

MARWIC

T · I · M · E · S

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

MARYLAND WIC LAUNCHES NEW ONGOING STAFF TRAINING PROGRAM

By Cristina Luibil, MS, LDN, Nutrition Specialist, MD WIC Training Center

The Maryland WIC Program has always been an advocate for staff training. This year, we implemented two new ongoing staff training programs, in-person sessions geared towards paraprofessional staff (the “CPPA Update”) and an online Training Library covering frequently asked ‘how-to’ topics by clinic staff.

The CPPA Update Planning Committee consisted of local agency and state staff who worked tirelessly over the course of a year to secure dates, locations, topics and presenters. Each session started with a networking hour and an ice breaker, allowing staff to meet their colleagues from other local agencies.

The topics chosen stemmed from CPPA input, based on what was pertinent to know and use in their day-to-day clinic duties. Presentations covered topics such as the opioid epidemic and substance exposed newborns, navigating difficult topics such as postpartum depression and miscarriage, Maryland WIC foods “approved or not approved” trivia, and a competitive game of Maryland WIC Jeopardy. CPPA Updates were held on three different dates to allow all CPPA staff the opportunity to attend without negatively affecting clinic schedules.

Continued on page 9



CPPA Update Planning Committee are (left to right) Sherri Sabol, Tracy Ducker, Tamara Hendricks, Cristina Luibil, Aiyana Green-Odle, Joyce Hornick, and Colleen Pierre. Not pictured are Maria Edmonds, Tricia Evix, Jackee Hirsch, Claudia Jimenez, Amy Johnson, Katie Li, and Christine Wright.

VIRGINIA LAUNCHES STATEWIDE BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY RECOGNITION PROGRAM

By Jarene Fleming, IBCLC RLC, Virginia Department of Health State Breastfeeding Coordinator

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH), in partnership with Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition, Childcare Aware of Virginia, and Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, piloted the Virginia Breastfeeding Friendly Recognition Program to highlight workplaces and early care and education settings that have created spaces and made institutional and cultural changes to support human milk feeding. VDH recognized more than three dozen organizations for being breastfeeding-friendly. Certificates were presented to the recipients at the September 6 celebration at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, VA.

“Thank you, because what you do spreads the word to others,” said VDH’s Dr. Laurie Forlano, who gave opening remarks at the event. “In addition to supporting the health of the babies that are benefiting from breast milk, you are obviously supporting the health of that mother. As important to me, both professional and personally is that you are creating systems and policies and (sending) messages to women that they matter,” said Forlano, VDH deputy commissioner for population health.

The breastfeeding-friendly recognition program is administered by the VDH Office of Family Health Services Division of Prevention and Health Promotion with assistance from the Division of Community Nutrition’s WIC Program. Self-nominations were accepted for the recognition, which required certain breastfeeding policies and practices to be in place. The program will expand in 2020, the criteria, guidelines, and application can be found here: <https://vabreastfeedingcoalition.org/> Businesses are encouraged to apply.

“Our overarching goal at the Virginia Department of Health is to promote, protect, and support breastfeeding in Virginia by educating businesses, and encouraging and supporting families within breastfeeding friendly systems. Community collaboration is essential to normalize human milk feeding and make it accessible to all,” said Jarene Fleming, VDH State Breastfeeding Coordinator. ■



Congratulations to all the winners!

WINTER 2020

■ Congratulations to the 2019 Loving Support Award Winners!

.....Page 3

■ District of Columbia’s WIC at Unity Health Care Hosts Breastfeeding Month Events

.....Page 5

■ Puerto Rico WIC Hosts Sixth Annual Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference

.....Page 7

■ NWA Conference Attendees Donate Bears to Maryland WIC

.....Page 9





MARWIC TIMES is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, Mid-Atlantic Region Office as a discretionary project of New Jersey WIC.

Cindy Weiss-Fisher, MS, RDProject Manager
NJ WIC Services
Christina BalasCreative Director
Lisa ArnoldEditor

Please submit articles or story ideas for
MARWIC TIMES to your State Editor
at the State WIC Office Address.

Delaware.....Joanne White
District of Columbia.....Christi Dorsey, MA, RDN
Jessie Lupo
Maryland.....Debbie Morgan
Ernest Le
New JerseyCindy Weiss-Fisher, MS, RD
PennsylvaniaBonnie Mellott
Puerto RicoOnellys Medina Garcia
Milane Medina
Virgin IslandsLorna Concepcion, MS, RD
Virginia.....Renee Johnson
West VirginiaRuthie Maniscalchi
MARO, USDAJennifer Nagy, MPH, RD

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442 or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

NEWS FROM THE USDA: USDA UPDATES INFANT NUTRITION AND FEEDING GUIDE TARGET AREA FOR USDA FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE MANAGEMENT EVALUATIONS

By Jennifer Nagy, Program Specialist

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) conducts Management Evaluations (ME) as part of its oversight efforts for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). An ME is a periodic assessment of State and local agency operations and administration. Target area MEs allow FNS to focus oversight efforts on key areas related to WIC Program integrity and operations and they inform the technical assistance and guidance that FNS provides for the years that follow.

FNS has targeted oversight efforts on three key areas since fiscal year (FY) 2013.

These include:

- FY 2013-2014 Vendor Management
- FY 2015-2016 Certification, Eligibility and Coordination
- FY 2017-2018 Funding and Participation

The target area for review during FYs 2020-2022 is Nutrition Services. The Nutrition Services ME examines how State agencies plan for and deliver nutrition services including nutrition and breastfeeding education. Delivering high quality nutrition services is essential to carrying out the Program's mission and ensures that WIC continues to support self-sufficiency through healthy outcomes for pregnant and postpartum women, infants and young children. Nutrition Services MEs cover core elements of the Program outlined in the WIC Nutrition Services Standards (NSS).

During FYs 2020-2022, the FNS Regional Offices across the country must conduct WIC Nutrition Services MEs on all 90 WIC State agencies. This includes 50 geographic State agencies, the District of Columbia, 34 Indian Tribal Organizations and five US territories. FNS staff from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO) will be visiting all of our State agency partners during the next three fiscal years.

State WIC staff can prepare for these MEs by accessing the State Technical Assistance Review or STAR Guides found in the ME Tool. STAR guides are a list of the exact questions that FNS will send to each State agency to complete for your Management Evaluation. In addition, the Nutrition Services Standards, available on WIC Works, are an excellent resource for preparing for your ME. And don't forget, the WIC staff in MARO are happy to answer any questions you may have or provide technical assistance as needed. ■

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC CELEBRATES 73RD INDIAN DAY INDEPENDENCE

The 73rd Indian Independence Day was celebrated on August 15 at NJ Trinitas WIC. Over 100 participants and their family members enjoyed the culinary delights and events of the day.

A healthier version of mango lassi was made that used WIC-eligible foods such as yogurt, milk and mangos. Recipes in several languages were available. Kid activities included coloring pages of the native flag, Taj Mahal, mangoes and other culturally appropriate pictures.

The educational display featured interesting facts about the culture and foods.

Yoga originated in India and it is one of the largest producers of spices and mangoes.

Guests and staff joined in

dancing to Bollywood music and learned a few dance moves led by Smitha Paulose. Staff supported the event by wearing Indian attire or wearing colors of the Indian flag: orange, green, or white. Some wore bindi decorations on their foreheads.

The Paulose family and several employees provided a luncheon for staff that included samosas, Indian fried rice, a variety of side dishes and Indian mango ice cream. It was a fun day to embrace the Indian culture. ■



Celebrating Indian Independence Day are (right to left) Allison Proano, Smitha Paulose, Stefanny Vargas-Masis, Raisa Luna and Nirea Jackson.

USDA CONGRATULATES THE 2019 LOVING SUPPORT AWARD WINNERS!

By Kelly Mannherz, MS, IBCLC, USDA Regional Nutritionist

In 2014, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service developed the Loving Support Awards of Excellence as a way to recognize and celebrate WIC local agencies that provide exemplary breastfeeding peer counseling programs. The application for this prestigious award assesses agencies' adherence to the WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling, which provides standards for program implementation, oversight, staffing, and training. Recognition is given in three performance levels: Gold, Gold Premiere, and Gold Elite.

In 2019 USDA staff were so pleased to present Gold Loving Support Awards to six WIC local agencies in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Congratulations to the awardees:

- District of Columbia: Children's National Medical Center
- Maryland: Baltimore County Department of Health and Community Clinic Incorporated
- New Jersey: Jersey City WIC and Rutgers New Jersey Medical Center
- West Virginia: Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department

The fiscal year 2020 application period for the Loving Support Awards opened on October 7 and remains open until December 13. USDA encourages all local agencies to apply so that your commitment to providing outstanding breastfeeding support can be recognized. These awards are valid for four years, so all 2015 and 2016 awardees are encouraged to reapply and be commended for their continued achievement. The Application, Application Instructions, and FAQs are available for download on the FNS public website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/loving-support-award-excellence-program>. ■



West Virginia Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department



Baltimore County Department of Health



Community Clinic Incorporated

See related stories on pages 6-7

CHESTER COUNTY WIC PARTICIPANTS CELEBRATE END OF PAPER CHECKS

By Siobahn Kelly, Outreach Coordinator/Nutritionist, Pennsylvania Chester County WIC Program

During the last week of September, Pennsylvania's Chester County WIC staff prepared to head to Harrisburg, PA for training on the new PENN Management Information System (MIS) and eWIC smart-cards. Clerk Yolanda Diaz began her WIC career 30 years ago hand-writing benefits onto paper checks for participants and said it felt "surreal" that it was time to give out the last sets of paper checks to our participants. However, you can see how excited our participants were to be transitioning away from the paper checks onto a new, modern eWIC card. Many Chester County participants said they are especially looking forward to more discretion and convenience while using their WIC benefits at the grocery stores.

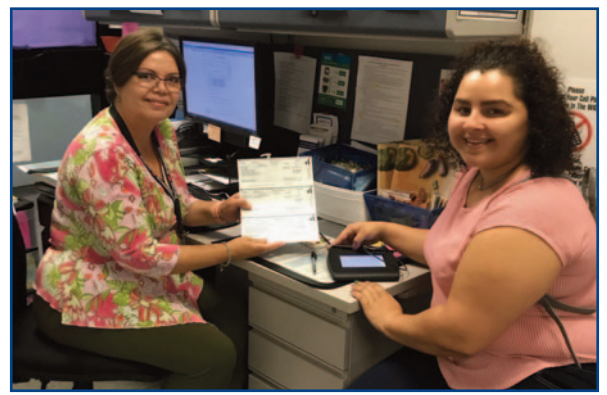
During the week-long training from September 23-27, knowledgeable State Agency staff taught Chester County and Maternal and Family Health Services, Inc. WIC staff all about the ins and outs of the new PENN MIS and the eWIC cards. Upon returning to our clinics for mock clinic day on September 30, staff decorated the waiting areas with streamers and banners to celebrate the introduction of the new eWIC card. Participants walked in on go-live day October 1 excited to pick up the first eWIC cards and felt they were truly a part of a significant transition for the PA WIC Program.

And...so far, so good! Chester County WIC staff have risen to the challenge of learning not just one, but two brand new systems while continuing to provide our participants with quality services. As the fourth region to roll out the new MIS and eWIC cards, we appreciated all the invaluable advice and guidance provided by local agencies that had already gone live, especially Lancaster County who invited us to pay a visit to their clinic and observe for a day.

Chester County WIC Director Lisa Larsen said, "Through WIC we can offer nutrition education, healthy food and breastfeeding support, and this new, convenient eWIC way for our families to shop has come a long way from hand-written checks!" ■



Chester County WIC participant Porfira and her daughter Laura Sofia are all smiles after receiving their last set of paper checks at the Toughkenamon clinic.



Clerk Yolanda Diaz happily gives out the last set of paper checks (after 30 years!) to WIC participant Karol at the West Chester clinic.



Chester County WIC Staff (left to right) Katherine Nunez, Allie Barajas, Valerie Delgado and Talia Valentini enthusiastically give out last the set of paper checks to WIC participant Rachel and her daughter Jordyn at the Coatesville clinic.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S WIC AT UNITY HEALTH CARE HOSTS BREASTFEEDING MONTH EVENTS

By Paige Zaitlin, Unity Healthcare WIC Director

To celebrate World Breastfeeding Month, WIC at Unity Health Care, Inc., of Washington DC, hosted an event on August 15. To encourage healthy eating during pregnancy and while breastfeeding, WIC invited Arcadia Mobile Market to have a pop-up farmer's market and Mary's Center SNAP-Ed to do a food demonstration using nutritious WIC foods. SNAP-Ed made smoothies and whole wheat pasta salad. Arcadia sold fresh fruits and vegetables and accepted (and doubled)

WIC Cash-Value Checks, Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks, Senior FMNP checks, and SNAP (food stamps). Other vendors included AmeriHealth Caritas, and AmeriGroup DC, which are two insurers who came to share information about programs for their members and general health information, as well as, Educare, an early learning center in a low-income area of DC, and SOME (So Others Might Eat), a community-based organization serving DC's homeless population.

During the event, WIC raffled off Giant (grocery store) gift cards and a Boppy pillow, which is designed to help support babies while breastfeeding. All vendors provided health information and giveaways like reusable bags, salad shakers, bibs, and baby t-shirts. We hope this will be the first of many events to come. ■



Sharon Wright, IBCLC (left) and Amy Lukin, CPA and LA Breastfeeding Coordinator, staff the table.



Pictured (left to right) are Breastfeeding Peer Counselors Lilliemae Bonilla, Zeida Eslava-Cortez, and Aleta Grandison, and State Breastfeeding Coordinator Emily Woody.



Enjoying the day are (left to right) Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Aleta Grandison, Emily Bonilla (Lilliemae's daughter), Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Lilliemae Bonilla and WIC Director Paige Zaitlin.

WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY MOV WIC WELCOMES HOME VISITATION ORGANIZATIONS

By Jennifer Habeb, Nutritionist II, Outreach Coordinator

West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley (MOV) WIC recently held a presentation inviting organizations involved with home visitation programs for children to the WIC office to get better acquainted with what WIC provides and how our programs can collaborate better between each other.

Representatives from Birth to Three, Right from the Start, and Parents as Teachers attended the presentation. The goal for us was to provide educational outreach through a more personal approach.

We utilized a West Virginia State Agency-made "Welcome to WIC" video along with a locally produced slide show about what our wonderful program provides to the community.

Shannon Hedrick, our new outreach collaborator, facilitated the meeting. Nutritionist Jennifer Habeb and Certified Lactation Specialist Tammy Moyers spoke about what breastfeeding and nutrition services WIC clients receive when coming in for their visits.

Even though we currently have a good relationship with these organizations, everyone that attended learned something new about WIC. Whether it was from how clients can complete nutrition education or what types of formulas we can provide, everyone walked away with a better understanding of our services. We also played a few games. Attendees also had the opportunity to enjoy the light refreshments that were provided.

Our upcoming presentations include foster care organizations, early childhood education organizations, and hospitals and women's care centers. We look forward to developing better relationships with all our community partners and spreading the word throughout our region of all the wonderful aspects of WIC. ■



Representatives from MOV WIC, Birth to Three, Right from the Start, and Parents as Teachers spend the morning together learning about WIC and how we can collaborate better with each other.

DELAWARE WIC HOSTS BREASTFEEDING CONFERENCE

By Ida Lewis, IBCLC, RLC and Charmaine Sampson, IBCLC, RLC

The Delaware WIC Program hosted a one-day World Breastfeeding celebration on August 1. The conference was held in the Dover Downs Hotel and Casino in the Rollins Center with approximately 185 attendees.

The Johnson Family Brass Combo, previous WIC participants of Milford, DE provided musical renditions as attendees entered the conference.

The speakers of the conference included Thomas Innis of The Ripples Group located in Boston. He reported, according to the WIC Data System statistics, breastfeeding rates consistently improved from 2013 through 2018. Mothers contacted by a peer counselor were 61% more likely to breastfeed at six months. It looks like the hard work of the peer counselors is paying off.

Dr. Christina Smillie, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, FABM provided two lectures: "Baby-Led Breastfeeding: The Neurophysiologic Basis for Infant Feeding" and "The Mother Baby Dance: The Right Brain Connection." The evaluations showed that everyone enjoyed both the presentations.

After lunch, four WIC breastfeeding mothers – DeShawna Perry, DeSheena McCray, Dominique Lawson and Ana Hernandez – discussed their experiences with the WIC Program along with their use of eWIC and peer counselor services.

The conference concluded with a lively presentation by Nancy Hastings RN, IBCLC of Beebe Medical Center. Hastings' topic, "Protecting the Breastfeeding Accomplishments in Delaware," had the audience laughing and at times moved to tears.

Lunch was provided to all registrants. During conference breaks, the attendees visited vendors that provided additional health and community resources with breastfeeding information. EZ Clicks, a local photo booth company, provided a bit of fun and memories.

The Breastfeeding Coordinators have started planning the 2020 breastfeeding celebration and look forward to even greater community participation. ■



Former WIC participants Megan, Kara, Joshua, Kyra and Michael Johnson provided musical entertainment.



Thomas Innis



Dr. Christine Smillie



Nancy Hastings, RN, IBCLC

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK: VIRGINIA WIC AND CACFP PARTNERSHIP

The Mission of the Virginia Department of Health is to protect the health and promote the well-being of all people in Virginia. Our vision is that Virginia will become "the healthiest state in the nation." The work we do everyday in the Virginia WIC Program speaks directly to our agency's mission and vision. The Virginia WIC Program is housed in the agency's Division of Community Nutrition along with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers.

For the past year, Virginia WIC and CACFP have collaborated to streamline efforts to connect participants to the resources available to them. The CACFP has incorporated WIC information into CACFP trainings to ensure day care centers are knowledgeable about resources available to their participants. In addition, WIC Dietetic Interns create CACFP menus to help centers provide nutritious meals for participants with specialized diets (including vegan, vegetarian, Kosher/religious-friendly, culturally appropriate, diabetic-friendly, and seasonal). The CACFP provides participating centers with the WIC Food List to help centers navigate whole grain rich foods and cereal sugar limits. Thanks to the new CACFP meal pattern, which allows centers to receive meal reimbursement for on-site nursing, the CACFP team coordinates with the WIC breastfeeding team to work with centers on creating breastfeeding-friendly environments and encourage nursing on-site.

Most recently, Virginia WIC staff assisted in the promotion of the Virginia Farm to CACFP Week, held October 21-25. Virginia Farm to CACFP aims to connect participants to nutrition education, Virginia-grown foods, and gardening opportunities. Through these activities, CACFP participants learn about Virginia agriculture while building their knowledge and interest in healthy foods. To kick off the celebration, WIC and CACFP staff participated in the 'Crunch Heard Round the Commonwealth' on October 9. Staff members made noise for Virginia agriculture by biting into a Virginia grown apple! Schools, centers, homes, and organizations around the Commonwealth bit into an apple on the same day to celebrate Farm to School and Farm to CACFP. The collaborative efforts of the two programs are a win-win for Virginia families.

"Teamwork definitely makes the dream work here in Virginia," said Paula Garrett, Division of Community Nutrition Director. Garrett says the enthusiasm of the program members is infectious and she is looking forward to future collaborations from the teams. ■



Staff from Virginia WIC and CACFP gather together to take a bite of an apple.

TWO NEW JERSEY WIC PROGRAMS RECEIVE USDA LOVING SUPPORT GOLD AWARDS

NJ WIC is happy to announce that the Jersey City WIC and Rutgers NJMS WIC programs received the USDA Loving Support Gold Award of Excellence for Exemplary Breastfeeding Support and Practices, which was presented to the staff during our World Breastfeeding Week celebrations.

Rutgers NJMS WIC Program and the Jersey City WIC Program use the Loving Support model to help our mothers meet their exclusive breastfeeding goals. Breastfeeding support staff is consistently available on a daily basis. Our WIC programs have three full-time peer counselors present at the main sites. At Rutgers NJMS WIC, the peer counselor spends a few hours each day visiting the University Hospital OB/GYN clinic to provide prenatal breastfeeding education to new moms registering for WIC. The peer counselor also visits the labor/delivery unit at University Hospital, where she is able to support moms with breastfeeding concerns before they are discharged home. In addition, a lactation consultant is available three days a week at the Rutgers NJMS WIC site, two days at the Jersey City WIC site and on call 24/7 to support the peer counselors as needed.

In an effort to address breastfeeding challenges in the early postpartum period, the Rutgers NJMS WIC Program has developed Memoranda of Understanding with local area hospitals. This collaboration allows our peer counselor to provide breastfeeding support to our participants within the first two days of birth. In the event we are unable to provide support at the hospital, University Hospital, Clara Maass Medical Center and Jersey City Medical Center lactation consultants refer the moms to Rutgers NJMS WIC and Jersey City WIC lactation consultants to have the mother contacted.

As a result, an appointment is scheduled for their first infant certification appointment at their earliest convenience, while in the hospital. We also use this initial telephone contact to identify any breastfeeding challenges the dyad maybe experiencing and we continue to follow up through telephone contact throughout the first month postpartum and beyond. If immediate breastfeeding assistance is requested prior to the initial infant appointment, the participant can be scheduled for an individual breastfeeding consult within a day. If the mother is unable to visit the WIC office, a peer counselor and lactation consultant can offer to make a home visit. All WIC staff is trained to refer concerns to the breastfeeding department. In addition we partner with community programs that support breastfeeding, such as the Partnership for Maternal & Child Health of Northern New Jersey, which provides health care services such as nursing home visits and parenting classes.

For our exclusively breastfeeding mothers without health insurance, the Rutgers NJMS WIC Program provides breast pumps appropriate to their needs. This anticipatory assistance enables our moms to continue breastfeeding while working. Lastly, our WIC Program provides incentives to our exclusively breastfeeding mothers.

We appreciate all the hard work that the WIC staff offers on a daily basis to make sure that breastfeeding services are incorporated into the regular WIC clinic flow. We appreciate all the time that the USDA team and the State WIC office put into reviewing and selecting the recipients of the Loving Support Gold award. We are extremely pleased to be two of six in the Mid-Atlantic Region to have been selected. We plan to continue to work to meet our goal to reduce predominantly formula feeding and helping our mothers, who are more like family to us, meet their breastfeeding goals and needs.

WIC participants and staff showed great excitement and appreciation for the opportunity to share in this great accomplishment with us. The staff is proud to have been selected, and feel great enthusiasm to have been recognized for all of their hard work and dedication to our participants. We strongly believe that breastfeeding mothers, their support systems, and their breastfed babies will have a great impact on changing the world. Again, we thank every member who has contributed in any way possible to make this award achievable. ■



NJMS staff (left to right) Dr. Hanan Tanuos, Adriene Cooper, Susan Stephenson-Martin, Mackieba Reyes, Kathy Gonzalez and Peter Sahu receive their award.



State WIC presenting the award to Mackieba Reyes (center) are Susan Stephenson-Martin (left) and Cindy Weiss-Fisher.



USDA staff joined the celebration. Pictured are (left to right) Kelly Mannherz, Susan Stephenson-Martin, Mackieba Reyes, Kathy Gonzalez and Danae Lewis.

IRONMAN? NOPE IT'S IRONWOMAN IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Emma Walters

Laura Casto, who works as the State Office, Policy and Procedure Coordinator and Nutritionist with the West Virginia WIC Program, finished the Ironman 70.3 World Championship in Nice, France on September 7.

This race was qualification only; she qualified in 2018 at Ironman 70.3 Atlantic City by placing third in her age group. Along with competitors from all over the world, the World Championship race featured a stunning 1.2-mile swim in the Mediterranean Sea, a 56-mile bike ride through the French Alps and finally a 13.1 mile run along the Promenade des Anglais, a path that parallels the Sea.

In 2020, Laura plans to compete in her first Ironman distance race, a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run, to work towards qualifying for the Ironman World Championships, held each year in Hawaii. ■

Laura Casto



PUERTO RICO WIC HOSTS SIXTH ANNUAL NUTRITION AND BREASTFEEDING CONFERENCE: “WIC A GOOD BEGINNING...TRANSCENDING BARRIERS”

By Isamarie Sandoval Santiago, LDN, MBA-HS, Nutrition Education Coordinator

On September 26-27, the Puerto Rico WIC Program held its Sixth Annual Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference at the “Complejo Ferial de Puerto Rico,” located in the Municipality of Ponce. This educational activity was focused on new objectives and initiatives towards quality services provided by the WIC Program, from an inclusion perspective. The reason for this has been the observation of a significant cultural change, where the mother was the one who made the visits to the clinic and looked after all care related to the infant or child, but now it's different! As times have changed, today we see fathers taking on more active roles in the health care and education of their children. In addition, other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and godparents assist in raising infants and children. Therefore, this conference focused on these changes and settings that demand WIC be ready to take on new changes and challenges.

The aforementioned educational activity required the participation of all employees due to its essential purpose, which was to offer continuous education in nutrition and breastfeeding, in order to continue providing quality and excellent services. During both training days, in addition to the topic related to inclusion, values and aspects of equality were also emphasized. All this was carried out to promote the availability of good health and nutrition for all our participants equally, without obstacles or barriers of any kind.

Some of the conference topics included “How to Customize the Services of the Program,” “What do I Need to Make the Nutritional Assessment Process (VENA) a Success?,” and “Competencies to Develop Customer Awareness.”

The conference was a valuable and successful learning event, where the WIC Program demonstrated that it continues to give its maximum efforts for the benefit of the population we serve. ■



Meet the new characters of the Puerto Rico WIC Program – “Viggy” and “Frutalina.”



Representatives of different clinics islandwide received awards for their achievements during 2018-2019. The staff is together with Jeanette Canino, LDN, Executive Director of the Puerto Rico WIC Program, (top row, center); as well as with Carlos Ortiz Medina, Director of the Caribbean Area Office FNS-USDA (top row, far right).

WEST VIRGINIA'S MID-OHIO VALLEY WIC WINS LOVING SUPPORT GOLD AWARD

By Emma Walters

West Virginia's Mid-Ohio Valley (MOV) WIC Program was presented the 2018 Loving Support Gold award on September 26. This award designation is provided to agencies that have a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program that meets the high standards and core components of the Food and Nutrition Service WIC Breastfeeding Model for Peer Counseling.

All eight West Virginia WIC agencies have received this award once during the last four years. In 2015, the recipients were Wheeling/Ohio, Randolph/Elkins and Central. Valley, Monongalia and TSN won in 2016; Shenandoah received the award in 2017, and MOV in 2018. ■



Denise Ferris, State WIC Director (right) accepted the award on behalf of MOV from Roberta Hodsdon of the MARO Regional Office, School Nutrition Program.

NEW JERSEY'S NORTH HUDSON WIC PROGRAM CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL FOOD DAY

On October 16, New Jersey's North Hudson Community Action Corporation WIC Program held its annual International Food Day celebration. It was an educational morning complete with foods and traditional crafts from around the world. In the spirit of the event, the classroom was festively decorated with flags from the various nations being represented.

WIC staff prepared delicious and healthy dishes that are staples of their native countries. Participants were enthusiastic to try the colorful variety of foods. The banquet-style table consisted of foods ranging from hearty vegetable samosas from India, to a colorful tabbouleh salad from Turkey, to rice and chicken from Dominican Republic and everything in between. As the staff served participants these ethnic delights, they gave a brief description and history of the cultures each food represented.

The event was a celebration of different cultures and appreciation for diversity. Participants were able to learn about and embrace a variety of nations that they were not aware of before, as well as further familiarizing themselves with the culture and customs of their friends and neighbors. The festivities truly captured the spirit of International Food Day. ■



Sharing foods from around the world are Nutritionist Lilibeth Garcia, WIC Coordinator Karen Lazarowitz, Chief Nutritionist Crystal Khacherian and Nutritionist Vanessa Reyes.

PENNSYLVANIA'S ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECEIVES WIC GRANT FROM NO KID HUNGRY

No Kid Hungry has awarded \$10,000 in funding to the Pennsylvania's Allegheny County Health Department WIC Program. Grant funding will help the agency, who is partnering with the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, redesign their WIC clinic space to bring nutrition education to life for kids and adults.

The Allegheny County Health Department is one of eight agencies to receive funding up to \$10,000 from No Kid Hungry in its first-ever round of grants aimed at supporting children ages 0-5. The grants are designed to address declining WIC participation rates and provide funding for agencies to test strategies aimed to improve WIC participant experiences.

"Early childhood is a critical period of growth and development, and access to adequate food and nutrition can have long-lasting implications on the health and wellbeing of kids," said Elyse Kovalsky, senior manager of program innovation at No Kid Hungry. "No Kid Hungry is thrilled to be able to support these innovative ideas aimed at transforming the WIC experience for kids and families – at the WIC clinic, at the grocery store and beyond."

"The National WIC Association is excited to see the range of creative and innovative projects being implemented and we look forward to sharing findings from these projects with the wider WIC community," said Rev. Douglas Greenaway, President and CEO of the National WIC Association.

WIC is one of the most important and effective federal nutrition programs. Benefits are for children under the age of five or women who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Through WIC, parents and caregivers can get nutritious foods for their young children, as well as access to important services at WIC clinics, including nutrition education, counseling and referrals to local health and welfare agencies.

About Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 6 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids start the day with a nutritious breakfast and families learn the skills they need to shop and cook on a budget. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Join us at NoKidHungry.org. ■

NWA CONFERENCE ATTENDEES DONATE BEARS TO MARYLAND WIC

At the NWA Conference in April, attendees from all over the country participated in a Build-A-Bear workshop to make stuffed bears. Everyone had a great time connecting with each other, filling up bears, selecting out-fits, and in some cases, writing customized notes for participants. As the host state for the NWA conference, the bears were graciously donated to Maryland WIC for distribution to infants and children throughout the state.

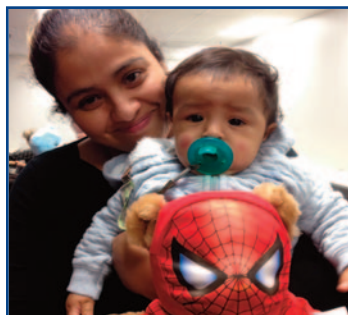
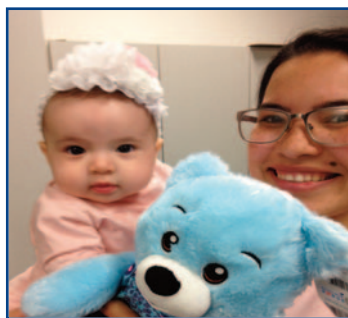
Locally, in celebration of Breastfeeding Month, the Howard County and Greater Baden WIC agencies hosted events to celebrate WIC participants. Families were invited and participated in several activities. There was a cooking demonstration, free chair massages and car seat safety education. Information sessions were provided by United Health Care, Maryland Physicians Care, University of Maryland Extension and Howard County Health Department. The best part was that the children attending the events received the donated bears from the NWA Conference. The smiles on the children's

faces as they received their bears made the events a great success; we hope to do something similar again next year.

We can't thank NWA enough for their donation to our children. ■



WIC participants in Maryland with their new stuffed bears.



NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC ATTENDS HILLSIDE HEALTH FAIR

Trinitas WIC attended a local health fair in Hillside, NJ on October 6. Health fairs are the perfect opportunity to connect with the community and other services. Being an educational and interactive event that focuses on preventive health makes WIC the perfect fit.

Our outreach goal is to keep our children on the Program. Many of the children enroll in pre-school and often drop out of WIC. Evening and Saturday hours are available. Free health screening is provided. Breastfeeding support groups are held each month. Nutrition and breastfeeding education are provided, along with community referrals. At the main site participants may apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and apply for health insurance. ■



Staffing the health fair are Lactation Instructor Raisa Luna (left) and Senior Registrar Chandra Curry.

NEW JERSEY'S TRINITAS WIC CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

"Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding" was the 2019 theme for World Breastfeeding Week in August. NJ's Trinitas WIC breastfeeding services focuses on inclusive concepts to encourage parents to realize their breastfeeding goals.

"Empowerment is a process that requires evidence-based unbiased information and support to create an enabling environment where mothers have successful breastfeeding experiences," explained Lactation Service Coordinator Maribel Solano. Breastfeeding is in the mother's domain and when fathers, partners, families, workplaces and communities support her, breastfeeding improves.

WIC breastfeeding services include monthly contacts with pregnant and exclusive breastfeeding women, hospital and home visitations, group support and education, assessments and provision of needed aids and incentives.

Breastfeeding has numerous health benefits for infants and mothers. Studies have focused on the racial disparities in breastfeeding initiation and duration. Estimates have indicated that non-Hispanic black infants are less likely to breastfeed compared with other racial/ethnic groups. Evidence-based practices of hospitals that support initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of birth and do not provide any formula without a medical indication have associated increases in breastfeeding initiation rates, duration and exclusivity. Returning to work is a major consideration for breastfeeding plans. Staff work closely with mothers and based upon needs and assessments information on provision of pumps and other aids are provided.

Fifteen breastfeeding women were honored by the presentation of certificates during breastfeeding support sessions in August. Wellcare HMO sponsored a breakfast. Gifts bags were donated by Amerigroup and Wellcare. Families share and bond with each other during the monthly breastfeeding support sessions held at Trinitas WIC. ■



Attending the August 9 breastfeeding support class were (staff, back row) Raisa Herrera, Rosa Paredes, Maribel Solano and Miriam Zokner, and attendees Karina Abrego, Silvana Copa, Karen Perez, Maria Sanchez, Alma Tapia, Lizeth Uribe, Maria Zelaya, Rocio Portillo, Maria Ortega and Sandra Franco.



Attending the August 2 breastfeeding support class were Kathya Castro, Ashley Scalzulli, Susana Boada, Maria Velez and Sarell Rubio.

MD WIC Launches New Ongoing Staff Training Program from page 1

The online Training Library consists of five- to ten-minute webinars recorded by Training Center staff. These supplemental training webinars cover clinic procedure topics such as hemoglobin collection and partial benefits voids, and nutrition education topics such as helping picky eaters and telephone counseling. The webinars were created to reinforce what is learned during their initial new employee training.

The Training Module library is a dynamic project overseen by the Training Center nutritionists, adapting to local agency needs, staff requests, and preference. ■

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S CHILDREN'S WIC HOSTS USDA AND USAID VISITORS

By Jaya Janakiram, Children's Hospital WIC Director

D C's Children's WIC hosted Martin Forman Nutrition Fellows from the USDA and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This year's Fellows were from Sudan and Nepal. USDA's "Food for Peace" program works together with USAID's Nutrition program to combat under-nutrition. The partnership has made a significant impact on global health.

In its early days, the program helped feed millions of hungry people overseas with donated U.S. surplus food for emergency relief, school lunches and institutional feeding. Starting in 2015, USAID has offered the Martin Forman fellowships for national nutrition staff from USAID country offices.

The fellowships are from a program dedicated to the work of Dr. Martin J. Forman, who established and directed the USAID Office of Nutrition for its first 20 years. The fellowship is a professional development opportunity for country staff through temporary rotational assignments, including structured learning components, at USAID headquarters in Washington, DC. The Fellows visited Children's WIC to learn more about how a federally funded nutrition program operates. WIC staff at Children's Hospital provided a background of the WIC Program and walked them through the certification process. The Fellows left with a deeper appreciation for federally funded nutrition programs and were impressed with the services offered through the WIC Program. ■



Pictured (left to right) Libia McDonough, WIC staff; Olivia Newman, USDA Nutrition Program Analyst; Stephanie Mork, USAID Nutrition Intern; Toni Henderson-Jones, WIC staff; Debendra Adhikari, Nutrition Specialist, Health Office, USAID/Nepal; Adam Hamid Sabil, Food Security Specialist, Office of Food For Peace, USAID/Sudan; Fartun Yussuf, USAID Nutrition Program Analyst; Yibo Wood, USDA Global Coordinator; Jaya Janakiram, WIC Director; Devanshi Patel, WIC staff; and Jennifer Hernandez, WIC staff.

CITY OF EAST ORANGE (NJ) CELEBRATES WORLD BREASTFEEDING MONTH

By Vickie Nizin, Breastfeeding Manager

The City of East Orange (NJ) WIC clinic held its annual World Breastfeeding Week program on August 6. Approximately 40 adults participated. In addition, there were many children and infants. This year's theme, "Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding," was the focus. This diverse program was supported by resources from within and outside the community.

The program included a rich story-sharing time for all who attended on why they breastfed, plan to breastfeed, challenges which they faced and or have overcome, strategies for working and breastfeeding and sharing by fathers as well. There were presentations on Soca dancing by Audra Groh, yoga and meditation by Nancy Candea and Fadja, Acelleron representative Kristin Quinn presented an informative session on Medicaid breast pumps, and our chief nutritionist Olufunke Odedele made a presentation on nutrition and breastfeeding.

In addition, community member Evelyn Peralta and family provided face painting to the children, which helped families feel embraced. The program ended with a lovely lunch. The program was amazingly successful because of the beautiful spirit and energy, the feeling of warmth and friendship, and the wise information that was shared among the families who attended. All felt the love and support of the community to breastfeed. In addition, commentary cards were added to our photo gallery of Black celebrities who breastfed on "The Cost of Not Breastfeeding." We invite visitors to come in and view our gallery.

Black Breastfeeding Week Celebration

On August 20, a small group of WIC breastfeeding moms gathered for a viewing and discussion of "Chocolate Milk: The Documentary Series." After the film, two African-American lactation consultants from the RWJBarnabas Health and Vickie Nizin, East Orange WIC's Breastfeeding Manager, facilitated a discussion. The film followed the lives of three individuals and the impact of race and racism on services they get and work they do. One was a mother who wanted to have a natural birth and fully breastfeed, who ended up with a cesarean, struggling with her breastfeeding, having her relationship not work out and having to work to support her family. It demonstrated the challenges of trying to get help and not being able to afford it. The second followed a WIC peer counselor who ultimately becomes a lactation consultant and her commitment to working with African-American women. The third followed a black midwife and her struggles to get fair wages and respect for her skills. The after film discussion topics included the lactation consultant sharing her challenges she faced being black and getting whites to trust her skills and expertise. It was a small gathering with five moms and we look forward to having more participation next year. ■

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S MARY'S CENTER WIC CELEBRATES BREASTFEEDING

By Akua Odi Boateng, MS, RD, LD, WIC Director, Mary's Center, Washington DC

Breastfeeding is celebrated worldwide in August to encourage breastfeeding and promote the health of babies around the world. The Mary's Center WIC Program in Washington, DC held a breastfeeding fair in line with the theme for this year, "Sustaining Breastfeeding Together." The fair showcased how resources in the community can help to sustain long-term breastfeeding.

Various community organizations that provide services to mothers in the community were invited to showcase how their programs can help a mother increase the duration of her breastfeeding. The Home Visiting program of Mary's Center, which supports mothers during pregnancy and after the delivery, provided information on how to receive services. Pacify, a DC-based app that gives pregnant women and new mothers 24/7 access to a lactation consultant, demonstrated how to ask questions through the app. Breath DC, a non-profit community health organization created to fight all forms of lung disease, educated mothers on the effects of second-hand smoking and how they can get resources to quit or help their building to be smoke-free. The Briya Public Charter School, an education center for adults and young children, encouraged mothers who need to learn English or acquire a high school certificate to enroll with their babies. The Mary's Center SNAP-Ed Program, an evidence-based program that helps people lead healthy lives, conducted a cooking demo where they demonstrated quick, easy, and healthy recipes that busy moms can make using WIC foods. And lastly, The Bilingual Health Assistance Program, a program that helps individuals apply for benefits, was on hand to educate mothers about their health insurance options.

Overall, 30 families participated. They were very engaged and appreciative of the interactive nature of the celebration. The community partners were also happy with the opportunity to meet with mothers in the community. Peer counselors worked hard throughout the month to promote the event by making phone calls and sending out text messages through DC's BfedDC texting system. The event was truly a success and we look forward to planning next year's celebration! ■



Community breastfeeding specialists gather to discuss the film, "Chocolate Milk."



Julia Flores and son Julian Reyes enjoying breastfeeding festivities in the clinic.



WIC families, staff and community organizations enjoying the event.



Pictured (left to right) are Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Faiza Hamza, WIC Director Akua Odi Boateng, and WIC CPPA Yudith Portillo Prieto.

NEW JERSEY NORTH HUDSON WIC PROGRAM WEAVES A BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT NETWORK

By Wamaitha Mirie

National Breastfeeding Month was a time of reflection and celebration at New Jersey's North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) WIC Program. As the staff busied themselves with decorating the clinic and preparing for our annual breastfeeding fair, the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) theme gave us pause to envision a holistic approach to breastfeeding support. Our participants face a variety of challenges that directly impact their decision to breastfeed; the WIC staff is often the primary source of breastfeeding support and as a result we have to constantly redefine what it means to "Empower Parents to Enable Breastfeeding."

Increasingly research has demonstrated that working collaboratively with public health agencies and community stakeholders can positively impact breastfeeding rates. Effectively cultivating relationships remains an evolving process which the NHCAC WIC Program's fair tries to facilitate by serving as a venue for building bridges that connect various health care providers to each other and our participants. We hosted our breastfeeding fair at Donnelly Memorial Park, a scenic location overlooking the Hudson River. Our pregnant and breastfeeding mothers spent the day learning about other services such as the Partnership for Maternal Child Health of Northern NJ which provides home visitation and mental health referrals, the Palisades Success Center which facilitates support groups and parenting services and health insurance providers who facilitate access to medical care. The NHCAC women's health, pediatrics, dental and medical assistants attended to provide free health screenings and information.

The breastfeeding fair offered an avenue to gain familiarity and explore future partnerships to enable continued communication and consolidation of services among various agencies. Our participants enjoyed the kinship of breastfeeding and sharing with other women in a relaxing environment; they sampled tasty nutritious snacks and participated in a yoga session, led by Xiomara Rivas, a certified instructor. The event ended with the mothers leaving with breastfeeding aids, including nursing bras, nursing pillows, infant slings.

We would like to thank all of our supporters who made this year's event a success: Amerigroup, Horizon NJ Health, United Healthcare, Whole Foods, Extra Supermarket, 7-Eleven, Bambi Baby, Leading Lady, ACME, BJ's Wholesale Club and Bravado. ■



The NHCAC WIC Program staff, joined by two clowns, poses for a group photo.



Yoga Instructor Xiomara Rivas demonstrating stretching techniques.

RESOURCE GUIDE CREATED FOR LOCAL BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS IN WEST VIRGINIA

By Lauren Korzep, Shenandoah Nutritionist/Outreach Coordinator

A resource guide was created for local mothers to streamline breastfeeding support services in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. One of the WIC clinics in the eastern panhandle has seen an increase in breastfeeding rates since its local hospital started its initiative to become a Baby-Friendly Hospital and was awarded international recognition as a Designated Baby-Friendly birth facility in December of 2018.

The resource guide was created by the newly formed Eastern Panhandle Breastfeeding Coalition consisting of members from the local WIC agency, Berkeley and Jefferson Medical Centers, Shenandoah Community Health, and community members with a special interest in supporting breastfeeding mothers. Many moms stop breastfeeding because of lack of support or knowledge about breastfeeding. One of the goals of the coalition is to increase access to breastfeeding support.

The resource guide highlights local International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants, Certified Lactation Consultants, meeting times and locations of four local breastfeeding support groups. It also includes information on obtaining a breast pump, local ear, nose, and throat (ENTs) specialists and pediatric dentists who can diagnose and release tongue ties. The brochure even has information on web-based breastfeeding support such as the USDA WIC breastfeeding website, videos, medications and breastfeeding, and a very successful local mom-to-mom breastfeeding Facebook support group with over 1,300 members.

We hope that this is an initial start to many projects that will support local mothers in their breastfeeding journey. ■



A sneak peek at the breastfeeding resource guide.



**MARWIC
TIMES
Calendar**

The deadline for the Spring issue of MARWIC Times is February 6, 2020. Submit articles, photos and calendar events to your State editor. No Polaroid pictures. 5" x 7" digital photos (saved as JPEGs) preferred. All photographs must include a detailed caption.

CORRECTION

In the Summer issue of MARWIC TIMES, we misidentified the women in this photo. They are Claudette Welch and Aderonke Adegbite of the Johns Hopkins University WIC Program, who celebrated National Nutrition Month with a Create-Your-Own-Parfait Bar at their monthly staff meeting. We apologize for the error.



MILKAPALOOZA: THIRD ANNUAL COMMUNITY BREASTFEEDING CELEBRATION IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA HEALTH DISTRICT

By Candice Mitchell, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Public Health Outreach

Over the summer, Central Virginia Health District helped to celebrate Milkapalooza, a community event held annually in recognition of World Breastfeeding Month. This event was sponsored by Member One Federal Credit Union through The Motherhood Collective, Humankind, Live Healthy Lynchburg and Women and Children's Services at Centra. It is a huge community event that brings us all together as one partnership with one main focus - to sustain, normalize and support breastfeeding.

This celebration is held on the front lawn of our very own Centra Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, VA, where many different organizations, coalitions, vendors and health agencies pop up a tent and pull out a table to share breastfeeding information, bring awareness and have a whole lot of fun. There were games, face painting, obstacle courses, canvas painting, bubble blowing, balloon animal artistry, a petting zoo, and even the opportunity to meet your favorite princess or become a superhero, along with an abundance of food trucks from which to choose numerous tasty cuisines.

All community organizations were given the task to create something special at their respective booths to give the feel of a carnival/circus theme and to have a fun activity for children and their parents to participate in as they moved around the event.

For the Central Virginia Health District, we had a fun activity where you could fish babies out of a water tank called "save the babies." This game involved a fish tank, mini fishing pole, water and tiny baby figures with magnets attached to their bottoms. The children were instructed to fish out or save as many babies as possible, and as a prize we helped the children make bracelets out of pipe cleaners and buttons or color pictures of mommies breastfeeding babies.

At noon we gathered on the front steps of Centra Virginia Baptist Hospital for a celebratory Latch-On for our breastfeeding mothers, followed by a Splash-On for our non-breastfeeding mothers. We were also graced with the presence of Jarene Fleming, IBCLC, State Breastfeeding Coordinator for the Virginia Department of Health, who was presented with a special plaque for World Breastfeeding Month during a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

This event was so much fun and we truly enjoyed participating with our community partners. Every year it gets bigger and better. Connecting with the community through these events lets us know that we are making an impact and that what we do matters so much to those for whom we do it. We look forward to next year and an even greater turn out. ■



Staffing the table were (left to right) are Office Service Specialist Kelly Van Clief, IBCLC State Breastfeeding Coordinator for the Virginia Health District Jarene Fleming, and Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Candice Mitchell.

The MARWIC TIMES newsletter is now available online at <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/>



New Jersey State Department of Health - WIC
P.O. Box 364
Trenton, NJ 08625-0364