

Healthy Start Coalition Members Convene at Annual Meeting

On May 29th, Healthy Start held its annual Coalition membership meeting at the Bradenton Country Club, where 45 member agencies were represented and participants engaged in a dynamic agenda covering the Coalition's 2009-2010 action plan, which outlines programmatic activities to improve prenatal, postnatal, and childbirth outcomes and our funding allocation plan, which summarizes the current fiscal year's budget. We were very pleased to report that our 2009-2010 funding was allocated without significant changes from last year, thanks in large part to Healthy Start friends and supporters, who wrote extensively to the Manatee legislative delegation, championing our work and, thus, allowing us to continue providing services to moms and babies.

In addition to addressing key business matters during the meeting, the Coalition members also presented Community Partner Recognition awards to Matt and Ellen Drews, long time supporters of Healthy Start. Ellen initiated the creation of the Mom's Closet, which provides maternity and infant items for families in need, and she continues to mobilize support among her friends if a family requires special assistance. Matt, as chair of the former Sarasota Sports Foundation, was instrumental in the provision of funding for the En Familia Program and the Keeping Our Children Safe Campaign, both of which educate families in how to prevent child abuse using popular education techniques that equip parents with key information, resources, and skills to navigate the challenging, but rewarding, world of parenting.

Pat Neal, who wasn't able to attend the meeting, received his award in August for his commitment to and support of Healthy Start's Infant Safe Sleeping Campaign. Kristine and Steve White were also unable to attend the meeting to receive their recognition and thanks for supporting our yearly Christmas Campaign, but the Coalition will schedule a future date to present these special friends with their awards.

Healthy Start Executive Director Fred Leonard received an award of appreciation from the Board of Directors to thank him for his many years of service and continued dedication to the agency and outgoing board member Lorraine Van Lede-Brown received an award for her fine leadership during challenging times as a two-term president of the board.

The Voting Members approved the following Board Members for the 2009-2011 term:

- Donna Vellenga, Manasota SOLVE re-elected for a second term
- Marion Stuart, American Cancer Society re-elected for a second term
- Valerie Taylor, Just For Girls elected for first term



Healthy Start Association Annual Conference

The Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions held their Annual Conference from July 14th to 16th in St. Pete Beach.

Healthy Start Manatee's Executive Director Fred Leonard co-facilitated a pre-conference session for executive directors during which the current systems of the coalitions were examined and a plan of action was outlined for future best practices that focus on system improvement.

The conference offered excellent workshops and training opportunities that included Dr. Tara Gonzales who presented on respiratory syncytial virus in premature infants, Dr. Frank Catalanotto on early childhood cavities, Dr. Joan Meek on breastfeeding practices, Kris-Tena Albers from the Florida Department of Health on pre-conceptual health, and Jonathan Conrad on web-automated human interaction.



Healthy Start reaches 100's of families at 15th Annual Manatee Children's Summit

Close to 10,000 individuals visited Healthy Start's booth during the Children's Summit, which was held at the Manatee Convention Center on August 8th.

For this year's summit theme, The Power of Imagination, Healthy Start conducted a drawing contest "What I want to be When I Grow Up" and children who participated received door prizes, including books and games. The winners of the contest were three creative artists, one of whom wants to be a judge, one a pediatrician, and one a police officer. Major Connie Shingledecker, of the Sheriff's Department who participated in the event to help promote infant safe sleeping, met and spoke with the young future officer and encouraged her to follow her dreams.

Moms and dads who stopped at the booth were provided with our Safe Sleeping Campaign educational information and materials. Information was offered on infant safe sleeping practices and SIDS/SUIDS prevention, as well as the role of tobacco and resources for smoking cessation services. Healthy Start's Project Moses bassinets and pack n play cribs were also featured, thanks in large part to the support of the March of Dimes and the Lakewood Ranch Lakewood Ranch Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation.

Families also received information and materials on breast cancer prevention, including self-exams and when and where to get a mammogram, as well as a listing of local breast health resources; nutrition and the importance of folic acid for women planning a pregnancy and/or are expecting a baby; and other Healthy Start programs and services.

The Healthy Start team is grateful to the generous and hard-working volunteers who helped make this event so successful; we extend our warmest thanks to Priscilla Rios, Cassandra Rios, Adriana Rios, Brenda Montoya, Zack Lee, Laura Jaramillo, Lois Kersey, Lacy Kersey, and Kori Haight for sharing their time and wonderful talents!



Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign 2009

This year, Healthy Start's Breast Cancer Awareness project, funded by the Komen Foundation and in partnership with Gulf Coast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), has expanded in scope beyond outreach and education services. Our CHWs are also providing patient navigation services for Spanish-speaking women who have had an abnormal screening or have been diagnosed with breast cancer, which includes language interpretation, assistance with completing forms, and communicating with health care providers.

The CHWs had an opportunity to gain new, useful information and tools to help them implement this patient navigation piece via a day-long medical interpreting training offered by GSAHEC in June.



As part of our outreach and education efforts, Healthy Start took the campaign to the Unity in the Community Back to School Resource & Wellness Rally held at Just for Girls on August 15th, where an estimated 1000 individuals participated. Moms, aunts, and other participating women, as well as dads, who visited our table learned about the importance of monthly breast self exams and, if appropriate mammograms, for early detection, and healthy nutrition habits for prevention. They also received easy-to-use educational materials about each of these topics for future reference and to share with friends and family.

Healthy Start Community Health Worker Receives National Award

Our very own Martha Ramirez, who has served as a Healthy Start Community Health Worker (CHW) for the last seven years was recently presented with the national Esther M. Holderby Award, which honors a dedicated CHW who has overcome personal adversity to promote health in his or her community.

After spending her young-adult years working as a field worker, experiencing first-hand poor housing conditions, long hours, meager wages, and lack of access to adequate health care services, she lost her mother to breast cancer seven years ago. Throughout her illness, Martha was her mom's primary support and pillar of strength for her entire family. Then, last year, her family confronted breast cancer again when her father's new wife was diagnosed; and, again, she worked tirelessly to ensure her stepmother and dad received the treatment and support they needed.

Despite the serious adversity she's had to confront, Martha has never lost her faith in life and humanity. To the contrary, she has dedicated herself to serving those who are most at-risk, forgotten, and without access to services. She has gone back to serve the women in the fields, only to discover that, after 25 years, little has changed and the conditions of labor, housing, exposure to pesticides, and general exploitation and abuse are, in many cases, worse.

Witnessing these conditions has moved Martha to take a proactive role in effecting change where she can. During the last seven years as a Healthy Start CHW, she has been trained in myriad health education and prevention topics, especially related to women's and infants' health, such as breast and cervical cancer, HIV, smoking cessation, prenatal care and folic acid education, infant safe sleeping practices, breastfeeding promotion, and family planning. Her mission is to educate and empower those women who traditionally do not have access to services.

Martha was presented with the award during the Center for Sustainable Health Outreach Unity Conference in Saint Louis, MO in July. The award was established in 2006, by James M. Holderby Jr. and Lisa Renee Holderby, to commemorate the late Esther M. Holderby. Ms Holderby was a 25-year, four-time cancer survivor and most importantly a dedicated CHW. Until her passing in July 2005, Ms. Holderby continued to educate women of the importance of early detection of breast cancer and advocated for increased funding for early detection services and CHW programs.



Martha Ramirez

Healthy Start Initiates Five-Year Service Delivery Plan Update Process

Healthy Start recently launched what will be a year-long process to develop a new, updated Service Delivery Plan, which will serve as a roadmap for the agency's work over the next five years. During this first phase of the process, we have been conducting outreach to and recruitment of community stakeholders to engage them in various committees that will address the key health and psychosocial areas we focus on and will contribute to the development of the plan.

The Service Delivery Plan Update process will also entail a health problem analysis and community needs assessment. All of these activities, many of which will be conducted in collaboration with partner agencies and the community stakeholders mentioned above, will help Healthy Start achieve substantive and meaningful outcomes in the coming years, which will ultimately benefit the moms, infants, and families we serve.

We are still seeking volunteers to participate in committees; if you are interested or would like further information please contact Luz Corcuera at luz@hsmantee.com or Lisa Ramirez at lramirez@hsmantee.com.



Our 2009-2010 Board of Directors: Donna Vellenga, Secretary; Marion Stuart, Vice-President; Jackie Kelsey, President; C.J. Czaia; Mary Willis, Treasurer; Valerie Taylor, outgoing past-president Lorraine VanLede-Brown and Christine Harrison. Not pictured Angel Couchois and Beth Trent.

Healthy Start Manatee Team Convenes for Agency-wide Information Exchange

Last June 23rd, Healthy Start team members convened at the agency's headquarters from their various service locations to engage in a community resources information-sharing forum. This was the first in a series of programmatic trainings for Healthy Start service providers, which included the three care coordination teams: hospital-based, community-based, and clinic-based. In addition, our wrap-around service providers, which includes parenting educators, a lactation consultant, and psychosocial counselors, participated in the discussion, as did Healthy Start staff.



Client risk factors, as outlined in Healthy Start's state-mandated Standards and Guidelines, were reviewed and local resources were identified to which clients can be referred for services that Healthy Start does not provide directly. The information exchanged was documented and incorporated into a Community Resources Toolkit that was distributed to our care coordinators and service providers. This will serve as a reference tool to help support their work with Healthy Start participants who are contending with risk factors.

Hurricane Season Tips for Pregnant Women and Infants

Here are some useful tips to keep in mind and share with clients, friends or family during the 2009 hurricane season, as recommended by the March of Dimes. For more information on disaster preparation for pregnant women and infants, please visit our website: www.hsmanatee.com.

Hurricane/Disaster Checklist

Before:

1. Call your physician to let them know where you will be; if you plan to leave town bring a copy of your medical records, immunizations and current medications
2. Discuss concerns and delivery plans with your health care provider.
3. If you have a case manager or participate in a program such as Healthy Start or Nurse Family Partnership, let your care coordinator know where you are going and a phone number to contact you.
4. If you have a high-risk pregnancy or you are close to delivery, check with your health care provider to determine the safest option for you.



During:

- Bring any current medications, including prenatal vitamins and prescriptions.
- Keep a copy of prenatal medical records with you and contact information for your health care provider in case you have to visit another provider.
- If you are driving, be sure to stop to get out and walk every 1-2 hours.
- Wear comfortable shoes and pack some snacks.
- Maternity clothes may not be available if you evacuate; pack extra clothes

Feeding your Baby:

- In emergency situations babies have an increased need for the disease-fighting factors and the comfort provided by breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding can be calming for mom and baby.
- Breastfeeding is recommended during an emergency because it is clean and means that refrigeration, bottles, or water for preparing formula are not necessary.
- Stress can affect your milk supply, but breastfeeding itself can help reduce stress. Do your best to make breastfeeding time as relaxed as possible.
- If breastfeeding is not possible, have a supply of single serving ready-to-feed formula. Ready-to-feed formula does not need mixing and water should **not** be added to it. When using ready-to-feed formula, pour the needed amount into a bottle and throw away the formula that the baby does not drink if you cannot refrigerate it. After opening, the formula must be refrigerated.
- Do not use water treated with iodine or chlorine tablets to prepare powdered formula.

Roots Summer Arts Program Presents the Wackadoo Zoo

Close to 50 children and youth participated in the Roots Summer Arts Program and performed the musical theater production of “The Wackadoo Zoo” for a full-house at New Beginnings Church in Palmetto on July 3rd.

Over 100 audience members, many family and friends of the young actors attended the event, a comedic tale of silly zoo animals who lead the audience into the vicissitudes that befall a hard-working professor of linguistics who tries to correct the animals’ “speech defects.”

The musical was the culmination of a week-long arts camp sponsored by the Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County, the Manatee County Cultural Alliance, and New Beginnings Church. During the course of the last week in June, participants between the ages of 5 and 12, received instruction and direction in theater/acting, singing, and movement to prepare for the performance.

Arts professionals, including Roots Program Director, Scott Blum and his wife Dorothy, both with the Manatee County Cultural Alliance; Leymis Bolaños Wilmott, Founder and Director of Fuzion Dance; and Rick Kerby, Artistic Director of the Manatee Players partnered with the sponsor agencies to provide instruction for the children.

In addition, volunteers also helped support the program. Joshua and Elizabeth Mark with Mt. Hermon Baptist Church in Danville, VA brought a team of teen volunteers, who conducted various service projects in the area, to lend their assistance to the program. This was the fifth year that the Roots Summer Arts program was offered to Manatee County children.



2009-2010 Infant Safe Sleeping Campaign

Since initiating this year's CHW-based safe sleeping outreach and education campaign, Healthy Start has reached over 400 community members directly. Thanks to our March of Dimes Safe Sleeping project grant, Healthy Start has been able to expand its education efforts to raise awareness of not only SIDS/SUIDS prevention, but also accidental infant death due to unsafe sleeping conditions via all of our outreach and educational outlets, such as our website, newsletter, and Manatee Educational TV Healthy Start Series. Through these efforts, we have been able to cast an even wider net, reaching an additional, unquantifiable number of community members.



Healthy Start Joins Manatee County Tobacco-Free Coalition

This quarter, Healthy Start became a member of the county's Tobacco-Free Coalition, which was launched in August 2008, and whose mission is to create a tobacco-free atmosphere for Manatee County; improve the health of county residents by reducing tobacco use, eliminate tobacco use among youth, educate the public on tobacco-related health issues, and advocate for positive reform.

Healthy Start has extensive experience implementing tobacco cessation efforts among our target population of pregnant women and women with infants who have a family member that smokes. We bring a special perspective to the coalition on how this issue impacts families and on strategies to educate and raise awareness in the community overall, and among the Spanish-speaking community in particular.

As part of the coalition, Healthy Start has been supporting and contributing to the planning and development of a community open-house event, to be held Tuesday, August 18th at the American Cancer Society, during which the coalition will introduce itself to and discuss how it can assist Manatee County businesses, health-care professionals, community-based organizations, and anyone interested in this issue to identify resources and go tobacco-free. The event will also highlight the coalition's recently published Tobacco-Free Resource Guide and will feature guest speaker Dr. Dwight Fitch, board member of the American Cancer Society and practicing oncologist.

Other participating coalition member agencies include the American Lung Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, American Cancer Society, GSAHEC, Just for Girls, Manatee County Health Department, Manatee Memorial Hospital, and University of Florida-IFAS Extension.

Healthy Start Care Coordinator Yvonne Bundrage Retires

After three years of service as a community-based care coordinator, Yvonne is taking a break to spend more time and enjoy her children and grandchildren. Yvonne holds a special place in Healthy Start's heart and among the Manatee County community, as she has worn various hats working in the local non-profit sector, serving the community for much of her career. While her Healthy Start clients and colleagues will miss her positive energy and smiling face, we wish her well on her new path!



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Save the Date:
Safe Sleep for Sweet Dreams
Infant Safe Sleeping Campaign Community Awareness Dinner

Friday, September 25th from 6 to 9 PM
The Renaissance on 9th

Dinner, cash bar, music, dance, door prizes
RSVPS and ticket information:

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