

MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY WIC READIES PARTICIPANTS FOR NATIONAL CENSUS DAY APRIL 1, 2010

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

The National WIC Association has partnered with the 2010 Census to ensure a complete and accurate census. In support of this initiative, the Pennsylvania Allegheny County Health Department/WIC Program invited John Ramos, Partnership Specialist of Western Pennsylvania, US Census Bureau, to present an in-service at the General Staff Meeting on October 28, on the upcoming census. His role is to contact and establish partnerships with various organizations in the local community regarding obstacles or barriers to participating in the census. Mr. Ramos discussed his position as an

Continued on page 5

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED — John Ramos, US Census Bureau, presents an in-service to Allegheny County Health Department WIC staff.



FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA BELIEVES IN WIC

FIRST LADY VISITS DC WIC'S UNITY HEALTH CARE UPPER CARDOZO PROGRAM

By Dele Rufai, MS, RD, LD, Local Agency Coordinator

On June 29, the First Lady visited Unity Health Center at Cardozo to announce the Obama Administration's support for the renovation and modernization of the Health Center that will provide health care access to millions of the uninsured population. During this visit, accompanied by the Center Medical Director, Dr. Padilla, Michelle Obama paid an unannounced visit to the WIC Program. Her first question was "Where are my babies?" She met the WIC staff, pregnant women, infants and children with hugs. She toured the nutrition education room and browsed the education materials in Nutritionist Victoria Bailey-

Continued on page 4

FIRST LADY ATTENDS GRAND OPENING OF THE WHITE HOUSE FARMERS' MARKET BY FRESHFARMS

September 17 was a cool and misty rainy afternoon. A silent yet excited crowd of approximately 300 people eagerly waited for the arrival of our nation's First Lady, Michelle Obama, at the FRESHFARMS White House farmers' market. The farmers' market is located two blocks away from the White House on Vermont Avenue and H Street, NW. At 3:15 pm, a secret service agent announced, "Ladies and gentlemen please close your umbrellas and let us welcome the founders of FRESHFARM Markets." The crowd began to cheer the Honorable Mayor Adrian Fenty of Washington, DC, and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. The crowd really began to cheer as the agent announced, "First Lady Mrs.

Continued on page 2



OFFICIAL VISIT — First Lady Michelle Obama with Vincent A. Keane, President and CEO of Unity Health Care.



PICKING THE FRESHEST — Mrs. Obama selects some fresh produce.

WINTER 2010

■ MARO's "Pathways to a Healthy Future: Ending Childhood Hunger by 2015"Page 3

■ WV WIC Employee Patty Parkey Honored for Exemplary ServicePage 4

■ News from PA's Community Action Southwest WICPage 7

■ DC WIC Creates Portable Grocery Store to Train Staff and VendorsPage 9

■ Meet Delaware WIC Program's New Southern Health Services WIC SupervisorPage 10



BREASTFEEDING WALK PROMOTES BREASTFEEDING INFANTS; SUPPORTS MOTHERS IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Tracy Eddy, The Dominion Post

The following story is reprinted with permission from The Dominion Post.

Pediatricians, mothers and families banded behind a banner that read “Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work” and marched down High Street on Tuesday night. The Monongalia County Health Department WIC Program organized the Breastfeeding Awareness Walk in order to promote the benefits of breastfeeding infants and to show mothers that the community supports their decision. The walk started at the Wesley United Methodist Church, on High Street, and ended at the Monongalia County Courthouse.

Holly Hildreth, interim public health educator for the health department, said the WIC Program usually hosts a luncheon in August to celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness Month, but decided to host an awareness walk this year, so the community could get involved.

“The health care community understands that breastfeeding is the optimal feeding choice,” she said. “But the reality is that the health care providers are only part of the puzzle. We need support from people throughout the community to make breastfeeding work.”

Brittany Fabiano, of Morgantown, said she breastfeeds her daughter, and she had been asked not to breastfeed in public in the past. She championed the Breastfeeding Awareness Walk because she believes mothers should be allowed to breastfeed their hungry infants in public, if necessary, she said.

“I have always known I was going to nurse,” Fabiano said. “All my family was nursed. I think it’s wonderful.”

Hildreth said babies who are breastfed are 15 times healthier than babies fed with formula. “Most people are aware that breastfeeding is the healthiest choice, but they do not realize they need to be part of the support system,” she said. “If someone sees a woman breastfeeding in public, they should encourage the mother.”

The WVU Children’s Hospital Breastfeeding Task Force, Monongalia General Hospital, the West Virginia Health Start HAPI Project and Mon County HeadStart and Early HeadStart also sponsored the walk. Morgantown Mayor Bill Byrne issued a proclamation declaring August Breastfeeding Awareness Month. After the walk, items such as infant carriers and diaper bags were raffled off. Also, all the children who participated in the walk were given a children’s book. Hildreth said the items were provided by WIC or donated by breastfeeding mothers.

On Monday, the West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance (WVBA) recognized several businesses in the state for supporting breastfeeding mothers. Christine Compton, project coordinator for WVBA, said the support the businesses offered could be anything from providing breastfeeding mothers with a clean, private place they can pump or allowing them time during the work-day to go breastfeed their babies.

Mylan Pharmaceuticals, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Preston Memorial Hospital and WVU Hospitals were the area businesses that were recognized. ■



WALK ON — Pat Clevenger, Breastfeeding Coordinator with the Monongalia County Health Department WIC Program; and Tammy Foley, RN, IBCLC with Ruby Memorial Hospital; lead a group of walkers down High Street during the Breastfeeding Awareness Walk.



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First Lady Attends Grand Opening continued from page 1

Michelle Obama!”

Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack gave remarks on the recent increased surge in new farmers’ markets and registered small farms across the country. Mrs. Obama opened her speech with, “I have never seen so many people excited about fruits and vegetables.” She gave a personal testimony of the importance of feeding your family nutritious meals that included fresh produce. Mrs. Obama spoke about the importance of farmers in the WIC, Commodity Supplemental Foods and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) and the impact of farmers’ markets in communities across the nation.



IN GOOD COMPANY — First Lady Michelle Obama with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Washington, DC Mayor Adrian M. Fenty.

Mrs. Obama ended with the ringing of the market bell. The market bell signifies the opening and closing of the market. On her way to a farm stand, Mrs. Obama shook hands with our very own Carol Smith from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office USDA WIC. Carol stated that, “She is the first famous person that I have ever met.” Sabrina Lewis from DC WIC missed the handshaking opportunity while taking pictures of the event. The farmers’ market is comprised of 19 farmers; three were certified by the DC WIC and Seniors Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). The market participates in the Double Dollar Coupon program sponsored through FRESHFARMS and accepted SNAP, WIC and Senior FMNP benefits, too. ■

NEWS FROM THE USDA: MID-ATLANTIC STATE AGENCIES SELECTED TO RECEIVE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT FUNDS

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 provided \$100 million for State agencies to establish, improve, or administer management information systems, including changes necessary to meet new legislative or regulatory requirements such as the WIC food package. In order to competitively distribute the funds, four Requests for Applications (RFAs) were released. Each RFA solicited proposals from WIC State agencies for specific types of grants including State Agency Model (SAM) transfer grants, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) planning grants, EBT implementation grants, and miscellaneous technology-related grants. Five Mid-Atlantic State Agencies that submitted applications in response to the RFAs were selected to receive \$8,821,516 in grants for various projects. MARO is pleased to announce the following awards:

- **Delaware** (\$250,000), **District of Columbia** (\$300,000), and **Pennsylvania** (\$462,264) were selected to receive EBT planning grants.
- **Delaware** was selected to receive \$5,000,000 for the transfer of a new management information system.
- **District of Columbia** was selected to receive \$282,421 to enhance their CARES information system and for electronic signature pads.
- **New Jersey** was selected to receive \$1,349,413 for the transfer of a new management information system and nutrition education kiosks.
- **Pennsylvania** was selected to receive \$792,315 for computer equipment.
- **Puerto Rico** was selected to receive \$421,250 for new management information system planning and enhancements to their current system.

In addition, **Virginia** and **West Virginia** were selected to receive ARRA grants outside of the RFAs to support their existing Crossroads system development project (\$17,276,448) and EBT project (\$585,822).

Look for updates on the projects in future issues of MARWIC TIMES. ■

MARO's "PATHWAYS TO A HEALTHY FUTURE: ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER BY 2015" STATE DIRECTORS' MEETING ADDRESSES FISCAL YEAR 2010 PRIORITIES

FNS' priority initiatives were the focus of a November 17-18 MARO State WIC Directors' meeting held at the Regional Training Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. In keeping with this year's theme, "Pathways to a Healthy Future: Ending Childhood Hunger by 2015," Acting MARO Regional Administrator Cathie McCullough opened the meeting by acknowledging the many significant milestones achieved by MARO States in Fiscal Year 2009, including the successful implementation of VENA and the new WIC food packages. FNS Headquarters Branch Chief Sandy Clark addressed national issues, 2010 priority initiatives, and addressed the challenges facing the WIC Program and its administrators in 2010. Regional WIC Director Diana Limbacher led a lively discussion on how FNS and States can work collaboratively to achieve these goals. MARO State representatives were quick to offer ideas based on their recent experiences, successes, best practices, and technological advances.

Regional WIC staff discussed the MARO Customer Service Workgroup achievements and available funding to improve program access through infrastructure improvements; the many nutrition education resources available to States; and Fiscal Year 2010 funding, including MARO Operational Adjustment and ARRA funded projects. State and Regional Office staff not present in Greenbelt were able participate in important training webinars on the new Management Evaluation Tool and PartnerWeb 3.1. Remote attendees were also able to take part in an H1N1 update and a Healthy Weight Summit presentation.

But this year's meeting wasn't all business. Complementing the business side of the day, attendees received humorous awards for their notable services and efforts and participated in games, including a word jumble comprised of new food packages items, which brought about many smiles and laughs. Exercise-based activity-breaks kept the mood light and energized. Validating WIC's cheerful and innovative approach to addressing 2010's pressing issues, meeting evaluations provided excellent and encouraging feedback. Kudos is graciously extended to all those who helped make this year's annual State Directors' meeting a rousing success! ■



Anne Spalding (DC WIC) assisting Shirley Sword (PA WIC), Greg Landis (PA WIC), and Sandy Clarke (FNS HQ) in selecting authorized foods from the DC WIC approved food list.



Joni Garci (FNS MARO), Denise Ferris (WV WIC), Donna Seward (VA WIC), and Kirk Wilborne (FNS MARO) participate in an active break sponsored by Maryland WIC.



Jeannette Canino (PR WIC), Sandy Clarke (FNS HQ), Donna Seward (VA WIC), Gloria Clarke (DC WIC), Denise Ferris (WV WIC), and Jaime Rivera (PR WIC) were the winning team in the "WIC Brain Freezers" word jumble game.



Diana Limbacher (FNS MARO) presenting Jackie Marlette-Boras (MD WIC) with the "#1 MARO Hostess Award."



Diana Limbacher (FNS MARO) presenting Joanne White (DE WIC) with the "#1 MARO Trailblazer Award."



Diana Limbacher (FNS MARO) presenting Jean Malloy (NJ WIC) with the "#1 MARO Go-Getter Award."

WEST VIRGINIA WIC EMPLOYEE PATTY PARKEY HONORED FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE

Just after the launch of the WIC Program in 1974, Patty Parkey began her WIC career in April of 1975. Even though Patty possesses a BS Degree in Home Economics from Concord College, she was hired as a WIC Clerk for Southern West Virginia Regional Health Council since there were no Nutritionist openings at that time. Soon thereafter, she moved into the WIC Nutritionist position and found her true calling.

Before working in the WIC Program, Patty was employed as the Home Economist for Appalachian Power Company in Roanoke and Tazewell, VA. After starting her family, Patty and husband, Ray, moved back to her hometown of Princeton, WV, and continued her work with Appalachian Power. As her family grew, Patty was able to leave her job and lovingly devoted 14 years of her time and energy to raise her two sons, Andy and Barney, and daughter, Cindy.

Since 1975, Patty has experienced many changes with the WIC Program. From the massive participant draft distributions at county

National Guard Armories to STORC computerization, from handwritten drafts to printer generated vouchers, from the imminent danger of the Mingo County floods to the security of her own WIC Supervisor's office and even the positive parent agency change from Appalachian OH-9 to WVEMSTSN, Inc., Patty has seen it all. Better still, Patty has been a positive, encouraging, professional driving force through it all.

In the spring of 2008, Patty was diagnosed with breast cancer which forced her to take medical leave to seek treatment. Just as she has been in her professional life, Patty has approached her fight with cancer with determination and an inspiring attitude.

While recovering from radiation treatment complications at Princeton Community Hospital, Patty was surprised by a visit on August 14, from Denise Ferris, WV WIC Director; Joe Richards, WVEMSTSN, Inc. CEO; and Elva J. Clemons, TSN/WIC Program Director. Denise expressed her appreciation and presented Patty with a certificate of excellence for her 34 years of WIC service. WVEMSTSN, Inc. has been the



PATTY PARKEY

local parent agency for 10 years and Joe honored Patty by placing a 10-year tenure pin on her shoulder. Elva gave Patty roses as a gift from Patty's co-workers.

As in true Patty Parkey spirit, Patty spoke strongly of how important the WIC Program has been and continues to be in the lives of the participants. Patty stressed with tears in her eyes, that the support and love of her WIC friends is a valuable gift and has encouraged her through her cancer treatment and her many years with WIC. ■

NEW JERSEY'S PASSAIC WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING

The Passaic (NJ) WIC office had a very successful World Breastfeeding celebration on August 24. Fully breastfeeding women and their children were invited to attend. More than 30 women, infants, and children participated.

Clients sent pictures of their breastfed infants for a poster which was displayed and admired during the event. Lactation Consultant Miriam Ruchman and Peer Counselor Ana Aguilar used another poster to help illustrate their discussion of the 2009 World Breastfeeding theme, "Breastfeeding During Emergencies."

Doris Roman, a social worker for the local prenatal health clinics, was a special guest speaker. She gave an excellent talk to educate parents about Shaken Baby Syndrome.

Next, clients received personalized certificates celebrating their breastfeeding experience amid cheers and applause. Mary Turbek of the New Jersey State WIC Breastfeeding office then pulled raffle tickets and announced the winners of several beautiful donated fruit baskets.

Also donated was a delicious lunch for all attendees and WIC staff. As an additional thank you to our exclusively breastfeeding WIC mothers, all participants received tote bags with "Go for the Gold" onesies, bibs, breast pads, breastfeeding magnets, and assorted infant toys.

The entire Passaic WIC staff was responsible for the success of this fun and educational breastfeeding celebration. ■



PARTY ON — Passaic WIC moms and babies celebrate World Breastfeeding Week.

MEET DELAWARE WIC PROGRAM'S NEW NUTRITIONIST II

By Jennifer Colantuono, RD

I was born and raised in Claymont, Delaware, and attended the University of Delaware (UD) where I completed my undergraduate degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. To become a Registered Dietitian one needs to complete an accredited Dietetic Internship Program, which I was able to do at UD. During my internship I went through a number of rotations to gain experience in the field of Nutrition. One of my rotations was with the Delaware Public Health Department, WIC Program. I worked as an intern, learning about the Program, observing the daily flow of the clinic, and seeing first hand the support and education mothers get through WIC.

After completion of my internship, I applied to University of Delaware for graduate school and was accepted into the Human Nutrition Program. I was also offered a position as a teaching assistant with the UD Dietetic Internship. Having just completed the internship myself, I was very excited to help those who were where I once was. I spent two years in this position and learned a lot in this time frame. During my graduate studies I took a Maternal and Infant Nutrition class and fell in love with the topic. I ended up choosing it for my final project and became very excited and passionate about maternal health and pregnancy.

Currently, I am working for WIC as a Nutritionist II Supervisor through the State of Delaware's Division of Public Health. I started this job this past May 26 and am working in Dover, at Williams State Service Center. I have learned so much in the short time I have been here. I have become even more excited about breastfeeding and child nutrition. I enjoy seeing the children everyday and learn so much from both the staff and clients here at WIC. ■



JENNIFER COLANTUONO

First Lady Visits Unity continued from page 1

Makinde's office.

In her remarks, Mrs. Obama indicated that nearly one third of the children in this country are overweight and will suffer from diseases such as diabetes at one point in their lives. She commented on the increased numbers within the Hispanic and African American communities and pointed out that access to primary care, preventive care, wellness and nutrition counseling help to prevent chronic diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. She stated to WIC program staff "Thank you for doing my work for me." ■

VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND WIC WELCOME THE 2009-2010 DIETETIC INTERNSHIP CLASS!

By Lauren Hosterman, Dietetic Intern, Harford County (MD) WIC Program

The Virginia Department of Health/Maryland WIC Dietetic Internship celebrated the incoming class with a photo opportunity outside the Virginia Department of Health. The class of 2009-2010 marks the second year of a partnership between the Virginia and Maryland WIC Programs to offer a dietetic internship to eligible employees. Orientation was held on September 14 -17 in Richmond, where interns learned about the activities and projects to be completed over the next 11 months. Each intern will split their time between WIC duties and community nutrition activities and complete additional full-time rotations in clinical and food service settings. Kathleen Sergent (VA) is the Internship Director and Connie Webster (MD) is the Maryland Internship Coordinator. The interns appreciate the support of their State WIC Office and local agency while pursuing this opportunity. ■



CLASS OF 2009-10 — The most recent Dietetic Internship Class is (left to right) Uma Sridharan, Virginia WIC; Mary Jane Wilson, Virginia WIC; Lisa Euliss, CCI-Montgomery County WIC; Allison Leonard, Virginia WIC; Lauren Hosterman, Harford County WIC; Amy Sutton, Virginia WIC; Antoinette Hinds, CCI-Montgomery County WIC.

NEW JERSEY'S CAMDEN COUNTY PRESENTS 2009 WOMEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE

As part of the March Nutrition Month activities, Camden County Department of Health & Human Services WIC staff participated in the 10th Annual Women's Health Conference, "It's All about You, A Conference for Women of all Ages" held on Saturday, March 7, at Eastern High School in Voorhees, NJ.

WIC Nutritionist Amy Rhinehart and Clerk Typist Daniella Denoto worked at the WIC exhibit table to provide WIC outreach and nutrition information and WIC cereal samples and magnets to more than 1200 women. Over 120 social service and community health agencies provided lots of wonderful information in the exhibit hall. Health screenings included blood pressure by nursing students, bone density by a local hospital, vision testing and massages. Over 60 other workshops were provided on numerous women's health, nutrition and wellness topics. Other WIC staff worked as team members to help make this event a success. It was such a great day to share health and nutrition resources with so many women. ■



REACHING OUT — WIC Clerk Typist Daniella Denoto (left) and WIC Nutritionist Amy Rhinehart (center) provided WIC outreach and nutrition information at the WIC exhibitor table.

PA's Allegheny County continued from page 1

educator in promoting how important it is for everyone to participate in the census and to encourage employees and WIC participants to mail in their census questionnaires. The goals of the bureau are to reduce the undercount, increase response rate and deliver a consistent message. The data collected will be used to apportion seats in the US House of Representatives, distribute \$400 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments, and make decisions about community services provided in the future.

At the in-service, copies of the 2010 census forms and contact information were provided to the WIC staff. Mr. Ramos will provide pamphlets and other promotional materials to the WIC staff in January, which will be used to develop bulletin boards to promote participation in the census at the ten Allegheny County Health Department WIC offices. ■

VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND WIC CONGRATULATE THE 2008-2009 DIETETIC INTERNSHIP CLASS

By Margaret Eng, LDN, Nutrition Specialist Maryland WIC Program

Congratulations to the first group of Virginia and Maryland WIC nutritionists who were part of the combined Virginia Department of Health/Maryland WIC Dietetic Internship Program (previously the Virginia Department of Health Dietetic Internship).

After a challenging ten months of balancing internship and WIC work responsibilities, all seven interns in the Dietetic Internship 2008-2009 class completed requirements for graduation. As interns, they had the opportunity to work in various community, nutrition, hospital, and school foodservice facilities in Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Having completed the program, they must now demonstrate their competency to perform as an entry-level Registered Dietitian by passing a comprehensive exam. Four of the interns – Chloe Devening from Virginia and Margaret Eng, Kristen Perry, and Fran Ritinski from Maryland – have already taken and passed their exams. ■



CLASS OF 2008-2009 — The Dietetic Internship graduates celebrated with a pizza lunch. Pictured (left to right) are Chloe Devening, Virginia WIC; Frances Ritinski, Southern Maryland WIC; Ginny Fox, Virginia WIC; Kristen Perry, Harford County WIC; Janny Cho, CCI-Montgomery County WIC; Shannon Meadows, CCI-Montgomery County WIC; Margaret Eng, Maryland WIC State Agency.

PUERTO RICO WIC MOM TAKES CONTROL OF FAMILY'S WEIGHT

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

Marta Meaux, a nutritionist with Puerto Rico's Trujillo Alto WIC Clinic, shared the story of a determined and committed family.

WIC participant Miguelito gained 20 pounds in 12 months. Now 6 years old, he has been able to maintain his weight of 98 pounds thanks to his family's participation in WIC, where his mother, Sujail, has learned better health practices.

Sujail lost 135 pounds, and her husband has lost weight, as well.

Marta considers this a great achievement because the mother has the ability to influence her family's eating habits with the skills she acquired in the WIC Program.

Congratulations to Sujail and Miguelito. And the rest of their family! ■



NOW AND THEN — This is Sujail with her old jeans!!!

WIC OFFICES HONORED BY WEST VIRGINIA GOVERNOR

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

The West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance (WVBA) recognized businesses that are supportive of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace in a ceremony with Governor Joe Manchin, III on August 3. The Governor issued a proclamation of August 2009 as World Breastfeeding Month. Awards were given to 20 supportive work-sites from around the state of West Virginia. The awards ranged from bronze to platinum, with the platinum level indicating the highest level of support.

The criteria for selection were as follows:

Platinum – Employee prenatal program, 24/7 access to a certified lactation consultant, (services provided by company; or at a minimum, a list of local lactation assistance within the community), employer provides breast pump for employee, private pumping room and an area for storing milk, plus paid break time, and a written policy to support lactation.

Gold – Employer has a written lactation policy AND a private pumping room/area and a place for storing milk.

Silver – Employer has a lactation policy OR a private pumping room/area and a place for storing milk.

Bronze – Employer has supported a lactating employee at this worksite



GOING PLATINUM — Valley Health WIC Director Mary Caldwell and Governor Joe Manchin, III are pictured with the Platinum Award given to Kanawha's WIC Office.

in specific ways, (i.e., paid break times, allowing employee to leave premises on break time to travel to sitter's, provided access to a private pumping area and/or a milk storage space).

The Valley Health WIC Program, Kanawha's Local Agency from Charleston received

a PLATINUM level award because of the 24/7 lactation counselors available to all employees at this site in addition to the VH policy of allowing babies to come to work if they are breastfeeding.

Valley Health Systems, Inc. from Huntington received a GOLD level award for having written policy in place for all employees to have their babies brought to work for six months to breastfeed.

The majority of moms list their need to return to work as the number one reason why breastfeeding is not even attempted, or ends up being cut short. "Workplace support for breastfeeding women can positively impact the bottom line," stated Stephanie K. Whitney, MA, and State Breastfeeding Coordinator for the WV WIC Program. "Among the benefits are lower healthcare costs, enhanced productivity, greater employee satisfaction, increased retention and a positive corporate image," she added. Work-site policies that provide breastfeeding mothers with break time and a clean, private place to pump and store breast milk during the workday, help parents provide their babies with a healthy start to life.

The West Virginia Breastfeeding Alliance was formed in 2008 and welcomes new members to help further their mission. The mission of WVBA is to improve the health of West Virginians by working collaboratively to protect, promote and educate the community about breastfeeding. Additional information about WVBA or worksite breastfeeding policies can be found at www.wvbfa.com. ■



GOLD STANDARD — Accepting the Gold Award for Valley Health from Governor Joe Manchin, III are (left to right) Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Sherii Carpenter, IBCLC; and Doty Hatten; Mary Caldwell, MA, IBCLC; and Summer Lovetro.

NEW JERSEY SETTING THE TABLE FOR A HEALTHY NATION

New Jersey was honored to host the 17th Annual Meeting and Conference for the National Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs (NAFMNP) in Atlantic City October 13-16. Over 120 eager attendees gained the opportunity to experience some informative presenters.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Michael Hamm from Michigan State University, spoke on sustainable food systems that engage communities in applied research and outreach programs. Dr. Hamm's presentation emphasized the benefits and stark differences between conventional farming, to the latest and most sophisticated farming technology of the 21st century. The Deputy Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, Ms. Kathleen Merrigan enthusiastically spoke about the government's goals to integrate farmers and farmers' markets into communities nationwide in order to prevent hunger and eliminate childhood obesity.

Those in attendance represented 30 states across the country, as well as Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the Chickasaw and Osage Nations. There were a variety of major topics covered during the conference. Among them were: the new WIC Cash-Value Voucher implementation in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, Electronic Benefit Transfer for farmers' markets, Locally-Integrated Food Systems, modern technology that provided insight in today's younger farmer's approach to doing business and the presentations by two certified farmers in New Jersey at the Farm to Consumer session.

There was excitement expressed by many members in attendance about sharing this information with their respective colleagues and communities upon returning home. This year's NAFMNP conference in Portland, Oregon, should prove to be just as worthy. Stay well and hope to see you there! ■



SOUVENIRS FROM ATLANTIC CITY — Showing their awards are (left to right) Jonathan Thomson, NY State Dept. of Agriculture and Markets; Doris Evans-Gates, Georgia State WIC, Division of Public Health; Trish Newman, Nevada Dept. of Administration; Dorothy Ngumezi, NJ WIC Services Chairman, SEMNP; and Purvie Green, Mississippi Dept. of Agriculture and Commerce.

VIRGINIA'S CHESTERFIELD WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH

During World Breastfeeding Month, in an effort to keep breastfeeding awareness alive in its community, and to encourage even more breastfeeding participation within its WIC population, Virginia's Chesterfield Health Department gave as breastfeeding education tools, 100 gift bags filled with breastfeeding materials and information. The recipients of these bags were then made eligible to receive, by raffle drawing, a breastfeeding cake made from baby diapers.

A bulletin board with the breastfeeding poem by Dr. Seuss, illustrated with attractive graphics, was displayed in a waiting area during the month. This bulletin board attempted to show unique ways of how and where breastfeeding can be successfully accomplished as a vital emergency response.



A display table also made more breastfeeding materials available to the community.

To conclude the festivities, the diaper cake raffle was drawn at the end of the month. Our district congratulates Yomarys Aguilar, the newly appointed breastfeeding peer counselor, for her untiring efforts in bringing a successful closure to World Breastfeeding Month 2009. ■



WIC TAKES THE CAKE — Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Yomarys Aguilar shows off the bulletin board, gift bag and diaper cake (top) and presents the cake to the winner (bottom). ■

WORKING TOGETHER TO END CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN MARYLAND

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

As one of the USDA nutrition programs, the Maryland WIC Program is actively participating in the Governor's Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland by 2015. The purpose of the Partnership is to end childhood hunger by closing the gaps between those who are participating in the programs that provide food to families and those who are eligible but not participating. Our goal is to conduct statewide outreach campaigns to ensure that everyone who is eligible knows about the WIC Program and is able to access benefits.

Robert Bruce, State WIC Outreach Specialist, attended the Local Agency WIC Coordinators' July meeting to explain how their outreach efforts will be recognized and reported to the Partnership. He distributed the Local Agency Event Chart for their use in documenting activities and explained that this information will be included in the monthly report to the Governors' Office.

The Partnership held a summit on Friday, August 21, at the Catonsville Community College for faith-based leaders from around the state to learn about the Partnership and how they can promote or administer child nutrition programs at their facilities. There were 109 participants from ten counties, with over half coming from Baltimore City. The morning was dedicated to providing an overview of the Partnership, childhood hunger in Maryland, and key childhood nutrition programs. Participants attended workshops in the afternoon to learn more about the programs. Speakers included Congresswoman Donna Edwards and Max Finberg, Director of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at USDA.

Staff from the Prince George's County and Greater Baden WIC Programs joined the partners for a similar summit in Prince George's County held in November. ■

NEWS FROM PENNSYLVANIA'S COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTHWEST WIC

By Leisa Shawley, CAS Outreach/Retail Store Coordinator

Dr. Harvey Karp visits PA WIC Office!

Community Action Southwest (CAS) and Mon Valley Community Health Services, Inc., WIC staff was fortunate to receive a visit during the summer from Dr. Harvey Karp, pediatrician and author of the "Happiest Baby on the Block!" WIC staff and community members completed training prior to his visit in techniques for calming fussy infants and were certified as "Happy Baby Educators." Dr. Karp was able to observe and was pleased to see how well the WIC staff have implemented the Happiest Baby initiative. The PA Happy Baby Project is funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Health Breastfeeding Program.

To date, over 100 families have benefited from the program at the CAS WIC Program. The feedback from families has been very positive and the WIC staff will complete a formal evaluation survey in early 2010. Dr. Karp stated, "It was so great spending the day with you last week! I was so proud and humbled to see how this information is being taken to the heart of so many dedicated caregivers."

Breastfeeding Celebration

Breastfeeding is many things to many people! On August 25, Community Action Southwest WIC staff, as well as members of the community, gathered to celebrate those things in support of World Breastfeeding Week. This second annual event featured a cake and punch celebration, and participants who attended shared stories and won prizes.

An essay contest was featured and women were able to write down why they chose to nurse their baby. The two winners were chosen at random from the many entries we received in the contest. The first prize was a cozy, mother's rocking chair and the second prize was a \$100 gift card for Wal-Mart.

In addition to the gathering, CAS also registered nursing mothers for special prizes in each of our four main WIC clinic locations. The winners of those prizes were chosen in October. Whether choosing to breastfeed one day, one month, or one year, the Community Action Southwest WIC Program will make every effort to continue to reward and honor these special women in the coming years.

Thanks to all who attended and the great WIC staff who support and help all breastfeeding events to be a huge success! ■



HAPPY BABY EDUCATORS — Dr. Harvey Karp (back row, second from left) is surrounded by Cathy Moffit, Westmoreland WIC Director; Debbie Patton, CAS Certified Lactation Counselor; Patricia Blaker, CAS Early Head Start, Child & Maternal Health Supervisor; Karen McFedries, Mentoring Coordinator for The Washington Hospital Teen Outreach; and Joan McCrory, CAS WIC Health Professional. Seated are (left to right) Jessica Shuber, CAS Assistant WIC Director; Sally Zahn-Biava, Westmoreland WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator; and Rosa Snyder-Boyd, CAS WIC Director.

VIRGINIA'S THOMAS JEFFERSON HEALTH DISTRICT WIC BRINGS BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS TO LOCAL CITY PARK

Members of the Thomas Jefferson Health District WIC staff in Charlottesville, VA, organized a Family Funfest at a local park to celebrate Breastfeeding Awareness Month in Virginia. The event was funded by a grant obtained from the Community Obesity Task Force and donations from local businesses.

Fliers were sent to area physicians' offices, WIC sites and hospitals to advertise the Funfest. Local TV stations added information about the Funfest to their Community Calendars. Nearly 100 people from the community attended.

Fun activities for the families included a moon bounce, face painting, story time and several games which encouraged physical activity. Free, healthy food and drinks were provided to people attending.

Breastfeeding promotion and education was the focus of the event. A display board outlined the importance of breastfeeding in emergency situations and breastfeeding educational materials were showcased. Lactation consultants and breastfeeding peer counselors were available to answer questions. The event provided an opportunity for peer counselors to meet in person with clients whom they have been following by telephone.

Attendees were entered into a raffle to win donated items such as breastfeeding supplies and gift cards. Completed evaluation forms showed that participants had a positive experience and would attend again.

The WIC staff was thrilled with the success of the Family Funfest and will work hard to make it an annual event. ■



HEAR YE, HEAR YE — Breastfeeding Coordinator Mary Hintz, RD, and Breastfeeding Peer Counselor use a megaphone to announce winners of a raffle.



STOPPING BY — These were two of the many people who stopped by the event and read the educational display.



STORY TIME — Lactation Consultant Helen Wanner, RN IBCLC, volunteers her time with the District's high-risk breastfeeding moms and loves babies!



PUT ON A HAPPY FACE — Shema' VonTye, RN, shows her skill as a face painter.

NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC DOORS REOPEN WITH NEW FOOD PACKAGE

On October 1, New Jersey's Burlington County WIC Program doors were reopened for WIC participants with a very excited New Food Package after 3 days' closing for client services. The local agency has welcomed its participants and visitors to the Health Department with balloons and posters announcing the New Food Package.

Six months of hard work paid off by successfully rolling out the New Food Package. The CPAs were consistently demonstrating the Food Models in the Nutrition Education Class since April. WIC participants appreciated and were excited about the new package. The office received calls from the participants during their last visit who selected to stay with the old food package for the next three months requesting to change their package after hearing from their family, friends and neighbors.

Burlington County has received several requests from referring agencies to provide in-services of the exciting changes occurring in the program. They also started distribution of the Sesame Street Kits to WIC Families. The response has been very positive. The children are very excited when they see the Sesame Street characters. The DVD was played while families waited to get their vouchers. ■

MARYLAND'S HARFORD COUNTY WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING

By Marge Kleinberg, IBCLC, Harford County WIC Program Peer Counselor Coordinator

More than 100 mothers, babies, children and breastfeeding supporters gathered at the Upper Chesapeake Medical Center (in Harford County, MD) on August 4 for our annual Breastfeeding Celebration held in collaboration with the hospital's lactation department. We were pleased to have representatives from the USDA Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO) and the State WIC Office as well as the Harford County Health Officer and the Harford County WIC Program in attendance.

Laurie Miele, an Upper Chesapeake Medical Center lactation consultant, welcomed everyone to the event and Roberta Hodsdon, MARO Deputy Director, shared USDA's support for breastfeeding and her pleasure at seeing the roomful of breastfeeding mothers and babies. Amy Resnik, Maryland WIC Breastfeeding Promotion Coordinator, and Marge Kleinberg, Harford County WIC Peer Counselor Coordinator, awarded certificates to Harford County's newest peer counselors — Shante Webb and Mary Jane Bush — for completion of their peer counselor training.

A slide show of mothers and babies attending the weekly breastfeeding support group at the Medical Center played throughout the event. A party atmosphere prevailed – with cake, balloons, homemade play dough to occupy the older children, and displays and door prizes provided by various local organizations including the Harford County Health Department, Harford County WIC Program, Harford County Library, La Leche League, Medela, Inc, Baby Sign with Theresa, Baby Wearing, Discovery Toys, Harford Breast Pump Rentals, Joyful Sounds, and Piggy Sacks.

The annual event marks the culmination of another exciting year of working together with the Upper Chesapeake Medical Center to extend breastfeeding support to the entire community. ■



CELEBRATING BREASTFEEDING — Attending the Harford County WIC Breastfeeding Celebration are (left to right) Carol Smith, Senior Program Specialist, USDA MARO; Roberta Hodsdon, Deputy Director, USDA MARO; Delores Stewart, Senior Nutritionist, USDA MARO; Jackie Marlette-Boras, MNS, RD, LDN, Director, Maryland WIC Program; Patricia Avakian MSN, RNC-OB, Director of Women and Children Service, Upper Chesapeake Medical Center; Laurie Miele RN, BSN, IBCLC Lactation Consultant, Upper Chesapeake Medical Center; Mary Noppenberger RD, LD, Coordinator, Harford County WIC Program; Amy Resnik, MS, RD, CSP, LDN, IBCLC, Breastfeeding Promotion Coordinator, Maryland WIC.

DC WIC CREATES PORTABLE GROCERY STORE TO TRAIN STAFF AND VENDORS

By Cheryl Funanich, RD, LD

In previous new food package trainings, the most popular request for training from WIC staff and vendors has been for a grocery tour pertaining to the new food package. But this would normally entail schedule juggling and transportation issues; not to mention the awkward maneuvering through aisles with an attendance list of 40-plus people. So our answer was: "We'll bring the grocery aisles to you!"

With our final training on the new food package in September, DC WIC invited WIC staff and vendors to our portable grocery store. The purpose of the training was to learn how to use the Approved Foods list, be familiar with new WIC checks, read food labels and identify approved food items. This training was such a success that DC WIC Director Gloria Clark presented the "repeated" portable grocery store to the MARO WIC Directors' meeting in November.

The portable grocery store consists of 31 tabletop display boards of 274 food labels. It features food labels from the majority of WIC food groups. It was a team effort to collect all these food labels (frozen, canned and fresh). Our Bureau Chief, Michele Tingling-Clemmons, communicated throughout the Community Health Administration our need to collect clean, empty food containers. One month later we had collected over 500 food labels and used about 220 of those labels/containers. The missing food labels desired for tofu, baby food and tortillas were printed via the internet. We also obtained some food labels from food manufacturers. Each tabletop display board has answer keys to identify which food label is approved or not approved. We even have a fresh produce section which consists of plastic fruits and vegetables and a mock food scale. The purpose is for those being trained to demonstrate their ability to instruct WIC participants on how to weigh and calculate desired produce within the limit of their cash-value checks.

Before we presented the portable grocery store, we gave a review of the new food package, distributed new mock WIC checks and held a question-and-answer session. Each trainee was responsible for touring each tabletop display (each represented a grocery aisle of WIC foods) and pointing out which food items they would buy with their WIC check. The person manning the tabletop display would check the answer key before cashing them out. This was a prime opportunity to learn hands-on why a food item is approved or not approved.

Walking in our WIC participants' shoes has clearly taught us a valuable lesson! Overall, our staff and vendors conveyed that it wasn't easy to get it all correct the first time. We believe this experience will help us to better serve WIC participants during the transition to a new food package. ■



YES OR NO? — These labels represented canned vegetable that are both allowed and not allowed.

PENNSYLVANIA WIC AGENCY GETS THE MESSAGE OUT

Hamilton Health Center, Inc. of Harrisburg, PA, completed a successful bus advertising campaign in 2009. This eye-catching campaign promoted awareness of the WIC Program in Dauphin County and stimulated many calls to WIC. ■



PUERTO RICO WIC DEVELOPS BREASTFEEDING INITIATIVE FOR DOCTORS

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

Iris Roldan, the Breastfeeding Coordinator of the Puerto Rico WIC Program, developed a breastfeeding promotion initiative targeted to physicians. She and her staff designed a WIC breastfeeding promotion campaign for the medical profession to help encourage an alliance with the WIC Program and promote the benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and baby.

WIC worked hand-in-hand with the health professionals to provide information to promote and encourage the duration on breastfeeding. The information ensures that doctors are educated in encouraging breastfeeding and that hospitals have procedures and staff in place to help support breastfeeding. This initiative strengthens the relationship with the medical community and increases support and communication among patients, health professionals and other leaders in the community.

The participants avoid potential problems by resolving issues before they become obstacles that result in barriers to a successful breastfeeding process. The alliance of the medical professional with the WIC Program in the strengthening of the process of breastfeeding among the participants will result in protection, support and confidence in the breastfeeding process, facilitating the breastfeeding duration.

The information concerning breastfeeding and the use of medications is distributed to physicians via a breastfeeding information kit. These were delivered primarily in areas that had low breastfeeding rates to reinforce and renew breastfeeding knowledge of these health professionals.

The program was initiated in three WIC Regions — Fajardo, Caguas, and Metropolitan. The Ponce Region was later added. The WIC Staff identified the medical health providers that serve the participant mothers. They visited the offices to hand them the breastfeeding promotion kit.

The breastfeeding promotion kit includes educational materials and a cover letter explaining the initiative and the importance of the doctor's role in breastfeeding promotion and duration signed by the WIC Director; Medications and Mothers' Milk 2008 Book, Breastfeeding Triage Tool Book, and several informative booklets on a variety of pertinent topics.

For more information of this initiative, contact iroldan@salud.gov.pr. ■



JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED — This is the breastfeeding initiative kit developed by Puerto Rico WIC for use by physicians.

HOMETOWN SPIRIT GRANT BENEFITS COMMUNITY PROGRESS COUNCIL, INC. WIC CHILDREN IN PENNSYLVANIA'S YORK COUNTY

By Barbara Graham, Outreach/Retail Store Coordinator, Community Progress Council, Inc.

The Junior League Thrift Shop of York County (PA) collaborated with the Community Progress Council, Inc. (CPC) WIC Program to present the "Kids' Closet." The goal is to help the WIC participants purchase clothing for kids, diapers, bottles, books, hats, and gloves at a discount rate. The CPC WIC Office provides a coupon to the participants to take to the Thrift Shop to receive a \$1 off a \$10 purchase. The Junior League has extended this campaign to include all COC Agency staff.

An Open House was held at the Junior League Thrift Shop on October 3 to kick-off the project and goodie bags with healthy snacks and information about the new WIC foods were given to all the families stopping in. This project was made possible by the United Way of York's 2009 Hometown Spirit Grant and will continue until June 2010. ■



OPEN CLOSET — Attending the Kids' Closet Open House Celebration are (left to right) Linda Barton-Brobst, Treasurer-Elect for the Junior League Committee; Susan Noya, Chairperson of the Junior League Board; Barbara Graham, CPC Administrative Services Coordinator; and Beverly Wilson, CPC WIC Director.

VISITING VENDORS TO BUILD BRIDGES OF SUPPORT IN WEST VIRGINIA

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

As West Virginia's WIC Program prepares for the biggest change in 34 years, communicating with the community is a main priority. Informing our vendors, (grocers, managers and owners) about the food package changes is an important link in gaining their support so that the transition is as smooth as possible for our participants.

One-on-one, face-to-face visits were conducted statewide to close the gap between local agency clinics and the important vendors we partner with to deliver food benefits to WIC families. Each local agency designated one or more staff to assist vendors in understanding the new WIC food package, and being the first point of contact for vendors on customer service and food package issues. For example, Christine Compton, Outreach Coordinator for Valley Health/WIC; Diana Freeman, Nutrition Assistant for Valley Health WIC; and Cassie Loftus, Breastfeeding Counselor and Community Outreach Liaison for Boone County's WIC Program, met and partnered with neighborhood grocers, assessing each store's readiness for providing the new WIC foods, and providing new food package updates. Store managers and owners have been very receptive and welcome this new relationship with the WIC Program. The majority of vendors called the visits "informative and interesting."

The main concern among vendors was the space available to stock both food packages for the three-month period of September through December. Most stores have limited shelf space, yet they planned to carry a wide selection of the allowed items for participants. Formal, more in-depth vendor trainings were conducted by the state office and have addressed this issue.

Overall, the visits were a huge success. Employees, vendors, participants and the community are all abuzz about the upcoming food package changes. "The new food packages are an exciting, healthy change for WIC. It's great to work with such a worthwhile program that meets the educational and nutritional needs of our participants," Diana Freeman said of her role in this initiative. ■



READY, WILLING AND ABLE — Diana Freeman provides on-site support and technical assistance to grocers as WIC prepares to implement the new food package.

MEET DELAWARE WIC PROGRAM'S NEW SOUTHERN HEALTH SERVICES WIC SUPERVISOR

By Laureen Briody, RD

I graduated from the University of Delaware with a bachelor's degree in Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics with a minor in biology. My first employment opportunity was right here at the State of Delaware as a Public Health Nutritionist in New Castle County. My responsibilities included providing WIC and nutrition education for high-risk pregnancy clients at the outpatient center in Wilmington Hospital and WIC nutrition at the Northeast State Service Center. I was also provided the nutrition portion for the new task force whose goal was to decrease the rate of infant mortality in Delaware. The program was called EPIC at the time and is now better known as Child Watch. I left the State of Delaware for an opportunity to increase and develop my clinical skills at Christiana Care. At Christiana Care, I began my work as the dietitian for the high-risk pregnancy population and cardiac care patients. Soon after joining Christiana Care, I became certified in nutrition support where my primary responsibilities were to assess and develop a nutritional care plan for critical care patients in the trauma unit, the surgical units and the neurosurgical units. This ended after several years when my husband and I decided to move to Tulsa, Oklahoma to pursue further education.

Living in Tulsa was an awesome experience both personally and professionally. I enjoyed the cultural differences of the southwest not seen while growing up and living in the northeast. Six months after moving to Tulsa, I had an opportunity to further my professional skills as a private practice dietitian. My private practice included nutrition counseling for individuals and community groups. I also worked at a cardiology practice to study the effect of diet and exercise on hyperlipidemia. While working with them, I had the opportunity to go to Cooper Clinic in Texas for a tour and presentation.

While living in Tulsa, I had my first child. Shortly afterward, my husband and I decided to return to Delaware. Our family continued to grow with the addition of another child. I stayed at home with my children and homeschooled them for some time. My desire to pursue my profession stirred but for the area of management. This brings me right back to public health nutrition, where I am the WIC supervisor here in Delaware's Southern Health Services.

I rejoined Delaware's WIC program this past April. After just a few months of working here, I have grown and learned so very much. My staff consists of such awesome individuals. We have a great team that works so very hard to see a large population of people who seek WIC assistance. The WIC Program is a great program to work for and I like how it reaches out to help assist our community. ■



LAUREEN BRIODY

MARYLAND'S MID-SHORE WIC COLLABORATES WITH LOCAL FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

By Nancy Sawyer, MS, RD, LDN, CLE
Nutritionist, Mid-Shore WIC Program

The Mid-Shore WIC Program in Maryland has a close working relationship with most of the local Family Support Centers and Judy Centers (state grant-funded early childhood and family education centers). The Talbot County WIC office is housed in the same building as the Talbot County Family Support Center and once a month there is a clinic in the Caroline County Judy Center in Federalsburg. Because these centers work closely with WIC families – sometimes even serving as their proxies – we have enlisted their staff to help get the word out about the new WIC food packages.

Nancy Sawyer and Nicole Riddleberger, nutritionists with Mid-Shore WIC, have done presentations for the Talbot and Caroline County Family Support Centers to help their staff understand the new food packages. Having this staff know the details of the new food packages means there are that many more people educating our families. We're thrilled with the support the staffs from these programs give to the nutrition messages we have for our families. ■

CAMDEN COUNTY (NJ) WIC HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL SENIOR INTERGENERATIONAL FARMERS' MARKET EVENT

This past summer, Camden County WIC children and seniors planted vegetables and herbs in the courtyard at the WIC site in Blackwood, NJ. This was the third year for the WIC and Senior Intergenerational Farmers' Market Initiative.

The seniors from our Senior Day Center watered the plants all summer. McCann's Farm came to our WIC site each week from July through mid September to allow WIC clients and seniors to redeem Farmers' Market vouchers and staff was able to purchase great NJ produce. WIC children and seniors made strawberry peach



MAKING SMOOTHIES — Preparing a treat are (left to right) Inez Wilson, Rodrigo and Adele Nelson, with Robin Waddell from Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

smoothies in July during check pick-ups.

On September 9, we held our WIC Farmers' Market Intergenerational event. Seniors and children from Respond Daycare in Winslow came to pick the rest of the vegetables in our garden. We grew some tasty Jersey tomatoes, peppers and squash. Robin Waddell from Rutgers Cooperative Extension held a food demonstration and the seniors and children prepared Apple with Yogurt Cinnamon Dip, Jersey Fruit Smoothies with cranberry juice and peaches, and Jersey Rainbow Salad. Pictures were taken with our "Miss Strawberry." Everyone enjoyed all our Jersey Fresh vegetables and fruits. ■



IN THE VEGETABLE PATCH — Pictured with the children from Respond Day Care are (left to right) Rose Fennimore, WIC Coordinator Kathy Kachur, Joan Rutherford, Cheryl Johnson, and Vera Tomasetti.

PENNSYLVANIA WIC HOSTS NEW FOOD PACKAGE KICK-OFF EVENT

By Bonnie J. Mellott, Public Health Program Administrator

The Pennsylvania WIC Program celebrated the most significant change to the foods available in WIC at a statewide kick-off event on October 1. Mark B. Esterbrook, CEO, Community Action Program (CAP) of Lancaster County, Inc. graciously hosted the event at their facility in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Health, Everette James, was the keynote speaker and he said, "Today is a historic day. The changes to the WIC food packages are significant and will improve the nutrition of Pennsylvania's new mothers and young children. It is critically important to give kids a healthy start so they can grow into healthy adults. Now, WIC participants will have even more choices to support healthy eating habits."

The celebration included five additional speakers; including Eva Torres, who not only works full-time for the CAP WIC Program but also receives WIC benefits. She is a part-time student and mother of a 2-year-old and said, "WIC is a wonderful thing for me because it gives us more opportunity. Fruits and vegetables and brown rice can make me healthier. I can make delicious foods and stay healthy at the same time."

CAP WIC Program participants answered the following three survey questions: What does WIC mean to me? What has WIC done for me over the years? How do you feel about the new foods coming to WIC? The results were displayed on three boards for the event and showed the impact WIC has on families.

State Senator Lloyd Smucker said, "Good nutrition is a building block for a good future. The old slogan was 'Reading is Fundamental.' Proper nutrition is fundamental as well."

The Lancaster County WIC staff prepared an excellent display of the WIC foods and everyone attending the event had the opportunity to taste some great recipes. The recipes included Cereali-cious Muffins, Tofu Hummus Wrap, and Tropical Smoothie and each recipe included four or more WIC food ingredients. Kudos to the CAP WIC staff who prepared these wonderful recipes!

The Pennsylvania WIC State Agency staff would like to express our appreciation to all who presented and attended the celebration; including USDA, WIC Partners, WIC Directors, and WIC families. It was a great event to showcase what is new in WIC! ■



A GRAND DAY — Enjoying the PA WIC celebration are (left to right) State Senator, Lloyd Smucker; Cathie McCullough, Acting Regional Administrator, USDA Mid-Atlantic Region Office; Mark B. Esterbrook, CEO, Community Action Program of Lancaster County, Inc.; Shirley H. Sword, MS, RD, LDN, Chief, Nutrition Services, PA Dept. of Health, Division of WIC; Eva Torres, Lancaster WIC Program staff and WIC participant; and Everette James, PA Secretary of Health.

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- New Jersey WIC Administrative Meeting. Topic: Annual Civil Rights Training. January 21.
- Pennsylvania WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. January 27 – 28.
- New Jersey WIC Nutrition Services Quarterly Meeting. January 29.
- Pennsylvania WIC Directors' Meeting. Harrisburg, PA. April 21 – 22.
- The deadline for the Spring issue of MARWIC TIMES is January 29, 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.

PENNSYLVANIA WIC MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE THE CHANGING FACE OF WIC

By Amy L. Holtan, MA, RD, LDN, Public Health Nutrition Consultant

The Pennsylvania WIC Program worked on two national initiatives this past year. The first was implementing the new and improved WIC food packages and the second was improving VENA initiatives, a philosophical shift to help WIC staff better tailor nutrition services provided to participants based on improved WIC assessment practices. Both of these initiatives are major shifts in the way WIC conducts business, both from an operational and philosophical approach. The impact was huge for staff, but equally substantial for participants. The PA Food Package Advisory Committee, consisting of six local WIC agency representatives and two State

Agency staff, contracted with a marketing firm to create and implement a marketing campaign in 2009.

The campaign included design and message testing with two focus groups, one with staff and one with participants. From this testing, the following deliverables were produced and distributed statewide to local WIC agencies: six-panel brochure, small and large poster, bulletin board, press release, newspaper ad, radio and TV PSAs, and billboard design and placement. The local WIC agencies will be surveyed in January to see how they utilized the materials that were provided by this campaign.



MESSAGE DELIVERED — Check out the new WIC billboard!

All materials from the marketing campaign can be viewed at the Pennsylvania WIC website www.pawic.com. Click on WIC and YOU: Making Healthy Choices Together. ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY HEALTH WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING WITH FIRST RESPONDERS LUNCHEON

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

To kick-off World Breastfeeding Week, (WBW), West Virginia's Kanawha WIC office hosted a First Responders Luncheon on Friday, July 31. The Peer Counselors and Lactation Consultants hosted the luncheon to honor breastfeeding moms and their supporters.

The theme for WBW this past year was "Breastfeeding – a Vital Emergency Response." In keeping with that theme, the staff chose to dub the invitees, "First Responders." The selection criteria were the same as last year's celebration, which was also an "invitation-only" event. Mothers that did not receive any formula for the first six months of the child's life were invited to the luncheon.

Moms, babies, dads, siblings and grandparents filled the education room to share stories, great food and fun. Mothers received gift bags with numerous goodies and cookie cutters in the shape of a mother, with a note that read: "You were cut out to be a great mom! We hope you fondly remember your nursing days when you use this cookie cutter."

Among the activities the attendees enjoyed, was a cookie decorating station with cookies shaped like people which they could make and take home to share with the rest of the family. Various prizes were



A CUT ABOVE THE REST — Fully breastfeeding mothers were honored at a luncheon while receiving small reminders of how they chose the best for their infants.

donated by area merchants and everyone who attended received at least one present.

These First Responders proved that being the first to respond to their child's needs was something worth celebrating. ■



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