

MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MARY'S CENTER WIC PROGRAM HAS INCREASE IN BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS DURING THE FORMULA RECALL/NATIONAL FORMULA SHORTAGE

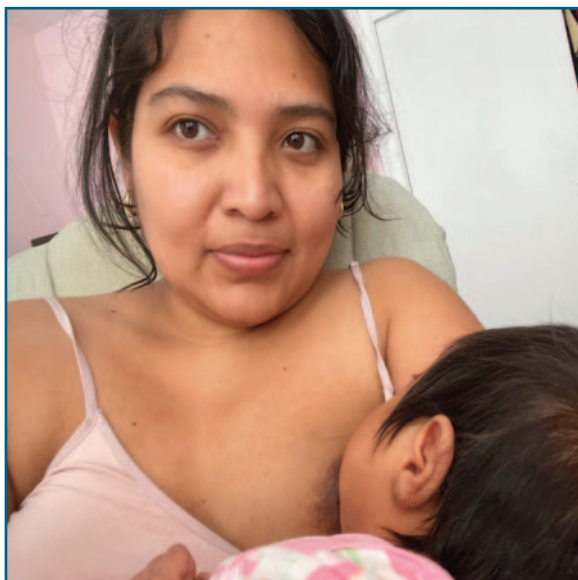
By Lisle Cole, MBA, CLS, Nutrition Associate

District of Columbia WIC families have been resilient through many recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, and most noticeably the Similac formula recall by Abbott Nutrition that has led, in part, to the national formula shortage experienced today.

The formula recall panicked many WIC families. Mary's Center WIC staff received an increase in calls from participants seeking guidance on how to handle purchased recalled formula, and/or what to do when their WIC-issued formula was not available in-store. Mary's Center's Breastfeeding Peer Counselors and Certified Lactation Consultants then began receiving more calls from mothers on breastfeeding guidance. One of the most popular questions asked was, "How do I increase my breastmilk if I now only want to breastfeed and stop giving formula?"

Since February, Mary's Center WIC Program has seen an increase in the number of mothers attending their virtual breastfeeding support group, Beautiful Beginnings. In addition to the support group, the Beautiful Beginning class provides information on varying breastfeeding topics and highlights community resources available to WIC families. Mary's Center WIC Program also saw an increase in the number of mothers and infants exclusively breastfeeding, thanks largely in part to the dedicated work of WIC staff.

The use of technology has greatly assisted Mary's Center WIC staff in supporting its breastfeeding mothers and infants. Platforms like Doxy.me, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, and the Pacify app are each used in their own way to provide the best support and care to WIC families. Mary's Center WIC staff celebrate the successes of their breastfeeding participants and will continue to provide the critical support needed in their breastfeeding journeys. ■



Mary's Center WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Johana Campos breastfeeding her 3-month old daughter, Ruby.

FALL 2022

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PENNSYLVANIA SENATOR BOB CASEY JOINS LOCAL WIC AGENCY FOR A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON FORMULA SHORTAGE

By Jean Holmgren, Communication and Advocacy Associate, Maternal and Family Health Services

US Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) joined Maternal and Family Health Services (MFHS) in May for a roundtable discussion about the infant formula shortage in Scranton, PA outside of the future home of the agency's new Circle of Care offices. The Senator spoke with MFHS staff, as well as Victoria Bigelow, a local WIC program participant, about the challenges of the last several months.

Bigelow's infant daughter, Davina, needs a specific baby formula. She was born in September 2021 and for eight months Bigelow has been navigating a new baby and a formula shortage. Then, the recall made the Alimentum formula her daughter needs even harder to find.

"If you don't have a baby, you don't think it's real," Bigelow said. At some points she was driving upwards of 25 miles if she had a lead on formula in stock.

Senator Casey listened to Bigelow's story, as well as accounts from WIC Nutritionists and the roadblocks they were experiencing in helping the families they serve and was taking this information back to Washington to work on additional legislation to help mitigate the formula shortage crisis. ■





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NEWS FROM THE USDA: BREASTFEEDING AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

By JoAnna Hazard, MS, RD, CSO, LDN, Nutritionist

World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated every year from August 1 through August 7. WIC local agencies and clinics participate in this global initiative by hosting webinars, speakers, engaging in social media campaigns and so much more! The Mid Atlantic Regional Office uses this time to recognize, honor and celebrate local agencies and clinics who have achieved a WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence.

This year we are so pleased to announce the following award winners for FY22:

New Jersey Gold Awards

- Children's Home Society of New Jersey's Mercer County WIC
- Gloucester County WIC
- North Hudson Community Action Corporation WIC (see story on page 12)
- NORWESCAP WIC
- Trinitas Medical Center WIC

Maryland Awards

- Harford/Cecil County WIC was awarded Gold
- Maryland Department of Health Upper Shore WIC achieved Gold Premiere

This year has certainly been a challenging one. WIC staff at all levels of our organization has been truly tested by the impacts of not only the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, but also the infant formula shortage and recall. For seven clinics in our region to be awarded a WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence during this time, speaks to the dedication of our staff and a willingness to continue serving those who need us.

One of the bright sides to this last year is the innovation born out of necessity within every MARO state! Innovations range from new communication methods such as text alerts, to social media campaigns aimed at helping families find formula. I've also had the good fortune of overhearing a pregnant WIC mom praise their services and support she's received during this stressful time. "Everyone has been so great at calming my nerves. I was so stressed about formula that I've decided to breastfeed. It's just scary out there right now and I know I have the support I need at WIC."

Thank you for all that you've done and will continue to do to support our women, infants, and children! ■

WEST VIRGINIA'S MCHD WIC HOSTS "MOTHER'S APPRECIATION DAY"

By Sarah Moore, BS, MCHD Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's MCHD WIC hosted Mother's Appreciation Day on May 21 at the Robinson Grande Theater in Clarksburg, WV. This event provided the Harrison County community with the opportunity to receive hairstyling, nail painting, massages and makeup services, free of charge. Students at the Clarksburg Beauty Academy provided the pampering services. While individuals waited to receive their free beauty services, they were able to browse through the various tables that our community partners set up, allowing individuals to know all of the resources that are available to them.

The day concluded with door prizes, the grand prize being an "At Home Spa" gift basket. This event was so important to us because moms sacrifice so much time, money and energy into raising their kids. The event allowed MCHD WIC to appreciate moms and to let them know that their sacrifices do not go unnoticed. ■



Three cheers for moms!



Raffle winner Courtney Stevens.

FARM FRESH AT PENNSYLVANIA'S ADAGIO HEALTH WIC: NOVEL IMPLEMENTATION OF FMNP PROMOTION THROUGH SNAP-Ed

By Britney Zwergel, MS, NDTR, Nutrition Services Senior Director; Samantha Elms RD, CLC, WIC Director;
Ruth Bender, MS, RD, SNAP-Ed PSE Coordinator; Madison Santella, MS, RD, SNAP-Ed PSE Coordinator

This farmer's market season, PA's Adagio Health's WIC and SNAP-Ed teams partnered to pilot a novel produce distribution system that promotes the Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP).

In 2019, FMNP benefit redemption rates in the five Pennsylvania counties where Adagio Health provides WIC services (Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Indiana, and Lawrence) ranged from 36% - 55% of checks that were issued. The COVID-19 pandemic caused redemption rates to drop further, with 2021 data showing that 25% - 48% of issued checks were redeemed. Commonly cited barriers to FMNP check utilization include lack of transportation to traditional farmer's markets or farm stands, lack of time to make special trips to a market, and inconvenience of having to make a shopping trip additional to a routine grocery store visit.

To address these barriers, Adagio Health Nutrition Services is connecting with local Pennsylvania farmers to supply fresh, local produce daily in all five WIC offices. Adagio Health SNAP-Ed staff picks up produce from participating farmers on a weekly basis and operate a pop-up market stand. Produce is available Monday through Friday for WIC participants, senior citizens, and the public during business hours. At these pop-up markets, SNAP-Ed staff highlight the benefits of fresh produce and choosing seasonal options, conduct food demonstrations and tastings, and provide nutrition education materials including tip sheets, recipe cards, and small incentives to make produce shopping a fun experience for all ages.

Early project data and participant feedback is positive. During the first seven weeks of this project, 334 customers have been served, 581 FMNP checks redeemed (\$3,486 value), and \$249 collected in cash purchases, which totals \$3,735 supporting local Pennsylvania farmers across five counties. Many customers have expressed appreciation for being able to use their FMNP benefit checks on-site while visiting the WIC office for a regularly scheduled appointment and have shared that they may not have used their benefits if not for the convenience of the pop-up market. Thus far, this novel produce distribution system is a promising intervention to reduce barriers in FMNP benefit redemption, increase participant access to fresh produce and nutrition education, and support local agriculture. ■

SHARING MY STORY AT THE NWA ANNUAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXHIBITS

By Alexis Simms, Virginia WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

What an honor it was to be invited to join Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator Jarene Fleming at the National WIC Association Annual Education and Training Conference & Exhibits. Held in May in New Orleans, Jarene Fleming and I served as panelists during the closing general session entitled, "Preparing WIC for a Post Pandemic Future."

During the National WIC Association Conference, I had the opportunity to speak about the support I provide to families as a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor and my personal experience with relactation. It truly brought me to a moment of gratitude and appreciation for the work that I get to do supporting breast/chestfeeding individuals.

When my daughter was born five years ago, I was faced with a number of health challenges that required me to stay in the hospital, away from my baby. During this time I had a crash course on pumping from a number of IBCLC staff in the hospital who had all the best intentions in supporting me. Unfortunately, it was not helpful. I would consistently be told, "you have to move the milk." So, between the severe health complications I was having, I would wait until I "felt full," and pump with the hospital pump. When I got home from the hospital, I was discouraged from latching my baby and encouraged to only pump, so that is what I tried to do.

Due to that inconsistent schedule, I had a decrease in supply and eventually was only able to pump a combined one bottle in a two-day period. Eventually, with the support of my village, an increase in education on breastfeeding, and determination to exclusively breastfeed, I faced my next challenge of relactation. I did not know it was a thing at the time, but I knew I was determined to not rely on formula to feed my baby. As a twin who was breastfed, I knew my body could do what it needed to do for my single baby just as my mother did for the two of us.

Throughout the trials and lessons that I experienced, I was able to figure out what information I was taking in and what resonated with me. This journey is what made me say 'yes' when I was asked to join WIC as a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor. I love this role and the support I am able to give and the way I am able to connect with mothers, but I often would tell people, I am "just a breastfeeding peer counselor."

During the NWA Conference, I found the power in my role and appreciation for the "peer" expertise I bring to this work. While I am not a human milk doctor, just as important, I am someone who understands how to connect with my families from personal experience. Supporting families first from a place of understanding and walking with them through their journey of resource navigation, education, and empowerment has truly brought me joy in my time with WIC's breastfeeding/chestfeeding families. I was honored to share a glimpse of this experience at the conference and look forward to continuing my work with families. ■



Panelists (left to right) Leslie Lewis, Facilitator; Darlena Birch; Alexis Simms, Virginia WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor; Jarene Fleming, Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator.



Alexis Simms at NWA

CALLING ALL INNOVATIVE THINKERS – TIME TO RETHINK HOW WE PROMOTE FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION

By Mary Ann Ellsworth, MS, RDN, Immediate Past President, Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN)

It is frustrating to know that 90% percent of Americans do not eat the recommended daily servings of vegetables. 80% percent do not eat the recommended daily servings of fruits. Over the past 30 years, the percentage of Americans who consume the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables has declined, despite ongoing, high-profile public health campaigns and consumer education.

As healthy eating advocates, if we continue our “business as usual” strategies, we can’t expect different results.

The Association of State Public Health Nutritionists has published a Call to Action and a Checklist for Change. Learn more at: <https://asphn.org/call-to-action-vegetable-and-fruit-consumption/>. ■

ASPHN Call To Action:

Change How We Work to Improve Access and Encourage Eating of Vegetables and Fruits

To stop further decline in fruit and vegetable consumption and potentially reverse the trend, the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) is responding with intention and urgency to this public health crisis.

We recognize we cannot continue to implement the same strategies in the same ways in the hope of achieving a different outcome. We must engage in **divergent thinking**, examining this crisis from all angles, and open our minds to all ideas and possible solutions.

Checklist For Change

The following **Checklist For Change** will help our Association and members undertake this call to action.

RECOGNIZE. Human behavior is complex and often unpredictable. Motivation can come from many sources and incremental increases in fruit and vegetable intake should be encouraged, recognized, and celebrated.

- Lean into the reality that fruits and vegetables can be consumed in countless combinations, forms (fresh, frozen, canned), and preparations. There is no right or wrong way to consume them.
- Acknowledge the professional judgments and biases that can interfere with our mission.
- Recognize that other disciplines and sciences may offer solutions that can be incorporated into our programs and approaches.

PRIORITIZE. We must make equity, practicality, and sustainability the most important actions of our work.



WEST VIRGINIA WIC PARTNERS WITH DOLLY PARTON’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Inspired by her father’s inability to read or write, Dolly Parton decided to find a program that started locally, but has now grown to a nationwide, age-appropriate, and free resource for books! This entertainment icon and businesswoman began Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library in 1995 in Sevier County, TN. The first book order totaled 1,760 books.

Now, this project is crossing national and continental boundaries, spanning into the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, Canada, and Belize. Dolly Parton made inspiring children who love to read her mission and planned to do this by providing books that encourage this activity. This book-gifting program mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family’s income! As of July 15, 2021, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library became available in all 55 counties of West Virginia. Dolly Parton stated she was “thrilled to share that every child from zero to five in West Virginia is eligible to register for (her) Imagination Library!” and that “Together, we can inspire children to Dream More, Care More, Learn More and Be More.”

In line with the CDC’s Developmental Milestones, reading and engaging with children is important for brain, language, and speech development. Studies have shown that participation in the Imagination Library is positively and significantly associated with higher measures of early language and math development within children. Each year, a specially selected panel of early childhood literacy experts, appropriately titled the Blue-Ribbon Book Selection Committee, reviews hundreds of titles for inclusion in the monthly Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library mailing, taking great pride and care in selecting titles that meet the needs for different and unique children.

The committee also focuses on specific themes and concepts that are delivered within the storylines. For example, themes of inspiration, imagination, love of reading and learning, regard of diversity, culture, promotion of self-esteem and confidence, as well as an appreciation of art and aesthetics outlines a few. In Year 1 for example, which follows some of the youngest registered participants of the Imagination Library, focuses on books with bright, big, and colorful visuals. These books include board pages to stimulate touch, rhyme, and rhythm, as well as play-ground sounds. As children progress through year 6, which is around age 5, the books have shifted to school preparation and readiness, science, and non-fiction information, as well as folk tales and poetry.

Once registered, each month, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library mails the high quality, age-appropriate book to the family, addressed to the child.

Does this sound like something for you and your child? West Virginia WIC can assist! Children are eligible for WIC through the age of 5, aligning with Imagination Library duration! Register for Imagination Library online at <https://imaginationlibrary.com/check-availability/?#selectedCountry=US> or at your nearest WIC clinic. ■



PUERTO RICO WIC PROGRAM HOSTS ANNUAL NUTRITION AND BREASTFEEDING CONFERENCE

By Magdaliz Bonilla

For several years in the Puerto Rico WIC Program, the annual nutrition and breastfeeding conference was held to offer education to all employees. This year we celebrated our Eighth Annual Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference on July 29 at the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Hotel. After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was held in person with approximately 300 people in attendance, including nutritionists, CPAs, office clerks, administrative employees, as well as staff from the Food and Nutrition Service (CAO). It should be noted that this important event entailed several months of arduous planning by a working group made up by the executive director, human resources division, nutrition division, a publishing company, and other staff. Planning took into consideration many factors so that the conference was not only an event where the staff could be trained and acquire new knowledge, but also be carried out in an entertaining way.

During the introduction of the conference, messages were offered by the executive director, director of FNS, and Office of the Governor. Our director's message was aimed at motivating everyone to work towards a common goal and to learn and share at each stage; a message that is tied to our new advertising campaign. Also, the activity was dedicated to Edna Marín, former executive director of PR WIC; and a special recognition was given to Maria A. Díaz, nutritionist, and former director of the MIS/EBT division. Such recognition consisted of presenting her with a Lifetime Achievement Award for all her years of dedication and service to PR WIC. This turned out to be a very emotional moment for all of us who know and appreciate her.

The conference was divided into educational sessions offered in the morning and afternoon which included topics such as breastfeeding, human rights, equity and diversity in nutrition services, leadership, how to achieve happiness, and prevention of obesity in children. It was very important for PR WIC to select topics that were in line with our objectives. The selected speakers included a nutritionist, a university professor, breastfeeding specialists, lawyers, and a clinical psychologist, all excellent in their presentations.

The PR WIC Program will continue to carry out this great event in the future since it is an excellent opportunity to maintain the development and professional growth of our employees in order to offer the best services to the participants we serve. ■



Nilmarie Albarran with her staff



Nilmarie Albarran with staff from Food and Nutrition Service (CAO) of PR



Nilmarie Albarran, Executive Director of PR WIC

DELAWARE NUTRITION STAFF ATTEND ANNUAL DAND MEETING

By Ashley Lackey, WIC Nutritionist

Ongoing participation in annual conferences equips WIC staff to stay abreast of current evidence-based practices while partnering with WIC families. Dietitians and Nutritionists from the Delaware WIC Program attended the "Coming Back Together" Conference hosted by the Delaware Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. During this conference, WIC staff networked with professionals throughout the tri-state area. The event-filled day consisted of delivering culturally competent nutrition education, negative effects of diet culture, recognizing and addressing bias related to food culture, future impact of telenutrition, and advocating for nutrition as a general education course in secondary institutions.

Regarding Delaware, session highlights were geared toward elevating food security to nutrition security. Delaware Nutrition Programs are working to enhance collaborative action in prioritizing equity, mirroring programs to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, magnifying breastfeeding promotion and meaningful support. ■



Attending the DANA Conference are Nutritionists (left to right) Beth Petit de Mange, RD; Laura Ames, RD; Jen Tarburton, RD; and Ashley Lackey. They all work directly with WIC participants daily.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WIC HOLDS IN-PERSON ALL-STAFF MEETING

By Melissa Seyoum, RDN, Public Health Nutritionist

The District of Columbia WIC State Agency conducts an annual All-Staff Meeting to provide trainings, program updates, and celebrate local agency accomplishments over the past year. This year's annual meeting was special as it was the first time in several years that all State and Local Agency staff met in-person for the training.

The event took place over two days and included guest speakers who presented on this year's themes of Customer Service and WIC Skill Builder Training. DC WIC staff heard from Jennifer Day, IBCLC from Feed the Babes LLC on "The Explicit Implications of Implicit Bias During Care," and Katherine Manuel, PhD, RDN, Dietetic Internship Coordinator at Howard University on "Conducting an Effective Nutrition Assessment."

The in-person meeting took place at the National Arboretum in Washington, DC. Each local agency was given time to share accomplishments over the past year, and this time there was much to celebrate!

Local agency director for Children's National Health System Jaya Janakiram, MS, RD, LD, has served the DC WIC Program for 40 years and retired in August. Staff from Children's National Health System took time to honor her accomplishments, including her recent award from NWA and the impact she has left on the Program. She will be missed!

Other local agencies took time to recognize staff accomplishments and promotions that occurred this year, and collectively, DC WIC celebrated its successful roll out of eWIC and implementing a new MIS this past spring.

Overall, the two-day annual meeting was a success and received positive feedback from DC WIC staff. It was a refreshing time for all to reflect on last year's work and bring excitement to all upcoming initiatives and opportunities that the next year will bring. ■



Jaya Janakiram, MS, RD, LD celebrating her upcoming retirement after 40 years of service to the DC WIC Program.



DC WIC staff gathered for a group photo at the National Arboretum during the annual All-Staff Meeting.

NEW JERSEY'S BURLINGTON COUNTY WIC AND FARMERS' MARKET EVENTS A SUCCESS

By Tracy Little, Coordinator

"It takes a village." Never was there a more appropriate idiom for the work WIC does. This past winter, NJ's Burlington County WIC began the process of building the village to promote the WIC / Senior Farmers' Market Program. Meetings ensued between WIC and Office on Aging, WIC and farmers, WIC and the State WIC office, Office on Aging and Farmers, Office on Aging and community collaborators. What we came up with was to have a series of events throughout the county promoting WIC, Office on Aging and the Farmers' Market Program and create a cookbook showcasing Jersey Fresh produce.

Each event would have the agencies distributing their respective vouchers, a food demonstration using Jersey Fresh produce and a farmer on site for the clients to redeem their vouchers. The first event was a rainy morning; successful in that clients came, picked up vouchers, a wonderful food demo/tasting happened, but the farmer never showed.

In July, Office on Aging and WIC regrouped and held a similar event across the county. The farmer showed and benefits were redeemed, food demo happened and clients were happy.

In August, for National Farmers Market Week, we held our third and final event. We included the animal shelter and the Sheriff's office this time as well as our local farmer. It was successful. Many WIC clients and seniors showed up for the festivities. The location was key; it was held in the County Complex which houses many county businesses. The location brought out the curious to see what was going on and many county employees came. They were able to learn firsthand about our departments and purchase fresh produce from the local farmer. ■



Partaking in the Farmers' Market festivities were (left to right) Tracy Little, Leshette Williams, Dorothy Ngumezi, BJ Westmoreland, and Carla Fynan.



MARYLAND WIC LAUNCHES NEW SYSTEM TO REDEEM FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FARMERS' MARKETS

By Ernest Le and Maura Shea

Offering eWIC at farmers markets has been a bit challenging in Maryland. Since the farmers do not have traditional cash registers, they have to use some other kind of system in order to redeem WIC benefits from participants who want to buy fresh fruits and vegetables with their card. In the past, farmers had to lease a stand-alone wireless machine from our processor to accept the eWIC card at the farmers markets and roadside stands. The machines required the use of a WIFI hotspot and did not always reliably connect in order to complete a transaction. Therefore, farmers did not find it worthwhile to continue to use them. It was time to go back to the drawing board.

After working with our eWIC processor, we were able to come up with an alternative solution. Using a new app, WIC participants can generate a barcode which they can either print out or display on their phones. When they show this bar code at a farmers' market, the farmer can scan the code with their own phone or tablet which connects them to the WIC system and completes the transaction. There are no fees, and interest from farmers is higher than ever before.

Launching this new system required a lot of steps. First, our processor had to activate the new system and make code changes to allow Maryland WIC participants to generate the barcodes, and for farmers to be able to accept the benefits. Then the farmers had to be brought on board. This involved doing outreach to the farmer community, including webinars on how the app worked to process transactions. After introducing the features of this new system, farmers who expressed interest in signing up needed to register. Once the registration was complete, each farmer was tested to ensure that everything was working correctly. The next step was to perform outreach to our participants. This included creating posts on social media, a flyer to hand out in clinics and markets, and a video demonstrating how they can generate the barcode on their smartphones. We also created a list of registered farmers who accept fruit and vegetables benefits, which we update continuously on our website as we onboard new farmers.

It's still early in the program, but we have seen a lot of interest from both farmers and participants. Most importantly, the system actually works and farmers only have to use their smartphones they already have with them. We are hoping to see this feature grow so that our participants can continue to buy local fresh produce with their WIC benefits. ■



FAMILY HEALTH COUNCIL OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA IDENTIFIES AND SUPPORTS WIC WOMEN WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Melissa Bishop, Vice President of Nutrition Services, Family Health Council of Central Pennsylvania

The Family Health Council of Central PA's (FHCCP) 11-county Tapestry of Health WIC Program knows that women enrolled in WIC experience myriad conditions that affect their health and overall wellness, and substance use disorder (SUD) is one of those conditions. FHCCP knew that WIC, as a trusted provider, was an ideal place to identify people with SUD and offer help, but we were not sure how to do that in a busy and nutrition-focused WIC Program.

In 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs released a request for proposals to provide services to pregnant and postpartum women with SUD, and FHCCP applied for and received funding. FHCCP's program, called "Pathways to Wellness," uses the SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment) model to identify and refer women to services. All pregnant and postpartum women are screened at every nutritionist visit using one of two validated tools—the 5Ps (Parents, Peers, Partner, Pregnancy, Past) for pregnant women or the DAST (Drug Abuse Screening Test) for postpartum women.

The screening tools do not diagnose SUD; instead, they indicate who might benefit from further assessment. Those whose scores indicate further assessment is needed and who consent, are contacted by a FHCCP staff member who is trained to help each client decide if they want to be met with an SUD professional or if they are not yet ready for that step. Referrals are made based on the client's choices.

If a client decides to take that next step, she is enrolled in the program and care management is provided by the program's Community Health Worker (CHW). While the overall goal of the program is to ensure that pregnant and postpartum women with SUD remain engaged in SUD services, we recognize that multiple factors impact their ability to do so. The CHW, in partnership with the client, identifies barriers and needs in any area of her life and work together on solutions. The CHW can assist with enrollment in Medicaid, arrange and pay for transportation to health and human services, identify GED opportunities, provide clients with food and clothing vouchers, refer to employment programs, identify and help the client apply for rent or utility assistance, and much more.

The program has faced some challenges. WIC staff needs ongoing training and support to become comfortable with administering the screening tools and fewer clients than anticipated have enrolled in the program. In the end, however, we know that every WIC client with SUD that we can link to treatment and wrap-around services is an opportunity for a woman and a family to be healthier. ■

PENNSYLVANIA'S DELAWARE COUNTY'S WIC CLINIC MINI FARM STAND YIELDS RESULTS

By Susan Buchmann, RDN, LDN, CLC, Outreach Coordinator, The Foundation for Delaware County WIC Program

The WIC Program in Delaware County, Pennsylvania brought the farm to the WIC table. The Foundation for Delaware County WIC Program had partnered with a local farmer to bring fresh fruits and vegetables right to the WIC clinic, making foods more accessible for their participants.

Every Tuesday in June through September, the Upper Darby WIC clinic had a farmer set up a farm stand outside the clinic so the participants can redeem their Farmers' Market checks as soon as they receive them. A text message was sent out to all the local participants in each clinic the day before the event as a reminder to redeem their checks at the mini farm stand. The farm stand was very successful and will be continued next federal fiscal year. ■

VIRGINIA'S CHESAPEAKE WIC STEPS UP FOR BREASTFEEDING

By Joy Monton, Chesapeake WIC Coordinator

Every year, August 1-7, World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated to raise awareness about breastfeeding and its advantages. World Breastfeeding Week is coordinated and organized by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), a global network of individuals and organizations dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide.

On August 5, Virginia's Chesapeake WIC office held its World Breastfeeding Week celebration at the Chesapeake Health Department. Despite the scorching heat, the event was a beautiful and successful gathering of community partners, WIC participants, and guests.

Chesapeake WIC staff members issued Farmers' Market vouchers, hosted a gift raffle of items donated by staff, performed chest measurements and distributed nursing bras donated by the Chesapeake Health Department's BabyCare Program. The BabyCare Program is a visitation program managed by registered

nurses, who will answer questions and help mothers work through any issues they may have during pregnancy and after the baby is born. The visits can be done in the convenience of the client's home, the local health department, or other suitable locations.

Other activities and guests included a stroller parade where parents decorated their strollers and each participant received a reward; a Zumba instructor who got everyone moving; a representative from Paparazzi Jewelry who displayed beautiful pieces of jewelry that sold for \$5 per item; and the local Buffalow Family and Friends Community Pantry provided 50 bags filled with groceries that were distributed to participants. Refreshments included an assortment of goodies from an ice cream truck and iced coffee. Representatives from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), the nation's first nutrition education program for low-income populations, supported the event and provided information to the WIC participants on its programs designed to reduce nutrition insecurity in low-income families and youth.

It was not just fun, but also a very informative event. Dr. Nancy Welch, Director, Chesapeake Health Department, who is a staunch supporter of breastfeeding, attended the event and spoke to the attendees about the importance of breastfeeding. The World Breastfeeding Week theme this year was 'Step Up for Breastfeeding: Educate and Support,' and the Chesapeake WIC did just that! ■



(First row, left to right) Dr. Nancy Welch, Director, Chesapeake Health Department; Yvette Copeland, Nutrition Asst., Pilar Preciado, Outreach Nutritionist; Janice Lacerna, Nutrition Assoc.; (second row) Louise Carpenter, Nutrition Asst.; Gia Labidi, BFPC; Joy Monton, WIC Coordinator; Kia Allensilvels, Nutritionist Sr.; Courtney Primero, Nutrition Assoc., Colette Gahr, Nutrition Assoc.; Janae Voorhees, Nurse Manager; Karen Edward, Nutritionist Sr.



Exclusively breastfeeding mom D'Andrea Flora brought one-month-old baby, Sa'ge Flora, proudly showing her Exclusively Breastfeeding Certificate



Dr. Nancy Welch, Chesapeake Health Department Health Director, extended her all-out support to event attendees



Exclusively breastfeeding mom Monet Felton came with her decorated stroller with four-month-old baby, Delana

WIC SUPPORTS FOSTER CHILDREN IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

By Julie Kuhne, BS, MA in Ed, CLC, Outreach Coordinator, Broad Top Area Medical Center, Inc.

Pennsylvania's Broad Top Area Medical Center, Inc. (BTAMC) WIC Program has focused its outreach efforts on families that may not be aware of their children's eligibility for WIC, namely foster families, grandparents and single dads.

This summer, BTAMC WIC staff met with the Children and Youth Services (CYS) programs in Bedford, Huntingdon and Fulton counties. BTAMC donated hundreds of lion drawstring bags to the children entering foster care. The lion design was chosen as a symbol of bravery during this transitional time in these children's lives. Each bag is imprinted with the PA WIC logo and the names and phone numbers of the local WIC clinics served.

Huntingdon County Children and Youth Services (HCCYS) looked forward to distributing the bags to the children. The children used the bags to shop in the HCCYS storeroom that has toothbrushes, toys, school supplies and other free items to choose from. Bedford County Children & Youth Services and Fulton County Services for Children gave the bags to local WIC families. ■

NEW JERSEY'S NEWARK WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING 2022 WITH "STEP UP FOR BREASTFEEDING" THEME

By Sharon Schopfer, BS, IBCLC

On August 18, NJ's Newark WIC Program celebrated World Breastfeeding with its community partner, the Prenatal Services Program of The Leaguers, Inc., a Head Start Organization. Joining Leaguers staff members Sarah Cooper and Kay Laurore were mothers who exclusively breastfed their babies and participate in both Newark WIC and the Prenatal Services Program. Newark WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator Sharon Schopfer hosted the event at the Newark WIC William Street location.

Renee Davis, Lead IBCLC, WIC Liaison and Director of Training for Rumble Tuff, a provider of breast pumps and other baby care items, was the keynote speaker. A trained doula and lactation consultant, Davis gave a heartfelt and emotional presentation on empowering women by educating themselves in their roles as mothers. Drawing on her personal and professional experiences, she promoted mothers' power to choose their own paths and she gave tips on how to achieve their individual birthing and breastfeeding goals.

The presentation branched into a roundtable-style discussion on topics of particular interest to the attendees, such as pumping when going back to work, properly saving and storing pumped milk, and how to harness the health benefits of breastmilk's immunological properties. The attendees, many of whom had their babies with them, openly shared their personal experiences and thoughts. The mood was one of connection, support and encouragement.

Newark Breastfeeding Coordinators Mariely Torres and Rose Saint Albord assisted with decorations, food preparation and festivities. Questions and concerns were drawn at random for answers and discussion. The event lasted about two hours, culminating with raffles, with a Rumble Tuff Breeze personal use breast pump as the grand prize. ■



Our food table of yummy treats



The party favors and raffle items



Newark WIC Breastfeeding staff (left to right) Mariely Torres, BFPC; Sharon Schopfer, IBCLC; Rose Saint Albord, BFPC, enjoying the day.

RETURN OF THE INTERN AT WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY WIC

By Tracy Bills, Nutritionist I/Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley (MOV) WIC office out of Wood County has been buzzing this summer with three Interns – Miah Gathman (WVU Undergrad, DPD), Savannah DeAnthony (OU, Graduate MS/DI), and Jake Howman (OU, Graduate MS/DI) for practical clinical experience. Kaitlin Iacobucci, intern (OU, Graduate MS/DI) will also be joining us in fall of 2022.

MOV WIC Director Jennifer Habeb strategically incorporated a diverse and talented team of college students that have provided a whole new level of fresh perspective in terms of technology and creativity. The list of academic accomplishments by these interns is impressive and has been encouraging to the entire WIC staff.

Here is a snapshot of two of our four superstar interns:

Miah Gathman serves on the Executive Board for the National Panhellenic Conference (WVU), VP of Service and Philanthropy (WVU), Member of the Order of Omega (WVU, top 10% of Greek Life), and the list continues. Miah is a genuine "foodie" who loves to create nutritious and culturally diverse recipes to try with her family and friends. Miah also enjoys crafting, fashion, country music, and she is a devout Christian Church Camp leader that has sponsored camps with 1200+ high school kids each summer!

Jake Howman, was a member of the Nutrition Club (OU), has played previously on Ohio University's baseball team, and he has completed a clinical RD rotation at Riverside Methodist Hospital. Jacob enjoys "whooping it up" with his twin brother, being active with man's best friend, Nala, his faithful dog, and spending quality time with his sweetheart of two years.

This group of eclectic interns has been outstanding in their work ethic. Each of them will have accomplished the tasks, projects, and assignments that are required of their RD programs and have easily exceeded Jennifer Habeb's expectations. Miah, Jacob, Savannah, and Kaitlin are future leaders in the Nutrition Services, and they represent the MOV with a passion for the health and wellness of their communities and beyond. There is no doubt that you will be seeing these four outstanding individuals again as they succeed at not only Nutrition Science, but as young and vibrant leaders of the future. The MOV WIC staff agree that it has been an absolute pleasure and honor to work beside them and be part of their academic and life journey. ■

YOU SAY TOMAYTO, I SAY TOMAHTO: VIRGINIA'S CHESAPEAKE WIC HOSTS TOMATO TASTING

By Joy Monton, Chesapeake WIC Coordinator

Why did the tomato blush? It saw the salad dressing!

Thanks to the Master Gardeners at the Virginia WIC Chesapeake office, on July 20, WIC participants, along with patients and customers at the Chesapeake Health Department (CHD), enjoyed non-stop tomato puns along with delicious tomatoes.

The Chesapeake WIC office boasts a community garden right outside its front door and at the entrance to the Chesapeake Health Department. The Chesapeake Master Gardeners, who manage the Grow, Eat, Live Garden, hosted a Tomato Tasting event to demonstrate the versatility of this summer favorite.

The event was advertised via flyers to WIC participants and Chesapeake Health Department patients and customers; it also was marketed through the CHD/WIC social media platforms. Vicki Roberts, person in charge of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners, created a table display featuring the different varieties of tomatoes that attendees were able to both taste and take home. Chesapeake WIC Coordinator Joy Monton assisted the event by distributing tomato-based recipes along with handouts, books, and tips on growing tomatoes right in your very own backyard.

Attendees were surprised to learn just how easy and low-maintenance it is to grow tomatoes, especially because they bear so many fruits in one season. Other tips shared included how good cherry tomatoes are for snacking and as a salad ingredient and the little remembered fact that most dishes we cook use tomatoes, which are excellent for garnishing and plating.

The Chesapeake Master Gardeners grow many different kinds of fruit and vegetables at the CHD/WIC Grow, Eat, Live Garden. The fruits and vegetables they harvest not only are shared with CHD staff and customers; passersby are welcome to take from the bounty as well. After attending the Tomato Tasting, attendees now know the answer to the question, "How do you fix a broken pizza? With tomato paste!" ■



WIC staff with Chesapeake's Master Gardeners (front row, left to right) Joy Monton, Chesapeake WIC Coordinator; Vicki Roberts of Chesapeake's Master Gardeners; (second row) Karen Edwards, WIC Nutritionist Sr.; Yvette Copeland, WIC Nutritionist Assistant; Pilar Rubio, Outreach Nutritionist; (third row) Gia Labidi, WIC BFPC; Colette Gahr, WIC Nutritionist Associate



Grow, Eat, Live Community Garden located in front of the Chesapeake Health Department/Chesapeake WIC Office.



Vicki Roberts of the Chesapeake Master Gardeners assisting attendees at the tomato tasting.

PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY WIC MOM SAYS "DON'T LISTEN TO NAYSAYERS!"

By Victoria Stewart, Program Coordinator; Interviewers: Neosie Morris, Assistant Nutrition Coordinator and Elina Alston, Lactation Consultant

New Jersey's Plainfield WIC Program wanted to feature a mom who has been a long-term WIC client and a champion in her breastfeeding initiatives. On July 8, we interviewed Andrea Woods, a 43-year-old mom of five children with another on the way. Woods stated she breastfed all of her children, but the first two she did not breastfeed for as long as she did the last three because of the knowledge she now has about breastfeeding.

Woods said breastfeeding felt natural; breastmilk was something only she could give her babies and she enjoyed bonding with her babies. When asked about her breastfeeding experience, she responded that it was painful initially, because her baby did not latch correctly, but when she was supported by a breastfeeding expert it got better.

Woods would advise all pregnant moms to "breastfeed your child for as long as you want for as long as you are comfortable with it and not to listen to naysayers. There are always people telling you something negative about breastfeeding but they must be ignored because there are too many benefits to breastfeeding, breastmilk is just healthier."

She would advise all moms and moms-to-be not to be afraid to ask questions to other breastfeeding moms or breastfeeding experts because the same question you have might provide the answer someone else might be seeking but is too afraid to ask. Woods said she really appreciated the breastfeeding classes the Plainfield WIC Program offered because she learned a lot from other breastfeeding moms. She wishes that more moms would choose to breastfeed their babies as soon as they are born so that they could have a great start in life. ■



Andrea Woods with three of her five children (left to right) Kirk (4), Reign (6), and Nyelle (2).

COOL AS A CUCUMBER: WIC STAFF ORGANIZE FREE FARMERS' MARKET AND OUTREACH EVENT FOR CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA STERNWHEEL REGATTA

By Nalani Wean, Food Security Partnership Liaison

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) aims to increase participant access to fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables as well as expanding the awareness, use, and sales at farmers' markets. WIC participants may purchase locally grown produce and herbs with FMNP coupons. While the summer FMNP usually runs from June until October each year, WIC staff wanted to provide an extra opportunity for community members to access fresh produce and other WIC support. So, they decided to hold an outreach event on Magic Island during the 2022 Sternwheel Regatta in Charleston.



Scenes from the Regatta

From Thursday, June 30 through Saturday, July 2, WIC staff operated a large tent on Magic Island. They held several events, including a free farmers' market, a private breastfeeding area with rocking chairs and diaper-changing tent for babies and small children, as well as a tomato seed-planting activity for children. Parents were able to access free diapers and wipes at the shaded changing station, free snacks and water in a breastfeeding tent, and breastfeeding guidance pamphlets. By having these private, fan-cooled areas for parents to take their children, WIC hoped to both provide a comfortable space for all families, as well as reduce the stigma surrounding breastfeeding.

WIC staff also provided fresh, local produce for free to Regatta attendees. By subsidizing fresh produce from John Carihfield Farms & Greenhouses, WV WIC distributed free foods to around 490 people, including children, parents, college students, and elderly West Virginians. Carihfield Farms supplied an abundance of corn, bell and banana peppers, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Additionally, WIC staff provided outreach materials, recipe books, nutrition education materials, and WIC participant certification instructions for eligible individuals. Walking past the WIC tent, festival goers could witness children learning about each item of produce and how to prepare it! Staff commented on the importance of getting nutritious food out into the community as well as supporting local farmers and production.

In their efforts to engage with the Charleston community, WV WIC also provided a free tomato-planting activity for children and adults alike. The Agency offered free tomato seeds, biodegradable cups, and soil to participants to encourage at-home gardening. Providing resources such as free diapers and wipes, fresh produce, and gardening materials all aided in reducing a portion of the burden on community members experiencing financial strain which could impair their health. Moreover, public events such as this one promote the establishment and continuation of community partnerships as well as a preventative approach to addressing social determinants of health. Overall, WIC staff served over 600 people and distributed more than 2,600 units of produce at their tent.

For more information, visit dhhr.wv.gov/WIC. ■

VIRGINIA WIC STATE BREASTFEEDING COORDINATOR APPOINTED TO INTERNATIONAL BOARD

By Jarene Fleming

Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator Jarene Fleming was recently appointed to the board of Monetary Investment for Lactation Consultant Certification (MILCC). MILCC is an international nonprofit charitable organization that provides financial assistance to qualified candidates seeking International Board Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®) certification. An IBCLC is a health care professional who undertakes the clinical management of breastfeeding in many settings, including public health clinics, pediatric offices, hospitals and private practice. MILCC's vision is that every family has access to culturally appropriate care from an IBCLC. Its mission is to remove financial barriers to accessing the IBCLC credential by fostering inclusiveness, promoting philanthropy, and increasing public awareness of the value of the IBCLC. IBCLCs serve breastfeeding families around the world, providing education, support and skilled lactation care. There are over 34,000 IBCLCs in 129 countries and territories, and many aspiring health professionals seek the IBCLC certification.

A previous MILCC scholarship recipient, Fleming now serves as the Virginia WIC State Breastfeeding Coordinator with the Virginia Department of Health's Division of Community Nutrition. In this capacity, she oversees the day to day operation of the WIC Breastfeeding Program and consults on a number of health department initiatives for maternal and child health and chronic disease prevention programs. Fleming is excited by this opportunity to "pay it forward" by sharing her journey in the lactation field to raise awareness and resources to help grow the profession and inspire the next generation of lactation activists. For more information about MILCC, visit www.milcc.org. ■



Jarene Fleming

NEW JERSEY'S NHCAC WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK AND USDA GOLD WIC BREASTFEEDING AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

By Karen Lazarowitz, WIC Coordinator, MS, RD, IBCLC

On Friday, August 5, New Jersey's North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) WIC Program celebrated Breastfeeding Week, "Step up for Breastfeeding: Educate and Support." Pregnant and postpartum breastfeeding WIC participants enjoyed a relaxing day in the park overlooking the Manhattan skyline, while breastfeeding and learning about breastfeeding. They appreciated meeting other mothers and taking home helpful breastfeeding aids and infant items.

Everyone was thrilled to take part in all of the activities. Lali the Clown kicked off the event with dancing and creating balloon animals. Children loved having their faces painted bright fun colors. Moms all lined up to have their child's footprints imprinted on a breastfeeding certificate to take home. There were plenty of healthy foods to enjoy, including receiving a beautifully wrapped box filled with trail mix, carrots, crackers, guacamole and water. A WIC Nutritionist prepared delicious yogurt and berry parfaits. Everyone had the opportunity to talk to WIC Breastfeeding staff and Nutritionists along with representatives from NHCAC health center and social programs, the Partnership for Maternal & Child Health of Northern NJ, Palisades Family Success Center and HUMC Palisades Medical Center.

The highlight of our celebration was when we were joined by USDA Food and Nutrition Service Mid-Atlantic Region Branch Chief Jaime M. Van Lieu and Program Specialist Patrick Farrell. They presented the Program with the 2022 Gold WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence for providing outstanding support and exemplary service. We are proud of our WIC mothers and infants who make breastfeeding a priority and our staff who provide compassion and support for each mother.

All the WIC participants went home with raffle items which included car seats, diaper cakes, infant seats, infant carriers, breastfeeding aids, bibs, dishes, and more! We would like to thank the many sponsors who helped make this day a huge success: Horizon NJ Health, Amerigroup, 7-Eleven, Bambi Baby, Extra Supermarket, Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health, Trader Joe's, and BJ's Wholesale Club for their generous donation of food and raffle items. ■



There were 80 WIC mothers, infants and children who joined us to celebrate breastfeeding.



USDA FNS MARO Branch Chief Jaime M. Van Lieu and Program Specialist Patrick Farrell presented the NHCAC WIC Coordinator Karen Lazarowitz with the 2022 Gold WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence.

WEST VIRGINIA WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is celebrated every August 1-7 and began in 1992 in commemoration of the 1990 Innocenti Declaration, which states that all women should be enabled to practice exclusive breastfeeding and all infants should be fed exclusively on breastmilk up to 4-6 months of age.

WBW includes annual themes of women and work, community support, ecology, economy, science, education, and human rights. This year, WBW had the theme of "Step up for Breastfeeding," which aimed to address several different objectives. The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) planned to inform people about breastfeeding, anchor breastfeeding as a critical part of nutrition, engage individuals and organizations to support breastfeeding, and galvanize action to aid in strengthening policy and legislation geared towards breastfeeding. In combination, these goals of #WBW2022 will protect, promote, and support breastfeeding across multiple levels of society!

Further, WABA is focused on their Warm Chain Campaign, a course of action geared toward sustainable development strategies post-pandemic, and how breastfeeding can improve nutrition and food security, while reducing inequalities between and within countries.

West Virginia WIC planned several exciting events to celebrate and promote breastfeeding! The Central Local Agency hosted an open house in their six clinics the first week of August that included a staff meet and greet, swag bags for the first 25 people, and a raffle for the rest of the attendees. The Monongalia local agency hosted its 12th annual Baby Buffy Stroll on August 3, 10am-12pm at the Meadowbrook Mall in Bridgeport. They also gave away goodie bags and door prizes. Mid-Ohio Valley WIC Clinics celebrated on August 18, 9am-12pm at City Park Shelter #10 in Parkersburg where they had a fire truck, refreshments, and door prizes!

In addition to these local agency celebratory efforts, the State WIC Agency hosted a celebration on August 5 at the Family Resource Center, 12pm-4pm. There were educational opportunities, information sessions, as well as free healthy foods and toiletries.

Individuals and organizations can pledge to participate in #WBW2022 celebration by sending details of virtual and physical activities to WABA to be featured on the Pledge Map. Further support can be harbored by using the following hashtags on social media posts and interactions: #WBW2022, #WABA, #stepupforbreastfeeding, #WarmChain. ■

PENNSYLVANIA WIC'S STATEWIDE MEDIA CAMPAIGN REACHES MID-WAY POINT WITH POSITIVE RESULTS

By Candance Sanderson, MEd, Statewide Outreach Coordinator, PA WIC

The Pennsylvania WIC Program continued to execute the new, statewide media/advertising campaign to promote the WIC Program working towards increasing participation and retention, promoting the value of the program, qualified staff, and eliminate stigma.

The mid-point evaluation campaign results included over 23.7 million digital impressions delivered, nearly 156.5K clicks to the pawic.com website, and over 4.3 million video/audio completions. ■

MARWIC TIMES Calendar

The deadline for the Winter issue of MARWIC Times is October 22, 2022. Submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved in JPEG/PDF format) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

