

Starting Off Right

A Quarterly Newsletter from
 Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson,
 Madison & Taylor Counties, Inc.

SUMMER 2015



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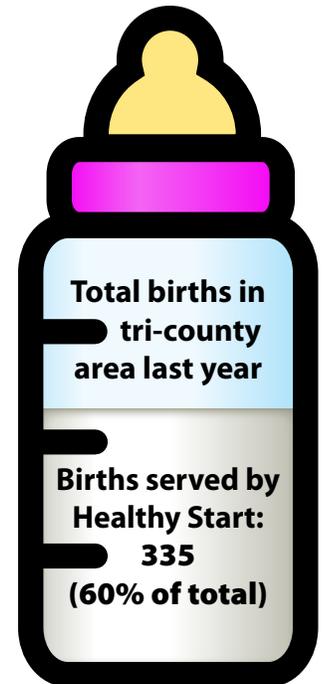
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A Big Thanks to All Our Coalition Partners

Our Annual Report to the Community

In reflecting on our past year, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated Healthy Start service providers that *served over 335 pregnant women and their infants with Healthy Start services. This is over 60% of the total births in our area and is indicative of the need for home visiting services in our communities.*

We are so proud of the work that is done in Healthy Start and grateful to our dedicated team at the county Departments of Health. In addition to oversight of the Healthy Start program in Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties, the Healthy Start Coalition is charged with community development activities that promote positive birth outcomes. The fiscal year that just ended June 30 provided many challenges in terms of Medicaid reform and access to care for our pregnant women in these counties, but there were many successes we wanted to share:



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1

Our Community Health Educator, Tonya Bell, is now a Certified Community Health Worker, and sits on a founding board to promote the certification statewide.

2

Parents as Teachers™

20 infants received Parents as Teachers services in FY 2014/2015.

3

Parents as Teachers™

Three new Healthy Start staff are now certified Parents as Teachers Parent Educators.

4

68%

The breastfeeding initiation rate for 2014 was 68%, compared to 63% for 2013, due in part to the Certified Lactation Consultants on staff with Healthy Start.

5

23

23 families were connected to community resources through a facilitated Whole Child Profile.

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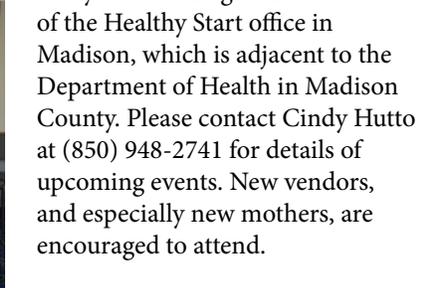
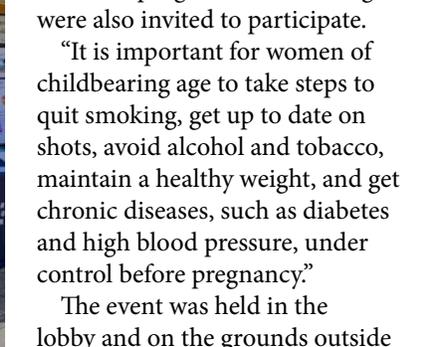
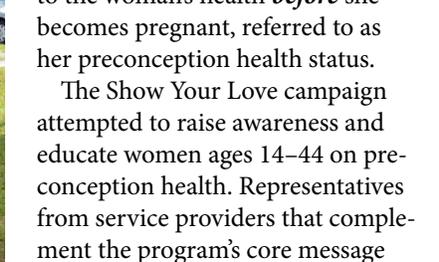
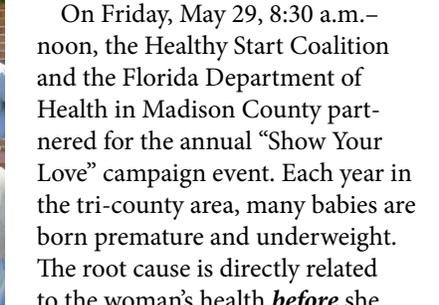
Show Your Love Preconception Health

On Friday, May 29, 8:30 a.m.–noon, the Healthy Start Coalition and the Florida Department of Health in Madison County partnered for the annual “Show Your Love” campaign event. Each year in the tri-county area, many babies are born premature and underweight. The root cause is directly related to the woman’s health *before* she becomes pregnant, referred to as her preconception health status.

The Show Your Love campaign attempted to raise awareness and educate women ages 14–44 on preconception health. Representatives from service providers that complement the program’s core message were also invited to participate.

“It is important for women of childbearing age to take steps to quit smoking, get up to date on shots, avoid alcohol and tobacco, maintain a healthy weight, and get chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, under control before pregnancy.”

The event was held in the lobby and on the grounds outside of the Healthy Start office in Madison, which is adjacent to the Department of Health in Madison County. Please contact Cindy Hutto at (850) 948-2741 for details of upcoming events. New vendors, and especially new mothers, are encouraged to attend.



Taylor County Healthy Start Celebrates with Meijah and Max

Raising a child is tough enough without extra challenges, so when a teenage mom turns her unplanned pregnancy into a wonderful parenting success story for the Taylor County Healthy Start program, all involved joined in the celebration.

In 2012, when Healthy Start Care Coordinator Linda Murphy met Meijah, who was living with her grandmother and unsure of how to handle her pregnancy, she was instantly inspired. Meijah hadn't completed her education and possessed few resources, but she was sure of one thing: Her baby would receive everything he needed to thrive!

As Meijah received information on pregnancy and newborn care, she worked hard to put the education into practice, joining the Lunch and Learn classes. She even committed herself to steadily eliminate medications she was taking so that she could breastfeed the baby (which she did exclusively for six months and then continued until 14 months).

Later, Meijah gratefully returned the support by serving as a role model for other new mothers.

"Wow!" doesn't begin to express how proud Linda was for both Meijah and Max.

When Max was born, although he didn't "score" into Healthy Start based on the brief postpartum interview the mother received, Meijah immediately requested Healthy Start services, including the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. "Max is my top priority!" Meijah noted, which has been continuously reflected in her subsequent choices.

In order to realize her long-term goals, Meijah recognized the need to complete her academic education as well, so she



enrolled in the local GED program, where she graduated in June 2015. She picked up her driver's license along the way, too, and got a car from Dad. As the saying goes, she planned her work and worked her plan!

Meijah is set to begin her LPN training in the fall, and all those around her believe that her success will continue.

"We're all so proud of Meijah and Max and of the great job Linda did to promote and achieve success over the last three years. Everyone involved is thrilled, but probably none more than Meijah and Max!" Director Kristie Lutz added.

For more information on Taylor County Healthy Start, please phone them at the Department of Health in Taylor County at (850) 584-5087.

Our Annual Report to the Community

Continued from front

6. Four hundred households were targeted to receive preconception education messages through door-to-door campaigns.
7. Two hundred nine opportunities, including health fairs, food distributions, community meetings, and other events were attended by the Coalition to provide information on preconception health.
8. Nine permanent benches display the message that displays the Whole Child Connection, which promotes resiliency for families.
9. Four newsletters were generated to promote awareness of preconception concepts through the Coalition membership of 315 members.
10. A PSA promoting women's health aired 16 times.
11. Sixty-six Coalition members attended the State of the Infant presentation in each county and were educated on maternal and child health statistics for these counties.
12. Twenty-six trainings or webinars were attended to improve the knowledge base for Coalition staff.
13. Eight direct service staff are now trained in SCRIPT, an evidence-based tobacco cessation program for pregnant women.
14. A self-service kiosk to promote access to the Whole Child Connection and Florida's ACCESS program was installed at the Coalition office in Greenville to increase the resiliency of the immediate neighborhood.

As we look forward to our new year, there are again many challenges but some incredible opportunities. The Coalition will be implementing Healthy Families services in the five-county area of Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, Lafayette and Hamilton counties. We will be providing child abuse prevention services to at least 60 families in these communities. Collectively, we are looking forward to developing a home-visiting infrastructure that supports healthy birth outcomes, prevents child maltreatment, promotes positive child development for children 0-3, and promotes school readiness.

Again, we gratefully thank our community partners and staff for making the past year a success despite significant challenges, and we gratefully acknowledge all our Coalition members and community partners for their commitment to making 2015/16 even better!

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Executive Director



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Gladys Roann-Watson *President*

Lucile Day *Vice-President*

Ernest Bruton *Secretary/Treasurer*

Jefferson County Members:

Lynn Elliott
 Tomica King

Madison County Members:

Bonnie Webb
 Vacant

Taylor County Members:

Eric Scott
 Corrie Willis

Taylor County Tobacco Free Partnership Recognizes Tonya Bell

Taylor County Tobacco Free Partnership recognized Community Health Educator Tonya Bell for her outstanding work in tobacco prevention, particularly among pregnant women and new mothers. As a longstanding member of the Partnership, Tonya was praised for demonstrating the dedication and drive needed to combat Big Tobacco.

"I have sympathy for all smokers; it's too easy to get started and so hard to quit," said Tonya. "Combining proven education and proper motivation, I support the partnership in their effort to make all people aware of the importance of tobacco prevention and cessation, especially among pregnant women and new mothers."

The Partnership mission is ...

- to create a tobacco-free atmosphere for Taylor County,
- to improve the health of Taylor County residents and of all Floridians by significantly reducing tobacco use,
- to eliminate the initiation of the use of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco among children,
- to promote health issues and healthy lifestyles, and
- to advocate for positive change.

Tobacco Prevention Specialist Martine Young was pleased to recognize Tonya for her accomplishments. As the facilitator of TCTFP, she appreciates the vital role contributors like Tonya provide. "Tonya has dedicated over five years of support to the mission of the Taylor County Tobacco Free Partnership. The Partnership is very appreciative of Tonya and her dedication to the cause. We like to refer to Tonya as our super hero for the Partnership. Without her, we wouldn't have made such tremendous progress towards creating a tobacco-free Taylor County."

To join the Partnership or to get more information about tobacco prevention in and out of the workplace, please email martine.young@flhealth.gov, or phone her at (850) 584-5087, Ext. 194.

