

Message from Board President Jackie Kelsey

Greetings to all our readers and especially our wonderful volunteers and donors, who provide much needed support to the staff. They are too numerous to name in one message, but it would be remiss of me not to mention our board member CJ Czaia and community supporter, Luis Eduardo Baron, who took time out of their busy schedules in March to go to Tallahassee and advocate on our behalf with the legislature. We all know how threatened we are by the economic downturn and shortage of funds, but depriving women and children of needed services bodes ill for the future. Healthy infants become healthy adults and education is never wasted. Should our funding indeed be cut, we will need our volunteers and donations more than ever. Currently, we especially need volunteers to share their time and talents by reading to children during support groups, teaching English, giving an educational presentation to a mom's club, or sharing any other skills. We are also soliciting donations for diapers and breast pumps, so that moms who have to go back to work can continue to nurse their babies. And, of course, we always welcome monetary donations for the families we serve who may find themselves in need during these difficult times. If you know of organizations with charitable funds available, please think of Healthy Start!



Healthy Start Celebration Rally

The Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County held a celebration rally on March 14th that drew a diverse crowd of community members and leaders, including Florida Representative Bill Galvano, Bradenton Councilwoman Marianne Barnebey, and Luis Eduardo Baron, founder and owner of the area's largest Spanish language media outlet, TVNET Media. Families and their babies, who have participated in Healthy Start's programs, personally thanked the local leaders for championing the agency's work, and presented them with recognition awards.

Mothers and fathers shared emotional testimonials of the profound impact that Healthy Start's infant education, prevention, and treatment programs have had on their babies' lives. Matthew and Cara Frew shared the story of their two-month old baby, who was born to his biological mother with serious health problems and how, through Healthy Start's programs, his health has dramatically improved. After receiving a recognition award from the Frews, Rep. Bill Galvano expressed his continued commitment to the moms and babies of Manatee County and emphasized that Healthy Start is a proven, effective program.

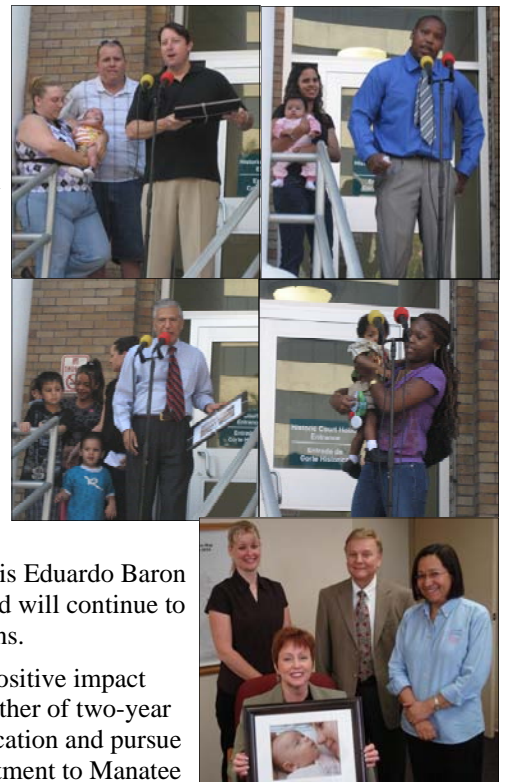
Angel Couchois, who spoke with her four children at her side, said that she prays Healthy Start can continue to provide the education and tools that empower mothers to create healthy lifestyles for their families. After receiving an award from Couchois, Luis Eduardo Baron said that he is a passionate supporter of education and early intervention for families and will continue to do his part to inform the community of programs like Healthy Start's via his publications.

Wayne Washington, his wife Jessica, and baby Winter, enthusiastically conveyed the positive impact that the organization's services has had on their lives and Yakeyra McCall, a young mother of two-year old Rashad, said that participating in Healthy Start has inspired her to continue her education and pursue her dreams. All of the families thanked the local leaders for their demonstrated commitment to Manatee County babies and asked them to continue being a voice for Healthy Start and the families it serves.

Councilwoman Marianne Barnebey, a long-time advocate for mothers and babies, who has also been a certified childbirth educator, was presented with a recognition award, as well. "Strong families build strong communities," said Councilwoman Barnebey. "Healthy mothers and babies can help a community to be strong and stay strong."

Rally attendees also enjoyed fantastic entertainment; throughout the event, DJ George Mendez volunteered his time and record-spinning talent to keep the crowd energized. The children of Ellen Meade Studios impressed the audience with their dance performances and the young singer, Bianca, from South East High School, captivated attendees with her moving songs. Our own CJ Czaia galvanized the crowd as emcee for the event.

Healthy Start is enormously grateful to all of the families, supporters, and volunteers who came out to celebrate with us! Thank you!



Healthy Start Mom's Club/ Club de Mamás and Family Club/Club de la Familia

Healthy Start hosts an informal bilingual mom's club every Wednesday from 10am-12pm at Sacred Heart Church in Bradenton. Moms can bring their babies or children and have an opportunity to make new friends and practice their English skills, while learning how to sew, crochet, or knit. They can also participate in a yoga class or in special educational presentations, which are given periodically, especially related to health topics, such as disease prevention, socialization, and child safety.

Thanks to the on-going dedication of Healthy Start Board President Jackie Kelsey and long-time volunteer Pat Royer, who co-facilitate the sewing and knitting classes, the moms not only learn new skills but put them to work by making bassinet quilts, sheets and liners to give back to Healthy Start's Project Moses.

The mom's club is lucky to have found a new volunteer recently, Terri Davenport, who conducts basic yoga classes for the moms and, sometimes, the kids follow along, too!

Healthy Start also now hosts a bilingual Family Club on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm at Project Light Literacy Center in Bradenton. Parents learn communication skills, receive support, and address questions about bonding with their newborn, handling sibling rivalry, and managing stress. Margarita Heideman, our parenting educator, facilitates the meetings.



Our Deepest Thanks and Farewell to Lorraine Van Lede-Brown

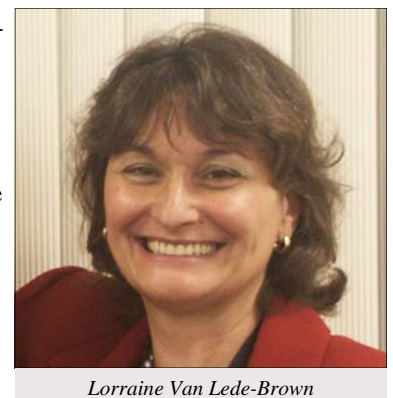
After five years of serving on Healthy Start's board, immediate past President Lorraine Van Lede-Brown's general board membership term is coming to a close.

During her four years as president, Lorraine led the agency through the implementation of an innovative approach to wrap around services that included community-, clinic-, and hospital-based care coordination programs, often having to confront and work through challenges such as budget constraints and new state-mandated Healthy Start guidelines. It was also during her tenure that significant revisions to our by-laws were made to respond to the emerging needs of the Coalition.

Lorraine led the organization with strength, wisdom, and kindness, going above and beyond her duties and setting the highest standards of transparency, open communication, and, perhaps most significantly, quality client service for the moms and babies we serve.

Last year, Lorraine passed the torch on to Jackie Kelsey, who, fortunately for Healthy Start, applies much the same leadership style.

We are immensely grateful to have such committed and passionate board members; and Lorraine exemplifies these qualities. We extend our deepest thanks to Lorraine for her service and are sorry to see her go, but wish her all the best and look forward to her continued partnership as part of Healthy Start's coalition membership.



Lorraine Van Lede-Brown

Mother's Day 2009 Celebration

Healthy Start hosted its annual Mother's Day celebration on May 6th at Sacred Heart Church in Bradenton, where our Healthy Start moms gathered to enjoy pampering beauty treatments, participate in health screenings and nutrition presentations, and partake in a communal lunch. Volunteers and partner agencies from throughout the community joined Healthy Start to make the event possible. Students of Manatee Technical Institute's Cosmetology Department provided the moms with manicures and Annelle Rodriguez, a student at Manatee Community College, gave relaxing chair massages, while the children were entertained with activities conducted by Bradenton Pilot Club volunteers Bernice McLaughlin, Jan Swafford, and Lorraine Dey.

Participants also had the opportunity to receive health screenings and immunizations, which were administered by Donna Keith and Sharon Carlson of the Manatee County Health Department. Healthy Start's lactation consultant offered the moms and kids quick, easy and healthy snack suggestions and related nutrition information, particularly for the moms who were breastfeeding their babies.

After all the beauty treatments and health consultations were completed, everyone joined in a delicious communal lunch and the event's sponsor, CJ Czaia, of Czaia and Gallagher, graciously attended to show his support of Healthy Start moms and babies and to thank all of the invaluable volunteers who helped make the celebration possible. Among the key community partners that supported the event was Sacred Heart's pastor, Father Salvatore, who provided the event location, which is also regularly used for our Mom's Club meetings. Participants left the Mother's Day celebration with parting gifts that were generously donated by Healthy Start supporters throughout the community.

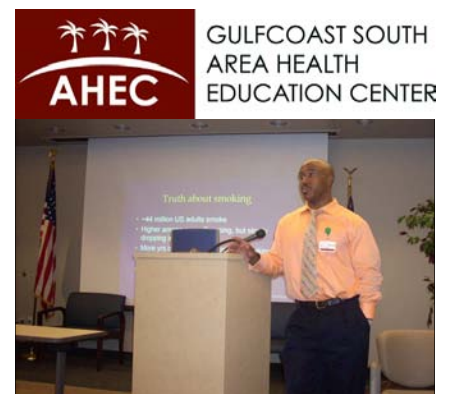


Smoking Cessation Campaign

As part of a partnership between Healthy Start and the Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), our Community Health Workers are conducting home visits and face-to-face educational presentations on the dangers of cigarette smoke to pregnant women and their families. Clients who would like to access "quit" support are referred, free of charge, to GSAHEC's cessation program.

As part of this initiative, Healthy Start's January general membership meeting featured Dr. Dwight Fitch, an oncologist, who, in his presentation *A Holistic Approach to Smoking Cessation*, placed particular emphasis on the impact of tobacco smoke on pregnant women and on the development of the infant. Dr. Fitch also shared strategies to encourage the mother and/or family member(s) to quit smoking. One of the tools in his kit was the urgent, simulated message from baby to mother, "Hey Mom, this is a no-smoking uterus!"

Anyone needing support to quit smoking, can contact the Florida Quit Line at 866-534-7909.



Infant Safe Sleeping Campaign

Thanks to a second year of funding from the March of Dimes, Healthy Start was able to offer both staff level and community-wide trainings on factors that play a significant role in infant safe sleeping strategies earlier this year. In February, Dr. Xavier Sevilla, a well-known pediatrician in the Manatee County community with Wholechild Pediatrics, presented a SIDS prevention training to Healthy Start's Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Care Coordinators, sharing some of the most up-to-date research and statistical information on the topic. Dr. Sevilla emphasized that evidence now shows that community-level education/intervention has a highly significant impact on a mother's or parent's behavior related to infant/child care and rearing; indeed, much more so than that of pediatricians. He enthusiastically acknowledged that it is precisely the CHWs' work that has this positive impact.



Dr. Xavier Sevilla (center)



Janet Goree

Healthy Start's March general membership meeting offered a training on awareness and prevention of shaken baby syndrome. Janet Goree, an expert who trains health professionals on the subject, gave the presentation *Shaken Baby Syndrome and Coping with Crying*, which provided coalition members key information regarding medical and legal aspects of the issue, statistics on shaken baby syndrome, and the impact it has on families. Ms. Goree further offered critical tools and strategies to identify situations of escalating frustration a parent or caretaker might experience when babies cry and how to prevent shaken baby syndrome. Key among the prevention tools she shared was for families to have a simple, pre-identified coping plan documented on paper for parents or caretakers to use in an escalating situation.

Through the generous support of the Lakewood Ranch Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation and Entre Nous Club, Healthy Start has been able to purchase 100 pack n'play cribs from the *Cribs for Kids* program, which offers the products at a discounted rate for nonprofits and service-providers. The Healthy Start pack n'plays are supplied to Manatee County families who do not have the means to provide their babies with a safe place to sleep in the home.



The women's group of the Church of the Annunciation

Healthy Start's Project Moses continues to make volunteer-assembled, temporary bassinets accessible to families who need a safe place for their new baby to sleep. Now in its fourth year of implementation, this initiative would not be possible without the volunteers who are committed to Healthy Start's mission and the families we serve. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the women's group of the Church of the Annunciation, Loving Stitches Ministry of Our Lady of the



Karen Wernimont (left), Kay Buchard (right)

Angels, Karen Wernimont, Connie Markowitz, and 90-year-old Kay Buchard, who suffers from macular degeneration and has limited vision, but still loves to knit baby hats. These generous and dedicated volunteers hand make key accessories for the Moses bassinets and pack n'play cribs, including mattresses, sheets, quilts and receiving blankets.

And thanks to the on-going generosity of St. Andrew United Church of Christ in Sarasota, Healthy Start is able to provide other necessities, such as diapers and other basic items to families in need. On behalf of the families who benefit from these services, the Healthy Start team extends its deepest appreciation to St. Andrew's for their caring actions to help ensure a healthier community.

Creating Families through Adoption

At the May general membership meeting, Kirk Zeppi, MS, LMHC, of Family Creations, Inc. gave Healthy Start Coalition members an informative presentation on adoption and its consideration as an option for women who are facing an unexpected pregnancy. Current trends in adoption encourage a process in which the importance of all parties involved is recognized. This includes determining the type of adoption preferred and the services that may be needed to facilitate the process for the birth mother, infant, and adoptive parents.

With the increase in open and semi-open adoptions and the new state requirement that adoptive children be raised with the knowledge that they are adopted, more individuals are experiencing healthier emotional outcomes with regards to having been adopted. Attendees expressed great interest in the subject matter and how useful the information will be when providing services. For more information you may visit Family Creations' website: www.familycreationsinc.com or contact them via telephone at (941) 747-9225.

2009 Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign Kick-off

During the last program year, Healthy Start Community Health Workers (CHWs) educated a total of over 600 community members on the risk factors of, and prevention strategies for, breast cancer, through community outreach events and one-to-one education. Healthy Start is extremely proud of the work accomplished during the implementation of the community-based breast cancer outreach, education and prevention project, made possible through our partnership with GSAHEC and the Komen Foundation.

To kick off our third year of this initiative, Healthy Start conducted outreach and distributed educational materials and information at the Bradenton Farmers' Market on May 23rd. We're grateful to the city and market organizers for providing complimentary booth space for our 2009 Breast Cancer Awareness project kick-off.

The CHWs will also continue to conduct home visits and face-to-face educational presentations in the community to raise awareness and understanding of risk and prevention factors and provide referrals for mammograms or other follow-up that may be needed by clients.



Breastfeeding Promotion Program

For a fifth consecutive year, Healthy Start has partnered with GSAHEC to implement a breastfeeding promotion program, targeting 180 community members, mostly pregnant women and new moms.

To initiate the project, last December, Natalia Cava, MS, CLC, gave the CHWs and project coordinator an interactive training on the benefits of breastfeeding and how to help teach new moms effective nursing strategies. Subsequently, Ms. Cava presented *Nutrition for the Breastfeeding Mother* to Healthy Start Coalition members at the April general membership meeting, which highlighted critically important nutritional needs of nursing moms and the consequences of deficiencies for both the mother and infant.

Healthy Start, in collaboration with the Latino Community Network, Manatee County Health Department (MCHD), and American Cancer Society, sponsored a wildly popular health outreach and education booth at the Midway Fleamarket in Palmetto on March 15th, attracting about 300 participants. Healthy Start's CHWs, Martha Ramirez and Monica Lamas; lactation consultant, Natalia Cava; and registered dietician, Mallie Shirk, were on hand to provide information and materials specifically related to breastfeeding and appropriate nutrition for nursing women. Margarita Heideman, Healthy Start parenting educator, was on-site, as well, offering attendees pertinent counseling and support information. MCHD offered participants free vaccines and the Cancer Society provided resources on breast cancer awareness and prevention.

On April 4th and 5th, Healthy Start conducted a second breastfeeding promotion event at the Red Barn Flea Market in Bradenton, where we provided educational and resource information. Our booth, centrally located in the main food court of the market, provided an optimal opportunity to outreach to the many families strolling through the halls. By rotating locations throughout the county, we hope to reach as many community members as possible with our outreach events.



Meet our Resource Development and Project Advisor

We are delighted to have Lisa Ramirez joining the Healthy Start family. Lisa brings extensive experience working with community-based programs. She has a BA in journalism and Spanish from Northern Illinois University and served as a rural health educator with the Peace Corps in Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. Most recently, she moved from Washington, DC where she worked as Director of Affiliate Member Services for the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the country.

Lisa is wearing many hats at Healthy Start, coordinating mini-grant outreach and education programs, supporting our community education efforts, and working on our service delivery plan. We welcome Lisa's expertise, enthusiasm and commitment to making a difference in the lives of the families we serve.



Caring for the Caregivers

In February, Healthy Start's membership meeting featured Janice March, LMHC, RPT, MA, who gave an insightful presentation, *Compassion Fatigue*, which aimed to equip Healthy Start's care coordinators and other support/wrap-around service providers with tools to care for themselves as they offer care to their clients. Currently, the families we serve have greater needs than ever, and often with too few resources available to accommodate so many needs, service providers' stress levels can become extremely high. Ms. March offered practical ways to step up self-care, emphasizing the importance of integrating the body and soul, through good nutrition, physical activity, such as sports or yoga, meditation, and/or engaging in a hobby. Further, she added that a key component to helping providers stay healthy and avoid compassion fatigue is agency-level support, which should strive to reduce overwork and offer space for creativity and self-care time, such as breaks and vacations.

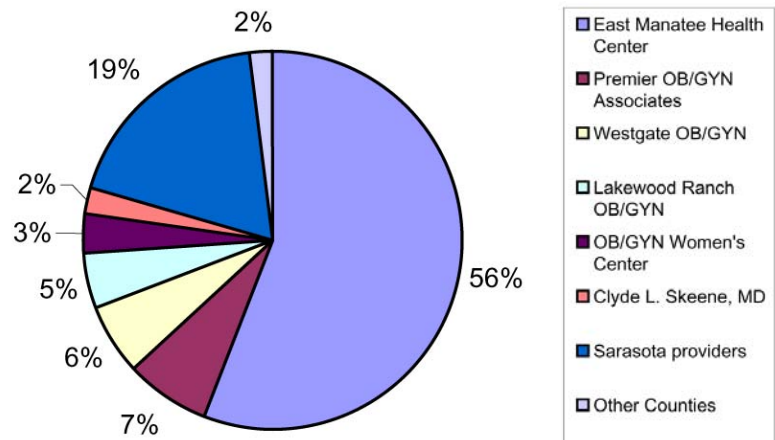


Healthy Start Prenatal Screening Rates

Healthy Start Prenatal Risk Screening Rates 7/08-2/09

The following data reflect the number of screens processed for Manatee County Residents from July 2008 through February 2009.

East Manatee Health Center	1,041
Premier OB/GYN Associates	134
Westgate OB/GYN	111
Lakewood Ranch OB/GYN	92
OB/GYN Women's Center	61
Clyde L. Skeene, MD	41
Sarasota providers	345
Other Counties	38
TTD	1,863



A special thanks to all the OB/GYN providers who diligently conduct Healthy Start Prenatal Risk Screens with their OB patients. Your collaboration in the screening process makes a significant impact on the health and well-being of pregnant mothers and infants in our community.

Visit our website at
www.healthystartmanatee.com

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