

MARWIC

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

GO PINK DAY AT WIC: THE CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY'S MERCER WIC PROGRAM RAISES AWARENESS ABOUT BREAST CANCER

By Kelly Ryan, MS, CLC and Jennifer Nagy, RD, MPH

The goal of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is to promote breast cancer awareness and share information on the disease. The Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Mercer WIC Program raised awareness about this important cause on October 16. The main focus of our event was to provide information on how healthy habits like choosing to breastfeed and eating a diet high in antioxidant-rich foods can help reduce breast cancer risk. Every day at the WIC office women make the important decision of whether or not to breastfeed their baby. According to the National Cancer Institute, breastfeeding for a duration of at least one year is associated with a lower risk of developing breast cancer. Eating foods high in antioxidants has also been widely studied, and evidence suggests that consuming a

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IN THE PINK — The staff of Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Mercer WIC Program helped educate WIC clients about breast cancer awareness.

MID-OHIO VALLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WIC VISITS FARMERS' MARKETS

By Jennifer Habeb, Nutritionist II, Outreach Coordinator

Fruits and vegetables are essential when eating a healthy diet. Not only does eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables decrease the risk of heart disease, stroke, and obesity, they also offer many other health benefits. Fruits and vegetables are high in fiber which helps with digestion. They are also high in antioxidants which can help reduce the risk of cancer. This is what West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley WIC agency has been trying to teach participants. What better way to promote these messages than through the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program was established in 1992 to provide fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants. The program provides clients with vouchers to use at local farmers' markets and roadside stands. The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department WIC Agency was able



WIC GOES TO THE FARM — Nicole Daniel displays at a local farmers' market to target potential WIC participants as well as assist current participants with their shopping experience.

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DELAWARE WIC IS GOING WOW

The Delaware WIC Program is in the process of adopting and adapting the Maryland WOW (WIC On the Web) Computer System to meet the specific Delaware WIC Program requirements and state technology standards. The new system began the phase-in process in January, with statewide implementation by April.

The current Delaware WIC management information system was originally designed specifically for use on an IBM mainframe system and was showing its age. It was primarily designed for record keeping, was process-driven, and did not allow staff to streamline processes or accommodate participant needs in the way in which an appointment was conducted. In addition, due to the age of the system, programming options were limited. The WIC Program needed a system that would bring its operational processes into the 21st century and allow for Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), which is in planning.

Delaware WOW is a browser-based system that will replace Delaware's mainframe centralized system by providing state-of-the-art web-based access using any computer having Internet Explorer 5.5 access. This new system will enhance the automation capabilities and reduce the risk of ongoing operation interruption by upgrading to a Web based technology. The new application also utilizes industry standard PDF technology to capture, store and display information required for certification.

The new system also provides a much more efficient process for assisting participants who come into the WIC

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By Justin Wohlsifer, MPA

FNS's programs are the first line in our Nation's defense against hunger and malnutrition, reaching 1 in 4 people in the United States each year. Cognizant of this fact, FNS has developed priorities which will impact the WIC Program in many positive ways. Key priorities for Fiscal Year 2013 include:

- Improving access to nutrition assistance by raising awareness and reducing barriers to participation.
- Improving integrity in nutrition assistance programs and exercising good stewardship of federal funds by reducing improper payments.
- Improving nutrition by promoting healthful choices among clients.
- Honoring civil rights in program delivery through improved business processes and training.

FNS is making great strides at supporting and encouraging healthy choices among clients through nutrition education and promotion, expansion of the use of benefits for fresh produce at farmers' markets, and testing innovative

strategies to incentivize consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other healthful foods. However, certain populations, such as seniors, Latinos, and children, participate at lower rates than the general eligible population.

Bringing harmony to this imbalance, FNS plans to implement changes to policies and program requirements which will facilitate program access using integrated technology. Creative program education will also be implemented through collaboration with program partners by disseminating program eligibility information to underserved populations. In WIC, an Exemplary Breastfeeding Practices Awards program will be initiated.

Promoting access to nutrition assistance programs – programs that have never been more urgently needed than they are today – goes hand-in-hand with managing them in a manner that ensures public confidence and maximizes the impact of Federal dollars. Americans expect and deserve a government that ensures the public investment in nutrition assistance is managed wisely. Otherwise, we risk undermining public confidence and threaten our programs' very survival. Furthermore, strong management ensures that those most in need of nutrition assistance receive it – and that scarce resources are not wasted by error or abuse.

MARO shares the FNS Departmental priority to be a model of Federal Government service.

Ensuring equal and timely access to nutrition assistance programs for all customers is a critical component of the FNS and MARO mission. ■



MARO Promotes Wellness Program, Builds In-House Fitness Center

By Sylvia Nah, MPH

Practicing what we preach, MARO is home to a comprehensive and well-received wellness program, with initiatives ranging from presentations given by medical and nutritional professionals to soup tasting and office Olympics. And in July 2012, MARO added another component to its wellness program: an in-house fitness center.

Employees are an organization's most valuable assets, and MARO recognizes that healthy employees tend to be happier, more productive, and have significantly lower healthcare costs. The bottom line: employee welfare directly affects an organization's success. In light of this truth, MARO employees now have access during lunch hours and after work hours to a fitness center equipped with elliptical machines, treadmills, and recumbent bikes. The fitness center also has free weights, medicine balls, and resistance bands.

The MARO Wellness Committee hosted a body and strength tone demo in September with a local certified personal trainer that provided two-45 minute sessions showing employees how to utilize body weight and resistance band exercises. The demo classes were so well received that employees arranged for the trainer to conduct personally paid for 1-hour classes weekly for six weeks. ■



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MARO WIC Proudly Recognizes New Jersey WIC for Its Longstanding Commitment for Continually and Professionally Producing the MARWIC TIMES Newsletter

Since 1995, New Jersey WIC has produced the MARWIC Times newsletter, capturing news and activities for all nine WIC states agencies in the region. From all of us here at MARO WIC, thank you for your continued support.

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

- The 6th International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition. Loma Linda, CA. February 24-26.
- NWA Annual Education & Networking Conference and Exhibits. Little Rock, AR. April 14-17.
- 10th Annual Nutrition & Health Conference. Seattle, WA. May 13-15.
- 7th Biennial Childhood Obesity Conference. Long Beach Convention Center, CA. June 18-20.
- The deadline for the Spring issue of MARWIC TIMES is February 15, 2013. Please submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPGs, please) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

LIBRARY SYSTEM WINS STATEWIDE AWARD FOR COLLABORATION WITH PENNSYLVANIA'S DELAWARE COUNTY WIC PROGRAM

By Cynthia Barrar, MA, RD, LDN

Outreach Coordinator, Crozer-Chester WIC Program

On September 30, Theresa Dykes, Infant Program Specialist at the Delaware County Library System was awarded the Pennsylvania Library Association's 2012 Best Practices Award for her collaboration with the Crozer-Chester WIC Program. PA State Library Association's *Checkup for Young Readers* is an outreach program where health



MAKING READING FUN — Theresa Dykes of the Delaware County Library System brings books to life for WIC families.

care providers partner with local libraries to encourage parents to read with their children. The goal of this program is to reach out to as many parents as possible and give them information about how important it is to read to their babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. The Delaware County Library System expanded the program to reach into three Delaware County WIC offices where there is an identified need for information about early literacy.

Over the past three years, Ms. Dykes has been visiting one of the three WIC offices each month. During her visits, parents were provided with recommended book lists, a list of library locations, infant and toddler storytime schedules, and age-specific information with tips of things they can do to prepare their child for success in reading and in school. Parents are encouraged to read to their children at home and are given a free picture book to get them started. Ms. Dykes spent time reading to children and modeling to the parents effective one-on-one book sharing. "When we give parents the information they need and demonstrate to parents how to read to their children, we are helping them learn how to



READING WITH BABY — Theresa Dykes of the Delaware County Library System demonstrating effective one-on-one book sharing with a WIC mom and her child.

assist their child in developing early learning skills. This also provides opportunities for children to learn how to read independently," said Ms. Dykes. For many years the Delaware County WIC Program has made efforts to work with volunteers or colleges/universities to coordinate reading services for our families, so we were pleased when Ms. Dykes brought *Checkup for Young Readers* to our program. Through a PA Library Association initiative called PA Forward, libraries across the state have positioned themselves as community centers advancing five key literacies – basic information, civic and social, health and financial – and making a real difference in peoples' lives. This initiative opened the door for our program not only to promote WIC by assembling informational and outreach displays in different libraries throughout Delaware County, but to also bring *Checkup for Young Readers* program to our community. Your local library makes a great WIC partner! ■

VIRGINIA/MARYLAND DIETETIC INTERNS FOCUS ON HEART HEALTH

This year the Virginia/Maryland WIC Dietetic Internship added the Million Hearts Initiative as part of the community concentration, "to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over 5 years." During orientation, the interns participated in the Million Hearts VA Blood Pressure Challenge launched by Dr. Karen Remley, State Health Commissioner. The interns learned how they can support and educate the citizens of



PRESENTING THE 2012/2013 VA/MD WIC DIETETIC INTERNS — Pictured (left to right) are Stephanie Riviere, Fairfax WIC; Jeanette Sheppard, Crater WIC; Jennifer Madden, WIC Central Office; Kayla Williams, Roanoke WIC; Theresa Gilson, Lord Fairfax WIC; Sarah Whitson, Rappahannock WIC; Tabitha Monroe, Peninsula WIC; and Rachel Patterson, Fairfax WIC.

VA about the signs/symptoms of a heart attack, healthy food choices and the importance of being physically active.

The theme of this year's upcoming National Nutrition Month, "Eat Right, Your Way, Every Day" is another opportunity for the interns to highlight a heart healthy lifestyle. ■

A WEST VIRGINIA WIC PARTICIPANT SAYS THANKS: BUILDING PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION THROUGH CUSTOMER SERVICE

By Heidi Staats, State Outreach Coordinator

There are many ways in which WIC clinics differ, but there's one way in which every clinic is the same: every clinic has participants. Participant satisfaction impacts community image and retention, and at its core, good customer service is about employees treating participants in the manner they prefer – with respect, courtesy, efficiency. The following comment was received by the West Virginia WIC State office:

Thanks so much for the great care that my three children receive. They all eat better and get a variety of food with WIC. The staff is awesome and very accommodating. Thank you for the great service that you provide. Bless you!

Thank you to the WIC employees of West Virginia's Hancock County WIC Program for translating our organizational mission, vision and values into behaviors. ■

Delaware WIC is Going WOW continued from page 1

clinic for assistance, incorporating the concept of Participant Centered Services where the system is not the focus of the interview; rather, interacting with the participant and identifying participant needs is the focus.

The old system drove the process and interaction with the applicant. You could not skip a step and needed to get information in a very ordered fashion. With the new system, service providers can enter information as it is provided by the participant; they can choose to skip around from screen to screen and have multiple windows open for several family members and move between participant screens making the process much more efficient.

The new system will allow Delaware WIC clinics to become virtually paperless, giving staff members more time to interact with participants and to provide much needed nutritional counseling. It will also provide accurate and timely information either as raw data or in standardized reports. ■

MID-ATLANTIC REGION CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC CELEBRATES MOTHERHOOD AND BREASTFEEDING

Area women learned the benefits of breastfeeding and making the most of mother's milk at a special breastfeeding awareness event at New Jersey's Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC) WIC in August. Twelve women who had fully breastfed for one year were honored and presented with "Mothers Dedicated to Breastfeeding" Certificates.

Anita Otokiti, TRMC WIC Director, noted that breastfeeding promotion and support is a priority in the WIC Program. Trinitas' WIC Program was established under the auspices of the Sisters of Charity in 1981 so it was fitting that the theme of the event was "Understanding the Past and Planning for the Future." Anita reported that The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296, considered that positive health outcomes may be correlated with breastfeeding performance measurements.

In her remarks, Sylvia Dellas, Program Manager, NJ WIC indicated that, "The WIC Program has encouraged breastfeeding for more than 20 years and has been promoting breastfeeding as the optimal infant feeding choice. WIC provides pre-natal breastfeeding education as well as postpartum support for women who choose to breastfeed."

Florence Rotondo, NJ WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, commented that, "Many hospitals are working on implementing the 'Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.' That's making a difference in better breastfeeding care and information for mothers and babies. For example, at Trinitas, exclusive breastfeeding rates increased from 7% to 25% in just one year, and breastfeeding rates at Trinitas WIC are going up, too."

Ms. Rotondo urged the women to address their questions or concerns about breastfeeding to the "wonderful WIC staff who are here to help you. Our peer counselors are experienced breastfeeding mothers who understand what it is like to have a new baby. They have learned how to help you once you are home from the hospital and can be valuable resources."

Carrol Ozarraga, Nurse Manger of the Labor and Delivery and Postpartum Units at TRMC, explained that many policies and practices offer more support for the breastfeeding woman. Also, she recommended that mothers should contact the nursing team if they have any concerns or problems after leaving the hospital.

The highlight of the event occurred as women shared stories about their hospital experiences in the Labor and Delivery unit of Trinitas.

To provide continuity of service, WIC Lactation Instructors visit women during their stay in the hospital and follow-up with mothers once they are home. Maribel Solano, IBCLC, Lactation Coordinator operates the WIC Breastfeeding Warm line at (908) 209-8185.

"Several countries were represented at our breastfeeding event which mimics what is occurring around the world as over 120 other countries participate in World Breastfeeding activities," explained Anita Otokiti. "The women who attended addressed many concerns and were especially interested in how WIC provides electric pumps to breastfeeding women who return to work or school."

All who attended enjoyed a nutrition education demonstration that featured WIC-approved foods. Kinces Joseph, Nutritionist, and Patricia Cummings, Nutrition Supervisor, prepared quesadillas, fruits, vegetables and juices. Environmental-friendly shopping bags were provided which included educational materials, nursing pads, coloring books and other items. ■



GATHER ROUND — Enjoying the day are (seated, right to left) Elizabeth Ramirez with Brittney and sisters; Riva Frag with Mark Gad; Maria Ramirez with Nathali and Nury Fallas with Isabella; (standing) Maribel Solano, Lactation Service Coordinator; Claudia Muelle, Lactation Instructor; Raisa Herrera, IBCLC, Lactation Instructor and Anita Otokiti, Director.

PENNSYLVANIA'S FRANKLIN COUNTY WIC PEER COUNSELORS CELEBRATE WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK IN STYLE

By Alicia Miller, Retail Store and Outreach Coordinator, SCCAP WIC Program

Pennsylvania's South Central Community Action Program, Inc. WIC Program breastfeeding peer counselors in Franklin County decided to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week by making a statement – a fashion statement. Several of our peer counselors designed unique breastfeeding t-shirts which all Franklin County WIC staff purchased and wore sometime during the week. The peer counselors also decided to draw awareness to World Breastfeeding Week by reaching out to our local health care community as well as our WIC Moms.

On August 1, the peer counselors delivered baskets of "lactation cookies" to our local OB/GYN practices, pediatrician offices and the maternity units of both local hospitals. In addition to the yummy treats, the baskets included information about the peer counselors and a sample of frequently used breastfeeding education materials.

On August 3, the peer counselors organized and sponsored a "Breastfeeding Awareness" walk along a local rails-to-trail. About 30 peer counselors, WIC moms, and family members strolled on the trail which runs along the Conococheague Creek in Chambersburg, PA. At the end of the walk, the peer counseling staff provided healthy snacks and drinks for everyone.

Our final event was the highlight of our World Breastfeeding Week activities. A "photo shoot" was held at two of our clinic locations. Breastfeeding moms were invited to bring their babies to have their picture taken by a professional photographer. Through fund raising events, the peer counselors raised enough money to offer each mom a free 8x10 photo of their baby. Fifty-two moms participated in this event. The entire week was a great success! ■



BASKET OF TREATS — Baskets of goodies that the Franklin County Peer Counselors prepared for area physicians' offices and hospitals.



SMILE — Franklin County Peer Counselor and professional photographer Marah Mumma used her talents to enhance World Breastfeeding Week for WIC moms.

PUERTO RICO WIC CLINIC GRADUATES

BREASTFED INFANTS

By Elian Sierra, Nutrition Supervisor
Guaynabo WIC Clinic

On August 18, Puerto Rico's Guaynabo WIC Clinic and Santurce/Hoare WIC Clinic at the Samuel Quinones Salon in San Juan hosted its second graduation for breastfed infants.

There was a parade of mothers with their breastfed babies. These mothers were awarded certificates acknowledging their duration of breastfeeding. Nearly 70 mothers with their infants, family and friends attended.

The work team coordinating this graduation was led by Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Elizabeth Figueroa, Zulma Martínez, Elizabeth Santos and Yazmin Estrella; breastfeeding mothers as volunteers Wilmarie Montañez, Ana Estrella, Alma Ocasio, Lyanet Lamas, and Jariliz Nieves; and the WIC Clinics' Nutritionists Elian Sierra and Nilda Burgos. Also attending the event were WIC Program Director, Edna Marin and the Metro WIC Regional Director, Candida Torres. ■



GRADUATION DAY — Happy mothers, babies, family and friends celebrate!

NEW JERSEY'S PASSAIC WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

New Jersey's Passaic WIC Program had a very successful World Breastfeeding celebration on August 3. The event was coordinated by the newly certified Lactation Consultant Ana Aguilar. Congratulations to Ana on her accomplishment!

Exclusively breastfeeding women and their children were invited to the party, which was attended by more than 40 women, infants, and children. Beforehand, clients sent pictures of their breastfed infants which were displayed in the waiting room and admired during the event. The event was also attended by Mary Turbek, IBCLC from the NJ State WIC Office. Lissette Carcano, City of Passaic Public Health Nurse, was a special guest speaker, and gave an excellent presentation on Child Safety.

Clients received personalized certificates celebrating their breastfeeding experience amid cheers and applause. A raffle prize drawing was held and five beautiful fruit baskets were given away. The fruit baskets and a delicious lunch for all attendees and WIC staff were donated courtesy of AmeriGroup. As an additional thank you to the exclusively breastfeeding WIC mothers, all participants received tote bags filled with 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. ■

VIRGIN ISLANDS WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING MONTH

By Lorna Concepcion, MS, RD

Breastfeeding Month was celebrated across the board in all Virgin Islands WIC clinics by holding open houses on specific days for each clinic along with other activities throughout the month. Breastfeeding Coordinator Donabel Pierre spearheaded and attended all activities. Included were breastfeeding classes (dads invited) where breastfeeding videos were shown continuously throughout the month during regular clinic activities. A lobby display was erected at the Charles Harwood Community Complex lobby along with a video about breastfeeding. This was well received by clinic patrons who learned a lot about breastfeeding and felt they would be able to encourage a mom to breastfeed. Breastfeeding pictures of VI WIC moms were hung around the clinics featuring moms expressing breast milk and breastfeeding their babies and posters with breastfeeding tips were also hung around the clinics and along hallways. One mom demonstrated latching on to show other moms how it was done.

Moms also tasted nutritious snacks using WIC foods, which helped to show them how to use these foods to give them those extra calories needed for breastfeeding. They all received recipes of these snacks. St. Croix Family Planning obstetrician, Dr. Moise Mamourette, came to one open house to support our WIC moms and assured them that "breastfeeding ensures good health for infants and moms." The activities sparked such interest among Charles Harwood Community Health staff that one maintenance staff member (also a WIC dad) helped show patrons in the lobby how a breast pump worked after seeing it demonstrated. Many dads in St. Thomas clinics also came to sessions in support of their infants being breastfed. One dad at the Roy L. Schneider WIC clinic marveled at the expressed milk from his baby's mom who received assistance from the Breastfeeding Coordinator and proudly held his son, indicating that WIC is really helping his family to be healthy. All these activities were done to help promote breastfeeding as the norm for feeding infants. ■



Donabel Pierre and WIC dad who proudly holds son as mom shows her expressed breast milk at Roy L. Schneider WIC.



Dr. Mamourette (right) and WIC mom at Charles Harwood WIC.

DC WIC'S WINNING MESSAGE: "HELP YOUR BABY BLOOM – BREASTFEED"

"Help Your Baby Bloom – Breastfeed" was the winning message in the DC WIC bulletin board contest celebrating World Breastfeeding Month. The first place bulletin board was the creative creation of staff at the Children's National Medical Center clinic. Special recognition goes to Jill Steverson, student intern; Sara Beckwith and Muriel Raglan, nutritionists; Courtney Monroe, and Toni Henderson-Jones, technicians; and Jaya Janakiram, coordinator.

Second place winner, Anacostia Health Center's bulletin board, "Make Breastfeeding a Family Tradition," featured a family tree with warm and inviting pictures of nursing moms and babies and messages about the benefits of breastfeeding. A tie for third prize went to two clinics — Mary's Center Georgia Avenue and Adams Morgan, both in Northwest DC. Mary's Center's bulletin board was especially appealing to children, showing panda cubs, baby pigs, elephants and monkeys breastfeeding and Adams Morgan did an exemplary job of highlighting all the benefits WIC provides breastfeeding moms. Honorable mention awards went to Marie Reed and Congress Heights clinics. Staff at all winning clinics were given healthy fruit baskets to share and enjoy.

The DC WIC State Agency was overwhelmed by the creativity and enthusiasm of the clinic staff. Thanks to all of the DC staff that contributed, especially our dedicated peer counselors. And a special thanks to Sharon Swinbourne, from Medela, our expert judge! ■



AND THE WINNER IS... — Congratulations to Children's National Medical Center WIC staff for first prize in DC WIC's World Breastfeeding Month bulletin board contest.

MID-ATLANTIC REGION CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH

CATCH ON TO LATCH-ON – MARYLAND WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING WEEK STATEWIDE

By Mary Kalscheur, MS, RD, LD, Breastfeeding Services

Congratulations on the wonderful breastfeeding celebrations planned and organized in Maryland in support of World Breastfeeding Week and National Breastfeeding Month. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week was “Going Back to Nature’s Best.... Understanding the Past, Preparing for the Future” and for Breastfeeding Month was “Everyone Can Help Make Breastfeeding Easier.” In an effort to provide a more user friendly theme, the Breastfeeding Promotion Committee came up with “Catch on to Latch-On”.

“Natures Best” is breast milk for baby and it provides all the nutrients needed for proper growth and development. WIC has seen many changes in the past 20 years with the de-emphasis on formula use and the return to breastfeeding and all its benefits. Breastfeeding incidence in Maryland has gone from about 12% in 1991 to around 62% in 2012.

Activities throughout the state included baby showers, picnics, a Big Latch On, a Share-A-Thon, education/health fair, games, prizes, raffles, display tables, refreshments, gift bags, etc. All this came along with lots of support and sharing among the participants who attended. Dads were also encouraged to participate and many of them did especially in Baltimore City for the “Grand Baby Shower.”

Maryland State WIC had a table at the Baltimore City event along with many other organizations. Several diaper “cakes” made by staff were raffled off. They were made from diapers and decorated with baby items and toys (all materials were donated). Several donated gift cards from local stores were also given away. Many participants tried out our breastfeeding wheel answering true/false questions related to breastfeeding. Part of our display included the savings available for breastfeeding. Amy Kovar-Resnik worked with the Breastfeeding Promotion Committee to cost out the savings to breastfeeding participants which came to nearly \$3000. It included the cost of food for a BE mom and baby for a year, cost for consultation with a lactation consultant, cost of a breast pump and various breastfeeding accessories.

I also attended one of the CCI, WIC celebrations at the Wheaton clinic where the printed programs as well as the event were presented in Spanish and English. Participants were scheduled for a check pick-up and alerted in advance that it would take 2 hours. Approximately 50-60 people attended including moms, dads, children, and supportive friends/relatives. A breastfeeding Jeopardy-type game was played and Romantica radio personality, Johana Hernandez, was on hand to emcee the game and the drawing of great prizes and food alldo-



Howard County celebration.

nated by various businesses in the area. The main prizes were an infant car seat and a diaper bag with an attached changing mat. The peer counselors shared their breastfeeding experiences as did several moms from the audience. In addition to the program, participants could visit the vendor tables and view the many great posters put together by the breastfeeding peer counselors and other staff from CCI.

The following are snippets submitted by local agency staff summarizing celebrations throughout Maryland:

Nancy Sawyer, Mid-Shore WIC — To celebrate World Breastfeeding Week, Mid-Shore WIC held a breastfeeding baby shower on August 4, offering family photographs as our incentive. Surprisingly, all of our attendees were pregnant moms, so it became a wonderful opportunity to encourage these moms to breastfeed. Kristin, our volunteer photographer, breastfed both of her children, so she chimed in with her breastfeeding experience as well. Our moms walked away with great breastfeeding information and wonderful memories of their pregnancies. Mid-Shore WIC thanks Kristin Wilkerson for her wonderful (volunteered) photography services.

Danya Benton, Upper Eastern Shore WIC — We held our annual breastfeeding picnic on August 3 at Conquest Beach, which was attended by 36 people. We had a recipe demo and sampling with dishes that included WIC-approved foods such as southwest black-eyed pea and corn salad, red beans and brown rice, black bean and vegetable quesadillas, yogurt parfait with fruit salad, and black bean brownies. We held a La Leche League group discussion about common questions mothers have. There were display tables from a few local agencies set up for clients to ask questions and get information. Clients also enjoyed swimming and relaxing on the beach!

Janice Besecker, Washington County WIC — “Going for the Gold” isn’t a phrase used just by Olympic athletes. Mothers who breastfeed know that they are providing the best start for their babies with their breast milk, the gold standard. The journey to lifelong health begins with breastfeeding.



Cake at Harford Cecil celebration.

Our WIC mothers who breastfeed also “Go for the Gold.” During World Breastfeeding Week, Washington County WIC hosted a Share-A-Thon on August 7 where several mothers shared their Olympic themed breastfeeding experiences with expectant mothers. About 25 participants attended along with 1 dad and many siblings.

- Hurdles: overcoming tongue tie and hospitalization
- Group synchronized swimming: remain afloat while coordinating breastfeeding twins
- Marathon: pumping and donating breast milk after toddler self weaned
- Gymnastics: flexibility with siblings, work, and life style

In addition to the Share-A-Thon, photos of 55 WIC mothers, shown holding a gold medal, shared their “Going for the Gold” breastfeeding experiences by written testimony. These photos were placed throughout the front lobby for all participants to enjoy and be encouraged by. Washington County took the Olympic theme a step further with special assistance from Arleen Shuster, RD who engaged the children in physical activities while the Share-A-Thon was taking place. Under Arleen’s direction, the children enjoyed moving and stretching in very creative ways including: ice skating without lifting their feet, shaking like they were wet dogs, moving like they were caught in a spider web, and stretching to reach for imaginary balloons. Arleen should receive the gold medal for surviving a “marathon” (over an hour) program!

Maria Caranungan, Howard County WIC — On August 29, Howard County celebrated breastfeeding month with a baby shower. Pregnant and breastfeeding moms were invited. Over 20 participants plus their spouses and support people attended. Games were played which everyone loved and enjoyed. A video about breastfeeding was shown with a question and answer session conducted afterwards. The breastfeeding peer counselors organized and conducted the event. United Healthcare donated refreshments and give-aways. A representative from Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program provided some information about dental health and dispensed toothbrushes. All par-

ticipants received gift bags containing diapers, washcloths and some baby toys which had all been donated. The celebration was a big success and we hope to continue offering this event in the future.

Kathy Tremper, Johns Hopkins WIC — On August 3, a small but enthusiastic group of breastfeeding moms joined Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Sharon Seunarine at Johns Hopkins WIC Cherry Hill site for “The Big Latch.” One mom even drove up from Wheaton, MD to be part of this event! Ellen Gold, from State Breastfeeding Services, was present to share in the excitement as we counted down to “The Big Latch.” We are proud to have the opportunity to add to the total number of moms participating in this international event. On August 21, Abigail Lopez, from Johns Hopkins WIC Eastern Avenue site, hosted a baby shower at Highlandtown Health center. A large group of expectant moms and dads attended giving WIC another chance to spread the good word about breastfeeding. ■

DC’S CHILDREN’S NATIONAL MEDICAL CENTER WIC SPREADS THE WORD: BREAST IS BEST!

By Sara Beckwith MS, RD, LD, CLS

The WIC staff at Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, DC organized a breastfeeding celebration event and shared World Breastfeeding Month with WIC participants, hospital visitors, and hospital staff. WIC staff collaborated with primary care clinic staff to provide breastfeeding education, literature, and motivation on August 13. The WIC Program at Children’s National Medical Center is an official partner of the Text 4 Baby Program. Participants received promotional materials about Text 4 Baby. There was something for everyone, including children who enjoyed the artistic talents of WIC staff who painted faces and arms. Our dietetic intern created an interactive tri-fold poster about the benefits of breastfeeding and the WIC Program. ■



PROUD SUPPORTERS OF BREASTFEEDING — Participating in the festivities are (left to right) Jayasri Janakiram, WIC Program Director; Courtney Monroe, WIC technician; Corixa Bran-Paz, breastfeeding peer counselor; Sara Beckwith, WIC nutritionist; Muriel Raglin, WIC nutritionist; Jill Steverson, dietetic intern; Toni Henderson-Jones, WIC technician; Geena McNeil, Children’s National Medical Center clinical technician.

THE CHILDREN’S HOME SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY’S MERCER WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK AT CAPITAL HEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

By Kelly Ryan, MS, CLC and Carol Tenneriello, RN, IBCLC

The Children’s Home Society of NJ’s Mercer WIC Program is committed to helping moms and babies achieve breastfeeding success. Although the number of babies in New Jersey who were ever breastfed is above the national average according to the CDC’s 2012 Breastfeeding Report Card (79.7% compared to 76.9%), breastfeeding rates at 6 months drop down to 47.9% and 26.1% at a year. One likely contributing factor is a lack of breastfeeding support after discharge from the hospital. A clear linkage between hospitals, other community organizations, and the local WIC office can help bridge this gap in support, and improve breastfeeding duration rates. Oftentimes breastfeeding has already diminished or ceased by the first postpartum WIC appointment, but by working together with hospitals and community agencies, WIC can streamline breastfeeding care for mothers and babies.

For World Breastfeeding Month 2012, our office was invited by Children’s Futures to participate in a celebration at our local hospital, Capital Health Medical Center in Hopewell, NJ. This hospital was recently designated as a baby-friendly hospital, and the physicians, nurses, and lactation consultants there truly share our passion for helping mothers give their babies the very best food—breast milk. The celebration, held on August 14, put Step Ten of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative’s Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding into action. Step Ten encourages us to “foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or clinic.” By bridging the gaps between discharge from the hospital and the first WIC appointment, WIC and Capital Health can work together to improve breastfeeding duration.

Our agency was represented by our outstanding breastfeeding department, including our Breastfeeding Manager, Carol Tenneriello, RN, IBCLC, two of our Peer Counselors, Victoria Fredrick and Maritza Aguero, and a gracious volunteer, Harriet Abekah. The Breastfeeding Department staff also invited WIC moms to attend the event and share their breastfeeding experiences with the pregnant mothers in attendance. The staff drew quite a large crowd of men and women alike as they demonstrated how to hand express breast milk and how to use a breast pump. Information on the WIC Program was distributed, and the staff explained the multitude of ways that WIC supports breastfeeding. Reusable shopping bags with the World Breastfeeding Week logo were distributed and two slings that were donated were raffled off to happy participants.

Other agencies in attendance included Children’s Futures, The Children’s Home Society’s CUNA program, the Central Jersey Maternal Child Health Consortium, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Nurse Family Partnership. Educational materials were distributed by each of these programs. We left the event feeling positive that we had taken another step towards building a successful collaboration among community agencies that offer breastfeeding advice and help. We will work to build on this collaboration to foster a true breastfeeding-friendly environment for all mothers and babies in our region. ■



STICKING TOGETHER FOR WIC — Attending the breastfeeding celebration at Capital Health Medical Center are (left to right) Maritza Aguero, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor; Harriet Abekah, volunteer; and Victoria Fredrick, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor.

MORE MARO BREASTFEEDING NEWS

VIRGINIA BEACH WIC CELEBRATES NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING MONTH

The City of Virginia Beach officially declared August as National Breastfeeding Month at a Community Celebration event hosted by the Virginia Beach WIC Program at the Virginia Beach Farmers' Market on August 4. The event was attended by approximately 100 people. Former mayor Meyera Oberndorf read the official proclamation and gave an inspirational speech to attendees congratulating them on their worthwhile efforts and dedication to breastfeed and provide the best for their children.

A fun day with various activities was available for the breastfeeding mothers, their infants and family members. A popular segment of the celebration included a "Decorated Stroller Contest and Parade" on the Virginia Beach Farmers' Market grounds. The contest and parade were sponsored by Anthem HealthKeepers, which provided all decorating items. Prizes for the winning entry were donated by Farmers' Market vendors, Elaine Cecil Jenkins from Kempsville Florist & Gifts and Barbara Morrisette from Seasons Best Store. Elaine and Barbara also served as judges for the Stroller Contest. "Parade Hats," which were made by Becky Kear and Ruby

Arredondo, were given to all attendees and vendors to decorate and wear during the event and parade.

During the awards ceremony, each WIC breastfeeding mother received a certificate congratulating her on her worthwhile efforts to provide "the best" to her infant by breastfeeding.

Informational booths from various community agencies and Health Department services were present throughout the event. Vendors provided information, door prizes and give-aways. A fun, interactive Zumba demonstration was provided by Zumba instructor, Nadia Donaldson.

We would like to thank the following agencies/organizations for their continued support and participation at the 2012 Breastfeeding Celebration:

- Anthem HealthKeepers
- Virginia Beach Farmers' Market
- Virginia Beach Department of Public Health
- Virginia Premier
- Optima Health
- KoolSmiles
- Newborns in Need
- Pembroke Mall
- Cheryl Dunbar-Manning - Mary Kay Products



A STROLL IN THE PARK - Stroller Decorating Contest Winner

- Nadia Donaldson - Zumba
- Planned Parenthood
- Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters
- Adult Learning Center
- VB Medical Reserve Corps

The event was organized by the VB WIC Office Manager Becky Kear; Virginia Beach Breastfeeding Coordinator Maria Galang; Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Charlene Cattoi, Tanya Jones, Jennifer Yoder-Stedman, Cherisse Arrington, and Carmen Scherrer; WIC Coordinator Lisa Anderson; and Outreach Worker Ruby Arredondo. ■

LOCAL PUERTO RICO WIC AGENCIES HOST BREASTFEEDING SUMMIT FAIR

By Michelle Rodriguez-Negron, Buena Vista WIC Clinic

On August 30, Puerto Rico WIC clinics Buena Vista and Bayamon joined the celebration of Breastfeeding Month with a Summit Fair for expectant and nursing mothers, with 120 mothers in attendance.

This activity was led by nutritionists Mireily Rodriguez and Michelle Rodriguez. The slogan of the activity was "My mom and I, talk about breastfeeding," and was held in the Hall at Bayamon.

Michelle Rodriguez, nutritionist at the WIC clinic Buena Vista, presented "Breastfeeding: Importance, Benefits, Myths and Positions." There was an artistic intervention characterized by Dr. Placenta, animation, and games fair conducted for the participants.

The fair featured exhibitors, raffles, awards, and a lecture by psychologist, Dr. Maribel Mercado. Awards were presented highlighting various qualities of nursing mothers to encourage them during the breastfeeding process. Mothers were honored for length of time breastfeeding, pregnant women nursing an infant, and a nursing mother who overcame difficulties and achieved successful breastfeeding. The activity ended with a graduation ceremony for nursing mothers. ■



GRADUATION DAY — Bayamon and Buena Vista WIC graduation of nursing mothers.

DC WIC AND USDA FOOD SAFETY DISCOVERY ZONE TEAM UP FOR WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH

The District of Columbia WIC staff promoted breastfeeding, healthy eating and food safety at the DC Open-Air Farmers' Market on August 11. Visitors to the market were invited to play the "Breast is Best" game to learn about the benefits of breastfeeding for both moms and babies; watch a cooking demo and sample great tasting fresh salads made with Farmers' Market produce; and tour the interactive Discovery Zone van as a fun way to learn all about food safety. In addition to touring the four steps to FightBac stations inside the van, Mary Harris, and her staff at USDA provided food safety information tailored for pregnant and breastfeeding moms.

This was the second collaboration of DC WIC and the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. The Discovery Zone van was also featured at the Get Fresh Festival on July 28 at the FreshFarm Market in Silver Spring, MD. At this event, peer counselors from Montgomery County, MD WIC and DC WIC worked together to promote breastfeeding. Children and adults played "Spin the Wheel" to test their breastfeeding knowledge and received fun giveaways and educational materials. The peer counselors were able to answer questions and speak to the benefits of breastfeeding and the services WIC offers to support breastfeeding moms. ■



LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT BREASTFEEDING — Lisle Cole, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, talks to a Farmers' Market shopper about breastfeeding.

WEST VIRGINIA'S VALLEY WIC PARTNERSHIP ADDRESSES BARRIER TO BREASTFEEDING

By Peg Kenyon, Valley Health WIC Program Nutrition Coordinator

West Virginia's Valley Health WIC Program's efforts to promote breastfeeding were boosted by volunteer seamstresses. Sneed's Vacuum and Sewing Center, a neighborhood business, and members from the Shalom Circle at Canaan United Methodist Church, as well as some of the employees at the Charleston WIC clinic donated their time and talents to make gifts for WIC participants. The sewing center donated not only time but also beautiful fabrics and supplies. Employees have even donated their leftover fabric "scraps" large enough to make a single cover-up for the cause.

The results are colorful and fun breastfeeding cover-ups given to expectant moms in Valley WIC Breastfeeding Education classes. The goal has been to encourage those signing up for the breastfeeding group education class to be successful in their attempts to breastfeed their babies. Sometimes modesty can be a barrier that has been voiced by participants in this class; providing the cover-ups through this project may be a means to possibly overcoming this barrier.

Not only have cover-ups been made with traditional baby prints, but some of the most popular have been those sporting patterns such as camouflage, as well as the logos of the West Virginia University Mountaineers and the Thundering Herd of Marshall University. This has truly become a group effort. Hopefully this can become a tradition that will continue. Thanks to all who have made it a success! ■



SEWING FOR BREASTFEEDING — Regina Sneed, owner of Sneed's Vacuum and Sewing Center (left), shows off a breastfeeding cover-up with Valley Health Nutrition Coordinator, Peg Kenyon.

PUERTO RICO'S RIO PIEDRAS WIC CLINIC HOSTS BREASTFEEDING WORKSHOP

By Raquel Torres, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Rio Piedras WIC Clinic

Aware of the importance of the relationship between pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding, the WIC Clinic in Rio Piedras (PR) offered the first workshop, "Towards Childbirth with Love," to pregnant participants. They were educated on how to prepare for a desired childbirth and a good start in the process of breastfeeding. Those who completed the workshop succeeded in full-time nursing of their babies after birth. This workshop resulted in the development of a support group where participants shared experiences of breastfeeding and parenting with their families and Rio Piedras WIC Clinic staff. ■



GRADUATION DAY — Workshop "Towards Childbirth with Love" graduation.

PUERTO RICO WIC TEACHES NUTRITION THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT: CLOWN RAYIN ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO EAT HEALTHY

By Wilmelis Marquez

"Children who are fed well become happy, strong and healthy kids." Those were the first words that the Clown Rayin said to the children participating in the WIC Program's Healthy Bus Tour, which visits different municipalities in Puerto Rico each week to encourage good eating habits in toddlers.

Rayin's show is one of the activities offered in the WIC Healthy Bus Tour in order to educate all children between one and five years old about the benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables in a fun way. At each presentation, Rayin creates awareness in all children that the nutrients and vitamins, contained in every meal, are a main source to prevent diseases.

The colorful clown gets toddlers on their feet to dance to the rhythms of songs whose lyrics explain the difference between fruits and vegetables, their colors, and their benefits when consumed as part of a well-balanced diet.

Another way to get their attention is through games using plastic fruits and vegetables, and games utilizing drawings and stamps. Rayin dedicates time to draw healthy foods such as carrots, apples, and grapes on children's faces as part of the show.

For Puerto Rico's WIC Program, children are the priority, which is why this initiative was developed. On each of the Healthy Bus Tour visits, the children become the protagonist of health. A healthy kid is a happy kid and that is what the program promotes.

The program, directed in Puerto Rico by Edna Marin, moves this mobile unit, equipped with four working and evaluation areas, waiting rooms equipped with movies for children, areas for weighting and measuring, as well as breastfeeding areas, in order to evaluate and provide access to more women, infants and children of the benefits of this federal aid. ■



CLASS CLOWN — Rayin teaching about fruits and vegetables.

Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department WIC Visits Farmers' Markets continued from page 1

to provide \$3,550 for WIC participants in a nine-county region of West Virginia. Many participants look forward to receiving these benefits in addition to their WIC vouchers. Families begin calling toward the end of spring asking when they may come in and pick up farmers' market vouchers. Interested participants are issued \$10 vouchers which are disbursed quickly because of the popularity of the program.

There are 81 farmers' markets and stands in the Mid-Ohio Valley WIC region. Last year a farmers' market in the smallest county of the Mid-Ohio Valley located directly outside the WIC clinic made it convenient for participants in obtaining healthy foods.

The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department WIC agency exhibits at a local farmers' market to not only promote WIC in the community, but to also assist participants with the shopping experience, including free shopping bags. The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department WIC Agency is proud to promote healthy eating through the Farmers' Market Program! ■

CENTRAL WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH PEDIATRIC PRACTICE

By Stephanie Whitney, WV WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator

The West Virginia WIC Program is proactive by trying different approaches to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. The Central WV WIC Local Agency has the highest breastfeeding rates in the state. The Central WV WIC office, located in Summersville, has been building a good relationship with pediatrician offices for several years. As a matter of fact, a small coalition formed a few years ago, has increased collaboration with the focus on building breastfeeding-friendly communities.

The Central WV Breastfeeding Coalition is coordinated by the WIC breastfeeding staff, and its membership includes pediatricians, obstetricians, Right From the Start, Head Start and other early childhood service providers in the area. Following the first coalition meeting, a physician with Summersville Pediatrics approached the WIC staff offering office space in their practice, for the benefit of families receiving lactation services and breastfeeding information.

The WIC office staff is thrilled about the opportunity to help with the request. Plans are developing, along with the logistics of how the families will be referred. The Central WIC office International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) Carrie Adkins will have an individual office in Summersville Pediatrics to be available to assist moms and babies, along with their families. She will provide support, information, and answer questions or concerns in order to encourage pregnant women how best to care for their babies and to offer on-going support for new mothers when making the choice to breastfeed. Carrie will provide breastfeeding peer counselor services on the same day following pediatrician visits.

This collaboration will model WIC breastfeeding services co-located in the healthcare provider office with the goal of acquainting physicians with the role of a lactation consultant, improving breastfeeding outcomes, and highlighting IBCLC skill level in dealing with breastfeeding issues. ■

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S WEB-BASED INITIATIVES

In 2006, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia WIC Program partnered with the University of Virginia's (UVA) Office of Continuing Medical Education to offer a free web-based training to healthcare professionals. The emphasis was on increasing the knowledge-base of physicians in lactation management. As a bonus, this course counts toward the required education that hospitals need in moving toward Baby-Friendly designation. The course offers free continuing education units to physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, and dietitians, etc. The website is located at www.BreastfeedingTraining.org. To date, there have been over 26,000 healthcare professionals registered for the course.

Due to the success of the web-based education course, VDH and UVA expanded the project to offer a free performance improvement project. The performance improvement initiative was developed for physicians seeking Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credit. The performance improvement website can be found at: www.breastfeedingpi.org and allows physicians access on-line to collect and analyze practice data over time to document improved quality of care. This initiative helps physicians utilize data to identify gaps and provide solutions to create a plan to close those gaps. The website also provides tools and strategies to make small cycles of change, and to improve practice efficiency and patient outcomes. To date, there have been over 492 physicians registered for the performance improvement initiative and over 150 have completed all three phases. Fifty more are in the final phase. This project has shown statistically significant results in increasing the rates of exclusive breastfeeding. There was an increase of 17% found in the proportion of exclusive breastfeeding. Other significant changes included increase in 24-hour rooming-in, increase in breastfeeding assessment offered every 8-12 hours, increase in early follow-up within 48 hours of discharge from the hospital, and a decrease in pacifier use both in the hospital and at four weeks post-discharge.

For further questions please contact Virginia's State Breastfeeding Coordinator, Lisa Akers at lisa.akers@vdh.virginia.gov or (804) 592-9932. ■

NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC HOSTS SMILE NJ

Various programs and agencies continue to provide services to participants of New Jersey's Burlington County WIC Program participants. A representative from the Regional Oral Health Program of Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers, Inc. provided many facilitated discussions and dental hygiene demonstrations for participants and children at the administrative site and satellite sites. The local agency also hosted Smile New Jersey for three days with a very good turnout. The feedback was very positive. The Smile NJ will be covering the local agency's administrative site every fourth Friday for FFY '13. The program was appreciated by the parents and guardians because it covers children up to age of 18 for families that cannot afford to continue the dental insurance for their children. ■



SMILE — A dental assistant from the Regional Oral Health Program of Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers, Inc. works with a WIC client.

Go Pink Day at WIC continued from page 1

variety of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables may slow or prevent the development of cancer as well.

On the day of our Go Pink event, all of the WIC staff wore pink to work, and WIC participants were given pink ribbons to wear as they came in for their WIC appointments. Antioxidant-rich foods such as fruit kebabs were offered, and education on healthy eating for cancer prevention was prominently displayed. Group education classes for the day focused on breast cancer awareness and prevention, and educational videos like "Breastfeeding: Join the Boob-olution!" (www.thebump.com/breastfeeding) were played for our clients. Women were encouraged to take charge of their health by making smart decisions to get regular breast exams, to eat plenty of antioxidant-rich foods, and to breastfeed their babies.

Although our Go Pink event only lasted one day, this is information which is invaluable to the women we serve every day of the year. Further, every time a woman is making the important decision of whether or not to breastfeed her baby, information on breastfeeding's power to reduce breast cancer risk will be shared. ■

**NEW JERSEY'S NORTH HUDSON
COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION
WIC PROGRAM BREASTFEEDING
CELEBRATION A DAY IN THE PARK**
By Karen Lazarowitz
WIC Coordinator

New Jersey's North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) WIC Program held the event, "The Road to Lifelong Health Begins with Breastfeeding," during National Breastfeeding Month. All WIC breastfeeding mothers were invited to spend the day in the park with their infants, breastfeeding, talking to other mothers, enjoying snacks and learning about other programs and services available to breastfeeding mothers. The purpose of the event was for breastfeeding mothers to spend a relaxing day in the park showing the community the wonderful aspects of breastfeeding.

Approximately 40 WIC breastfeeding moms joined together on benches in a beautiful park overlooking the Hudson River and a beautiful view of the Manhattan skyline. WIC Breastfeeding and Nutrition Staff were available to offer breastfeeding and nutrition information along with healthy snacks provided by Amerigroup. IBCLCs from Palisades Medical Center and a nurse from NHCAC Women's Health attended to show the breastfeeding support by the medical community.

The mothers and WIC staff were excited to try belly dancing with their babies wrapped to their bodies. Baby-Wearers of Northern NJ showed mothers how to wear a baby in various soft cloth carriers. A representative from the Partnership for Maternal and Child Health set up a display and was available to answer questions on maternal postpartum depression. Moms were thrilled to take home free giveaways and win free raffled gift baskets assembled by the breastfeeding department with donated items from local businesses and individuals. The big prizes of the day were three car seats donated by the Car Seat Safety Program from Jersey City Medical Center.

At the end of the event moms lingered as they conversed, nursed and enjoyed a beautiful afternoon. The event was a huge success and WIC participants and staff are looking forward to next year's events! ■

"ASK ME ABOUT MY WIC STAR" – VIRGINIA WIC RECOGNIZING CASHIERS DOING THE RIGHT THING

In October, the Virginia WIC Program officially introduced a new way to recognize cashiers and others that help the program succeed. The name of this new approach is "Ask Me About My WIC Star."

Many times when a store hears from the WIC Program it is to tell them something they did not do in accordance with either regulations or program requirements. Conversely, those individuals that meet or exceed expectations are never acknowledged. So to address this shortfall we came up with the Most Valued Performer award recognition strategy. This comprehensive strategy means for cashiers who properly follow the WIC check out steps (as identified in the Cashier Training Guide) the WIC Program gives them words of praise and recognition, including:

- Send a "good news" letter to the store manager and corporate office (if applicable) which congratulates them when no violations were found during the compliance investigation.
- Identify the specific names of the cashiers (as well as provide a copy of the receipt) that handled these compliance buy WIC transactions.
- List the name of stores that received "good news" letters in future editions of the Working with WIC bulletin.
- Providing two special "Ask Me About My WIC Star" buttons that represent a small token of appreciation for a job well done.

The important element in earning a star is for the cashier to know why he/she is being recognized. A special certificate which provides this explanation is also given to the cashier, along with the "Ask Me About My WIC Star" button. Hopefully when cashiers proudly wear their buttons, this will go a long way in helping them feel proud of their contributions to helping the program succeed.

This new recognition strategy has been enthusiastically received by the retailer community. ■



VIRGINIA'S RAPPAHANNOCK AREA HEALTH DISTRICT HOSTS ZUMBA PARTY

By Eileen Alwang, Rappahannock Area WIC Coordinator

To celebrate World Breastfeeding Week, Virginia's Rappahannock Area Health District held a Zumba party. They hosted it at a local community center, and it was open to both the public and WIC participants. For two hours, local Zumba instructors volunteered their time and did short Zumba sessions. In addition to the Zumba lessons, there were different community vendors to do outreach. There were also WIC and breastfeeding information tables. The Rappahannock district advertised the event with flyers at multiple community organizations and on their blog. The event was a huge success and all of the people who attended really enjoyed themselves. This event was a great way to get the word out about the benefits of breastfeeding and the support that is available for those moms. ■



ZUMBA WITH WIC — Pictured (left to right) are Nutritionist Associates Wanda Draper and Amanda Henson; and Breastfeeding Coordinator Sarah Whitson.

ECOIDS PARTNERS WITH PENNSYLVANIA'S CAMBRIA COUNTY WIC

By Lenny Meketa, Community Action Partnership of Cambria County (CAPCC) WIC Director and Lisa Stofko, The Learning Lamp Communications Specialist

The Learning Lamp's new EcoKids consignment boutique is doing more than raising money for the agency's free after-school program. The store is also outfitting needy families in Pennsylvania's Cambria County's WIC Program through the Community Action Partnership of Cambria County (CAPCC).

WIC serves 3,300 individuals from 1,200 families in Cambria County each month. The program has been accepting surplus clothing from EcoKids since last July and distributing items to its families at three locations - CAPCC's Johnstown office on Main Street and WIC clinics in the Ebensburg Mini Mall and medical building on Theater Drive in Carrolltown.

"Our families are always struggling to make ends meet, and this partnership with The Learning Lamp has been a tremendous help, not only for WIC families but for people in the communities we serve," said Lenny Meketa, CAPCC WIC Program Director. Meketa emphasized that people who are not enrolled in WIC can also stop by the locations and receive clothing. The joint effort between The Learning Lamp and WIC has actually prompted additional donations of clothing from throughout the community.

In addition to working with WIC, The Learning Lamp has also partnered with Conemaugh Health System to provide clothing for older children admitted to Aloysia Hall at Memorial Medical Center. The program provides in-patient treatment to children and adolescents suffering from serious emotional and behavioral problems. For more information about how EcoKids is making a difference to children and families in Cambria County, call The Learning Lamp at (814) 262-0732 or visit www.ecokidsresale.org. ■

**PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY
WIC CELEBRATES LOCAL FOOD
MONTH WITH FRESH FOOD FEAST**

By Carol M. Janesko, RD, LDN,
Public Health Nutrition Administrator

The Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program celebrated Local Food Month with a Salad Bar Luncheon. As part of the general staff meeting, all staff members were asked to bring a food item, grown locally if possible, for the salad bar to be shared by all employees at the WIC Office. The salad fixings included several types of lettuce, radishes, beans, cheese, fresh fruit, raw vegetables, nuts, olives and low-fat dressings. The staff were encouraged to take their wonderful salad outside at Market Square and then to enjoy a walk around Downtown Pittsburgh. ■

MEET WEST VIRGINIA WIC'S NEW PROGRAM INTEGRITY COORDINATOR

By Marsha King

My career with the State of West Virginia includes over 18 years of service in several departments, although I am definitely new to the WIC Program. I started with the Bureau of Employment Programs, and spent the first few years as a vocational and Veterans counselor with the Job Service. Eventually I moved into staff training at the Central Office and was responsible for developing new hire training, along with ongoing training as policies and programs changed.

The combination of local office, front-line experience coupled with program oversight responsibilities for meeting training mandates led to my next position in internal auditing and monitoring of Job Service offices statewide. That unit also had primary responsibility for the Bureau's Civil Rights and EEO programs. This included ensuring all facilities and programs were accessible to clients and employees when the Americans with Disabilities Act was initially enacted, along with investigation of all discrimination complaints received.

After pursuing other opportunities for nine years, I returned to State government with the Department of Health and Human Services six years ago, working primarily in the SNAP and Medicaid programs. When the opportunity came to return to Program Integrity, I was quite happy to join the WIC family.

As I get to know the people who work so hard to help West Virginia's citizens through the WIC Program, I am continually impressed with the dedication, compassion and enthusiasm of those who dedicate themselves to improving the quality of life for the women, infants, and children of West Virginia. Many of our employees have dedicated their entire working careers to the WIC Program and its participants, and quite a few have over 25 or 30 years of service. That tells me the value of our program, and that I have truly found a long-term place to make my contribution to this truly wonderful program. ■

PUERTO RICO'S SANTA JUANITA WIC CLINICS GETS FIT WITH MY PLATE

By Karla Flores LND, CLE, MPH, Nutritionist, Santa Juanita WIC Clinic

Puerto Rico's Santa Juanita WIC Clinic met with the children who participated in the Weight Management Program in 2007 to assess their anthropometric measures and its progress. Santa Juanita WIC Clinic Nutritionists Karla Flores and Ivonne Rodriguez coordinated the activity with the purpose to observe the weight management progress and maintenance of the suggested practices in the initial program for these WIC participants.

They also designed it for new nutrition education to the children and their parents. They included new dietary guides, nutritional recommendations for children and the new My Plate icon. The children received nutritional counseling, educational games and participated in a Zumba class for kids. At the end of the activity, they were offered healthy snacks, raffles were conducted, and certificates awarded for the enjoyment of the participants. ■



GETTING TOGETHER — The Santa Juanita WIC Clinic staff engages kids in an activity.



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