

# MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

## PENNSYLVANIA'S ADAGIO ALIQUIPPA WIC STARTS NEW YEAR WITH NEW OFFICE

By Barbara Jinar, CLE, IBCLC, Nutrition Services Ancillary Services Coordinator, Adagio Health

Pennsylvania's Adagio Health received an operational adjustment grant to relocate and upgrade their Aliquippa WIC office. Aliquippa serves a caseload of approximately 1,000 participants a month. This new location is approximately 1,500 square feet of office space. The building was renovated from plans specifically designed to serve WIC customers in an attractive, flow-efficient, friendly area. The space includes a customer waiting area, business/receptionist office, an education area, nutritionist office, counseling office, laboratory, secured voucher and distribution area, play area for the children, peer counselor office, a private area for breastfeeding moms, satellite office, storage, and separate staff and client restrooms.

Like all Adagio Health/WIC offices, the Aliquippa WIC office has a nutrition education area equipped with three kiosks from which the customers can access over 50 different learning modules. Adagio Health also offers web from home nutrition education for their participants. Using the kiosks or web from home for nutrition education enables staff to individualize nutrition education for each participant with follow-up education from staff during their WIC visit. The nutrition education area also permits enhanced flexibility for customers to schedule their WIC appointments. Extra counter space allows for convenient placement of educational displays, brochures and referral materials which highlight WIC services and those services provided by other programs.

Children enjoy visiting the office because multiple wall toys

entertain them as their parents are attending their WIC appointment. What a great way to start off the New Year! Adagio Health administers the WIC Program in five counties in western Pennsylvania.



NEW DIGS — Sarah Selby RD, LDN, enjoys the new office!

## WEST VIRGINIA'S RANDOLPH-ELKINS WIC PROGRAM RECYCLES

We have all heard about the benefits of recycling. Green living practices preserve resources, protect the environment and benefit the economy. So how is Randolph-Elkins WIC taking action?

The WIC staff participates in office waste recycling by copying on the back sides of paper, cutting scrap paper into notes and message pads, using shredded paper at our homes as compost and animal bedding, and by donating cardboard boxes and other office paper to the Tygart Valley Youth Group recycling program.

Recycling takes little effort and makes a big difference. We can encourage our WIC families to participate in outdoor activities enjoying the clean air, clean water and litter-free landscapes that recycling helps make possible. ■



PITCHING IN — Taking steps to make things green are Randolph-Elkins staffers (left to right) Vicky Howes, Nutritionist/RN; Sandra Miller, WIC Program Director; Blanche Simmons, OA; Susan Foster, RD; and Dorothy Garcia, Breastfeeding Counselor.

## MARYLAND'S LOWER EASTERN SHORE WIC STAFF HELPS HURRICANE SANDY SURVIVORS

By Shannon Morris

Staff from Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore WIC Program responded to the needs of the victims affected by Hurricane Sandy by providing referrals to the Food Stamp Program and the names and locations of organizations that offered assistance. Individually, the staff donated cash and items and volunteered at various organizations. Two staff were leaders in helping those in need. Emma Zeltman worked with her fellow tenants in her apartment complex collecting food and cleaning supplies and Caroline Johnson helped members of her church collect money for the Hurricane Sandy victims. ■

## SPRING 2013

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**NEWS FROM THE USDA: HIGHLIGHTS FROM ANNUAL MID-ATLANTIC WIC STATE DIRECTORS' MEETING:  
WIC STATE AGENCIES ARE ON.....THE ROAD TO SUCCESS**

By Christine Berberich, Program Specialist, SFP

**T**he Road to Success" was this year's theme for the FY 2013 Mid-Atlantic Regional WIC State Directors' Meeting that provided time to share updates, promote discussions and provide networking opportunities between MARO and State Agency staff. The event was held at the Regional Office in Robbinsville, NJ from February 5-7.

MARO's Regional Administrator Patricia Dombroski agreed in her opening remarks that this year's theme was appropriate, stating "especially in these times when new challenges seem to come from every direction and often try to divert our attention from the important work that we do." She also added that working together to protect the integrity of WIC is a high priority.

Debra Whitford, Director of the Supplemental Food Programs Division, gave the national perspective, highlighting the status of both funding and implementation plans for meeting the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) mandate by 2020 and the importance of being "good stewards of Federal Funds."

Roberta Hodsdon, MARO's Branch Chief,

Supplemental Food Programs (SFP) began her update on the 2013 MARO WIC/FMNP/SFMNP work plan with an optimistic Power Point presentation featuring Louis Armstrong's song, "What a Wonderful World" that used amusing road signage that had attendees reflect on the unusual routes we encounter during our work journey. Following Roberta was Amy Holtan, SFP Nutritionist and Joni Garcia, SNAP Nutritionist, who covered topics such as VENA, nutrition risk code updates and national studies currently taking place. Shirley Sword, PA WIC, spoke regarding the PA WIC Breastfeeding Performance Bonus Award received from the USDA in FY2011 to enhance breastfeeding promotion and support activities.

Carol Smith, Senior Program Specialist, SFP and Justin Wohlsifer, Program Specialist, SFP began the second day with "What's Trending in Vending?" detailing program integrity, best practices and compliance investigations in the vendor management area. Eric Ratchford, Branch Chief in MARO SNAP, continued the theme and provided insight into SNAP's retailer management and suggested procedures to improve the application screening process for high risk vendors. The MIS/EBT Update was presented by SFP Senior Program Specialists, Robert Logan and Brian Buszko, which included updates on various guidelines/requirements that are either in draft or under FNS review, such as: Handbook 901, WIC EBT Operating Rules and Technical Implementation Guide (TIG) and National Universal Product Code (NUPC) Database.

Connie Kramer-Walker, Senior Program Specialist, SFP offered Q&A guidance for navigating the WIC ME Tool along with Brian Buszko who took the audience through a "live" demonstration. WIC Policy issues concerning extended certification periods, verification of certification cards, waiting lists and subpoenas were covered by Jaime Van Lieu, Team Leader, SFP and Sylvia Nah, Program Specialist, SFP.

The final day began with an overview of the WIC Customer Service Toolkit by Altarum Institute's Senior Policy Associates, Diane Phillips and Karen Deehy. The Toolkit provides 16 individual training modules on 7 topic areas that reinforce various customer service aspects to WIC local staff through interactive activities

and videos. Next up was MARO's Civil Rights Director, Michele Sazo; she reviewed the new civil rights organization, her role in handling participant complaints and provided guidance on applicable laws and regulations. Kirk Groomes, Financial Management Specialist in MARO, explained FM's role in the data mining process and how it will be used in conjunction with WIC reviews to maximize the effectiveness of operations and minimize participant and vendor fraud. Basic procurement and contract requirements were summarized as well. Dañae Lewis, Program Specialist, SFP, explained the process for the FY13 Operational Adjustment Fund Projects and provided a funding update.

Throughout the three-day meeting, WIC Directors and staff were provided opportunities to shine and share highlights from the past year. DE provided its updated vendor and participant materials, displaying its professional and consistent brand. DC highlighted its success with MD in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program collaboration. MD headed a new Hospital Breastfeeding Policy that resulted in a commitment from birthing hospitals to become a Best Practices Hospital, producing a substantial increase in breastfeeding rates. A Share Point Server allows NJ's local agencies to have one concise source for policies, procedures, calendars and reports. VA and WV described successful program integrity efforts and procedures used to identify participant fraud by using social media sites. Also, VA reviewed the status of its HealthBites website, which offers nutrition education to WIC participants and the general public and can now be utilized by other WIC State Agencies. The Virgin Islands discussed their staff training and breastfeeding promotion initiatives and clinic staff in PR attended various training sessions that have resulted in increased breastfeeding rates.

The final topic was led by Patricia Dombroski, Regional Administrator, who solicited ideas on collaboration opportunities and integration with other health and nutrition programs. State Directors were encouraged to share best practices and success stories with MARO and one another.

It was clear to all attendees that the MARO State and local agencies are clearly "On the Road to Success." ■



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**VIRGINIA WIC TRAINEES TAUGHT PROPER FOOD PREP AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**L**isa Pawloski, Professor and Chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, speaks during a demonstration of food preparation and cooking for WIC trainees at the Mason Nutrition and Food Studies kitchen. ■



Photo by Alexis Glenn/Creative Services/George Mason University

## MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE WIC WELCOMES TWO NEW EMPLOYEES

### Meet Dañáé Lewis

Acceptance into USDA's Student Career Experience Program was a natural fit for Dañáé Lewis. Having both parents retire from the military, she knew she wanted a career in public service, and this was a perfect avenue to start a new profession. As a Program Specialist for the WIC Program, Dañáé recently completed her Masters in International Relations and Conflict Resolution from American Military University.

Prior to starting her internship in June 2012, Dañáé was a Bank Manager as well as a mortgage supervisor. Her strong work ethic continues as she completes funding, reporting and analysis for aspects relating to Funds Management, Food Delivery and Certification/Eligibility. She respects WIC's commitment to not only provide participants access to nutritious foods but to support quality programs that promote a healthy lifestyle.

Dañáé is a voracious reader and embarks on an annual trip abroad with family.

### Introducing Christine Berberich

On December 16, 2012, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office welcomed Program Specialist, Christine Berberich. No stranger to public service, Christine comes to MARO WIC with a plethora of valuable experience working with grants and low-income citizens. Prior to joining MARO, she spent eight years with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development where she reviewed and coordinated grants, monitored grant recipients, as well as conducted workshops and training for unemployed job seekers, an aspect of her career that she truly valued because of the interaction and personal relationships she was able to establish with clients on a regular basis. Additionally, she spent six years with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development where she conducted public housing and section 8 on-site reviews.

Although Christine will work in MARO WIC, she will also have the unique opportunity to learn and work on projects within all three branches of the Special Nutrition Programs (SNP) Division; School Based Programs, Community Nutrition Programs, and WIC. When asked what she is most looking forward to at MARO, Christine said, "I am really excited to learn and become familiar with all of the different programs that comprise SNP."

When she is not dedicating her time to MARO, Christine enjoys outdoor activities with her family such as playing tennis, walking, and bike riding. ■



DAÑÁÉ LEWIS



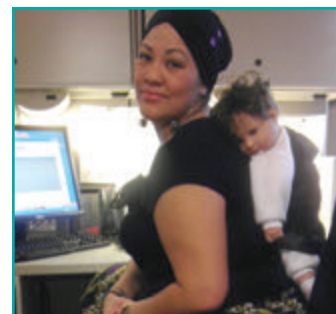
CHRISTINE BERBERICH

## NEW JERSEY'S NEWARK WIC CELEBRATES FOOD DAY IN INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Food Day – *International Style* rocked Newark (NJ) on October 24. Preparing ethnic vegetable dishes was the theme of the day. The staff of the WIC Program operated by the Newark Department of Child and Family Well-Being prepared an array of cultural dishes for WIC clients to sample.

Participants were also treated to a cooking demonstration on how to prepare a Mexican favorite Zucchini and Corn. Other dishes included Colcannon and a Vegetable Medley from Ireland. From the southern United States came Sautéed Cabbage and Sweet Potatoes with Apples. Rice with vegetables dishes from both Africa and Puerto Rico were also shared. A novelty snack was a big hit with the children - jello wedges. Hollowed out oranges were used as jello molds. Once the jello set, the oranges were cut into wedges. Participants felt this would make a great party treat!

An international atmosphere prevailed. Staff wore cultural attire. A huge wall display of fruits from around the world, prepared by CPA Josephine Valenzuela, was unveiled. Participants gave an A+ for the day's events. Recipes were distributed and participants expressed an eagerness to try them at home. Compliments on the vegetable dishes resulted in many clients trying new foods. Parents were grateful for this opportunity to learn new ways of introducing fruits and vegetables into their child's diet. ■



DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION — Health Aide Sandra Larkin in African dress.



AROUND THE WORLD AND BACK — CPA Josephine Valenzuela in Mexican dress pointing out fruits of the world.

## VIRGINIA'S WESTERN TIDEWATER WIC OFFICE HOSTS BREASTFEEDING LUNCH FORUM

On September 26, 2012, as part of Western Tidewater (VA) WIC's team staff meeting, it hosted a lunch forum with two WIC breastfeeding moms from the district. To strengthen our approach to breastfeeding recruitment and retention, we invited two moms — Ebony Holland of Franklin and Eva Kline of Suffolk. Both have had successful breastfeeding experiences and were willing to share their journeys with our group. They described their experiences through their personal struggles and successes while breastfeeding.

One mother, who is expecting her second child, struggled and overcame inverted nipple issues and ultimately breastfed her first child for over a year. The second participant and mother of four attributed her first failed attempt at breastfeeding to her age and immaturity, but breastfed her next two children successfully and is now breastfeeding her fourth child. These moms have also expressed their willingness to share their experiences with other breastfeeding moms who are trying to overcome any difficulties.

Following the lunch forum, a breastfeeding problems/solutions presentation was given by Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Kim Underwood. Staff was informed how to recruit and retain breastfeeding moms through a lively discussion of problems encountered during breastfeeding, and solutions. Staff members also participated in a round of a breastfeeding position (version of musical chairs) as well as a true/false breastfeeding knowledge game. By better understanding the needs and struggles of breastfeeding mothers, the WIC staff can assist in making every mother and baby's experience successful. ■



LUNCH AND LEARN — Attending Western Tidewater WIC's breastfeeding lunch forum are (front, left to right) Jacob Kline (big brother), Eva Kline (breastfeeding mother of four), Joshua Kline (baby brother), Ebony Holland (soon-to-be breastfeeding mom of two); (back, left to right) Breastfeeding Program Coordinator Stacey Revis, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Kim Underwood, and Nutrition Associate and enthusiastic breastfeeding advocate Nancy St. Sing.

## CHILDREN'S NATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER (DC) WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES WIC CLIENT APPRECIATION DAY 2012

By Sara Beckwith MS, RD, LD, CLS

The WIC Staff at Children's National Medical Center, in Washington, DC, showed gratitude and appreciation for the WIC families and organized the 2012 WIC Client Appreciation Day. Held on October 10, the event encouraged WIC families to eat more fruits and vegetables and increase physical activity.

The day of festivities featured fruit and vegetable-filled goody bags for all WIC participants. Four WIC families received beautifully decorated fruit and vegetable baskets. To close its 2012 season, WIC staff used this opportunity to promote the District of Columbia WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). This past year, the District of Columbia WIC FMNP featured 62 farmers, 39 market locations, and 9 farm stand locations. WIC participants have the opportunity to redeem their FMNP checks in DC and Maryland. After sampling the delicious fruit and vegetables, all WIC families were motivated to redeem their FMNP checks.

WIC Client Appreciation Day also promoted physical activity. All WIC participants received jazzy yellow hula-hoops! WIC staff led participants in a fun and interactive exercise class incorporating the yellow hula-hoops. In 2011, the DC WIC Program launched the, "We've Got to Move" campaign, in an effort to promote exercise and physical activity among WIC participants. ■



**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES GALORE** — WIC staff show off the beautiful fruit and vegetable baskets. Pictured (left to right) are WIC Nutritionist Muriel Raglin, WIC Technicians Courtney Monroe and Toni Henderson-Jones, and WIC Nutritionist Sara Beckwith.

## PUERTO RICO WIC OFFERS HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS FRUIT AND VEGETABLES RECIPES

The three main causes of death in Puerto Rico are associated with obesity; heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Furthermore, 32% of kids and teens on the Island are overweight. We need to become aware of the "epidemic for the XXI century" that is, obesity, as the US Surgeon General referred to this health issue.

The PRWIC Mobile Unit (Healthy Bus Tour) included an effort to increase awareness among applicants and participants on how to prepare colorful, nutritious and easy-to-make meals. As part of the Healthy Bus Tour, a local chef, Ivonne Martinez, held food demonstrations on healthy meals in which fruits and vegetables were highlighted. Produce was presented in a variety of ways that captured children's attention.

"In a caring way I teach kids how they can help their moms or dads prepare their meals and how they can incorporate fruits and vegetable in their diets," concluded Chef Martinez. The chef explained that it is preferable to select low-fat foods, whole grains, and dried fruits such as cranberries. During her presentation, Chef Martinez prepared several recipes in which kids can help their parents prepare their lunches and snacks.

Among the meals prepared by Chef Martinez that the participants had a chance to taste:

- Turkey, jam and cream cheese roll wrapped in whole grain tortilla with lettuce and tomato
- Whole grain pita pizza made with cheese and vegetable
- Whole grain Mexican rice made with garlic, cilantro, pepper, carrots, low fat cheese and seasoned with low sodium cumin ■



## PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY WIC PARTICIPATES IN TREE FESTIVAL

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

Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program was invited to participate in the 27th Annual Festival of Trees held in Renziehausen Park in McKeesport, PA. The WIC staff included Candis Sines-Westerberg, MEd; Marian Pusateri, and Carol Janesko, RD, LDN, who decorated one of 80 trees on display. The WIC theme was "Wonderful WIC" and featured stress balls in the shapes of apples and bananas, pictures of WIC babies and garland chains made from WIC cereal. The festival collected cash donations and canned goods and the proceeds went to support the McKeesport Food Bank. ■



**TREE TRIMMING WITH WIC STYLE** — WIC Nutrition Assistant Samantha Glenn, and her daughter, Samone Glenn, a participant at the McKeesport office, joined in the decorating festivities.

## CHRISTMAS AT NEW JERSEY'S VNA HEALTH GROUP WIC: SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN... HELLO NEW BRUNSWICK AND PERTH AMBOY

This year Santa Claus was delivering more than toys to WIC children in NJ's VNA Health Group's New Brunswick and Perth Amboy WIC clinics. On December 18 and 19, the portly, joyous, white-bearded man read Christmas stories to a group of delighted children under the grateful watch of their parents and the WIC nutritionists and generalists.

Santa's visit at WIC was once again financed by local health insurance company Healthfirst, who, as part of its mission to improve the health and well-being of the community, worked diligently with our WIC staff. The DTR for the WIC Program, Julia Sotomayor, the Marketing representative for Healthfirst, Gladys Cartagena, and its Community Manager, Aviva Woog, brought in about 125 WIC children – over two days – to this special holiday event celebrating joy, giving and caring for other people.

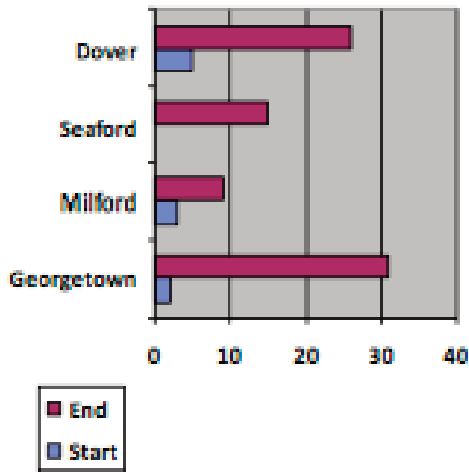
WIC parents were very appreciative of this event. Their comments ranged from gratitude to blessings for the opportunity to receive gifts, take pictures with Santa and take part in entertainment for their children with Christmas stories. Mrs. Claudia Alvarez, mother of Lucas (six months), said "What a great idea that this Christmas someone cares about my son and all the kids in the community. God Bless and thank you Healthfirst and WIC." Mrs. Amanda Serrano, mother of Yvette (3 years) and Mathew (2 months), said "Wonderful idea, kids love it. Thank you so much." ■



**NEW BRUNSWICK STAFF** — Sharing the joy of the season are members of the VNACJ WIC staff.

## DELAWARE WIC PROGRAM INCREASES DENTAL VISITS

The Delaware WIC Program collaborated with the Delaware Bureau of Dental Health (BDH). The BDH educated the staff of Delaware WIC on current oral health issues. Then WIC launched a three-month Dental Education Module that included distribution of adult and child toothbrushes, a flipchart for education on oral



health, and coloring pages for children. One of the goals of the BDH is to increase dental visits at one year of age.

Dental health providers and WIC both spread similar messages such as: limit sugared beverages, avoid baby bottle tooth decay, decrease sugary food/snacks, and eliminate the transfer of bacteria from parent to child by sharing food, drink, or putting pacifiers in the mouth before giving to baby.

The numbers are in and age 1 visits increased during this effort. Of the WIC clinics that have a Dental Clinic in the same building, age 1 visits soared from 10 in the beginning of the effort to 81 visits by the end of the three months. This represents a 300% increase.

The BDH has thanked Delaware WIC for its support in educating and raising the awareness of beginning dental visits early. WIC staff who are housed in the same State Service Center as public health dental clinics walked their clients directly to the dental window to set up an appointment! The close relationship between WIC and the Dental Health Clinics was evident during this joint venture. ■

## NEW JERSEY WIC: COMPASSIONATE, COMPETENT & COMMITTED

On Friday October 19, New Jersey WIC Staff joined together for an annual meeting.

This was the first statewide meeting in more than 15 years. More than 400 staff were in attendance at the Renaissance Newark Airport Hotel in Elizabeth, NJ. The goal of the meeting was to empower, energize and commend WIC staff for all the work they do.

The meeting began with a welcome from Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner for Family Health Services/NJ Department of Health; and Patricia Dombroski, Regional Administrator for Mid-Atlantic Region/USDA/FNS. The opening keynote entitled "Put Your Oxygen Mask on First: Practice Self-Care" was delivered by Gloria Boseman, PhD, RN, who wowed the audience with her dynamic presentation.

WIC staff attended breakout sessions in the morning and afternoon, selecting from the following topics: "Customer Service: The Art of Finessing," "Keeping Breastfeeding Going," "Navigating the Maze of Exempt Infant Formulas," "Creating a Peaceful Environment," "Building Leaders at Every Level of WIC," and "The Joy of Fitness Made Fun." The closing keynote entitled "Life in Balance," was given by Marianne Neifert, MD (Dr. Mom). Dr. Neifert closed out the day with an inspiring message to try and keep balance in our lives by "saying no to the good things, so you can say yes to the best thing."

Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and many attendees commented that this was one of the best meetings they had ever attended. ■



Jaya Velpuri, PhD, Tri-County (Gateway Community Action Corp) WIC Coordinator receiving local agency award from Roberta Hodson, Regional Director (MARO/FNS/USDA) and Gloria Rodriguez, Assistant Commissioner (Family Health Services/DOH).

## WEST VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH WIC FOSTERS FAMILY BONDS THROUGH PLAYFUL RESOURCES

By Lauren Korzep, Shenandoah Medical Systems WIC Program Outreach Coordinator

The Shenandoah Medical Systems WIC Program and West Virginia Birth to Three have partnered to promote "1-2-3 Just PLAY With Me" in the WIC clinics serving Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Mineral and Hampshire counties. "1-2-3 Just PLAY with Me" is a comprehensive, developmental card set, aimed to promote interactive play in children from birth to three years of age.

Early intervention therapists, Lacy Morise, licensed speech pathologist and Nicole Sergent, licensed physical therapist, co-authored the product after years of professional application and their personal experiences as mothers. Both Morise and Sergent work as early interventionists in their home state of West Virginia, and were seeking a resource focused on childhood development versus education as well as a tool that promotes bonding between parents and children.

The set of 75 interactive cards feature fun, easy PLAY activities designed to teach overall childhood developmental skills in a parent-friendly way. Color-coded to mark the five primary areas of development - cognitive, fine motor, speech and language, social-emotional, and gross motor - the cards are easy-to-use with developmental milestones on the fronts of the large cards with back-to-basic style PLAY on the back of each card that engages family and child.

The Shenandoah Medical Systems WIC Program graciously received five "1-2-3 Just PLAY With Me" sets donated by Morise and Sergent to use as a resource for WIC participants. For example, a card geared toward fine motor skills in a 24- to 36-month-old suggests using salad tongs to pick up objects and place them in containers to increase the strength of the grip to hold a pencil well. These suggestions for play can translate into parents encouraging their child to feed themselves and other nutrition-based habits that support the mission of WIC nutrition education.

Shenandoah Medical Systems Local Agency WIC Director Mitch Greenbaum has encouraged WIC nutritionists to utilize the cards, and keep track of times they have used the valuable information contained in the cards. He adds, "We are grateful for the gift of these easy to use cards and look forward to giving feedback to these fine practitioners." ■



LEARNING A LOT ABOUT YOUR CHILD THROUGH SIMPLE PLAY — (Left to right) Lacy Morise, SLP-CCC; Mitchell Greenbaum, Shenandoah WIC Director; and Nicole Sergent, MPT, introduce "1-2-3 Just PLAY With Me" in Shenandoah Medical Systems WIC Clinics.

## ADAGIO WIC OFFERS BREASTFEEDING SERVICES AT LOCAL PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITALS

By Barbara Jinar, Nutrition Services Ancillary Services Coordinator

The promotion and support of breastfeeding is a priority for both the WIC Program and hospital OB units. Unfortunately, most hospitals are short staffed and do not allow nurses to spend unlimited time counseling and assisting women with breastfeeding problems and/or concerns. Pennsylvania's Adagio Health WIC offices located in Armstrong and Lawrence counties have established relationships with their local hospitals. This partnership allows them to visit mothers who need help breastfeeding. These services have been made available through USDA Peer Counselor funding. WIC Peer Counselors and Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) visit WIC women on a daily basis, including the weekends, to make sure breastfeeding women are getting off to a good start. WIC breastfeeding mothers often worry that their newborns are not getting enough to eat. The Peer Counselors and CLCs provide basic breastfeeding education and support, and promote WIC to eligible moms who are not aware of the Program. Their role is to encourage and support mothers while reviewing proper breastfeeding skills. Breastfeeding topics include latch-on, milk production, importance of early and frequent feedings, skin to skin care, positioning, how to tell if my baby is getting enough, newborn sleepy baby, jaundice, sore nipples, and breast engorgement.

The Armstrong County WIC peer counselors have been offering their services since March 2012, while Lawrence County started at the end of October 2012. There is definitely an increase in WIC mom breastfeeding when comparing the Armstrong County April 2012 and November 2012, semi-annual breastfeeding statistics. The April 2012 breastfeeding duration statistics increased from 10.34 weeks to 16.80 weeks in November 2012! The key to successful breastfeeding includes information and education which the Adagio Health breastfeeding staff offers for new WIC moms. ■



LAWRENCE COUNTY — Aimee Bintrim, Certified Lactation Counselor (left) and Joline Urban, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor.



ARMSTRONG COUNTY — Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Jen Crispin (left) and Sandy Falsetti.

## MARYLAND'S CCI-WIC LOOKS TO LOCAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE BREASTFEEDING

By Rose Cohen

World Breastfeeding Week and Maryland Breastfeeding Month brought a lot of excitement to CCI-WIC. The staff geared up and executed very successful breastfeeding celebrations in three, centrally located clinics. CCI Breastfeeding Peer Counselors decided to spread the important message of breastfeeding in a different way. We reached out to many of the area media stations to publicize World Breastfeeding Week and Maryland Breastfeeding Month. We specifically targeted Spanish media to reach a greater portion of our population.

As in the past we welcomed Spanish Radio Station on-air talent, Johana Hernandez, from Romantica 900, to two of our celebrations. She shared her breastfeeding experience, brought prizes, and assisted with our raffle and our breastfeeding game.

We hosted Univision reporter Liliana Mass, who attended our Langley/Takoma Park celebration and filmed a segment about the importance of breastfeeding and the benefits of WIC. It was later aired on the 6 and 11 o'clock news. We made a point when speaking with Ms. Mass that in the past, Univision has provided inaccurate news regarding breastfeeding and infant feeding. We encouraged Univision to contact WIC in the future with any questions or any news that is relevant to breastfeeding.

Two of the Breastfeeding Peer Counselors, Varinia Sandino and Raquel Vasquez, were interviewed live at Radio America, 1540 AM. Sandino also had the opportunity to spotlight on the popular weekly Sunday morning program, Tu Familia Zol, a segment on WLZL – El Zol, a local CBS affiliate. ■



WIC IS ON THE AIR — Breastfeeding peer counselors, Varinia Sandino and Raquel Vasquez interviewed live at Radio America.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY WIC WANTS TO KNOW: WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE?

By Jennifer Habeb, Nutritionist II, Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department WIC Program Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley WIC is excited to be able to give away a MyPlate portion plate to children on the WIC Program. Not only are the parents and children excited to receive this plate, it is an excellent teaching tool. For those of you who are not familiar with this plate, it is based from the government's MyPlate recommendations which state when eating, your plate should consist of half fruits and vegetables and the other half lean protein and grains – preferably whole grains.

The individual sections serve as a reminder to put food from each of the food groups onto your plate. Many of our participants do not like very many veggies. With the colorful design and pictures of some different vegetables on the plate, we are hoping this encourages more families to not only explore more varieties of vegetables, but to eat them at every meal. The protein section also has pictures of a variety of lean meats such as fish and chicken and also eggs. This should encourage people to try some healthier options instead of bologna, hot dogs, and chicken nuggets that seem to be popular choices among kids.

We also have a lot of parents concerned with serving sizes. Since this plate has divided sections and is not too big, this will hopefully alleviate some parents' worries that their children are not eating enough food.

This incentive item proves to be popular among the clients and employees. At the same time it promotes healthy eating and healthier children! ■



PREPARING FOR HEALTHY FAMILY MEALS — Deb Dennis, Nutritionist II enjoys sharing MyPlate portion plates with WIC participants.

## CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA WIC “GIVES A HOOT!”

By Jaime Melnicove, Outreach Coordinator and Brad Gebhart, Director of Individual Giving, Family Health Council of Central PA, Inc.

Jaime Melnicove, Outreach Coordinator, Family Health Council of Central PA (FHCCP), in conjunction with Comcast Cable, WYOU and WBRE, Fathom Studios created an animated commercial promoting the WIC Program and its services. The commercial is consistent with a regionally branded and thematic media campaign completed last year. Currently, the commercial is being shown in several Pennsylvania counties, including Somerset, Columbia, Montour, Lebanon, Mifflin, Cumberland and Perry. This 30-second commercial is accessible to other WIC Programs who can tag the commercial to promote their own local WIC Program.

Worthy of Super Bowl comparisons, the commercial incorporates a mother and child owl, who benefit from the quality care and services rendered by the WIC Program. Cute, warm and feathery, the commercial strikes a chord with the young and old. You too will “give a hoot” about WIC when you see it for yourself.

Now that your curiosity is peaked, please check out the commercial at <http://vimeo.com/56998800> and see the outstanding work that was accomplished by the creative minds behind this commercial. Contact Jaime at FHCCP through email at [jmelnicove@fhccp.org](mailto:jmelnicove@fhccp.org) with any questions about the ad. ■



HOOT WITH WIC — Still frame shot from the “Give a Hoot” ad.

## DC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES A SILVER BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE AWARD

The District of Columbia Health Department is proud to announce their recognition as a Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace, receiving a Silver Award from the District of Columbia and Maryland Breastfeeding Coalitions on October 26, 2012. The award was presented during a luncheon ceremony at Providence Hospital by DC Coalition President, Dr. Sahira Long, and Maryland Coalition President, Amy Resnik, MS, RD (also well-known in MARO WIC as the Maryland State Breastfeeding Coordinator). The ceremony was included as part of an all-day DC Breastfeeding Promotion Mother-Baby Summit.

In addition to the DC Department of Health, 15 other workplaces received awards, the largest number of nominations ever, representing diverse businesses from across the Washington, DC and Maryland region.

Nominated businesses were rated in four areas — Support, Time, Education, and Place (STEP). A private area to express milk was a must, as stipulated by the Affordable Health Care Act of 2010. Other amenities provided by the businesses were also evaluated, such as a hospital-grade multi-user pump, flexible break times, and availability of breastfeeding supports like policies, classes, and support services. Based on the number of amenities and processes to support breastfeeding, businesses received the awards at Gold, Silver or Bronze level. Recognition is posted on the Coalitions’ websites and all recipients receive window stickers designating them as a “Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.”

The DC Department of Health’s private lactation room is equipped with a comfy rocking chair, refrigerator and clock, and is decorated with colorful and friendly posters. It is also equipped with educational materials on breastfeeding and a multi-user pump. “The health department actively supports and promotes breastfeeding as the healthiest feeding option for infants in all of its community health programs and clinics,” said Paulette Thompson, MS, RD, DC WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator. “Our own employees should not be an exception! They need to have support in achieving their breastfeeding goals too! We know that going back to work is a major barrier to continuance of breastfeeding and that a supportive workplace can make all the difference. Offering flexible work hours and providing break times and a private space for expressing breast milk are not just ‘nice to haves’ but imperative for nursing moms.”

As testimony from one DOH employee confirms...

*“When I returned from maternity leave after 3 months, I found that accessing the room was a simple and straightforward process. Having access to a clean, quiet and separate dedicated space for pumping, enabled me to continue exclusive breastfeeding until my baby was 6 months old and I could begin supplementing her diet. When I hear stories about women who have had to pump in bathroom stalls at work, I am horrified, and extremely grateful for my experience at the DC Department of Health. As a first time mom, who was balancing work and the demands of a new baby, I think that I would’ve given up on breastfeeding if not for having access to the lactation room at work. So thank you DOH, for helping me to provide the best option to my little girl.” — Taiwana M. ■*



AWARD- WINNING MOMENT — Dr. Sahira Long, President, DC Breastfeeding Coalition; Paulette Thompson, DC WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator; Anne Gaines, Interim Program Manager, DC WIC; Amy Resnik, President, Maryland Breastfeeding Coalition and Maryland WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator.

## GIVE-AWAY BASKETS CREATE INTEREST IN WEST VIRGINIA’S VALLEY HEALTH’S KANAWHA WIC EDUCATION CLASSES

By Peg Kenyon, Valley Health WIC Program Nutrition Coordinator

Give-aways at the Valley Health WIC Kanawha office, in Charleston, WV, have become popular, anticipated events for participants in nutrition education classes. Various gift baskets are assembled and offered during prize drawings several times throughout the year. A medley of Betty Crocker brand items from Dollar Tree stores have proven to be inexpensive, useful gifts to promote more meal preparation of healthy foods at home. Class participants are offered their choice of spatulas, turners, colanders, vegetable peelers, dry and liquid measuring cups, measuring spoons and cutting boards, all of which are attractively color-coordinated. One of each of these made up Regina’s basket.

The current basket has a ChooseMyPlate theme with divided adult and child plates, paper plates, child-size eating utensils and cup, placemat, coloring and activity books, all with The MyPlate logo. In June, it will be given to a lucky winner at the end of the current State education goal, “to empower families with knowledge and strategies, to build a healthy plate wherever they go.” ■



LUCKY WINNER — Pictured is winner, Regina McGruder, receiving her prize. Presenting the basket is WIC Nutritionist Chalida Ng.

## WEST VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH WIC PROGRAM EMPLOYEE SHARES FAMILY-FRIENDLY MESSAGES IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

By Pam Riggleman, Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Shenandoah WIC outreach representative, Pamela Riggleman, went to the Elk Garden Elementary School in Mineral County to read "Harold Groundhog and the Alphabet Farm." The children enjoyed joining Harold Groundhog on an exciting adventure on the farm as they learned their ABC's.

The book was written by a previous Shenandoah WIC employee, Sheredith Heitzenrater. Sheredith is a dietician with WIC experience at clinics throughout West Virginia and Maryland.

Sheredith has written three children's books. "Harold Groundhog and the Alphabet Farm" was her first book, and was published in July 2011. She then wrote "The Rooster's Children" which was published in May 2012. Raymond Rooster and Harriet Hen are very proud of their chicks Sherry Chick and Brent Chick, as long as they listen. Each chapter shows how you can be safe and still have fun by always listening to your parents.

Sheredith's most recent book was published in October 2012. The "Crooked" Longhorn Steer thought that he wasn't special because he didn't look the same as everyone else in the herd. He finds out in an unlikely way that he is very special, learning an extremely important lesson - you don't have to be pretty or perfect to be important!

Shenandoah WIC is proud to continue the tradition of supporting early literacy while also supporting Sheredith in her new career. ■

## PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTHWEST WIC PARTNERS WITH LIBRARY

By Rosa Snyder Boyd, MS, IBCLC, WIC Director  
Community Action Southwest WIC Program

As a "Family Place Library," the Citizens Library in Washington, PA reaches out to the community to provide information to families on resources available to help them and to provide opportunities for parents or caregivers and their children to gather together. Each year, four "Play and Learn" Parent Toddler Workshops are held and they approached Rosa Snyder Boyd, MS, IBCLC, WIC Director, Community Action Southwest (CAS) WIC Program to participate. These workshops meet once a week for six weeks and provide the children and their caregivers an opportunity to play together, hear stories, learn of appropriate child development, and meet representatives from various agencies serving young families in the community. This is a great partnership for CAS and they have participated in the initiative for three years.

CAS WIC staff provides information on MyPlate, appropriate portions, answers parents' questions on feeding concerns and provides a healthy snack. This month's snack was a "trail mix" of WIC cereals and dried fruits. Other snacks have included fruit salad and cheese kabobs. Parent inquiries on children's eating habits, picky eater, and food jags show that many parents worry that their toddlers do not eat enough. WIC addresses all these concerns, especially portion sizes for toddlers and the parent/caregiver role in feeding. This initiative shows how valuable WIC is to the young families in the community. ■



*TRAIL MIX, ANYONE? — That's Rosa Snyder-Boyd, MS, IBCLC, WIC Director, Community Action Southwest, offering a healthy snack to children and their caregivers.*

## IDLE WAITING ROOM TV? CHECK OUT WHAT WE DID AT PENNSYLVANIA'S CROZER-CHESTER WIC!

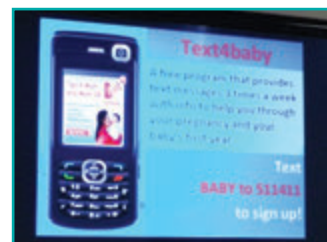
By Cynthia Barrar, MA, RD, LDN  
Outreach Coordinator, Crozer-Chester WIC Program

What started as a simple project aimed at providing general office and referral information to our customers expanded over time. Like many WIC offices, the Crozer-Chester WIC Program has televisions in their clinic waiting rooms. The televisions have been used to show educational videos on nutrition and breastfeeding as needed. More often than not, they remained turned off for fear of our customers turning the channel to television programming not suitable for young children. We came up with the idea to use them like large digital picture frames and to develop a PowerPoint presentation that we saved in .jpeg format. This allowed the collection of PowerPoint slides to be shown as pictures on our televisions during times when they were not being used for other purposes.

At first we planned on starting with a few slides that included WIC-related information such as clinic contact information, what to bring to the check pick-up or recertification appointments, brief WIC & YOU messages, and required referral information, such as C.H.I.P., immunizations and lead poisoning prevention. The project has blossomed into a fairly comprehensive collection of slides including the topics mentioned above, and breastfeeding promotion/support and key messages from PA's Childhood Obesity Prevention Series (the importance of family mealtimes, and the importance of increased physical activity, limiting juice, and healthy snacks). Now over 24 programs and services have an informational slide show including Head Start, Domestic Abuse Project, Nurse Family Partnership, smoking cessation, Kids Asthma Management Program, Text4Baby, SNAP, Early Intervention, Philabundance Food Help Line, The Special Kids Network, and Healthy Start. Each slide show is a small promotional billboard with the program name, brief description of services and contact information.

The picture slide show has been received well by WIC participants and staff alike.

The participating programs are pleased to be included in this project. Some programs cannot supply our WIC offices with a good supply of costly glossy brochures. The TV outreach project has been a way for these agencies to still have their information available to WIC customers at no additional cost to their program. The project has increased the availability of valuable referral information to our customers and also gives them something a little educational or entertaining to view while they are waiting. We are excited to be able to share WIC and the referral information in a new medium for our customers. ■



*THE POWER OF TV — Text4Baby referral slide shown in Crozer-Chester WIC Program's Community Hospital clinic in Chester, PA.*

## MARWIC TIMES Calendar

Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) 64th Annual Meeting.  
Orlando, FL. April 17-19.

10th Annual Nutrition & Health Conference. Seattle, WA. May 13-15.

7th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference. Long Beach Convention Center, CA. June 18-20.

Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo. George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, TX. October 19-22.

The deadline for the Summer issue of MARWIC TIMES is May 10, 2013. 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.



## SANTA AND READING BUG LADY HELP PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY PROGRESS COUNCIL, INC. WIC CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS

By Barbara Graham, Administrative Services Coordinator, Community Progress Council, Inc.

Pennsylvania's Community Progress Council, Inc. WIC Program appreciates its local Teamsters Union in York County around the holidays. Once again this past year, the Teamsters Santa was busy providing gifts for 50 WIC families. The Teamsters Union is committed to WIC families and has hosted this Christmas party for the past 16 years.

The WIC office also featured a special guest during the holidays, the "Reading Bug Lady!" Donna Watkins received the Jefferson Award and Fox 43 News Everyday Hero among other community awards for her dedication to get children and their parents to read. She volunteers her time at day care centers, elementary and high schools. The Reading Bug Lady celebrated the holidays by giving out books to the WIC children and their families and encouraging them to read. The books were provided by The Literacy Council of York County and York City Police Department. ■



*THAT'S SOME BUG — Destiny Boldizar and her son, Dylan, received books from the "Reading Bug Lady."*



*SANTA LIKES TO READ, TOO — Susan Goodling's son, Christian, is thinking, "WOW! That's a big bag, Santa!"*

## NEW JERSEY'S NORTH HUDSON WIC PROGRAM HELD A CELEBRATION FOR CHILDREN STARTING CUPS

By Karen Lazarowitz, RD

New Jersey's North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) WIC Program invited enrolled children to a sippy cup party. The event was a fun way to encourage children to use sippy cups in place of bottles. Nutritionists Nehal Shah, RD and Wendy Sanchez led an energetic facilitated discussion regarding oral health, weaning from the bottle and the start of drinking cups.

Children were excited to participate in the activity by dropping their bottles in a bottle bin to receive a new sippy cup. One child even tossed in his pacifier. They were later eager to get a new toothbrush with toothpaste to bring home. Many of the parents and children opted for complimentary oral screenings provided by Janet Lavandeira, DMD and Doris Latorre, CDA from the NHCAC Dental Department. The event was a huge success with the children having fun and excited to try out their new sippy cups. ■



*WHY CUPS ARE BETTER — Nutritionists Nehal Shah, RD and Wendy Sanchez led a facilitated discussion about oral health and the use of drinking cups.*

## FOOD PRESERVATION A POPULAR TOPIC AT WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH-CABELL WIC

By Denise Eagan, RD, Valley Health Systems WIC Program

Farmers' Market vouchers and Fresh Fruit and Vegetables vouchers are part of the West Virginia WIC food package. Many of the participants talk about enjoying their produce and the opportunities they get to try new vegetables when selecting WV-grown produce during peak season. It is for this reason Valley Health-Cabell WIC partnered with West Virginia University Extension agent Brenda Porter in providing nutrition education classes on "Food Preservation."

Brenda brought her expertise in the area of families and health to the Cabell WIC office; sharing information about freezing, canning and dehydrating foods. This time of year more families are interested in preserving produce they have grown, that has been shared by a special neighbor or friends, or from their purchases including their WIC vouchers.

Brenda first suggests, "thinking about what is best going to fit the family." For example, do they have the materials to can their food items? It takes two different types of canning vats:

1. Pressure Canning method for low acid foods such as: corn, green beans, carrots, meats, stews and sauces.
2. Hot Water Bath (boiling water) method for high acid foods such as: apples, peaches, berries and pickles when vinegar is used. A few other utensils are suggested to get started and of course canning jars with new lids and reusable rims.

Another thought is do they have the storage space to store the jars once processed?

Once canned, the containers can be held for several months or up to one year. Although as Brenda stated, "the longer you keep the containers the less quality product you will enjoy once you are ready to use it with your family." One of the best ways to learn more about canning is by using the USDA Canning book. It can be purchased or it is also online for you to read at [http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications\\_usda.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html) or the book SO EASY TO PRESERVE <http://www.uga.edu/setp/>.

WIC participants enjoyed learning and talking with Brenda. Brenda also provided taste testing of Peach Salsa she made that week. The men and women alike found the mixture of fruit and vegetables surprisingly tasty, with several requesting the recipe.

Brenda provided two sessions because we had so many WIC participants interested in learning about preserving food. In talking with Brenda after the presentations, we discussed the fact that learning about preserving food is such a timely subject, since so many families are interested in starting and using their gardens. Preserving the food extends the use of the produce through the fall and winter season to come. It also promotes using home prepared products which can better accommodate healthier meal preparations for the family. With the recent announcement of the 2010 US Dietary Guidelines for Americans encouraging limiting sodium and sugar, food preservation can better meet the recommendations. ■



*PREPARING FOR PRESERVATION — Brenda Porter, Family and Nutrition Agent with WVU Extension Service, prepares to share her knowledge of food preservation during nutrition education group counseling.*

## KEEPING WEST VIRGINIA'S WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY WIC WARM

As the snowflakes fly in these cold winter months, there is a group of ladies making it their mission to keep the Wheeling-Ohio County (WOC) WIC participants warm and give something made from the heart. The members of the Bethlehem United Presbyterian Church Ladies Day Out Craft Group sew, knit and crochet items such as blankets, booties, toboggans, afghans, and nursing shawls. When a new baby arrives in the Wheeling WIC clinic, families are grateful to receive a handmade gift these wonderful women have created.

Ladies Day Out Craft Group has been donating hand crafted items to WOC WIC for two years. During that time, it is estimated these items have been distributed to at least 200 families. When asked why they chose to make these items and donate them to the WOC WIC Program, Clarinda Timmons, the group's leader, stated, "When we began crocheting we had a minister at our church that was fluent in several languages. He would often go on mission trips to Mexico. When he would go, we would give him prayer shawls, blankets and booties to give to the families. After several trips we decided that we should not only be helping the families through the mission, but also helping locally." Ms. Timmons went on to say, "We decided on WIC because we wanted to reach out and help an organization that may be forgotten in some sense. Lots of people donate to hospitals; we wanted to help out families that may not get things like these otherwise."

The Wheeling Ohio County WIC staff and participants, would like to thank all the ladies of the Bethlehem United Presbyterian Church Ladies Day Out Craft Group for all the hard work and love they have put into making such beautiful items. ■



*BLESSINGS COME IN MANY WAYS — The Bethlehem United Presbyterian Church Ladies Day Out Craft Group has been blessing WIC participants with hand crafted items for the last two years.*

## WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH CABELL WIC CELEBRATES SPRING WITH CONTAINER GARDENING CLASS

By Denise Eagan, RD Valley Health Cabell WIC Nutrition Education Liaison

Rich Sherman, WV Extension Agent and Master Gardener, from West Virginia University Extension Services presented a program on Container Gardening at the Cabell County Valley Health WIC Program. Participants and their children learned container gardening can be an opportunity to grow plants in a variety of containers from small to large. The plants can be grown indoors or outside. The containers can have a specific theme, such as an assortment of herbs for seasoning recipes, vegetable assortments for Italian sauces, plants for ornamental beauty or vegetables for family meals.

Valley Health WIC Director Mary Caldwell purchased seeds from America the Beautiful Seed Program, and marigolds from a local greenhouse; the seeds provided vegetables and herbs to each of the Valley Health WIC sites. Valley Health-Kanawha County WIC's Nutrition Education Liaison, Peg Kenyon, has helped plan and provide a program on Container Gardening with Kanawha County Extension Agent and their Master Gardener for several years and also helped the Cabell-WIC office plan this event.

The participants enjoyed learning how to make eco-friendly planting pods from newspapers. The pods can be used to hold a cup full of soil, just enough to get the seed started. The pods are watered after the seeds and fertilizer have been added. Once the plants are sturdy, and the temperature and the ground are warm, the entire pod may be planted outside. Rich suggests opening up the pod a little to help the roots become acclimated to the earth. Plants that have been started first in pods have a better chance of growing undisturbed because the stems are stronger, the roots start growing and their plants are more resilient to insects.

Along with the pods, Rich shared how to determine the depth to plant the seeds, "Plant the seeds the depth of the length of the seed. The smaller seeds that are the size of tiny beads just need to be planted on top of the soil with just a thin layer of soil on top."

Sprinkle a little fertilizer on top is another suggestion made. With water and sunshine, in a few weeks small seedlings will appear. Each plant may be separated out as they get bigger. Many of the participants eagerly asked pertinent questions. Everyone enjoyed selecting seeds, and with Rich's assistance, they all planted several different vegetables and herbs. The children eagerly helped and were excited to take their new pods home to be nurtured and planted in the weeks to come.

Every week in May, during the group Nutrition Education classes, participants continued to have the opportunity to select seeds and make pod plants along with selecting marigolds plants to nurture and grow during the summer. The older children enjoyed selecting various seeds from the pictures on the front of the packages. The adults also enjoyed helping with the seed planting. Many discussions about different vegetables and herbs were part of the group education for the weeks during May. The marigolds were also offered to our mothers for Mother's Day and computer-developed cards were made available for the children to select to give to their mother or guardian.

During the summer Farmers' Market Vouchers, as well as the new Cash Value Vouchers for produce are offered to our participants. We found this project helps to continue to emphasize the importance of identifying vegetables that are part of a healthy lifestyle plan for the whole family. We found the program with Rich started the growing season, encouraging participants to try gardening, even if it was just one or two plants. The parents enjoyed working with their children; the children were excited to take the plants home and start their own garden. This experience will help the children to remember the fun and hopefully encourage them to start growing produce in the future. ■



*GARDENING CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE — Rich Sherman, WV Extension Agent and Master Gardener, from West Virginia University Extension Services presented a program on Container Gardening at the Cabell County Valley Health WIC Program.*

## EVIDENCE-BASED BREASTFEEDING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

### MARYLAND HOSPITALS ANNOUNCED

By Sherri Sabol, RD, LDN, CLC  
Chief, Breastfeeding Services

On November 13, 2012 at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) announced the 2012 Maryland Hospital Breastfeeding Policy Recommendations. The recommendations lay out evidence-based practices to help hospitals eliminate hidden barriers and support new mothers who choose to breastfeed.

The recommendations were developed over more than nine months through a review of evidence-based practices and public input. More than 150 public comments were received and considered before the recommendations were finalized.

In the United States, most babies are born in a hospital, and mother and baby have their first feeding experience in that setting. A mother's comfort with breastfeeding and her commitment to continue can be greatly influenced by hospital practices and staff support. First impressions have a lasting effect on subsequent behavior, making the birthing hospital stay a critical opportunity to impact breastfeeding success.

To improve support for mothers who choose to breastfeed, the 2012 Maryland Hospital Breastfeeding Policy Recommendations call for hospitals to:

1. Maintain a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
2. Train all health care staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.
7. Practice "rooming-in" – allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage unrestricted breastfeeding.
9. Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.

Hospitals can also meet the recommendations by obtaining Baby-Friendly certification through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative ([www.babyfriendlyusa.org](http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org)).

"Our goal is for mothers who choose to breastfeed to be successful," said Frances Phillips, RN, DHMH Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services. "We are pleased to see significant interest by Maryland hospitals, including Shady Grove Adventist Hospital, to support babies and mothers in breastfeeding."

Maryland hospitals were asked to complete a self-assessment. Hospitals submitted a copy of the completed self-assessment and letter of commitment to DHMH indicating their intention to meet the Maryland Hospital Breastfeeding Policy Recommendations or to sign a letter of commitment with Baby-Friendly USA by December 31, 2012. DHMH posted hospital commitments on its website in January. The website will be updated as hospitals progress toward Best Practice Hospital status or Baby-Friendly status. ■

## NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC HOSTS FOOD DAY CHALLENGE

By Anita Otokiti, Trinitas Regional Medical Center WIC Director

Trinitas Regional Medical Center hosted a bi-lingual nutrition education Food Day Challenge on October 24, at the WIC Center in Elizabeth, NJ. Food Day is a non-profit grassroots organization created in 2011 under the auspices of the Center for Science and has over 120 national partners. Food-related problems in our homes, on the farms, in our schools and communities are addressed. Program goals include:

promote healthy diets; support sustainable and organic farms; reduce hunger; protect the environment and support fair working conditions for food and farm workers. Guests speakers included Mayor Bollwage, City of Elizabeth; Bernadette Countryman, Senior Vice President TRMC; Mary Higgins, NJ WIC Public Health Nutritionist and Anita Otokiti, Trinitas RMC WIC Director.

Bernadette Countryman reminded attendees that 40 years ago, people laughed at such terms as organic and sustainable foods. In 1970, very few homes had microwaves; now the microwave is a must-have appliance. Tofu, yogurt, and brown rice were considered exotic foods. Now, whole wheat bread, tofu and brown rice are included in the WIC food package. Our nation and community are facing many medical problems that could be prevented. What will Americans eat 40 years from now? Will our food be real, in pill form or genetically modified? The challenge begins with each person and could be as simple as drinking water instead of soda, cooking at least one more meal at home, buying fresh produce that is in season, starting a garden project, reading food labels, trying whole wheat bread and becoming more involved in your community.

Elizabeth Mayor Bollwage raised a mango smoothie toast in honor of the event. The speakers addressed questions and concerns. Recent data shows that over 18 % of families experience food hardship. The Farm Bill is renewed by Congress every five years, which designates funding for WIC, SNAP and other nutrition programs. Major funding cuts are expected this year. What will that look like for the City of Elizabeth, for our nation? New Jersey had the third highest percentage increase in SNAP participation in the nation from March 2011 to 2012. Over 100,000 seniors received SNAP. Anita Otokiti, Trinitas RMC WIC Director shared, "that small changes in policies influence our lives, which was illustrated this past January when New Jersey declared that time used for school breakfast can count as instructional time. Participation in school breakfast increased 21 percent in NJ. Families are encouraged to check [www.NJHELPS.org](http://www.NJHELPS.org) for referral information."

Community leaders and organizations provided food demonstrations and displays which included Rutgers Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program; Shoprite; Amerigroup, Hillside Food Bank SNAP Outreach; First Baptist Church Farmers' Market; Lead Prevention-Partnership for MCH of Northern NJ and Immunizations of Union County Social Services. George Asprocolas from Asprocolas Farms provided miniature pumpkins for the bean toss game. Bowls of locally grown apples were placed at nutrition stations for guests to enjoy. A WIC Breakfast Station, created by Rosa Tamayo, RD, Assistant WIC Director, was available, which consisted of WIC-approved cereal and juice. Patricia Cummings, Nutrition Supervisor, presented portion distortion demonstrations. Those agreeing to the "MY PLATE CHALLENGE" received a tote bag and a child size plate. We understand that the decision to enroll in WIC is a step toward creating healthy families. Community goals and services of Trinitas RMC coincide with some of those of Food Day as resources and talents were shared. Additional information may be viewed at [www.Foodday.org](http://www.Foodday.org) or at [www.TrinitasRMC.org](http://www.TrinitasRMC.org). ■



*A DAY FOR DIGNITARIES — Food Day guest speakers (left to right) Bernadette Countryman, TRMC Senior Vice-President; Patricia Cummings, TRMC Nutrition Supervisor; Rosa Tamayo TRMC Assistant WIC Director; Mary Higgins, NJWIC Public Health Consultant; Anita Otokiti, TRMC WIC Director and Mayor Bollwage, City of Elizabeth.*

## “STRONG FAMILIES EAT TOGETHER” AT WEST VIRGINIA’S CABELL COUNTY VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEMS WIC

By Denise Eagan, RD, Valley Health Systems WIC Program Nutrition Education Coordinator

During National Nutrition Month, Brenda Porter from WV Extension Services provided a presentation for WIC children and parents on “Strong Families Eat Together.” Two sessions with over 20 participants and their children were in attendance. The group talked about ways they could plan together for a meal and also create an enjoyable time for the entire family. Brenda talked about how important making family memories can be, which can include getting everyone involved with food preparation and finding new recipes to try.

Finding the time to get the whole family together for a meal each week was also discussed. Tips on how to plan a meal were provided on laminated dry eraser boards. Each participant received a dry eraser board and pen. In addition spiral booklets were also handed out with “Mealtime Family Conversation Starters.” Colorful “Strong Families Eat Together” placemats were made available as another family-fun activity.

Cabell WIC also provided each family with an insulated shopping bag, infant cup and infant spoon. In addition the following handouts were made available: Family Meals; I’m Thirsty; Sweet Drinks, Skim & 1% Milk; Short Order Cooking; Other Mealtime Training Tools; Bye, Bye Bottle, Sippy Cup and Preventing Choking. Each family also received the book “Mealtime Training Pack,” with recipe cards, parent’s nutrition guide, reward chart and stickers for toddler and parents.

Participants expressed excitement in using the tools to start making mealtime memories with their families. ■



*PARTNERS IN EDUCATION — Brenda Porter, Family and Nutrition Agent with West Virginia University Extension Service, serves as guest educator in the Cabell County Valley Health Systems WIC Program.*

## NEW JERSEY’S EAST ORANGE WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES FOOD DAY

On October 24, New Jersey’s East Orange WIC Program celebrated Food Day by offering vegetables participants reported they seldom consumed in their households. In addition, the staff had a food drive to collect food items for food pantries in our neighborhood.

One of the activities conducted during Nutrition Month was a survey of fruits and vegetables consumption among WIC participants. We discovered that most participants are incorporating fruits in their diets but the consumption of vegetables had much to be desired, and there were several that had never been tried.

For Food Day, East Orange WIC partnered with Healthfirst in providing trays of some of these vegetables, including mushrooms, green peppers, avocados, cucumbers, bean sprouts, cauliflower, iceberg lettuce and red onions. We also provided two choices of dips.

During the intake process, support staff informed the participants about our special activity and encouraged them to taste the vegetables while they were waiting to see the nutritionists. Our effort was well received by all participants, especially the children, some of whom had second helpings. The nutritionists complimented everyone for participating and encouraged them to continue to try new vegetables.

Food Day culminated with the WIC staff donating 101 pounds of food to two pantries: Isaiah House and Meeting Emergency House with Dignity. ■



*TASTES GREAT — A young WIC participant seems to like cucumbers!*



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