

MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

NEW JERSEY WIC A STEP AHEAD – THINKING SUMMER FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE WINTER

By Janet Prester, Public Health Rep.1

During the cold wintry days of February when presumably no one was thinking about spring - no less summertime and the upcoming 2010 Farmers' Market season - New Jersey WIC Services conducted three regional meetings to strategize for a successful 2010 Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) season.



STRATEGIES FOR 2010 — Attending one of the regional meetings are (left to right) Jay Duco, Program Manager, WIC Services; Kathleen Mahmoud, Gloucester County WIC Coordinator; Johanna Mason, Public Health Rep. Food Delivery Unit, WIC Services; and Deepti Das, Burlington County WIC Coordinator.

Over 30 attendees attended each meeting representing the authorized farmers, WIC and senior coordinators and State WIC and Department of Agriculture staff. They eagerly shared their concerns and suggestions for increasing the use of the FMNP checks, promoting healthier eating with the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, and communicated with each other on how to coordinate farmers' markets with the WIC and senior sites. The goal is to aim for a 100 percent redemption rate. New Jersey allows authorized farmers to redeem Cash-Value Vouchers (CVVs). WIC partici-

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NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA WIC PROGRAM STAFF MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Mary Hahn, WIC Director
North Central PA Commission WIC Program

Sometimes in our busy schedule of clients, with all the policy and procedures to follow, the new individual food package updates at regular intervals, VENA, Guided Goal Setting, and the future of paperless benefits to prepare for; staff can't help but wonder "How much of what we do really has an impact on the individual participant's life? Are we making a real difference? Are all these little things we do really so important?"

Recently, the importance of detail became quite evident to staff at the North Central PA Commission WIC Program. In February, a new mom and baby presented at one of our clinic sites

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LIFESAVERS — Kathe Means, Nutrition Aide and Retail Store Coordinator (left), and Mary DeLucia, Registered Dietitian, are credited with helping save a baby's life.

MARYLAND WIC FOCUSES ON DIVERSITY WITHOUT ADVERSITY

For seven days in March, local agency and Maryland State WIC staff divided up into small groups for one-day workshops to explore their attitudes toward diversity. Increasingly, staff learned to interact more effectively with each other, and with WIC participants whose origins, ages, breastfeeding practices, and food

customs are themselves widely diverse. Staff appreciated sharing personal diversity information with ever-changing partners (not unlike a "speed-dating" format) to break the ice. Later, the laughter continued when teams of six staff members named their personal lemon and created its life story. Sharing first impressions of photographs of real peo-

ple drove home the need to learn more about others before we form judgments about them. Staff evaluations were overwhelmingly positive.

Diversity Without Adversity training was designed and delivered by Learning Dynamics, a professional training organization based in Connecticut. ■

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Mid-Atlantic Region State agencies have been gearing up for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) season since early spring. Farmers have been authorized and trained; participants have been receiving their checks; and promotional activities are being planned.

For Fiscal Year 2010, Congress appropriated \$20 million to operate the WIC FMNP nationwide. USDA announced Fiscal Year 2010 grant awards to 45 state agencies and tribal organizations for the WIC FMNP. The Mid-Atlantic Region as a whole received \$5,084,867. Following is a funding breakdown for the states in the FNS Mid-Atlantic Region that administer the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program:

- District of Columbia - \$276,404
- Maryland - \$313,132
- New Jersey - \$1,126,432
- Pennsylvania - \$1,641,915
- Puerto Rico - \$1,656,984
- West Virginia - \$70,000

In 2009, nationwide over 17,000 farmers, 3,800 farmers' markets, and 2,800 roadside stands provided fresh produce

to more than 2.4 million WIC FMNP participants, including US Territories and Indian Tribal Organizations. In MARO, the number of authorized farmers rose 8 percent from 3,898 to 4,226, which is largely attributed to increased outreach. MARO State staff is also commended for its' higher-than-average redemption rate of 65 percent as compared to the national average of 59 percent in 2009, with the participation accounting for more than one-fifth of all participants nationwide.

While every farmers' market is unique and vendors and clientele vary, one thing remains constant: the WIC FMNP helps shape healthy communities by teaming up with local farmers. Moreover, the program is a win-win situation with proven benefits for all involved, providing local farmers with increased revenue, offering WIC participants greater access to nutritious, locally grown produce, and creating community ties by developing new market opportunities. MARO is optimistic that all clinic staff providing the WIC FMNP coupons/checks will encourage participants to frequent their local markets this season and reap the rewards of consuming fresh fruits and vegetables. ■



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WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS EARLY CHILDHOOD LITERACY

By Jennifer Habeb, Nutritionist and Outreach Coordinator

Studies have shown that even before a child can read, listening to someone read benefits the child. Reading can help promote language and literacy along with bonding with the person reading to them.

This is why we invited a special visitor to come to our office. On March 17, Curious George made a visit to WV's Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department (MOVHD) Wood County WIC office. He stopped by to read to children during clinic. We had approximately 40 families scheduled for clinic that day. Many children were able to enjoy sitting with him and listening to him read.

MOVHD has also partnered with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to promote early childhood literacy. When children enroll into this program, they receive an age-appropriate book each month until their fifth birthday. This program is offered in our Calhoun, Mason, Roane, Pleasants, and Wirt county offices. We can register children for the program when they are in for their WIC appointment. In Mason County, 44 percent of the children that have registered for the program were registered at our WIC office.

We have also helped to support reading through an award from First Book National Book Bank. With this grant we are able to give each child on WIC a book on their birthday. The children have received many different titles of books including Dora the Explorer, Blue's Clues, Backyardigans, and many more. ■



CURIOUS ABOUT READING — This young WIC participant met Curious George on his visit to the Wood County WIC office, where he read to the children.

PUERTO RICO WIC HOSTS FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM AND WIC COORDINATORS MEETING

Managers from the WIC Program and the Department of Agriculture of the Government of Puerto Rico (DA), through its Agricultural Services and Development Administration (ASDA) operational arm for PR FMNP, coordinated a meeting held on February 22 in the Monterrey Farm Station in Dorado.

This meeting was attended by WIC Regional Directors, Regional Nutrition and Clinic Supervisors with the ASDA Marketing Program, and other Central Offices WIC Officers.

Helga Mendez, ASDA Marketing Director in charge of the management of FMNP, directed a message to those in attendance. WIC Director Jaime Rivera also addressed the group.

The topics discussed included report redemption of checks, results of participants' surveys, monitoring to the WIC clinics, guidance for markets itineraries, methods of delivery of checks, nutrition education and educational materials available. Redemption of cash value vouchers at the farmers' market was also explained.

The meeting concluded with a tour of the Monterrey Farm Station. ■



ADDRESSING THE GROUP — Making presentations at the meeting were (left to right) Helga Mendez, Agronomist ASDA Marketing Director; Jaime Rivera, PR WIC Program Director; Jeanette Canino, Acting Director WIC Nutrition Division; and Vilma Ortiz, WIC Policies and Procedures Division.



PHOTO OP — Posing around the banner prepared for education about FMNP and Five Color A Day Fruits and Veggies Message are (left to right) Jaime Rivera, PR WIC Program Director; Gerardo Vila, FMNP Manager; Helga Soto ASDA Market Program Director; Jeanette Canino, Acting Director WIC Nutrition Division; Maria Encarnacion, Nutrition Education Coordinator; and Alma Ortega, Outreach Coordinator.

WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WORKS TO BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH VENDORS

By Jennifer Habeb, Nutritionist and Outreach Coordinator

In a statewide effort to assist vendors and participants with the transition to the new food package, West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department staff has been providing direct technical assistance to authorized grocers. WIC employees began the grassroots approach to answering questions, addressing concerns and highlighting the shopping experience with local agency vendors in February. The vendors have been very receptive to these visits. They eagerly contribute techniques that can be utilized in WIC clinics as well as in stores to facilitate participant retention through a delightful WIC shopping experience.

During grassroots vendor technical assistance, WIC staff meet with the store manager, the assistant manager, department supervisors and/or customer service managers to discuss concerns shared by participants, variety and placement of authorized WIC foods, and develop strategies for shopping with WIC vouchers and serving WIC participants with ease. A team approach to identifying allowable WIC items through shelf tagging and simultaneously correcting the store's computer system offers the ability to facilitate change quickly. This method also allows a direct, hands-on teaching approach for vendors as well as WIC staff in gaining understanding in how the shopping experience can be overwhelming to WIC participants. Furthermore, shelf tagging assists participants and their proxies in identifying WIC-eligible foods through consistent messaging in all WIC-authorized grocers.

Participant and cashier education has also been addressed by development of each store specific WIC product list. This list serves as a supplement to the WV WIC Love to Grow Shopping Guide, and seems to quickly address participant comments regarding locating, selecting and purchasing desired WIC foods at their chosen authorized grocery store.

It has proven beneficial to build a local working relationship between WIC clinics and authorized grocers. In order to take



TAG, YOU'RE APPROVED — Kristine Green tags WIC approved juice. The 64 oz. refrigerated cartons of juice were included in the new WIC food package.

full advantage of the opportunities provided by the WIC food package changes, we couldn't simply "flip the switch" for each change – even in the grocery stores – and just hope for the best. Grassroots technical assistance with vendors is an approach benefitting from a golden opportunity, as we address participant preferences and market influences, potentially impacting case-load and a vendor's business. ■

VIRGINIA'S SOUTHSIDE RICHMOND WIC NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH HEALTH FAIR A SUCCESS

March is nationally known as National Nutrition Month (NNM), and every year, health departments all around the country celebrate NNM. This year, the VA Department of Health, Southside Richmond WIC Program held its own NNM fair featuring the theme, "Nutrition from the Ground Up."

The health fair took place on March 29, and included health fair table topics such as: Breastfeeding Promotion, Tips on Purchasing Fresh/Canned Fruits and Vegetables, Nutrition Facts, Portion Distortion, and an activity table with puzzles, games, and giveaways. Other programs within the VA Department of Health were encouraged to attend and have their own tables set up to promote their programs. Resource Mothers, a program available to aide teen mothers, was in attendance at the NNM health fair.

The WIC staff publicized the health fair to anyone who wanted to attend and also made it available to their nutrition education classes on that day. The health fair was a great success offering the public health education information, a healthy snack, informative materials and resources, fun games and activities, and friendly faces to offer advice and answer questions.

We look forward to hosting many more NNM health fairs! ■

VIRGIN ISLANDS' ROY LESTER SCHNEIDER CLINIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH WITH A SPLASH OF FRUIT

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD, Acting WIC Director

Nutrition activities at the Roy Lester Schneider Hospital WIC clinic in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, focused on promoting fruits as a good choice for snacks. Clinic Nutritionist Carol Bareuther, RD, created a poster and handout that gave ideas on using fruits and vegetables in many different ways that are attractive to children. The poster included the MyPyramid for Kids in Spanish and English and the accompanying "Tips for Families." These tips include suggestions such as "Vary Your Veggies – Go dark green and orange with your vegetables – eat spinach, broccoli, carrots and sweet potatoes."

National Nutrition Month can also be a time when WIC staff families help to promote the nutrition message. Carol's daughter, Nikki, assisted in the display and helped the WIC kids sample the fruit snack, "Fresh Fruit Cup." Two-year-old Azaan O'Neal stated that the snack "tastes good," and happily ate his full cup. The fruit cup included strawberries, cantaloupe, halved green grapes, fresh pineapple and bananas all cut in kid-friendly bite-sized pieces. Moms felt that this was a simple, attractive way to get their kids to eat fruits. ■



BEFORE... — Nikki Bareuther, daughter of VI WIC Nutritionist Carol Bareuther, offers participant Azaan O'Neal a fruit snack.



... AND AFTER — Azaan O'Neal happily eats his cup of fruit.

NEW JERSEY WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

By Kelly Ryan, MS, Public Health Consultant I - Nutrition, NJ WIC; and Kim Harless, MEd, CHES, Public Health Consultant I - Nutrition, NJ WIC

March is National Nutrition Month (NNM), an annual nutrition education campaign which was developed by the American Dietetic Association. The campaign's goal is to raise awareness about the importance of both making healthy food choices and engaging in regular physical activity.

The Nutrition Services Unit of the New Jersey WIC State Office held a NNM celebration for the Family Health Services Division of the Department of Health and Senior Services on March 24. To encourage everyone to get over their fears of trying new fruits and vegetables that they've never eaten, a Fear Factor Taste Test was held. Participants were given the opportunity to choose from a large variety of produce, including mangoes, grapefruit, avocados, kiwis, and star fruit. Participants were also encouraged to try some of their favorite vegetables like carrots, peppers, and broccoli with a new dip like hummus or guacamole. All of the produce was graciously donated by the NJ WIC staff. Next to each fruit and vegetable was a card which cited information on its nutritional content, preparation and storage tips, and creative recipe suggestions.

The NNM celebration also featured a presentation which illustrated the dramatic increase in portion sizes over the last 20 years. Information was provided on how many extra calories these larger sized portions are packing, and how much physical activity would be needed to burn them off. For example, 20 years ago, two average slices of pizza contained 500 calories, yet two slices of today's weigh in at 850 calories. To burn off these extra 350 calories, a 160 pound person would have to briskly walk for approximately an hour. The event's participants were particularly intrigued by the one-pound-fat replica that was on display, and were shocked to learn the sugar content of some of their favorite soft drinks. Educational materials on incorporating more fruits and veggies into the diet were distributed and three healthy recipe cookbooks were raffled off at the end of the program.

Celeste Andriot Wood, Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Family Health Services of the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services said, "Thank you for a great celebration! I know everyone who attended enjoyed sampling the fruits and veggies and taking just a little break to share some time with colleagues. You all did a great job." ■

WIC WISE 2 TRAINING DEFEATS THE MARYLAND SNOWS OF 2010

Despite the daily threat of additional snow to add to Maryland's record-breaking year, 17 new WIC employees attended the February 22-26 WIC Wise 2 training at the Greenbelt Training Annex. Trainees represented eight local agencies including the Lower Shore, Southern Maryland, Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Frederick, Prince George's, and Washington counties. Two temporary employees completed the group.

WIC Wise 2 is designed to help certifiers provide nutrition education that is individualized to meet each participant's needs. Trainees develop advanced counseling skills by engaging in fun yet focused activities. By practicing open-ended and probing questions, for example, they learn how to encourage WIC participants to reveal their personal nutrition concerns. By flagging a participant's willingness to change an unhealthy behavior, they discover how to open the door to sharing information that will improve the family's health. Trainees also build on their nutrition knowledge and infant and child feeding skills. They learn to offer exercise and quick WIC food tips to busy moms to help reduce the risk of childhood and adult obesity. Breastfeeding basics rounds out the week, creating a staff fully engaged in promoting breastfeeding as the normal way to feed an infant.

Long-time employees who would like to refresh their counseling skills are invited to attend future WIC Wise 2 trainings as space allows.

The State Agency training team includes Margaret Eng, Colleen Pierre, Amy Resnik, Sherri Sabol, and Michaela Tompkins-Davis. ■

VALLEY HEALTH AND CENTRAL WEST VIRGINIA WIC OFFICES RECOGNIZED WITH AWARD

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

The West Virginia KIDS COUNT Fund recently completed a year-long awards program entitled, "Business on Board with Childcare!" State-wide businesses were recognized for being supportive and accommodating of their employees' childcare needs. Employees were encouraged to nominate their employers for these awards.

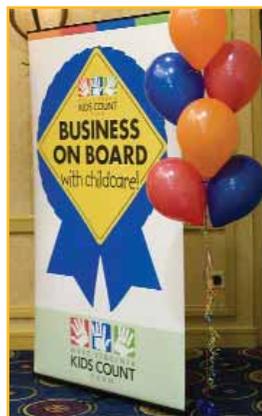
The businesses were honored at a luncheon held at the Charleston Marriott Hotel on March 24. Awards were given to 71 supportive worksites from around the state. The Valley Health WIC Program, Kanawha Clinic, and the Central WV WIC Program, Greenbrier Clinic, were selected to receive one of these awards.

To be a designated *Business on Board with Childcare!* Award winner, employers had to accumulate a total of at least 15 points among various categories. Among the award criteria that Valley Health and Central accumulated were:

- On-site childcare (*breastfeeding moms who are WIC employees can bring their babies up to 6 months of age with them to work*)
- Sick-leave for employees with sick children (*WIC employee sick-time can be used for family members, if needed*)
- Participation in their local KIDS COUNT Community (*WIC participates in KIDS COUNT's "Building Blocks of Learning" education program*)
- Access to information to help locate childcare in the community (*WIC Offices have childcare referral information available for staff and participants*)

Accepting the award for Valley Health was local agency Director Mary Caldwell. "We were thrilled to receive this award and we are proud to work for an organization that recognizes the delicate work/life balance that employees struggle with on a daily basis," Caldwell said. "Next year, we hope to qualify for a Navigator Award."

Navigator Awards were given to 17 of the 71 businesses in 2010. A minimum of 50 points was needed to qualify for the Navigator Award. ■



WIC ON BOARD WITH CHILD-CARE — Valley Health WIC and Central WV WIC earned a notable award for supporting employees' childcare needs.

DC WIC HOSTS OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

By Sara Beckwith, MS, RD, LD, WIC Nutritionist

For National Nutrition Month, the WIC staff of the Children's National Medical Center WIC clinic in Washington, DC hosted Client Appreciation Open House Day on March 29. Children and adults alike enjoyed craft activities, tasted cereal yogurt parfaits, and received give-aways as we celebrated WIC clients and promoted WIC to the public. As a result of the open house, we were able to make some new appointments and also recertify walk-in clients who have missed their previous appointments. ■



CELEBRATION — Nutrition Assistant Toni Henderson (left) and Nutritionist Sara Beckwith celebrate WIC Client Appreciation Open House Day at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC.

GROW AND GLOW IN DELAWARE

On March 29, all Delaware WIC staff members attended an in-service training at Del Tech, Terry Campus in Dover, DE. Ida Lawson, Breastfeeding Coordinator Kent/Sussex County, and Desiree Garcia, Breastfeeding Coordinator, New Castle County, organized and presented the first segment from the competency-based curriculum, *Using Loving Support™ to Grow and Glow in WIC*. This curriculum provides staff with opportunities to practice new skills for addressing common breastfeeding questions or concerns and provide the support needed to help mothers meet their breastfeeding goals.

The *Grow and Glow* theme was duplicated using brightly colored flower bouquets set on tabletops to initiate introductions. Staff engaged in several activities such as Building the Framework of Loving Support with pipe cleaners and Growing Healthy Babies and Moms with the plant pot. Prizes incentivized staff participation. The effectiveness of the training was deemed a success!

After lunch, BayHealth Medical Center Lactation Supervisor Gail Smith RN, IBCLC, presented an overview of a new Joint Commission National Quality Core Measure, *Exclusive breast milk feeding during the newborn's entire hospitalization*. Ms. Smith discussed how BayHealth is striving to meet the standards. They are working with their childbirth educators to develop policies which support, rather than hinder, exclusive breastfeeding. These include placing the baby skin-to-skin on the mother's chest immediately after birth, keeping mom and baby together throughout the hospital stay to promote breastfeeding success, and eliminating supplemental feedings. Partnership with WIC in providing Peer Counselors is a key component.

The Delaware WIC Program continues to strive to increase the number of mothers who breast-feed their children. We believe having a consistent message and providing support to breastfeeding mothers will go far in these efforts. ■



WIC STAFF GROWING AND GLOWING



TRAINING FOR ALL — Delaware WIC staff (left to right) Luvina Lacno, Tanya Saccoh, Marlene Hutton, Ameer Woodard, Ying Liu, and Beverly Carr (seated) enjoy the day's event.

NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

National Nutrition Month was celebrated with the theme "Go Green." Susan Konen, Burlington County Assistant District Recycling Coordinator, Office of Waste Management, was invited as a guest speaker for clients attending the clinic for nutrition education classes and check pick-up appointments. Ms. Konen provided a Power Point presentation of recycling and composting with various samples of compost from kitchen discards. The presentation was very informative and participants had many questions for Ms. Konen. Participants were given recycled tote bags filled with information on starting a garden, composting, and ideas of going green in the kitchen. Starter kits of seeds of various vegetables and fruits, soil and empty egg cartons were also given to class participants for children to start a garden.



GONE GREEN — This Burlington WIC participant got the "Go Green" message at the National Nutrition Month festivities.

A "Go Green" table was displayed with very creative ideas by the Competent Professional Authorities (CPAs) and supportive staff. Under the banner of "Go Green," the Local Agency's goal was to create awareness amongst WIC clients for efficient management of their household waste materials rather than increasing the volume of waste products to be discarded. The WIC staff demonstrated the use of an empty baby wipe container, which was decorated to be used as a piggy bank. An empty instant oatmeal box was transformed into a recipe box and a picture frame was made out of a CD case.

The Burlington County WIC Program has been invited to be guest speakers by several agencies. The requesting agencies have expressed interest in the new food package. The Local Agency provided trainings/in-services for nursing staff under the Child Health Program/Division of Youth and Family Services as well as Burlington County Healthy Mothers/ Healthy Babies Coalition. The agencies were excited with the changes in the WIC Program and will share the information with colleagues and target populations served.

The students at Tabernacle Elementary School were again generous with donations of books and brand new pajamas for the participants of the local agency. The collections were in honor of Read Across America. Moorestown Elementary School also again donated books for WIC clients. ■

NEW JERSEY WIC TAKES STEPS TO INCREASE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION

By Kelly Ryan, MS
(Public Health Consultant I - Nutrition, NJ WIC)

The new food package for WIC participants was implemented on October 1, 2009. Cash Value Vouchers (CVVs) were included in the new food package to encourage WIC participants to purchase fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables. These vouchers can be used at WIC-approved grocery stores or to purchase fruits and vegetables from certified farmers. Eligible WIC participants can also take advantage of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to get locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

New Jersey WIC is taking steps to remind participants to take advantage of these great opportunities by developing four posters, available in English and Spanish, which will be displayed in all of our local WIC agencies. Included on these posters are several of the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) core nutrition messages. FNS developed 16 of these consumer-tested messages to help nutrition educators deliver effective and consistent advice about healthy eating to low-income mothers and their children. Messages were developed for three groups: mothers of preschoolers, mothers of elementary and school-aged children, and eight- to ten-year-old children. Naturally, the messages of greatest importance for WIC are the preschool and elementary school messages. New Jersey's local agencies started utilizing these resources in May, just in time for the 2010 season of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program which began on June 1. A poster of a mother and her children in the grocery store reads: "Let your kids be 'produce pickers.' Help them pick fruits and veggies at the store." To stress the importance of being a good role model, another poster utilizes this message: "They take their lead from you. Eat your fruits and veggies and your kids will too."

These resources will be available on WIC Works once they are completed. ■

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pants will be able to enhance their purchasing power by using both the WIC FMNP checks and their CVVs at a roadside stand and/or at a farmers' market this season.

The ideas presented at the meetings and past years' data were used to implement this year's program. The program will decrease the number of checks from four \$5.00 checks to two \$10.00 checks and issue checks to children 2-4 years old who historically have the highest redemption rate. Everyone's input and attendance at the meetings is greatly appreciated. We look forward to the upcoming season with tremendous enthusiasm and are very optimistic that this year will surpass all others. ■

"COME AND PLAY, EVERYTHING'S A-OKAY" AT WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH SYSTEMS WIC

By Christine Compton
Valley Health Systems WIC Program Outreach Coordinator

"Come and play, everything's a-okay..." is the new attitude adopted by West Virginia's Valley Health Systems WIC clinics. The sites have taken a multi-faceted approach to incorporating the Sesame Street theme throughout the participant's visit.

It began with a kick-off event hosted at the Kanawha office, held in October 2009, to announce the new food packages. Sesame Street decorations were in place to add a festive touch to the day. Now, from the time a client walks through the front door, they are surrounded with these "sunny day" messages introducing the campaign.

In the waiting area we play *The Get Healthy Now Show* DVD on a TV showcased by a large wall mural of Elmo. A bulletin board in the main lobby boasts a *Sometime/Anytime Foods* message.

If the family is here for education classes, they will be surrounded by wall decorations of the Sesame Street characters, they will watch topic-related *View and Do* segments illustrating the five key messages from the kit, and they will receive state-generated handouts. Children and their care-givers will be encouraged to play games. The *Sometime/Anytime* spinning wheel compares the different food choices. Large dice are rolled and the square that is facing up shows an activity to do, such as jump, dance, stretch, run, wiggle or skip. A smaller, paper version of the dice game is given out as a take-and-make-at-home activity.

Clinic room doors are decorated with Sesame Street themes and messages about which foods are "sometime" and which are "anytime." After finger sticks, stickers are given out with messages such as, "apples keep cute little monsters strong" and "eat your colors everyday." Other key messages will be used throughout the rest of the year like: *Eat 5 Fruits and Vegetables Everyday!* *Eat Together as a Family!* *Be Active Everyday!*

As another component of this campaign, a container gardening program was scheduled for spring and vegetable seed packets were distributed and extension agent from West Virginia University spoke to participants.

Reinforcing our efforts has been the appearance of First Lady Michelle Obama on Sesame Street's season-opener along with the 40th anniversary celebration of the show this year. In addition, the recent media attention surrounding Mrs. Obama's campaign against Childhood Obesity continues to keep our Sesame Street messages at the forefront. ■



TIME FOR FUN — Hunter Thaxton, 3, plays the new Sesame Street dice game during a Nutrition Education class.



YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE? — Four-year-old Clyde Rader shows off his dynamic dance moves during a Nutrition Ed activity.



WANNA PLAY? — Playing a game, Clyde Rader, 4, shows the Sesame Street game to 15-month-old Emma Haynes, while the rest of the class participants watch and learn.

WEST VIRGINIA'S KANAWHA WIC DIGS IN! PARTICIPANTS TRY THEIR HAND AT GARDENING

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

Participants scheduled for nutrition education classes on April 5, were offered a chance to try something new. West Virginia's Kanawha WIC clients had a chance to learn first-hand about container gardening.

Master Gardener John Porter of the West Virginia University extension agency was the instructor for the day. "Gardening allows us to stretch our food dollars, and fresh food tastes better too," Mr. Porter told the class. He showed participants how to make their own small make-and-take container out of rolled newspaper and potting soil. They were also encouraged to select a sampling of seeds and seed packets to plant in their hand-made container and to take home and plant also. Assisting Mr. Porter with this project were Nutrition Education Coordinator Peg Kenyon and Outreach Coordinator Christine Compton.

"Gardening is up about 30 percent over the last few years because of the economy. And container gardening is useful for those families with limited space," Mr. Porter stated. As an example of food cost savings, Mr. Porter offered this scenario: "Blueberries cost about \$3 for a 4-ounce package at a grocery store, or \$12 for a pint; (whereas), you can get about a pint per week off of a blueberry bush for many weeks for an initial investment of just about \$5 per bush."

Participants enjoyed rolling up their sleeves and trying something new. Mr. Porter also offered a few simple recipe-preparation ideas for the gardening items. Some of the class had experimented with growing their own fresh foods, and for some it was a new adventure, but all were interested in making healthier food choices for their families. ■



TIPS FROM THE MASTER — WVU Extension Agent John Porter instructs WIC participants on starting their own container gardens.



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW? — Ella Smith-Bailey, Peebles Turpin and Danielle Justice try their hand at making their own newspaper containers for planting.



MY TURN — Nutrition Education Coordinator Peg Kenyon holds participant Daniel Thompson, while his mother, Danielle Justice, makes a container for gardening.

PUERTO RICO WIC SAYS "THANKS"

The Administration and Nutrition Division of the Puerto Rico WIC Program would like to acknowledge the efforts of the team of Nutrition Region Supervisors and WIC Nutritionists, who have worked to comply with the October 1, 2009 deadline to implement the VENA and new food packages requirements.

This dedicated group succeeded, ensuring the nutritional and health benefits for women, infants and children in Puerto Rico. ■



WINNING TEAM — Thanks go to these dedicated Puerto Rico WIC professionals for a job well done.

NEW JERSEY'S UMDNJ-WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH WITH FOREIGN FLAIR

During National Nutrition Month, New Jersey's UMDNJ- WIC Program was host to two Japanese professionals from the University of Shizuoka in Shizuoka, Japan. Their names were Toshiko Kuwano, PhD, RD, Associate Professor; and Hiroko Inoue, PhD, RD, Assistant Professor from the University's Food and Nutritional Sciences Department. Their visit included a tour of the various sections of our facility as well as an observation of the nutrition education delivery and check distribution process. The professors shared some of their ethnicity with the staff and provided us with copies of the Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top, which is a comparable version of our Food Guide Pyramid. They also gave samples of Japanese soups, teas and mints for the staff to enjoy. UMDNJ in turn reciprocated with several handouts, general information about the program as well as educational giveaway items.

The experience was both enlightening and enjoyable. Their departure was somewhat of a "sweet sorrow," with the promise of a return visit in the not-too-distant future.

During the rest of the month, the nutrition staff demonstrated to participants creative ways to utilize the newly added Cash Value Voucher Check to enhance their diets. Using a selection of imported fruits, nutritionists showed participants ways to combine them with other fruits to produce healthy smoothies with a unique, tropical flavor. Recipe handouts entitled "Taste the Tropics Smoothies" were developed using the recipes and were distributed to the participants to take home. They were also given samples of nutritious snacks which consisted of dried fruits, yogurt and citrus and educated on the nutritional value of such foods. Participants enjoyed the snacks as well as the education they received. ■

NEW JERSEY'S PLAINFIELD WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH FROM THE GROUND UP

By Sarah Reilly, Nutritionist, Plainfield WIC Program

National Nutrition Month (NNM) 2010 was very exciting for NJ's Plainfield WIC. Environmentally friendly grocery bags were made with Spanish and English flyers/pamphlets to emphasize healthy eating habits at an early age, food guide pyramid, healthy recipes and much more.

We had a special speaker present on lead education to prevent lead poisoning. Other topics discussed were childhood obesity, healthy weight, eating habits, fiber and whole grains. During these sessions, clients interacted and seemed to understand the health benefits of a healthy lifestyle.



GET THE LEAD OUT — These speakers discussed the dangers of lead poisoning.

Our clinic places a great deal of time and effort into nutrition education, and NNM was no exception.

We are trying to increase our population's knowledge of a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating. A great deal of time and effort was put into educating our clients on childhood obesity, as many of our children are in the overweight or obese categories.

We are pleased by the overwhelming interest in a healthier lifestyle and parents/caregivers wanting to make sure their children are not in the high-risk or overweight/obese category. ■



TOPICAL INFORMATION — This nutrition education board was one of many displayed to help educate clients on the topics for National Nutrition Month.

North Central PA continued from page 1

for certification. The clinic was quite busy that morning and the participants had a bit of a wait. The Nutrition Aide on duty, Kathe Means, noticed that the baby cried quite a bit and so she employed her "Happy Baby" calming techniques and swaddled the baby. The infant settled and was quiet for several minutes. Soon the certification began and Mary DeLucia, one of the staff dietitians, was asking all of the appropriate questions. Mary noted that the baby was rather fussy and seemed to whimper between breaths. Mary had the mother undress the baby for the weight check and as she did so, Mary noted a bluish hue to the baby's abdomen and neck areas. To the touch, the baby was cold and clammy. She immediately discontinued the screening and both Mary and Kathe helped the mom pack baby up and sent them to the closest emergency room. Later that day the mother called, fighting back tears, and reported the baby had been immediately sent to the nearest children's hospital by ambulance as ground fog had prevented life flight liftoff. Mom stated the cause of her baby's distress involved a heart blockage and a hole in the heart with a very low core temperature.

It was about a week later before staff heard more from the family. Staff was informed that the baby was on a ventilator and surgery was pending further stabilization. Seventeen days after the WIC appointment, the baby had heart surgery to repair two holes in the heart. The baby was reported to be "holding her own."

Family members felt it was the action taken by the WIC staff that saved the baby's life. Had the baby not received medical intervention the day of her WIC visit, she would not have survived. All staff was very grateful to both Mary and Kathe for their attempts to help this baby. It drove home to all of us the importance of weight checks in dry diapers. Without this physical observation, would the same course of action been initiated? It is obvious that when we give the very best care that we can, we do make a significant difference in the lives of the families we serve! ■

VIRGINIA/MARYLAND DIETETIC INTERN DOES GOOD TURN

Allison Leonard, a VA/MD Dietetic Intern from the Rappahannock Health District, sponsored a food drive for the local food bank and collected over 109 pounds of food. Here she is with some of her donations. ■



WEST VIRGINIA'S WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WIC PARTNERS WITH ORAL HEALTH EDUCATORS

By Tammy Amos, Nutritionist and Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Wetzel-Tyler WIC recognizes the importance of good oral health care and especially the need to start this care soon after birth. Education is a key factor in helping parents realize that preventative care starts very early.

February, National Children's Dental Month, was an ideal time to emphasize this message. Oral health educator, Marsha Delancy, was invited to attend several of Wetzel-Tyler WIC's nutrition education classes for presentations. She graciously accepted the invitation with great enthusiasm. Ms. Delancy made participants aware of the need to establish early care from wiping out the infant's mouth, avoiding bed-time beverages, decreasing consumption of juices and other beverages/foods high in sugar content, as well as having children seen for dental evaluations on a regular basis.

The importance of infant "baby" teeth was discussed, educating parents that the primary teeth hold placement for a child's permanent teeth and that losing teeth prematurely could result in a child having difficulty with bite/chewing, speech, as well as affecting self esteem. Demonstration on proper brushing and advice on selecting an appropriate toothbrush was given. Visual aids were utilized in showing health concerns that could result should dental care be neglected. Finally Ms. Delancy distributed appropriate size brushes (adults and children), floss and toothpaste to all in attendance.

Wetzel-Tyler WIC staff appreciated Ms. Delancy's kindness in sharing her expertise regarding dental care and feel that our WIC clients greatly benefitted. Most importantly, the message was reiterated that dental concerns are preventable! ■



DENTAL HEALTH 101 — Marsha Delancy shares her expertise in WIC nutrition education classes in an effort to improve the dental health of children.

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- PA WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. July 28-29.
- The deadline for the Fall issue of MARWIC TIMES is July 15, 2010. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

NEW JERSEY'S ST. JOSEPH'S WIC REACHES OUT DURING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

By Anny Uddin, Nutrition Supervisor, St. Joseph's WIC Program

St. Joseph's WIC Program (Paterson, NJ) welcomed National Nutrition Month 2010: Eat Right, with great excitement and enlightened staff and clients throughout our agency, and community as well. Not only did we share our enthusiasm and expertise with WIC clients, but we were also able to present nutrition information to the employees at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center.

On March 17, four staff nutritionists — Rossini Dubois, Jane Yi, Amalia Neira, MS, RD, and Patricia Santelli — entertained the idea to Eat Right to staff and visitors at the hospital cafeteria.

It was a great day of fun-filled activities, educational material, and excitement. This is something that we have taken part in for the past two years, and a way we feel we can educate not only our WIC clients, but share information and be available for our staff as well. It was a great opportunity to emphasize great health and how nutrition plays a great role in achieving this goal. The Staff at St. Joseph's WIC Program look forward to all of our upcoming outreach events. ■



GOOD NUTRITION FOR ALL — St. Joseph's WIC staff (left to right) Nutritionists Rossini Dubois and Jane Yi; Supervisor Amalia Neira, MS, RD; and Nutritionist Patricia Santelli distributed information to hospital employees and visitors as part of National Nutrition Month outreach efforts.

VIRGINIA'S CHESTERFIELD WIC NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH EVENTS A SUCCESS

March was National Nutrition Month and the theme for the month was "Nutrition from The Ground Up." In an effort to promote healthier eating and obtaining and maintaining healthier lifestyles for the citizen of the Chesterfield Health District, the Chesterfield WIC Program provided several promotional outreach efforts for the month.

The promotional activities started with a large Nutrition Education bulletin board that was placed outside the WIC waiting room. The bulletin board is a colorful display centering around the message, "Nutrition from the Ground Up." During the month, four weekly displays were featured beside the bulletin board catering to "The Food Group of the Week." Handouts and nutrition education materials were given out pertaining to the health benefits of the featured food group. In order to make the month interactive with the citizens, daily quizzes were given. The quizzes were designed to engage the participants in making healthier food choices. During one week of NNM, there was a daily food sampling. Each day featured a different snack that encourages adding a healthy variety to your lifestyle. The snacks featured foods that are given to the participants which provided creative ideas on how to use the benefits of the Program in a healthy manner. All participants engaging in the NNM promotional activities also received a nutrition education incentive that is designed to promote, obtain and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

In addition to the health promotions at the WIC office, there were three other promotions:

- Several of the district's libraries agreed to display a circular



CHECK WIC OUT — Chesterfield WIC Nutritionists (left to right) Laurie Ashley, Chloe Devening, RD, and Karla Langhorne offer information to passersby during National Nutrition Month activities.

display rack which holds nutrition education pamphlets on a variety of nutrition topics, including healthy pregnancy, breast-feeding, infant feeding, and general nutrition facts.

- Two nutritionists participated in a health fair as part of a community outreach project to bring general nutrition education information to the public on topics such as obesity, healthy snacking and heart health.
- Finally, Kerry Williams, RD, Nutrition Program Supervisor appeared on the county's television show, Chesterfield Spotlight, during the month of March providing a nutrition education message to the citizens of the Chesterfield Health District. ■

NURSING AT WORK: WEST VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH WIC PROMOTES BREASTFEEDING FOR EMPLOYEES

By Pamela Rigglesman, Outreach Coordinator

Misty Felton always knew she'd breast-feed, and was delighted to find an employment opportunity that would support her choice. Misty brings Riley, her eight-month-old daughter, to work with her. It's not an unusual circumstance to have babies in a WIC office, so what better way to make a testament of West Virginia's



BREASTFEEDING AT WORK — WIC Nutritionist Misty Felton and her 8-month-old daughter, Riley Faith.

Shenandoah Valley Health Systems WIC Program's dedication to their employees, and the mothers' dedication to their children.

WIC participants love hearing the baby cooing or playing when we answer the phone or while waiting for appointments.

Ms. Felton says, "I believe that having children around the office creates a positive environment. People smile more; they're more relaxed and playful."

The direct modeling of nursing while continuing with work tasks also opens discussion with mothers concerning fears and barriers that affect their dedication to initiation and duration of breastfeeding. ■

PENNSYLVANIA'S FAYETTE COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION WIC OUTREACH AT ANNUAL DIAPER DERBY EVENT!

By Betty Zackal, FCCAA WIC Program Director

Pennsylvania's Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) promoted the Fayette County WIC Program at their agency's annual St. Patrick's Day weekend event held at the Uniontown Mall on March 13. FCCAA WIC had a table presentation displaying WIC outreach materials at the Annual FCCAA Nurse Family Partnership Diaper Derby. This event has always been a great forum to promote WIC to the community.



DERBY DAY — Pictured (left to right) are FCCAA, Inc. WIC Director Betty Zackal; FCCAA Inc. WIC Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Coordinator Sheena Abraham; and FCCAA, Inc. Director of Operations Madeline Sloboda.

WIC Director Betty Zackal announced the seven WIC sites in the county, encouraging the audience to call for enrollment details. Twenty-three infants and toddlers either crawled or walked for the Diaper Derby. All received participation ribbons and many prizes were awarded to the parents for the children. ■

RANDOLPH-ELKINS HEALTH DEPARTMENT WIC PROGRAM GIVES AWAY FRUITS AND VEGGIES DURING NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

By Trish Halterman, MS, RD

The theme for National Nutrition Month 2010 “Nutrition From the Ground Up” was focused on making informed choices and developing sound eating habits. Nutritionists at West Virginia’s Randolph-Elkins Health Department have been teaching participants to get more fruits and vegetables each day for themselves and their families.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to make healthy choices since children learn habits, attitudes and beliefs from them. During March, to help families learn to eat more fruits and vegetables, drawings were held at all group nutrition classes. Vegetable pizza gift certificates and bags of dried “Craisins” were given away. Area businesses in all counties donated the pizzas. ■



PIZZA TO GO — Debbie Weasenforth (left), manager of the Petersburg Pizza Hut, presents a Veggie Lovers Pizza certificate to WIC Nutrition Assistant Tanya Wright.

VIRGINIA'S LOUDON COUNTY WIC GETS TASTY

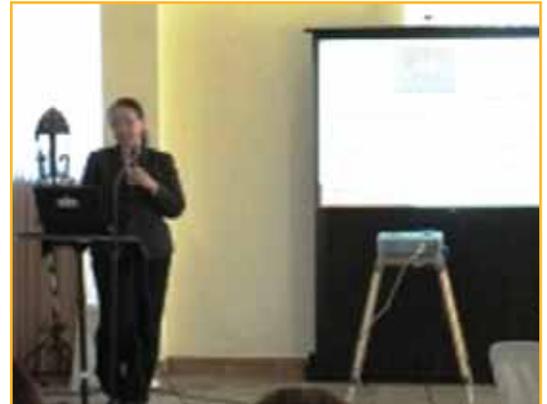
Loudon County WIC Program Dietetic Intern Uma Sridharan demonstrates easy recipes that can be made using WIC-approved foods for a group of WIC moms in the Loudoun County Health Department during National Nutrition Month 2010. ■



PUERTO RICO WIC PROGRAM IN “ACUDEN”

Puerto Rico’s Administration for Childhood Care and Integrated Development (in Spanish known by the acronym, “(ACUDEN)”) held an orientation for their Nutrition Coordinators of the WIC Program. The meeting, held in February, focused on the recently implemented food package changes, and a summary of the Agreement Review between themselves and the PR WIC Program.

Nutrition Education Coordinator Maria Encarnacion explained the food package changes and presented the new authorized food list. The nutritionists in attendance appreciated the new information. ■



LISTEN UP — Nutrition Education Coordinator Maria Encarnacion addresses the group on the new WIC food packages.



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