, MIS; Lauren Briody, WIC Supervisor, Southern Health Services; Jennifer Calantuono, Nutritionist II; and Tonya Saccoh, Nutritionist I.

Keynote speaker Amanda Archibald, founder of Field to Plate, presented an interactive and dynamic program “Repacking Your Nutrition Toolbox.” Her thought-provoking dialog offered new ways of thinking about food choice with creative tools and ideas to use in nutrition education.

Ms. Archibald has spent more than 14 years fine-tuning ways to engage people and get them truly excited about food. She is trained as a dietitian and inspired by parents whose love of food and culture shaped her unique perspective of food, nutrition, and food education.

Her extensive knowledge and understanding of food, nutrition and health in the US has been gleaned from living and working in both the US and Europe. This includes work as a research analyst in food, health and menu with The Mintel Group, as well as her extensive interaction with experts and artisans throughout the food supply chain (literally from field to plate).

Ms. Archibald is a member of the American Dietetic Association, the American Institute of Wine and Food and a member of Les Dames D’Escoffier, Washington D.C. Her vision, life goal and career are dedicated to creating meaningful food education experiences that make a difference – one bite at a time.

After lunch, Michelle Sazo provided the annual Civil Rights training which incorporated questions from Delaware WIC staff members.

Ida Lawson reviewed the breastfeeding food packages concluding a busy and fruitful day. ■

WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM HOLDS LOVE TO GROW TRAINING

By Heidi Staats, State Outreach Coordinator

Over 200 West Virginia WIC Local Agency employees attended the Love to Grow Food Package training in August at Stonewall Resort and State Park. As well as motivational lectures on "Staying in the Positive Zone," attendees took part in four workshops including breastfeeding, Sesame Street Healthy Habits for Life, computer system changes and food package prescription and delivery. The highlight of the training was the chance to express the inherent positives within this monumental program change through the session "Celebrating Our Success."

Heather Venoy, Love to Grow Food Package training committee chair, believes the training was a great benefit to both tenured and new employees. "We are promoting concise, consistent messaging and the employees are vital to the successful implementation of the new WIC food package. Events like the Love to Grow training offers the chance for state and local collaboration to help with confidence and knowledge."

Organized by members of the Love to Grow staff education committee, the training aimed to integrate food package information with practical skills, create a learning environment with fellow employees at differing stages through their nutrition career, and promote the positive aspects inherent with program change.

Denise Ferris, WV State Director, said, "Following from the success of previous training sessions and speaking with the employees who attended, this training featured a round robin, small group format with direct interaction and immediate feedback to questions. We ensured all attendees were exposed to the same message no matter their role in the WIC clinic."

"There are nearly 250 employees of the WV WIC Program and everyone agrees the best thing about the training is the chance to come together from difference locations and learn from each other. We couldn't have done this training without the help of our consultants Leslie Stone and Anne Durham, Operational Assistance Funds granted through the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office and the dedication of the Love to Grow committees."

West Virginia WIC also honored dedicated employees with service awards:

5 years of Service

Kristina Green
Denise Jude
Emma Jeanine
Ladd-Bird
Beverley Lanham
Elise Leef
Debbie Pack
Michelle Prudnick
Sarah Smith
Stephanie Whitney

10 years of Service

Carrie Adkins
Mary Bryan
Sandra Daubman
Norma Dominguez

Mitch Greenbaum
Linda King
Karen Korzep
Jenny Morris
Margaret "Peggy"
Sottile
Lynne Ryan

15 years of Service

Cindy Bacorn
Nancy Bond
Debra Bryant
Sherri Carpenter
Cindy Childs
Sue Chiodi
Elva Clemons
Brenda Fisher



PLATE FULL OF COLOR — "Celebrating Our Success" offered a time for dancing, artistic expression of the new food package and a congratulatory session of everyone's efforts.



MY DOES TIME FLY — Debbie Crouch, nutritionist with Valley Health Systems WIC Program and Anne MacBride, director with Monongalia County Health Department WIC Program have each dedicated 30 years of service to the women, infants and children of West Virginia.

20 years of Service
Robin Anderson

Patricia Cleavenger
Susan LaRue
Mary Beth Lind
Chalida Ng
Sherry Ours
Barb Warzynski

25 years of Service

Lillian Adkins
Beth Dowler
Terri Grimm
Fonda Love
Kathy Weaver

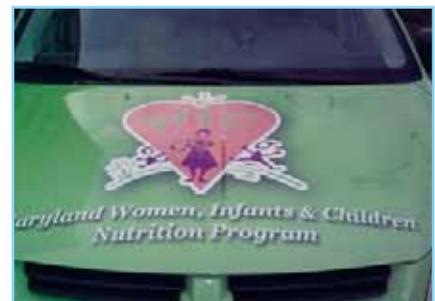
30 years of Service

Debbie Crouch
Anne MacBride ■

MARYLAND WIC GETS "WRAPPED UP" IN FIGHT TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER

By Robert Bruce, Procurement & Outreach Specialist, Office of the Maryland WIC Program

Maryland WIC's commitment to the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger was to increase its awareness across the State to eligible participants. What a better way to do this but by using our vehicle that travels across the State on a daily basis. In early December, the State WIC Office sent its Dodge Grand Caravan to get "wrapped" with a new improved look. We debuted the new improved WIC van at the December Coordinators' Meeting at the Annex in Greenbelt and received many compliments about its new look. Who would notice this green machine you might ask? Well, we here at the State Office have been receiving calls of the "WIC Mobile" being spotted all around the State by not just participants but government officials as well. This idea has taken off so much that several of our local agencies have expressed interest in doing either full or partial wraps on their own WIC vehicles. Thanks to everyone involved in this new outreach venture. ■



IT'S A WRAP — Check out Maryland WIC's Dodge Caravan, wrapped in a WIC message!

UPDATE ON PARTNERSHIP TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN MARYLAND

By Gene Nadolny, Chief, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maryland WIC

Maryland WIC staff continued participating in the End Childhood Hunger events. On November 3, Pauline Cole (from the Baltimore City WIC Program) and Claire McDerby (from the Baltimore County WIC Program) promoted the WIC Program and answered questions from the neighborhood residents who attended the Junior League of Baltimore's Health Fair. They shared an exhibit table which was near the State WIC Office's display that showcased their new retractable banners.

The Partnership has found friends in Congresswoman Donna Edwards and Max Finberg, Director of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at USDA. Knowing firsthand that the August 2009 Faith-Based Hunger Summit was successful in Baltimore County, they suggested that a similar summit be held in Prince George's County. After months of planning, a Hunger Summit was held on November 20, at the Prince George's County Community College. Jane Ghaffari, (Prince George County WIC Program) and Jackie Melton Greater (Baden WIC Program) joined Robert Bruce and Gene Nadolny from the State WIC Office at the WIC Program's exhibit table. Not only did the WIC staff provide information to the faith-based community, but also to the students who were attracted to the colorful exhibit!

The Partnership is planning a Hunger Summit in Frederick County in April and considering a Summit on the Eastern Shore. State WIC staff will continue to invite the local WIC staff to be at the WIC exhibit table to answer questions from the local faith-based community. ■



AT THE READY — Prepared to answer questions about WIC are (left to right) Claire McDerby, Baltimore County WIC Program; and Pauline Cole, Baltimore City WIC Program.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ADAGIO HEALTH PARTNERS WITH CARE WEAR

By Barbara Jinar, Nutrition Outreach Coordinator

Pennsylvania's Adagio Health's WIC Program has partnered with the national organization Care Wear. Care Wear is a nationwide group of volunteers who knit, crochet, and/or sew, providing handmade baby items to hospitals. All Care Wear items are given free to infants, children and their parents. The local partnership developed when Christie Gregg, who is the Beaver Falls Breastfeeding Peer Counselor and Happy Baby Educator, contacted the Beaver Falls chapter and asked if they could provide the Adagio Health WIC Program with "DUDU Wraps."

The Happy Baby Program is a class taught by certified Happy Baby educators. This class teaches parents to apply proper calming techniques to sooth a crying baby. A DUDU wrap is a swaddling blanket that measures 45" x 45" and is necessary in demonstrating the Happy Baby techniques. Unfortunately, this is an odd size baby blanket and an extra expense for the WIC participants. The Beaver Falls local Care Wear chapter consists of 6-8 women and they have donated 200 DUDU wraps for the fussy babies of Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Indiana, and Lawrence counties. The Care Wear women also donated 153 bibs and 100 burp cloths which were distributed in the five-county region during World Breastfeeding Week.

These Care Wear volunteers were recently honored for winning the "2009 Pay It Forward Challenge Award." This contest was sponsored by the Beaver County Times. The Care Wear ladies were honored with a \$750 check which will be used for sewing supplies.

Adagio Health cannot thank these women enough for their time and effort in helping the Happy Baby Program and also their breastfeeding program. Please visit www.carewear.org for more information. ■



THEY CARE — Adagio Health Nutrition Outreach Coordinator Barbara Jinar (back row, second from left) with the Care Wear Volunteers: Amy Bash, Della Smith, Dora Jean Mischka, Gwen Craig, Marianne Beck, Mary Ann Atkinson, and Virginia Liebegott.

WEST VIRGINIA'S GREENBRIER COUNTY WIC HOSTS A CONTEST TO HIGHLIGHT WHOLE GRAIN FOODS

The Ronceverte Clinic of the Central WV WIC Program highlighted the whole grain and canned bean selections of the West Virginia WIC Love to Grow Shopping Guide by hosting a promotional contest in conjunction with group nutrition education. The contest offered nutritionists the chance to promote whole grains and beans as a healthy staple of family meals, and suggest to participants how these foods can be included in daily diets. Participants winning a random drawing received cooking pots full of goodies, including ingredients for a whole grain pasta meal and a Taco Soup meal. WIC participants were thrilled to receive these foods and anxious to try the recipe ideas presented by the WIC Clinic. ■



LUCKY WINNERS — WIC participant Olympia Soto with CPA Amber Glover; and participant Jillian Bright with Kay Muhs, RD, were the lucky winners of food and supplies needed for complete meal preparation of a whole grain dish and a bean dish.

PENNSYLVANIA WIC CHECKS SUPPORT NUTRITION MESSAGES

By Bonnie Mellott, Pennsylvania WIC Education/Outreach Coordinator

The Pennsylvania Food Package Advisory Committee has had a busy year! The committee consists of six local WIC agency representatives and two State Agency staff. One of their projects was to create short nutrition messages to coincide with the new foods being offered by WIC and to support the Sesame Street/National WIC Association Healthy Habits project implemented by the Pennsylvania WIC Program. The following messages will be printed on all WIC checks during the time frames listed below:

Summer 2009: Eating a rainbow of colors of fruits and vegetables daily will keep the doctor away!

Beginning October 1, 2009: Keep the calcium – Lose the fat – Families use low-fat milk starting at age 2!

Beginning January 1, 2010: Try a new recipe using beans – soup, dip or salad!

Beginning April 1, 2010: For good health get 30 minutes of daily exercise. To lose weight, get 60 minutes!

Beginning July 1, 2010: Introduce your family to a new WIC food this month. Try brown rice! ■

THINKING WIC EVEN ON VACATION

Judy Diaz, Pennsylvania State Agency WIC Program Representative, traveled to Hawaii in September 2009 to celebrate her 50th birthday and got to meet the Hawaiian ELMO! How Fun! In Pennsylvania, we continue to support the partnership between WIC and Sesame Workshop and educating our WIC families about the “Healthy Habits for Life.” ■



NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC REACHES OUT

New Jersey's Burlington County WIC Program has assisted in promoting various agencies in distributing information regarding services available to Burlington residents. The local agency has provided WIC participants with information from Family Support Organization of Burlington County regarding Burlington County Food Banks, support services for families dealing with issues of child raising, communication, special education and upcoming events.

Flyers were distributed for Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaways hosted by a local faith-based organization. WIC participants were able to enjoy a Thanksgiving feast by receiving donated turkeys.

Local agency participants completed the Burlington County Consolidated Plan Public Survey. The purpose of the survey is to identify housing needs and programs, analyze market conditions and resources, set priorities and adopt strategies, allocate resources and track how money is spent and how goals are accomplished. The surveys were given to WIC participants of Burlington County to get their input regarding Burlington County's most important housing and community development needs and priorities. 1,000 surveys were completed in the month of January. ■

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- PA WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. April 21-22.
- WV Dietetic Association Meeting. Charleston, WV. April 27-29.
- PA WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA, May 20-21.
- PA WIC Nutrition Education Coordinators' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. June 9-10.
- PA WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. July 28-29.
- The deadline for the Summer issue of MARWIC TIMES is April 15, 2010. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM INTRODUCES SPECIAL POPULATION LIAISON

The Virginia State WIC office in Richmond, VA has been working to ensure that potentially eligible, underserved populations are offered the benefits of the program. Stephanie Arnold, Special Populations Liaison, was hired in August to lead this project. The Virginia State WIC office recognized a need to close the gap in health disparities by researching and advocating for underserved populations at the state level. Stephanie has begun this initiative with two major tasks: 1) working with state universities to elicit evidence-based research to aid both state and local offices in understanding and overcoming the barriers to service delivery and 2) building relationships with state government agencies and advocacy groups that serve WIC eligible populations.

Research and subsequent outcomes performed by these universities will not only guide WIC agencies in Virginia on how to better serve these populations but also educate and inform targeted groups during the community-based research efforts around the state of Virginia. Some groups of interest are foster children, Native American populations, grandparents raising grandchildren, and victims of domestic violence. Stephanie hopes to build upon the unique cultures and dynamics of each group to better understand and overcome the negative social determinants of health that act as a barrier to service delivery.

While research is a major and ongoing piece of this work, statewide outreach and advocacy is equally important. Stephanie has collaborated with and educated leaders from the Virginia Department for the Aging, Virginia Food Banks, homeless advocacy groups, Virginia Rural Health Association and the Virginia Office of Minority Health and Public Policy on the important nutrition and overall benefits of the WIC Program. These meetings and trainings have spurred a large degree of interest in continuing and building on these partnerships at the local level. It is the goal of the Virginia State WIC Program to use the combination of research and outreach to ensure that each eligible woman, infant and child is provided the opportunity to strengthen the health of their families, communities and ultimately the Commonwealth of Virginia. ■



STEPHANIE ARNOLD

MILK & MORE TASTING EVENT HELD AT WEST VIRGINIA'S KANAWHA CLINIC

By Christine Compton, Outreach Coordinator
Valley Health/WIC, Charleston, WV

During regular nutrition classes on Monday, October 5, WV's Valley Health Kanawha WIC clients had a chance to sample some new food choices. Featured food items included 1% and skim milk, fresh fruit pieces and squares of whole grain breads. The samplings were offered as part of the new WIC food package that was implemented statewide in West Virginia on October 1.

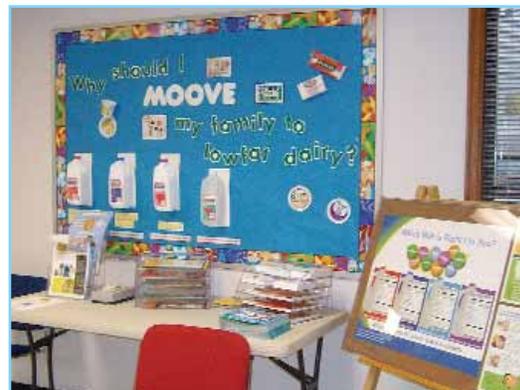
Participants donned their choice of chocolate, vanilla or strawberry milk mustaches, learned about the fat content in milk, and shared recipes and information. Nutrition class attendees and clients throughout the day were also encouraged to enter our Cap Challenge Contest. By choosing skim, 1% or 2% milk, participants can drink and win! Each time they bring in a low-fat milk cap, they can fill out a slip and enter to win a free crock pot. The contest kick-off began during the Milk & More Tasting Event and ended on December 31, when the drawing was held and the winner was announced. (See page 12.)

The Milk & More Tasting Event was co-sponsored by the American Dairy Association. Nancy Zwick, MED, RD, LD, Nutrition Affairs Coordinator for the Mideast American Dairy Association, attended the event and shared information about milk and milk-products. She also provided the milk for the tasting event. Hostesses for the WIC event were Nutrition Education Coordinator Peg Kenyon and Outreach Coordinator Christine Compton.

Several community partners, including members of the Appalachian Head Start Policy Council and the West Virginia State University Extension Office, stopped by throughout the day to lend their support. The news media turned out to promote the event as well, including the three major local television stations and the statewide radio outlet, Metro News.

Participants enjoyed trying the new foods and learning about their new food package choices. Many had never tried lower-fat milks and were surprised how much they liked the healthier choices.

Overall the event was a great success! ■



READY ALL ABOUT IT — The bulletin board in Kanawha's Education Room highlights the nutritional value of milk and showcases the differences in fat content in each type of milk.



TASTY — Participants sample fruit and bread and discuss the new changes to the WIC Program with Nutrition Education Coordinator Peg Kenyon.



SHOW OFF — A young participant samples low-fat milk and dons a milk mustache for the camera.

WIC CROCKPOT GIVE-AWAY WINNER ANNOUNCED AT KANAWHA, WEST VIRGINIA

Local family starts the New Year off by eating healthier

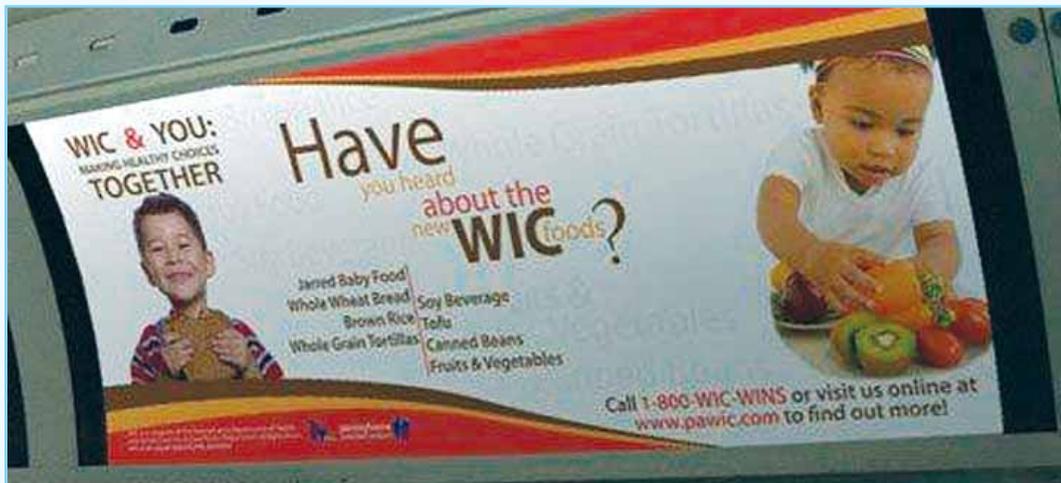
A crockpot give-away contest was part of a kick-off event, held at West Virginia's Kanawha WIC clinic, for the new WIC food package changes that began in October. For the last several months, participants were encouraged to bring in caps from their milk jugs. Every time a participant purchased low-fat milk, they could bring in, or mail in the cap, fill out an entry slip and register to win the crockpot.

The contest began October 5 as part of the Kanawha clinic's Milk & More Tasting Event. The contest ended December 31. The winner was drawn from a slew of entries during a nutrition education class on January 4. Lesley Adkins was presented her prize by Peg Kenyon, Nutrition Liaison for Valley Health WIC; and Helen Payton, Nutrition Coordinator for Valley Health WIC.

"This is helping my whole family keep my New Year's resolution to lose weight. I have lost weight and so have my kids, (who were too heavy), since I switched us to Super Skim milk. They actually don't mind the change now – I don't even flavor it anymore. I must have sent in 10 caps from my milk jugs to try to win this crockpot. I've never had one before," Ms. Adkins said of her family's accomplishments. ■



COOKIN' INTO THE NEW YEAR — (Left to right) Nutrition Liaison Peg Kenyon, WIC participant Lesley Adkins and Nutrition Coordinator Helen Payton conclude the Milk & More contest with the winning prize of a slow cooker.



GET THE MESSAGE

Pennsylvania WIC's new interior bus card ad promotes the new WIC foods. ■



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