

APRIL 2005



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mom's Night Out: Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm. Moms of children with special needs support group. Call Kim Barger @ 708-7682

First time Homebuyers and Immigration classes in Spanish. Contact Catholic Charities @ 714-7829 for more information.

2005 Walk America, April 30th at G.T. Bray Park. 7:00 am to 12:00 pm. Teams and sponsors needed. "Walk for someone you love." Call Beverly Hunter, MOD @ 355-1756 for more information.

Free-Blood Sugar Screenings, High Blood Pressure Classes, and Become Physically Active with Step Up, Manatee. County Health Department 748-0747 for more information.

Musical Motion for Parents and Children, Stress Busters for Parents. ADD/HDD Support Group, Taking Charge & Getting Respect from Your Kids Workshop, and "Pass Them On! Teaching Your Values to Your Children. Call the Family Partnership Center at 756-3007

The Mexican Consulate will be in Bradenton on May 21, 2005, from 10:00 am-5:00 pm at the American Red Cross, 2905 59th St. West

Project Light of Manatee County is celebrating their 10th Anniversary on April 23, 2005 from 11:00 am-1:00 pm. Call 745-1659 for more information.

Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County
410-43rd Street W, Ste. G
Bradenton, FL 34209
941-708-6111

www.healthystartmanatee.org

Meet our Board Vice President: Adela LeComte



Adela LeComte has been a member on the Board of Directors for Healthy Start Coalition for over a year. When asked to join the Board and after learning about the services Healthy Start provided to mothers and their babies, she states that "I knew that in some small way I was going to contribute to this great organization." Mrs. LeComte moved to Florida 23 years ago from sunny California. She has been working for Covered Bridge Development for 12 years as its Operations Manager. She also owns her own company that builds homes. Her high priorities in life are her friends and family. "I love to Volunteer," she says. She is a member of Volunteer Services of Manatee County. She has volunteered for Manasota SOLVE, Manatee County Girls Club, Girl Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, Boy Scouts, and many other organizations. Her philosophy on life is:

"I ask myself, 'How can I help?', When I give to others, when I reach out to help families, or people in need, it gives me great joy and satisfaction. I live my life with awareness, sensitivity, and know that a positive attitude is the way of life."

Walk America 2005



Premature babies need hope, love, and you. That is why it is so important to join Walk America. When you walk, you're helping the March of Dimes fight prematurity-a growing crisis that now affects more than 470,000 babies in the U.S. every year. Healthy Start Coalition is joining the efforts of March of Dimes by participating in Walk America on April 30th at G. T. Bray Park. To join the Healthy Start Team at Walk America, or for more information please contact Tenia Anderson at (941) 708-6111 ext. 104.

February: General Membership Meeting “Effects of Smoking During Pregnancy: Practical Solutions”

Dr. Clyde Skene , one of our Manatee OB/GYN providers presented on the effects of smoking during pregnancy. Dr. Skene gave some very practical solutions for empowering pregnant women to quit smoking. He discussed the importance of the health of the mother and baby in a smoke free environment, while giving facts on the lifelong effects on a child whose mother smoked while pregnant.



Folic Acid and Breastfeeding Education Campaign

Our African-American “Mentors” and our Hispanic/Latino “Promotoras” attended a training session on the importance of Folic Acid and Breastfeeding Education. Paula Termini and Luz Corcuera were the train-the-trainers of the day. The “Mentors” and “Promotoras” are now ready to disseminate this very important information to their peers in the community.



Visit from Tallahassee

Laura Pan, our Healthy Start Contract Manager from Florida Department of Health in Tallahassee, Florida, visited our agency in March to complete our Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance Review and to attend the Board of Directors’ Meeting.



Laura Pan (right) is pictured with our Board President, Marion Stewart.



Some of our Healthy Start Coalition members are working together on the Health Problem Analysis to review current Manatee County maternal and child health status data and county survey results. Their feedback has been of tremendous value to identify factors affecting poor health outcomes and determine a future plan of action for the Coalition.

"Sister to Sister" African-American Outreach

Sister to Sister is busy working with African American women and developing partnerships with local agencies to improve birth outcomes for African-American women in Manatee County. The Mentors are hosting "Baby Showers" to get the word out about education, referrals, support groups, and prenatal information offered to pregnant women and mothers with children under the age of three.



(Pictured is Tenia Anderson and Christa Wesley)

General Membership Meeting

"Breastfeeding and the Working Mom"

Katie Powers, Childbirth and Breastfeeding Educator delighted our Coalition members with her presentation. She gave useful tips and information on the benefits of breastfeeding. Including the benefit of healthier breastfed babies resulting in fewer days missed from work. Katie is the Coordinator for Pre and Post Natal Services at Manatee Memorial Hospital.



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Just for Girls, Inc.

Florentina A. Taylor, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Pediatrician

UPCOMING DATES FOR CEU OPPORTUNITIES

April 5, 2005 Major Connie Shingledecker
Manatee County Sheriff's Office

"Infant Death as a Result of Unsafe Sleeping Environments"
11: 30 AM

Manatee County Central Library

May 3, 2005 Crystal Coker, MPH
March of Dimes

"Interconceptional Care and the Impact on Birth Outcomes"
11:30 AM

Manatee County Central Library

COALITION STAFF

(941) 708-6111

Fred Leonard, Ext. 101
Executive Director

Luz Corcuera, Ext. 105
Program Director

Alicia Ordonez, Ext. 103
MomCare Supervisor/Advisor

Nancy Pettit, Ext. 100
Office Manager

HEALTHY START COALITION

STRESS AND PREGNANCY

CHRISTINA GONZALEZ, LMHC-PSYCHOSOCIAL PROVIDER

As mothers and fathers prepare for the birth of their first child or any other child after that, pregnancy generally becomes a wonderful time full of hope and dreams about the child that is coming to expand the family. Sometimes, however, pregnancy can also be a source of new feelings and emotions, some of them very overwhelming, and can also create a lot of stress in the life of mothers and fathers alike.

Pregnant women and their partners face many special stressors. Hormonal changes during pregnancy, pregnancy-related discomforts (like nausea, fatigue, swelling, frequent urination, and backache), and the physical changes that take place in the mother's body are one source of stress. These are especially difficult to contend with when the mother is working or busy and finds herself unable to do many of the things that she previously did.

Emotional stressors can also play an important role in pregnancy. Worries about the health of the unborn child, concerns about finances and economic issues, relationship difficulties between the mother and father of the baby, absent fathers, and concerns about the roles of being a mother can all wreak havoc on a pregnant mother's sense of peace. In particular, mothers who work long hours, who have several children at home, who come from abusive backgrounds, who are in unstable relationships with the father of the baby, who are very young or older mothers, substance-abusing mothers or mothers of partners who abuse substances, first time mothers, and mothers who have past psychiatric problems are at particular risk for experiencing stress and anxiety during pregnancy.

Stress during pregnancy has been linked by researchers to birth abnormalities, preterm delivery, low birth weight babies, increased post partum depression, autism and autistic spectrum disorders in children, relationship difficulties, and even make worse other pregnancy complications, such as preeclampsia (a pregnancy-related disorder that includes high blood pressure and can result in poor fetal growth and other problems). Stress is also linked with an increased risk of miscarriage. In addition, many pregnant women and their partners faced with large amounts of stress and anxiety can also endanger the mother and the baby by engaging in poor coping skills, such as smoking, skipping meals or choosing to eat junk food "on the run", or using alcohol or illicit drugs in order to be able to "cope".

Pregnant mothers (and their partners) should be encouraged to develop positive, healthy ways to deal with stress during their pregnancy. Some of these include making sure they get plenty of sleep, eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and make sure that they avoid negative coping skills such as drinking alcohol, using drugs or smoking to reduce their tension level. Regular prenatal care is very important. Working mothers in particular need to be encouraged to prepare small snacks to bring with them so that they are not skipping meals or engaging in fasting due to their high-pressure workday. Pregnant women should also be encouraged to increase their social support networks by improving relationships with their partner, extended family, friends and others, and learn to ask for help when they need it. Church groups, support groups, special interest clubs and activities and other programs are also wonderful in helping the pregnant mother find positive, supportive people to add to her social network. Meditation and relaxation techniques can be taught to pregnant women and their partners to help them also reduce stress. Visits from family support workers and peer educators who can educate mothers and their partners about available resource in the community, and teach about ways to have healthy pregnancies can also be very important in reducing stress. Some mothers and their partners may also benefit from psychosocial counseling, psychiatric intervention, and from couples counseling, especially those at greater risk.



Christina Gonzalez is a Healthy Start provider for psychosocial services.

Referrals can be made through the Healthy Start Coalition

