

# MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

## NEW JERSEY'S NORTH HUDSON WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES CULTURAL DIVERSITY

By Alina Gonzalez, MS, CDN

North Hudson Community Action Corporation WIC Program held a cultural diversity event during December. WIC participants had the opportunity to not only learn about other traditions, but to also experience them. The nutritionists created a welcoming environment exposing people to different cultures and their ethnic foods.

Highlights of the month were "Multicultural Day" celebrations. The classroom was decorated with culturally diverse décor with folkloric music playing in the background. Traditional ethnic dresses were worn by both participants and staff and everyone enjoyed tasting the non-alcoholic Eggnog. The display of exotic spices, viandas, dahls, coconuts, plantains and other traditional foods from each other's country helped participants to expand their ideas on how to plan and prepare healthy and tasty meals. The participants offered tips to modify some of the recipes and lower their fat content.

WIC participants from Guatemala, Peru, El Salvador, Chile, Ecuador, Morocco, Yemen and many other countries shared their holiday's traditions.



**TASTY TREATS** — WIC participants reviewed different ethnic foods and shared their stories about their traditions.



**WIC 'ROUND THE WORLD** — WIC Nutritionist Betty Rojas wears a "La Cumbiambera" while demonstrating different ethnic foods.

A Puerto Rican woman married to a Muslim man dressed her child and herself with Muslim's customary dresses and explained how she has integrated her culture into her husband's own traditions. A Middle Eastern couple shared how they would travel all the way to New York to purchase the traditional goat meat, which is a tradition during the holidays. Another participant expressed her surprise at the variety of beans and lentils available and earnestly decided to try some of the recipes that were contributed by the group.

The participants' enthusiastic response was a sweet fruit of the staff's creativity who had embraced the topic by outlining learning objectives, researching recipes and gathering all kinds of souvenirs to decorate poster and bulletin boards and meeting rooms. Kudos to WIC clients who so generously shared their time, ideas, tips, recipes and customs and kudos to the staff who diligently worked to make this event a successful one. ■

## WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC PROVIDES INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE BREASTFEEDING DURATION

By Summer Lovetro, WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors at the Cabell WIC Program in Huntington, WV offer more than just emotional support and education to their breastfeeding clients. They offer gift incentives!

Moms whose infants are 6 months old and fully breastfed (no formula) are given t-shirts that say "I eat at Mom's" as encouragement for moms to continue to breastfeed and give their babies the best they can. The clients love this little gift and their babies look adorable wearing it!! ■



**MODEL BABY** — Narcissa Cooper shows off her "I eat at Mom's" t-shirt while sitting on Mom's lap.

## WIC STARS IN MOVIE NIGHT IN MARYLAND'S FREDERICK COUNTY

By Katie Keirle  
Outreach Coordinator, Frederick County

It's a Friday night – What to do? A pregnant woman and her group of friends decide, "Hey, let's go to the movies!" It's a Saturday afternoon – Same question, what to do? A family with a 4-year-old decides to go see the newly featured cartoon movie. Another family is sitting a few aisles in front of them; their children are a little older, but their neighbor has a newborn baby. What do all of these movie-goers have in common?

Number one, they might be eligible for the WIC Program or know someone who is. Number two, if they are at the Regal Westview Cinema 16 Theater located on Buckeystown Pike in Frederick, MD, they will see an ad introducing the Frederick County WIC Program before their featured film!

Our ad briefly introduces the Frederick County WIC

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## SPRING 2011

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Near the end of Fiscal Year 2010, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service awarded competitive grant funds to improve technology and enhance benefit delivery systems for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC). Collectively, **Virginia** and **West Virginia** received Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Implementation Grants totaling \$7.9 million. These grants will assist the WIC Program in facilitating the transition from paper benefits to EBT.

In addition to these competitive grant awards, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office awarded a total of approximately \$4.1 million in Operational Adjustment (OA) grant awards for Fiscal Year 2011 to the **District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia** WIC State agencies for Automated Management Information Systems (MIS) related projects. Together, these two efforts show that MARO State Agencies are well aware of the looming requirement to implement EBT nationwide by October 1, 2020 and that they are keenly determined to

meet the demands of tomorrow.

Despite the emphasis on EBT and MIS in the recent year, this year's OA panel received creative and innovative grant proposals that covered all aspects of the WIC Program. Although technology oriented projects received the largest proportion of funding, the most frequent category of project submissions fell underneath Nutrition Services followed by Facility Renovations and Purchases. Here are a few examples of how MARO States will use Nutrition Services and Administration (NSA) and Operational Adjustment funds in Fiscal Year 2011 to improve the WIC Program:

**Delaware** Will relocate their Milford site from a flood zone, replace some of the older, flood-damaged office furniture and purchase new supplies to meet office space requirements of the new location. The furniture and supplies will allow DE WIC staff to continue providing WIC benefits to at-risk population in the Milford region.

**New Jersey** Through their project, *Grow and Glow in NJ WIC (Revitalizing Breastfeeding Services in New Jersey)*, NJ WIC will develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide, breastfeeding training program for all WIC staff. This initiative is innovative because of its emphasis on breastfeeding promotion and its goal of eliminating the disconnect between breastfeeding staff and the rest of the WIC staff by requiring that all staff participate in the "Grow and Glow" inspired curriculum.

**Puerto Rico** Acknowledging that the

decrease in child participation is a concern for the Puerto Rico WIC Program, PR WIC is taking the necessary steps to improve their clinics' environments by promoting the participant-centered VENA philosophy and by supplying educational waiting room items to under-equipped clinics across the island. It is hoped that exposing children to basic nutrition/fitness concepts will give them a chance to engage in physical activity and give their caregivers an opportunity to receive undistracted, focused nutrition counseling with nutritionists and Competent Professional Authorities (CPAs).

We are thrilled to see so many State agencies embarking on EBT and MIS related projects because this ensures that the Mid-Atlantic Region will be prepared for the program management challenges of the future. Additionally, we are pleased that our States, in usual fashion, continued to submit innovative projects aimed at tackling some of the less buzz worthy participant and program needs.

For a full list of FY 2011 OA Projects 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:

wiccustomerservice@fns.usda.gov. ■



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### HEALTHY, HUNGER FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010 REQUIRES WIC STATE AGENCIES TO IMPLEMENT EBT

On December 13, 2010, President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (often referred to as the child nutrition reauthorization bill) into law. The Act reauthorizes child nutrition programs for five years and includes \$4.5 billion in new funding for these programs over 10 years, with the goal of increasing access to healthy food for low-income children.

The Act has a major impact on administration WIC Program in that it requires State agencies to implement Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) no later than October 1, 2020. EBT means a food delivery system that provides benefits using a card or other access device that permits electronic access to program benefits. The Act provides details on requirements for exemptions, reporting, imposition of costs on vendors, minimum lane coverage, and technical standards for EBT.

WIC EBT has been successfully implemented statewide in numerous State Agencies throughout the nation including Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Wyoming. Mid-Atlantic State Agencies are actively working to meet the October 1, 2020 implementation date. Delaware, District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico have all received or been approved for special funding for EBT planning projects. Virginia and West Virginia have been approved for or received funding for both EBT planning and implementation projects.

Other noteworthy provisions of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act impacting WIC Program administration include expansion of support for breastfeeding and providing an option to State agencies of certifying participant children for up to one year (currently the certification period is 6 months). Implementing guidance is currently being developed on all provisions of the Act.

Additional information regarding the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 including a fact sheet can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). ■

## PENNSYLVANIA'S CROZER-CHESTER MEDICAL CENTER WIC PROGRAM OFFERS ENHANCEMENTS

Adapted from original article by Mary Wascavage, Director, Public Relations and Marketing, Crozer-Keystone Health System

Despite some industry experts saying that we are coming out of the economic downturn, certain facts paint a different picture. Unemployment is at its highest rate since the Great Depression, and as a result, many more people are turning to government-funded programs for help.

A report released Jan. 26, 2010 from the Food, Research and Action Center (FRAC) listed sections of Delaware County, PA (First Congressional District) as being second in the nation for experiencing "food hardship," a term that describes those who reported that there were times over the past year that they did not have enough money to buy food for themselves or their family.

"Due to the current economy, many people are coming back to our program in addition to our new WIC clients," says Filomena Ahlefeld, WIC Program Director for Crozer-Chester Medical Center. "We have an increased caseload and we have improved the enrollment process by creating a call center."

Based at the Chester site, the call center can be reached at (610) 497-7660 from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. A live attendant helps callers make WIC appointments, gives them basic information about the program, and tells them what information and documents to bring to their appointment. This helps the applicant move through the WIC process faster and easier when they arrive, and frees up staff to assist clients when they arrive at the site for their appointment.

In addition to the new call center, the Upper Darby site recently expanded. The office space was renovated and expanded from one to four patient rooms allowing staff to serve a greater number of clients in a more efficient manner.

New moms face many decisions about how to best care for their children. Food insecurity can threaten normal growth and development of infants and children and their ability to go on to lead productive lives. Crozer-Chester Medical Center's WIC Program is changing to better meet the increasing needs of new moms and young families all over the Delaware County. ■



**BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL** — Participants are enjoying the renovated Upper Darby waiting room.



**MAY WE HELP YOU?** — WIC staff ready to assist you at the Upper Darby site are (left to right) Nutritionists Ekaterini Aghazarian and Ann Bridy and Nutrition Assistant Wendy Feliciano.

## PUERTO RICO WIC PROGRAM AND THE DAIRY INDUSTRY TO JOINTLY PROMOTE MILK CONSUMPTION

In a joint effort to promote the integration of fresh milk consumption in their daily diet for a healthy nutrition, the Department of Health's WIC Program and Puerto Rico Dairy Industry (Fondo para el Fomento de la Industria Lechera [FFIL]) developed a communication campaign directed to Puerto Rican mothers and their children called "Fresh Milk and WIC, friends of happy families."

This campaign's objective is to educate pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers, postpartum women, infants and kids 1 to 5 years about the nutritional benefits of drinking fresh milk.

"Fresh Milk and WIC, friends of happy families" is also directed to make WIC participants conscious of the benefits the program offers and the requisites needed to participate in it. The Dairy Industry and WIC expect with this effort that more families benefit of the nutritional program using Puerto Rican products like fresh milk, thus contributing to strengthening the quality of life for women, infants and children on the Island.

The campaign investment has been approximately \$275,000 and includes newspaper ads, billboards and bus shelters. The first phase lasted two months and the duration of the whole campaign will last six months.

Milk contains a variety of nutrients essential for the proper development of children. It helps to reduce risks and prevent some diseases for its consumers. Because of its high calcium content, fresh milk promotes bone formation and helps prevent osteoporosis. Milk consumption helps reduce the risk of forming kidney stones, reduces uric acid levels, aids in the formation and regeneration of tissues, while reducing the incidence of dental issues and the likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease. ■



**STOP FOR WIC** — Bus passengers can't help but notice this WIC promotional poster at the bus stop.

## VIRGINIA'S LOUDON COUNTY WIC STARTS BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT GROUP

Loudon County (Leesburg, VA) WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Melinda Facal took the initiative and worked very hard to get her own breastfeeding support group going. Her first few meetings have been well attended and we applaud her initiative! ■



**MEETING AND GREETING** — Attending the breastfeeding support group meeting are (left to right) Vilma Castillo; Ana Ruiz; Brenda Koziem, MS, RD, HFS, WIC Nutritionist; Alexis Orellana; Melinda Facal, RN, Breastfeeding Counselor; Maxi Santander; and Azucena Romero.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC TEAMS WITH LINCOLN COUNTY STARTING POINTS FOR MONTHLY NUTRITION CLASSES

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

Carmen Blankenship, the Lincoln County Starting Points Coordinator, has invited West Virginia's Valley Health WIC to be a part of her playgroup's monthly nutrition activity. During the sessions, each family gets to make a recipe and take the leftovers home. In November, we made a no-bake pumpkin pie using pudding, milk, canned pumpkin, cool whip, and spices. I lead each session on how to make the recipe and then while waiting on the finished product we discuss the nutritional value of the foods in the recipe. I answer nutrition-related questions about their children. I also address any issues they are having with spending their WIC vouchers. In addition, each family is provided a WIC folder containing WIC income guidelines so they can refer other families to WIC. ■



**PASS THE PUMPKIN, PLEASE** — Jenna Rose, MA, RD, LD leads a discussion on the nutritional value of pumpkin with playgroup parents.



**EASY AS PIE** — Playgroup parents Melissa (left) and Crystal (right) help their children put the pumpkin filling in pie crust shells.



**BAKING TOGETHER** — Lincoln County Starting Points' parent and child make no-bake pumpkin pie.

## REACHING MARYLAND'S HOWARD COUNTY

By Donnell Stewart, MEd, Outreach Coordinator, Howard County WIC Program

Some might argue that the wealthier the community, the more difficult the outreach. But for the past 12 months, Donnell Stewart, MEd, Maryland's Howard County Outreach Coordinator, has used creativity and perseverance to find the hardest-to-reach most under-served groups of WIC eligible families.

Libraries are great resources for thoughtful displays. WIC had a long-term presence in each Howard County site in 2010. "Every library thus far," she said, "has pulled books, DVDs and CDs to co-locate with WIC displays." An adjacent shelf with baby exercise tapes, pregnancy books and self-help magazines for new parents enhances the display and draws the public to WIC materials. Similarly, the Howard County Food Bank was recently invited to set up a large display. Stewart commented, "We can't assume that everyone accessing a food pantry knows about WIC and vice versa."

Stewart says that in this media-savvy culture, displays must be eye-catching and interactive. Our farmers' market promotion featured real straw, and a working farm scene." She believes that children, since they are our customers too, should be attracted to the displays to encourage discussions about good nutrition. The exhibits are opportunities for families to talk about healthy eating. Stewart always tries to incorporate growth charts, and attractions at eye level for little ones, recipes, and to include a strong breastfeeding pitch. "Luckily, WIC has great material to work with," said Stewart.

Last spring, Stewart incorporated the Howard County Health Department's RV. "I had utilized the medical mobile before — at county fairs and outdoor wellness events — so I know the limitations and advantages of using it for outreach." One challenge: location, location, location! Stewart took the RV to a dozen grocery stores and farmers' markets. She stresses the importance of securing a spot very close to main entrances. People with small children or grocery bags hesitate to traverse rows of parked cars. Everyone who approached the RV was asked if they knew about WIC, had small children or knew a family who may struggle to get enough to eat. Stewart maintains, "Nothing attracts the public more than a warm welcome, a heart-felt smile and a sincere desire to represent the best of our agency." ■



**JOINING FORCES** — Howard County WIC Outreach Coordinator Donnell Stewart shows off the WIC display at a local library.

## STITCHING THE GAP TO INCREASE BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS AT DC WIC

By Alexandra Bender, Program Specialist

Hunt Place clinic is part of the Unity Healthcare System in Southeast DC. During World Breastfeeding Month, the WIC team at Hunt Place distributed breastfeeding information, buttons, and t-shirts to increase breastfeeding awareness. In September, Unity Healthcare created an agency-wide quilt constructed of squares from their clinics. Each clinic had been given their own square to decorate as a representation of the purpose of their clinic. The Hunt Place staff wanted to show their passion for breastfeeding by using their square to display a portrait of the staff in their breastfeeding promotion shirts with their breastfeeding bulletin board. The quilt is being hung in the corporate office of Unity Healthcare for all the staff and guests to see.

Through their hard work and dedication, Hunt Place has successfully increased their breastfeeding rates 4% over the past year and the staff is committed to further increasing the rates for initiation and duration. ■



**WIC AND QUILTING, PERFECT TOGETHER** — The Hunt Place quilt square represents the commitment of the WIC Team. Pictured (left to right) are Hunt Place WIC staff Lisa Williams, Valerie Lohman, Adrea Shelton Berry, and Esther Shephard.

## WIC HAS A NEW PLACE TO CALL HOME IN MILFORD, DELAWARE

By Lauren Briody, SHS WIC Supervisor

**O**n January, 18, the Milford WIC clinic found a new home at 253 NE Front Street, Milford, Delaware.

Staff will miss the old clinic that was in an old, historic fire station. The building was unique and quaint; however it was situated in a flood zone area so frequently the clinic operations had to move to another location with cramped quarters and a great deal of confusion for both WIC staff and WIC participants.

The new facility is located in downtown Milford, and it provides ample free parking for participants, staff and visitors, and is accessible via public transportation.

The new clinic has 500 square feet of office space that includes a large waiting room, storage and a dedicated breastfeeding room where breastfeeding moms can comfortably feed their babies in a breastfeeding-friendly environment.

The clinic also has access to a large conference/classroom for group nutrition education classes, breastfeeding promotional activities, facilitated group discussions, and targeted nutrition education activities to address specific needs of participants.

Lastly there is a separate break room for staff with windows and modern amenities (for their down time!).

Participants as well as visitors have commented on the very pleasant atmosphere. This much improved space provides an even greater opportunity for providing quality services to an ever-growing population. ■



**ALL THE COMFORTS OF HOME** — Moms are really enjoying the Breastfeeding Room in the new WIC Clinic in Milford, DE.

## VNACJ WIC PROGRAM SHOWS

### WINTER GENEROSITY IN THE NEW JERSEY BAYSHORE AREA

**V**NACJ WIC participants in the Belford (NJ) WIC Office were the beneficiaries of good tidings by the residents of the bayshore area. The week before Christmas, over 180 wrapped gifts were delivered to the WIC Office by members of the Woman's Club of Middletown. For the ninth year, the club has set up gift trees in local banks to collect presents for WIC participants and their family members. The children were excited to receive a brightly wrapped package. Many didn't believe they could take it home with them. Many mothers were happy to receive an extra gift for older children who are often forgotten in donations.

In another gesture of goodwill, just before the first snow storm of the new year, members of the Belford United Methodist Church delivered two large bags of new hats, gloves and scarves to the WIC Office. Congregation members were asked to donate a "Gift of Warmth" in memory of family and friends. Children were excited to choose a hat and gloves that matched their winter coats. The hand-knit items were chosen quickly! Many hands were able to stay warm in the freshly fallen snow thanks to the thoughtfulness of others. ■

## HIGHLIGHTING SPECIAL MONTHS CREATES INTEREST AT PENNSYLVANIA'S CHESTER COUNTY WIC

By Paula M. Taylor, CLC, Outreach and Breastfeeding Coordinator

**I**n March, 2010, the WIC Program of PA's Chester County Health Department wanted to emphasize the National Nutrition Month® theme, "Nutrition From the Ground Up – eat right." Led by Nutrition Education Coordinator Lisa Larsen, MEd, RD, LDN, each clinic displayed posters created by the Pennsylvania WIC Nutrition Education Committee. The posters discussed the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids, listed the foods that contained them, and encouraged families to eat natural foods without added ingredients as much as possible. Since our WIC population is about 50% Hispanic, we created the posters in Spanish also.

As participants visited our clinics during March, each family received a shopping list notepad to help them organize their needs at the grocery store. Our clerical assistants reinforced the usage of the new WIC fruit and vegetable checks as they gave each child a coloring book and package of crayons. Hopefully, as the gifts are used at home, they will encourage... eating right from the ground up!

Similar excitement was created in our Chester County WIC clinics



**CELEBRATING GOOD NUTRITION** — Estelle Faldeti and her daughters receive their WIC checks and National Nutrition Month gifts from Clerical Assistant Yolanda Diaz, at the Toughkenamon WIC clinic.

during World Breastfeeding Month last August. Six-foot-long posters proclaiming "Take 5 Healthy Steps" encouraged moms to start feedings off correctly with their newborns. The five steps included: 1. Commit to nursing your baby, 2. Fully nurse — no supplements, no bottles, 3. Nurse in the first hour after birth, 4. Put your baby skin-to-skin often, 5. Breastfeed on demand — watch your baby for feeding cues. The posters, created by Outreach and Breastfeeding Coordinator Paula Taylor, included photos of nursing moms and adorable infants intertwined with the five points.

Each family was presented a



**EAT RIGHT** — Stephanie Prestileo, RD, LDN, WIC Nutritionist, is showing the "eat right- National Nutrition Month®" posters to A'Tyanna and Ahmad Seoney at the West Chester WIC clinic.

card from Nutrition Matters, Inc® describing baby's first month of breastfeeding as they visited with a nutritionist. The cards were available in English or Spanish to meet the needs of our participants. As they received their WIC vouchers from our clerical assistants, the participants received a pen with the words, "BABIES♥Breastfeeding" in bright red colors. Children took home a coloring sheet picturing a mother nursing her baby and a pack of crayons.

Many mothers agreed to have their photos taken with their babies for a display in each of our clinics.



**BREAST IS BEST** — Guadalupe Gasper and her son, Mauricio Hernandez-Gasper are pictured with Clerical Assistant Carmen Melendez, in front of the "Babies were born to be breastfed" poster. The poster features pictures of breastfeeding mothers and their babies taken during World Breastfeeding Month.

The photo boards featured the idea, "Babies were born to be breastfed" and quickly filled in each of our clinics. A copy of the photo will be given to the mother during her next WIC appointment.

We are hoping the emphasis of National Nutrition Month and World Breastfeeding Month will have a positive effect on the lifestyles of the families we serve, and keep them coming back to WIC for more nutrition and breastfeeding education. ■

## VIRGIN ISLANDS WIC PLAYS "NAME THE FOODS" QUIZ AT TUTU PARK MALL IN ST. THOMAS

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

The WIC clinic in Tutu Park Mall, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, tested the fruit and vegetable knowledge of participants by holding a "Name the Food" quiz. A poster graphic with various fruits and vegetables was given and participants had to see how many of the foods they could identify. Recipes on fun ways to use fruits and vegetables were also provided, and participants were encouraged to use their fruit and vegetable checks to try a new fruit or vegetable. Lunch bag prizes were given to the three participants who identified the most foods. ■



**AND THE WINNER IS...** — *Shantel Harley (left) receives her lunch bag from Nutrition Aide Jacqueline Smith (right) as son, J'Coy looks on.*

## WEST VIRGINIA WIC OFFERS TIME TO BE ACTIVE

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

During the months of July and August, WV's Valley Health WIC promoted being physically active as a family. We discussed inexpensive, easy, and fun ways to be active together. In addition, we focused on why physical activity is important for adults and children.

We provided hands-on activities during the child education classes and showed families how they can recycle leftover items from WIC purchases and make it into a fun activity. One example is cutting the bottoms off of milk gallons and taping off the cut edge and using them as catchers with a small ball. Another way we encourage physical activity is using leftover WIC cereal boxes for cereal box bowling. We use cereal boxes for bowling pins and each child is able to roll a ball and try to knock down the boxes. In addition, we showed a clip from the Sesame Street Healthy Habits for Life kit that is called Get Up and Get Moving. Parents and children enjoyed the hands-on activities. Our hope is to show that physical activity can entail a variety of activities that families can do together. ■



**CEREAL BOX BOWLING**



**MILK BOTTLE CATCH**

## FRANKLIN & MARSHALL COLLEGE STUDENTS TAKE WIC EXPERIENCE ABROAD

By Sharon Wasneuski, MS, CAP of Lancaster County WIC Director

Three students from Franklin and Marshall (F&M) College needed a sponsor to complete their final project in the Global Public Health course they were taking. Their project focused on food sources and nutrition. So whom do you call when you need expertise in the area of food and nutrition? If you responded with – WIC, you would be correct!

Sharon Wasneuski, MS, WIC Director for Community Action Program of Lancaster County, Inc., PA, agreed to help Tigist Hailu, Ishmael Buckner, and Samara Valentine with their group project. Consequently, the students worked 16-20 hours each on the development of two important tools for the WIC staff. The first was the template of a newsletter the WIC staff could use on a regular basis to publish nutrition tips, information and recipes for the public.

The other tool was a survey for WIC participants to determine how they were using the WIC foods. The survey also sought to identify barriers that prevented them from using the nutritionally sound food. With the assistance of WIC nutritionists, the students were able to gather approximately 100 survey responses during client appointments. Wasneuski used a portion of the results in her outreach plan submitted to the state WIC office.

For their part, the F&M students had the opportunity to learn about the WIC Program, its participants and observe nutritional counseling by qualified staff. They also had an overview of the services that CAP provides. Shortly after the conclusion of their three weeks at WIC, the students flew to South Africa where they participated in a five-week work-study program with the Medical Knowledge Institute. Upon arrival, they applied what they learned from WIC to a series of train the trainer workshops. The workshops focused on disease prevention through education in low-income areas of the country with varying languages and cultures. The workshops covered diseases such as diabetes, HIV, tuberculosis, fetal alcohol syndrome and many others.

"The work we did with WIC helped us very much because we were able to use the skills gained for our project in South Africa – such as how to look for resources and how to relate to your audiences," said Tigist Hailu.

"With WIC I gained experience talking to Lancaster community members about why they choose to take advantage of certain nutrition programs, which aided me when speaking with community members in South Africa," said Ishmael Buckner. ■



**WIC GOES ABROAD** — *F&M College students (left to right) Samara Valentine, Ishmael Buckner, and Tigist Hailu took their WIC experience to South Africa.*

## NEW JERSEY'S OCEAN COUNTY WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF NEW SITE

New Jersey's Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) opened its new WIC office at 1771 Madison Avenue in Lakewood. Due to an increased caseload of 13,157 per month it was necessary to plan a site that is accessible to clients, well-lit, child friendly and has ample parking. The previous WIC office located on 4th Street had limited space; the client flow was not conducive to servicing clients efficiently; limited parking; and second floor location. Navigation of baby carriages, etc., through the elevator system in the building was difficult.

A strategic plan was put in place by OCHD. Properties were inspected and the present site was secured. The new WIC office uses 10,000 square feet of the 13,000 square feet building. The office is collocated with the Ocean County Health Department Public Health Emergency Response Planning Unit and the Ocean County Health Department Early Intervention Unit. The office is located in a strip mall and is sandwiched between the CHEMED, a Federally Qualified Health Center and the Lakewood Board of Education.

Much of the funding for the new office came from the United States Department of Agriculture. In addition to hiring an architect and builder, WIC staff provided input on the color schemes and layout flow to maximize the use of the office space. The new office is designed to provide WIC services to approximately 300 people per day. The clinic flow was designed so that eligibility determinations and nutrition education occurs simultaneously without crossing paths.

The new site includes nine intake rooms, five anthropometric and hematological rooms, and seven nutrition assessment and counseling rooms. Each room is enclosed, giving the clients needed privacy. There is a separate classroom and certification space that flow into two separate check waiting areas to receive vouchers and the next appointment. In addition, there is a breastfeeding suite, including three enclosed spaces with gliders where mothers can breastfeed their babies in private. This suite includes a breastfeeding classroom and office.

The layout of the new WIC office was created so the client wait time is less stressful as they moved through each space. The new clinic design prevents overcrowding. ■



**GRAND OPENING** — Attending the opening of the new WIC office in Lakewood are (left to right) Monique Hatten, Acting Director Mid-Atlantic USDA; Cindy Weiss-Fischer, MS, RD, NJ State WIC; Mary Mickles, MS, RD, Acting NJ State WIC Director; Kirk Groomes, Student Intern with USDA; Mathew Holland, RD, Chief Nutritionist, Ocean County WIC; Meg McCarthy-Klein, RD, Coordinator, Ocean County WIC; Brunilda Price, Ocean County Health Department Director of Community Services; and Florence Rotonda, IBLC, Breastfeeding Coordinator, NJ State WIC.



**A PLACE TO PLAY** — The space was created to be child friendly and colorful and a fun place to be. It offers educational games for children to play with in both waiting rooms.

### WIC Stars in Movie Night continued from page 1

Program with a quick introductory flash of the WIC logo. The ad also highlights who is eligible for the WIC Program, and shows that we provide health screenings, nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support and healthy foods. We end our ad with a flash of our phone number with the word "Call" in front. Additionally, throughout the ad, we feature pictures of three different and very beautiful families!

Since we started our ad campaign at the movie theater, we have found this to be an excellent way to reach out to our local community. Several thousand movie-goers see our ad over a month's period. Some of these individuals might be eligible for WIC themselves or for their families, while others seeing our ad might know a friend or family member who might also be eligible.

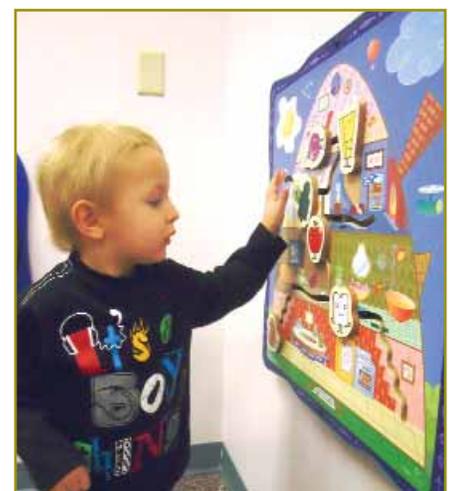
What better way is there to outreach to the community than to go where your community already goes and bring them back to you. In addition, there is something remarkable about how reaching out to some, whether it be at the movie theater or in your own office setting, can cause a strong desire to search for outreach activities that will reach more families! ■

### PENNSYLVANIA'S FAYETTE COUNTY WIC CLINIC MORE KID-FRIENDLY THROUGH USDA GRANT

By Betty Zackal, FCCAA WIC Director

Pennsylvania's Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. received an Operational Adjustment Funding Grant from USDA to renovate the main WIC clinic site in Uniontown, PA. The \$32,500 project provides a more kid-friendly atmosphere and a more updated educational environment for WIC participants located at 140 North Beeson Boulevard in the Family Service Center. The renovation makes the clinic more welcoming and stimulates the child's growth and social experience during the WIC appointment. The interactive nutrition wall activities and colorful carpet with a track to run toys allow children to play as mom completes dietary questionnaires.

The project included enlarging the waiting room, cutting a hole in the wall creating an archway between the seating area and the new play room area. The WIC certification rooms were also renovated with new cupboards and workspace areas. The WIC receptionist check-in area was renovated with higher alternating glass and fabric soundproof partitions to protect confidentiality as participants sign in for their appointments. All of the improvements are allowing for a calming environment for both the children and the adults providing better customer service to all the WIC customers at Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. ■



**FUN IN A NEW SPACE** — Jason Skidmore enjoying the new activity board at Uniontown WIC Clinic!

## INTERN GAINS EXPERIENCE AND INSIGHT AT PUERTO RICO'S NARANJITO WIC CLINIC

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

The Puerto Rico WIC Program provides pre-professional experiences to the interns of the Nutrition and Dietetic Internship of the Department of Health of Puerto Rico Government. One of these interns, Edmarie Chinae-Garcia, was accepted to the Naranjito WIC Clinic, part of Bayamon WIC Region. Nutritionist Rosalba Rodriguez-Morales prepared an intensive and interesting calendar for Edmarie, who interned from October to November 2010.

Edmarie participated in various activities, including the Health and Security Fair in Naranjito Public Plaza. She taught attendees about the fat content of some foods. Naranjito Mayor Orlando Ortiz-Chevere visited the WIC Program information station!

One of Edmarie's most memorable experiences was the breastfeeding support group. The intern was amazed to watch one of the little girls, who accompanied her mother, practice the art of discreet breastfeeding with her toy doll. ■



**LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER** — The little girl with her toy doll practicing discreet breastfeeding.



**COLLAGE OF MEMORIES** — Intern Edmarie Chinae-Garcia staffs the WIC Program information station at the health fair and receives a visit from Naranjito Mayor of Orlando Ortiz-Chevere.

## FARM TO SCHOOL WEEK HAS STUDENTS REACHING HIGH FOR VIRGINIA-GROWN PRODUCTS

Over 400 students at Smithland Elementary School in Harrisonburg, VA kicked off Virginia Farm to School Week (November 8-12, 2010) at a school-wide assembly. The kickoff event at Smithland Elementary was one of many events held throughout the state to promote connecting locally grown foods with school nutrition services.

Obesity Prevention Dietitian Kendall Brooks provided "Virginia Grown" nutrition facts for the event and Physical Activity Coordinator Jessica Rodriguez led the students in exercises around agriculture such as "reaching high" and "picking Virginia apples."

The Virginia Farm to School program is an effort to increase the amount of fresh and nutritious Virginia-grown products offered in schools and to promote opportunities for schools and local farmers to work together.

As a strategy to increase intake of fruits and vegetables and promote sustainable agriculture, Virginia Department of Health's CHAMPION Obesity Prevention Program has partnered with the VA Farm to School Workgroup to promote Farm to School Week as well as other farm to institution initiatives. VDH participates on the Farm to School Workgroup in partnership with VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, VA Department of Education, VA Cooperative Extension, advocates for local farm to institution programs, local farmers, and local distributors. ■



**KEEP MOVING** — Obesity Team member Jessica Rodriguez leads over 400 students at Smithland Elementary School in Harrisonburg, VA in doing exercises. Reach high to pick Virginia apples!



**LET'S GET IT STARTED** — Obesity Prevention Team members (left to right) Jessica Rodriguez, Heidi Hertz, and Kendall Brooks kick off Farm to School Week.

## PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTHWEST GETS CAR "WRAPPED UP"

By Leisa J. Shawley  
IT Manager/Outreach Coordinator

One of the goals of the WIC Program at Community Action Southwest (Washington, PA) was to increase the awareness of our services in the community. What better way than to drive around town with the WIC message on our car! This past year we decided to get it wrapped using the foods that we provide in WIC.

We purchased our Hybrid car in 2009 and use it for business trips around town and across the state. The graphics were created by Starn Marketing Group. ■



**NASCAR, WATCH OUT** — At a meeting in Harrisburg, then-Pennsylvania WIC Director Gregory Landis was delighted with the car and participated in this great photo op.

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WIC OFFERS NUTRITION EDUCATION TECHNICIAN COURSE

By Alexandra Bender, Program Specialist

The DC WIC Program has worked diligently this past year to develop a Nutrition Education Technician training course for our Health Technicians. The course was developed to increase secondary nutrition education rates among low-risk WIC participants in DC. We also wanted to recognize the talents and skills of our staff and provide opportunities for career enhancement.

The students completed an eight-week course which was developed in collaboration with the University of the District of Columbia. The students learned general nutrition information and counseling skills so they are able to provide secondary education to low-risk participants. Course topics included anthropometric measuring techniques, group discussion techniques, nutrition for pregnancy, postpartum nutrition, infant nutrition, child nutrition, breastfeeding nutrition, cholesterol, iron, vitamins A and C, and calcium. The students received additional training in breastfeeding support and documentation of secondary nutrition education for low-risk participants. The course was taught in the same manner as a college course. There were weekly quizzes on the textbook readings and graded participation and group discussions during the Thursday evening three-hour sessions.

The local agency coordinators chose the candidates based on their job performance and attendance. Candidates were also required to have completed one year working for DC WIC. Prior to the class, the candidates had to complete our on-line participant education modules and an essay on breastfeeding and the new food package.

A total of 14 technicians participated in and graduated from the course. The nutrition education technicians now have the responsibility to assist the nutritionists by providing secondary education to low-risk participants on general nutrition topics. This will allow the nutritionists to focus their time on certifications and high-risk participants as well as increase nutrition education rates and serve participants more efficiently.

In December, we hosted a graduation ceremony to show our appreciation for all the time, enthusiasm and hard work our nutrition education technicians have invested in this course. It was easy to see that working together in the course had helped bonds form among all of the technicians. This will not only benefit the local agency staff but also the entire WIC Program as a whole, with open communication between sites.

To continue the great work of the nutrition education technicians, the state agency plans to provide additional training throughout the year on topics such as facilitated group education. We also plan to offer the nutrition education technician training course to other staff who may have been unable to participate in this series.

We, at the state agency, are proud of each and every technician who took time out of her busy schedule to learn and grow with WIC. We value their hard work each day in the clinic and hope they feel a new spirit of commitment with this new responsibility. ■



**HATS OFF — Congratulations to DC WIC Nutrition Education Technician Graduates! Pictured (left to right) are Gloria Clark, DC WIC Program Manager with NET graduates Gwendolyn E. McNair, Rema R. Jackson, Sherika Bittle, Crystal Burton, Santos H. Benitez, Esther Shephard, Adrea Shelton Berry, Ercilia Perdomo, Darlene T. Johnson, Joselyn Santos, Dionne Giles-Dicks, Lucia Castillo, Toni Henderson-Jones, Corixa Bran-Paz, and University of the District of Columbia professor Michelle Harris.**

## PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY WIC PROGRAM RECEIVES LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR LIFE-SAVING NURSE

By Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, Allegheny County Health Department

Kathryn South, MS, RD, LDN, Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Coordinator, for the Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program received a letter of appreciation and commendation regarding Mary Ufnar, RN, IBCLC, from WIC participant, Jacquetta Neal.

Excerpts from Jacquetta's letter follow:

I gave birth prematurely to my third child, Mariah, on June 26, 2010. Mariah was born at a mere 2lb., 1oz. Although extremely small, she displayed incredible strength and proved to be a true fighter. During her month-long stay at Magee Hospital, Mariah was blessed not to have any complications that a child born at that age and size usually have. She did not require oxygen nor was she in need of any medications. She was simply a very healthy preemie. She remained in the hospital until she weighed enough to come home. Mariah was released from the hospital at 4 lb., 6 oz.

"Upon being released from the hospital, Mariah's doctor decided to send her home with oxygen to be used during feedings and at the lowest setting. She was also sent home with a monitor for her breathing and heart-rate, which is standard for all premature infants. Upon review of the monitor recordings, it was found that Mariah had been free from any apnea or bradycardia episodes. As a result, on August 8, 2010, shortly after coming home, the monitor and oxygen was discontinued.

"On August 9, 2010 the lactation nurse, Mary, was scheduled to come to our home to assist me with my breastfeeding efforts as she has done on several other occasions. The information and suggestions she has given me is the reason I am still breastfeeding to this day. She encouraged and reassured me I was doing it right and she always gave exact, specific information regarding breastfeeding. During Mary's visit on August 9, we were discussing breastfeeding and I looked at Mariah and realized that she was having a difficult time trying to breath."

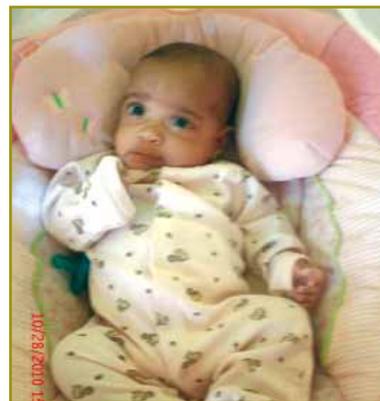
Jacquetta proceeded to state the stressful moments that followed where Mariah wasn't breathing and turned blue and how Mary's training, skills, confidence, and patience helped to save her baby's life that day.

"Mariah's color continued to lighten to normal and I can remember just thanking God over and over. Thanking God that Mary had been there and she gave life back to my beautiful, precious child, with His help. I hope this letter demonstrates the outstanding job that Mary did that day. She changed our life in a way that no one has ever done. Our deepest gratitude goes to her. She deserves to be acknowledged, rewarded and praised."

Kudos to Mary and all dedicated WIC staff everywhere! ■



**Mariah the day after her birth.**



**Mariah is a bundle of joy at 4 months.**

## PUERTO RICO WIC's YABUCOA BREASTFEEDING AND PREGNANT WOMEN SUPPORT GROUP

By Carmen A. Oliveras, Nutrition Supervisor  
Caguas WIC Region, Puerto Rico WIC

Puerto Rico's Caguas Region Yabucoa WIC Clinic hosted constant activities for their breastfeeding women.

The purpose of these activities is to acknowledge the women on reaching their goals of breastfeeding and to promote breastfeeding among the Yabucoa community.

These women have celebrated breastfeeding in many ways. During Thanksgiving week, they held a candle-lighting ceremony, where the women lit a candle to express their gratitude to the Lord for the opportunity to be empowered, educated and prepared to enjoy breastfeeding. Each mom received a certificate. They also hosted a pre-New Year's Eve Party with the traditional countdown during a class to celebrate their breastfeeding achievements during 2010. They held a symbolic toast and wore hats, as is customary during New Year's Eve celebrations.

The featured event was their first Convention for Breastfeeding Mothers and Moms-to-be. Over 200 people attended and participated in classes, chats and orientations about breastfeeding benefits, myths and techniques. More than 25 exhibitors from the private sector and public agencies joined the effort to educate the community.

The intention of all these activities is to speak about breastfeeding as the most natural way to nurture and feed the infants and to let know the community that the Yabucoa WIC Clinic is well empowered. They help educate WIC participants to manage their breastfeeding experience with their families and community as something natural and fun to do. ■



**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED** — Accepting her certificate for breastfeeding is mom Aracelis Ortiz (left) from Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Dimarie Rivera (right), as Yabucoa WIC Clinic Nutritionist Iris Laboy looks on.



**WAY TO GO** — Mom Melissa Lopez receives her certificate.

## NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS RMC WIC SERVICES MINORITY HEALTH MONTH 2010

By Anita Otokiti and Patricia Cummings, Trinitas RMC

As part of New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Minority Multicultural Health, Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC) WIC Services participated in the statewide initiative, "Healthy Me, Healthy Us" on September 10, 2010. As the classroom was transformed into a health fair, WIC Services used this as an opportunity to provide educational services and provide participants with "A Healthy Report Card."

WIC Department Nutritionists Epoeta Jerome and Dianne Kennedy featured bulletin displays on *Fruits and Vegetables; More is Better* which encourages increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. The Farmers' Market Produce display highlighted the cash value vouchers. Maintaining healthy weight and obesity prevention/intervention was discussed during encounters about becoming more physically active in your home and neighborhood. Nutritionist Zelma Mellett presented "Reading Food Labels" and advised how to avoid excessive salt, sugars and fats. She encouraged participants to look out for the hidden calories and saturated fats which can cause elevated cholesterol, obesity and other health-related diseases in children and adults. Nutritionist Kinces Joseph provided participants with information regarding their body mass index (BMI). Each participant received an individualized food plan from My Pyramid based on their BMI.

Breastfeeding Coordinator Maribel Solano and Lactation Instructor Tawana Jackson presented information on the disparities of breastfeeding rates. Exclusive breastfeeding rates are highest among older mothers, non-Hispanic White and Asian/Pacific Islanders mothers. Combination feeding while in the hospital is most prevalent among Hispanic mothers and foreign born mothers. One mother was observed comfortably breastfeeding while standing as she strolled through the various displays.

Mary Ann Kokidis, Health Educator, Amerigroup Cooperation, displayed healthy beverages comparing the sugar content of soda, sports drinks and other widely consumed beverages. The replica of five pounds of fat was a good visual tool to teach about obesity and weight control. Sharon Taylor and Margarita Tamaro performed HIV screening, while Health Technician Linda Bailey performed height and weight measurements.

More than 70 people participated in the event and each received information, screenings and gift bags. According to the surveys completed, WIC participants preferred the health fair method over traditional classroom discussions. One participant noted that she missed the classes. The event concluded as the WIC staff released balloons in remembrance of the victims and heroes of 9-11. ■



**A DAY TO REMEMBER** — Participants in the health fair released balloons in memory of the victims of 9-11.



**"FAIRY" NICE** — Participating in the health fair are (standing, left to right) Margarita Tamaro, Screening Services; Linda Bailey, WIC Health Technician; Zelma Mulette, WIC Nutritionist; Rosa Tamayo, WIC Program Manager; Dianne Kennedy, WIC Nutritionist; Tawana Jackson, IBCLC-Lactation Instructor; Maribel Solano, Breastfeeding Coordinator; (sitting, left to right) Mary Ann Kokidis, Health Educator, Amerigroup Corp.; Sharon Taylor, Director Screening Services; Patricia Cummings, WIC Nutrition Supervisor.

**PENNSYLVANIA'S LANCASTER  
WIC KIDS ARE FIT KIDS**

By Judy Fulginiti, Breastfeeding/Nutrition Education Coordinator

Community Action Program of Lancaster County, Inc. (PA) WIC Program recently received a \$10,000 grant award from General Mills Foundation. They were chosen as one of 50 national recipients out of 1,100 applicants who submitted proposals for improving youth nutrition and fitness behaviors.

The grant application, developed by Judy Fulginiti, Breastfeeding/Nutrition Education Coordinator, and Malvena McLeod, MS RD, CPA, proposed a "WIC Kids are Fit Kids" initiative using a hands-on learning kiosk for parents of children age two to five years. Participants will choose from topics such as "Physical Activity," "Fruits and Vegetables," or "Think Your Drink." After completing the module, they will answer a simple quiz question before seeing a nutritionist to set their nutrition goal. Kids can put their daily food choices to the test by taking the "Healthy Hero Challenge." This interactive approach to nutrition education offers an alternative to traditional counseling and is sure to appeal to a high-tech generation of WIC parents and caregivers! ■



**CHECK IT OUT** — Tiffany Pagan, and her daughter, Zaniyah Alicea, using the new kiosk.

**TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH**

By Anita Otokiti, TRMC WIC Director

During August, Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC) WIC Services hosted several events at the hospital and at WIC sites to highlight the theme of World Breastfeeding Month, "Breastfeeding: Just 10 Steps the Baby Friendly Way." New Jersey's Breastfeeding goal for 2010 was to have at least 75 percent of women breastfeeding at discharge. Falling short of this goal, WIC Services focused outreach on breastfeeding at the hospital. Obstetricians provide a vital service as they initiate the conversation about infant feeding plans with pregnant women. During prenatal visits at WIC, Breastfeeding Peer Counselors discuss how doctors and hospitals may support the decision to breastfeed and the right to refuse formula during hospital stays.

"Highlights of Breastfeeding Goals and Practices" was the subject of the in-service on August 16. Approximately 30 staff members of the nursery unit reviewed the NJDOH Breastfeeding Report Card, Breastfeeding in the Workplace, Baby Friendly Steps and the TRMC Employee Breastfeeding Policy. Attendees made several recommendations that will be considered in future endeavors. Nurses recommended that efforts must begin with registration in Labor and Delivery to support continuity of care. The reporting methodology of who is breastfeeding must be assessed to ensure that all hospitals have uniform reporting and documentation.

About 20 members of the Medical Care Team, which included Labor and Delivery, Nursery Unit and WIC, were invited to a tea service on August 23, where the theme was: "The Baby Friendly Way." As a result of this effort, several obstetricians invited WIC Breastfeeding staff to visit their private offices to provide breastfeeding support. The third event with 40 guests from the community was a "Birthday Celebration for the Newborns" on the unit on August 26 during the evening shift. Families were invited to visit the breastfeeding displays and learn how each family member is important to support breastfeeding. Trinitas RMC allows WIC to use a conference room on the nursery floor to provide breastfeeding education services and to coordinate appointments. ■



**PHOTO OP** — Enjoying the festivities are (left to right) Riasa Herrea, BFPC; Dr. K. Ayyanathan; WIC Director Anita Otokiti, and Breastfeeding Coordinator Maribel Solano.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** — Families enjoy the birthday celebration for newborns on TRMC's nursery floor.



**GETTING IT RIGHT** — Lactation Instructor Claudia Muelle (left) assists a mother.

**MARWIC TIMES  
Calendar**

- PA Retail Store Coordinators' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. April 13.
- PA Breastfeeding Coordinators' Meeting. Camp Hill, PA. May 16-17.
- PA WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. June 8-9.
- PA Nutrition Education Coordinators' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. June 8-9.
- The deadline for the Summer issue of MARWIC TIMES is May 6, 2011. 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.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC RECEIVES LARGE DONATION OF BOOKS FROM THE FIRST BOOK ORGANIZATION

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

West Virginia's Valley Health WIC recently received a donation of books from the Random House Publishing Company through the First Book Organization. WIC received approximately 8000 books in all. In addition to the free books, we also received free shipping through a grant from the United States Department of Education. We received four different books - *My Best Friend is a Princess*, *Pretty Princess Places* with reusable stickers, *Thomas and Friends Lift-the-Flap Freight*, and *Dr. Seuss's Horton Hears a Who! Can You?*. We are providing the books to all infants and children who come into their WIC appointments. The participants are very gracious and happy to receive the books.

We hope by providing free books to our young participants at WIC it will encourage parents to continue to read to their children at home. ■



*Evelyn and Jayson*



*Elijah and Christian*



*Jonathan and Harley*

## BUS POSTERS REACH MEMBERS OF WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH/WIC COMMUNITY

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

A unique opportunity was recently presented to our local agency area of West Virginia's Valley Health/WIC through Blue Line Media. Through a special offering, bus advertising was available at discounted government and nonprofit rates. Our agency was able to take advantage of this program by posting interior posters that ran in the Charleston area from February to May 2010. In another round of postings, both the Charleston area and the Huntington area were available and we ran interior and exterior posters for the period of June to August, and to complete the cycle, the final round of postings was available from October to December.

As many of us know, although WIC is free to eligible women and children, not everyone is aware of the benefits of WIC Programs in their communities. To address the lack of awareness, several WIC Program offices have taken steps to inform people about their services. While most focus on traditional advertising methods, some use the bolder method of public transit advertising to inform residents about their valuable services.

"Through this arrangement with Blue Line Media, we have been able to use bus ads to promote our programs and services throughout our local communities," stated Mary W. Caldwell, Valley Health/WIC Agency Director.

According to their website, [bluelinemedia.com](http://bluelinemedia.com), "Multiple Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs around the country have partnered up with Blue Line Media to get the word out about the important services they provide to deserving demographic groups. From nutrition support to breastfeeding education, WIC plays an important role in helping pregnant women and children obtain assistance to lead healthy lives. WICs' public service announcements rolled out on various media in multiple cities nationwide beginning in February 2010" and extending through December of 2010.

Each agency that participated in this special program was responsible for creating their posters. Valley Health/WIC selected Inside Out Creative, based out of Charleston, WV. The firm's owner, Amanda B. Easter, said, "Projects like this add excitement and purpose to my work. By educating and helping others, we can make a difference in a positive way."

To get an idea of the effect that the transit advertising has had on our participants and since many of our participants ride the bus, our local WIC office developed a survey to ask about the posters. Among the feedback we have received are comments such as "very nice/very good," "a great way to reach the community," "it lets people know what (WIC) offers," "even my 3-year-old pointed it out to me," and "it encourages people to sign up for WIC." ■



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