



MCHC

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MATERNAL AND CHILD
HEALTH CONSORTIUM
OF CHESTER COUNTY

WINTER 2010

UPDATE

Healthy Start's Long Term Impact

MCHC is proud of our 15-year record of improving birth outcomes for infants whose moms enroll into Healthy Start—more than 6,000 moms to date! Healthy Start infants are born at a healthy birth weight (of at least 5.5 lbs) at a higher rate than infants not in the Healthy Start program. In fact, in 2009, 97% of HS babies had healthy birth weights, a rate that surpasses the national Healthy People 2010 goal set by the federal government. Apart from the early health and developmental issues low birth weight babies are likely to face, including respiratory and cardiac problems and learning delays, they also face higher risk of many chronic diseases as adults, including diabetes and heart disease. Children's long-term educational success can also be affected by poor health at birth. Ninety percent of a child's brain develops before they are 5 years old! Those first years are critically important to ensure healthy cognitive development that begins a lifetime of learning. Many premature or low birth weight babies require special education classes and intensive support to learn basic skills, and continue to struggle with educational disadvantages throughout their lives.

A Healthy Start Story

We remain in touch with some of the Healthy Start moms we served in the program's early years, and one wrote to us recently to congratulate us on Healthy Start's 15th anniversary, and to share her story. Joanna enrolled into Healthy Start nine years ago, and now has a healthy daughter and a successful career. This is her story.



“When I graduated from college, I was five months pregnant. I moved back home with my mother and couldn't find a job. I started volunteering at the West Chester Community Center. I waddled into the Center almost every day.

Sonia Ortiz, a Healthy Start Advocate, had a tiny office in the gym. Every time I saw her, she would smile and say, “Hello there! When are you coming to see me?” I was always polite, but didn't feel comfortable sharing my need for help. I was scared and struggling financially, but asking for help was a very hard thing to do. But Sonia

always made sure she said hello, smiled, and checked in with me every time. It was obvious that she genuinely cared about my health and the health of my baby. Finally, I came to see her at the Healthy Start office.

Signing up for the Healthy Start program was one of the best decisions I ever made!

Sonia gave me the information I needed to stay healthy. She also taught me to take care of myself. As a mother, we often put everyone else first. Sonia made sure I took care of myself, so I could take care of my daughter. I am still learning to put myself first...I guess this is a lesson all mothers struggle to learn!

The Healthy Start program provided me with health information, diapers, blankets, clothes, and the resources I needed for my daughter to have the best start at life. Sonia also set a good example and taught me lessons I still use today. A kind word, pleasant smile, and persistency go a long way. I am so grateful that Sonia was willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to help me and my daughter.”

Celebrating 15 Years of Healthy Start

MCHC held its 2010 Annual Luncheon on September 23 at the Chester Valley Golf Club. Our guest speaker for this special day was Pauline Seitz, Director of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partnerships (LFP), which provided the initial funding in 1995 for MCHC's Healthy Start program. We were also joined by former Healthy Start participants Myriam Ruager and Chaya Scott, who spoke about their experiences with Healthy Start and how much it helped their families.

Just wanted to say how happy I am for you in celebrating Healthy Start's 15 years. The family analogy was great—you've parented children and you've parented a program into maturity—and touched many lives—both your staff members and many clients/families through your staff. Glad you can see and celebrate the fruition of a dream and lots of hard work over the years. It was a pleasure to celebrate with you.

—Pat Yoder, Chester County Health Department

Sponsors Mr. and Mrs. Robert McNeil, Jr.; Gold Sponsors The Adams Sterge Family Fund and First National Bank of Chester County; Silver Sponsors Stewart Huston Charitable Trust, Brandywine Health Foundation, and Jane MacElree; Bronze Sponsors Bentley Systems, Carol Ware Gates, Independence Foundation, MacElree Harvey, Michael and Nancy McLelland, and Philadelphia Foundation; and Community Sponsors Briggs, Bunting and Dougherty, Kunkle & Sennett, Newtown Office Supply Solutions, Countryside Consulting, EnVision Coaching, Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, Revak Consulting, and March of Dimes.

Many thanks to the sponsors who made the event a great success and raised more than \$30,000 for MCHC's programs, including: Presenting Sponsor Mrs. J. Maxwell Moran; Platinum



New Staff and Board

MCHC is delighted to welcome our new Healthy Start Program Director, Taren Gaddy. Taren has a B.S. in Community Health Education and an MBA from Eastern University. She has worked for a variety of local health organizations, including Maternity Care Coalition, The Health Federation of Philadelphia, Mercy Health System, and Sayre Health Center.

Also new to MCHC's staff is Faria Rota, our Family Benefits Advocate. Faria is originally from Panama, and speaks fluent Spanish, English, and Portuguese. She has previously worked in customer service and client relations, and now is part of MCHC's Basic Needs Access program, helping link families in need with services such as health insurance and SNAP (food stamps).

Finally, we want to welcome LaToya Myers as MCHC's new Community Outreach Coordinator. LaToya recently graduated from the University of Albany with a Master's of Public Health degree. She will focus on helping MCHC educate the community about the importance of enrollment into Healthy Start, especially for African American women at greatest risk of poor birth outcomes.



Left to right: Faria Rota, LaToya Myers, and Taren Gaddy

Two new members joined MCHC's Board of Directors this year. Tammy James is a professor in the Department of Health at West Chester University, and holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and Health Education. Steven Wilmot, MSW is employed at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia as Director of Specialty Care Programs and Outpatient Registration. Both look forward to bringing their experience and commitment to public health to help MCHC improve family health in Chester County.

Thanks to Donors and Volunteers!

MCHC is deeply grateful to the many volunteers and friends who contributed their time, hard work, and skill to benefit moms and children in our community. Thank you all so much!

- The Calico Cutters quilting group sold their beautiful handwork and donated the proceeds to MCHC.
- The Kennett Square Rotary Club donated school supplies to the Kennett Square Family Center, and contributed a generous financial gift to purchase additional school supplies for the families we serve.
- The Church of the Holy Trinity and Downingtown Friends Meeting contributed to MCHC.
- Many generous individuals contributed their time and money to collect school supplies and winter coats for children who need them.



Lisa O'Neill of the Calico Cutters with helper Gabriel Silva

“Thank you for helping me teach my girls how to help others—and giving us a wonderful afternoon!”

One family kindly wrote us to share their experience:

“I printed out your email listing all the supplies you were collecting and brought it home. The girls and I sat at the kitchen table and they circled the items they thought would be most helpful for children who were going to school. (They circled all of them!)”

Abigail and Catherine would pick an item—such as notebooks—and check out all the notebooks available. They tried to buy the ones that the children would like and get as many possible. We did this with every item on the list—markers, erasers,

rulers, etc. The girls had so much fun trying to make sure we were able to purchase supplies for as many children as possible, and were also interested in learning why children didn’t already have these supplies and why we were trying to help.

Thank you for helping me teach my girls how to help others—and giving us a wonderful afternoon!”

Let Your Holiday Shopping Benefit MCHC This Year!

Here’s a simple way to give to MCHC this holiday season: do your on-line shopping through www.iGive.com. Just create an account designating MCHC as your recipient and shop from more than 700 retail web sites, such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Bed, Bath and Beyond. MCHC will benefit from every purchase you make this holiday season!

United Way Fall Campaign

Many thanks to all who give to the United Way! Your donor designation to MCHC through the United Way gives children a Healthy Start! For United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, write in #08548. For all other United Ways, write in “Maternal and Child Health Consortium.”

Mother’s Day Tea—Save the Date!

MCHC’s popular Mother’s Day Tea is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, 2011. Mark your calendars now, and look for future updates by mail, e-mail, and our Facebook page!

Family Center Says "Let's Move It!"

In September, MCHC's Kennett Square Family Center held a special event called "Let's Move It!" The parent-child educational event focused on the topics of physical activity and nutrition. The first half of the event involved teaching families about the importance of being physically active and demonstrating ways that they can incorporate more activity into their daily lives. The second half of the event focused on providing families with information about nutrition and then a demonstration of how to prepare healthy snacks for their children. The event was held at the Episcopal Church of the Advent in Kennett Square, and was attended by 39 parents and children. Many thanks to all volunteers who helped to make the event a success!



MCHC Needs Your Help!

Every new mom in our Healthy Start program receives a package of infant care items. We are seeking donations of new items to include in these packages including: newborn and size one diapers; baby wipes; baby lotion and wash; and onesies for age 0-3 months. If you can help, please contact Courtney Coleman at 610-344-5370, ext. 108 or at ccoleman@ccmchc.org.

We also are always in need of volunteers to assist with mailings, organizing baby supplies, and other office tasks. Courtney would love to hear from you if you can donate your time!

GlaxoSmithKline Impact Award

MCHC is pleased to announce that we are a winner of the Glaxo SmithKline Impact Award this year, a prestigious honor recognizing our hard work helping families in our community to access the health care they need. The award includes \$40,000 in general operating support. MCHC also received this award in 1998 and 2005, making us the only organization ever to have received this award three times. We are extremely proud of this distinction and grateful for Glaxo SmithKline's continued support and recognition of our work.

Recent Contributors

MCHC is most grateful for the recent support of its funders in the community, who are key partners in making sure that children in Chester County start healthy, stay healthy and succeed in school.

- The 1675 Foundation and Marian S. Ware 2003/2006 Charitable Lead Annuity Trusts
- The Barra Foundation
- The Boeing Company
- Brandywine Health Foundation
- The Build-A-Bear Foundation
- Chester County Women
- Claneil Foundation
- CVS Pharmacy
- The Dircks Foundation
- Exelon Generation
- First Cornerstone Foundation
- Health and Welfare Foundation of Southern Chester County
- The Huston Foundation
- Nonprofit Finance Fund
- Phoenixville Community Health Foundation
- PNC Foundation
- Sovereign Bank Foundation
- Springbank Foundation
- United Way of Chester County
- The Woman's Exchange

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As required by the PA Solicitation of Funds Act, a copy of the official registration and financial information for Maternal and Child Health Consortium may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.