

Starting Off Right

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

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Community Leadership Praises 'State of the Child' Presentation

The Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties conducted its annual "State of the Child" meeting on April 25 at 9:30 a.m. at the Colin P. Kelly Fitness Center, located on the campus of North Florida Community College in Madison, Fla.

Executive Director Donna Hagan, who was accompanied by consultant Cecilia Freer, provided insights into the picture of health and well-being for Madison County's most vulnerable citizens: its children. The annual event received great praise for providing timely information useful to healthcare, education, government, business and civic leadership. Introducing vital data regarding the most pressing challenges facing new mothers and infants throughout the community, the meeting was geared to generate the collaboration needed to develop and implement sustainable solutions.

Recognizing that poor maternal and infant health are primary long-term contributors to Madison County ranking among the lowest in the state in chronic health and ongoing educational problems, organizers were committed to raising awareness of these key developmental issues. Madison County's perpetual poverty has often been blamed for these statistics and the associated disparities, suggesting that a turnaround is virtually impossible and mostly dependent on an improved economy. Generating lively discussion about cause and effect, Hagan urged all in attendance to support current and proposed programs designed to reverse these generational trends, such as the Boys to Kings project sponsored by Merv Mattair.

The Coalition's communications consultant, Michael Curtis, interviewed a number of directors and officials who attended the meeting, asking each for his or her assessment of the issues presented. Three focal points emerged: (1) the school system will not turn around—and, therefore, neither will the workforce—until key maternal and early childhood developmental crises are addressed; (2) everyone in the community has a stake in the outcomes; and (3) local organizations and volunteers need to donate time and resources toward this urgent priority.

Before concluding, a moment was also taken to acknowledge that the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor Counties is celebrating its 20th birthday. In recognition, many guests donated gifts useful to new mothers and infants.

For more information or to offer assistance with this great cause, please phone Cindy Hutto at (850) 948-2741, or email Cindy at cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org.



Cecilia Freer informs those attending the "State of the Child" presentation on April 25 about Madison's most vulnerable citizens: its children.

Donna Hagan
will serve as
President of the
Florida Association
of Healthy Start
Coalitions, Inc.
effective July 1,
2012. For more
information on the association, check
out www.healthystartflorida.com.



Jefferson County Whole Child Launches Healthy Smart Day

On Tuesday, March 27, parents were invited to Healthy Smart Day at the Jefferson County Health Department from 1–5 p.m. The special event provided children ages birth to five free developmental screenings, including vision, hearing, dental and other motor and behavioral skills screenings designed to make sure they are healthy and headed for a great start when school comes. Dozens of agencies donated staff and resources, along with prizes and

goodies to make sure everyone had a good time while receiving essential services.

During the course of the day, 31 families received screenings; 16 children were over three, 15 were under three. Three of those over three had already been tested by the school system and were receiving services. Three additional referrals were made to the school child find system. There was one referral for dental services and one referral to Early Steps. Three

concerns about behavioral issues were discovered; one was referred to CMS, and the other two did not get a referral. The latter may be an area of need for the community.

The lead sponsors for the event were Whole Child Tri-County, Jefferson County Health Department, Early Steps Children's Medical Services, Florida Diagnostics & Learning Resources System, and Jefferson County District Schools.



NEW MOVEMENT FOR BABIES

For Our Babies is a movement to promote the healthy development of U.S. children from conception to age three. Powered by an interactive website, which includes informative blog posts, videos, and podcasts, the movement advocates for enhanced prenatal care for expectant mothers, paid leave and well-baby care, increased screening and follow-up services for young children, and quality infant/toddler care. Check out the website to learn how to get involved and join the movement: www.forourbabies.org.



Organizers prepare to launch the inaugural Healthy Smart Day.



Kim Allbritton proudly showcases the Jefferson County Whole Child mobile unit during Healthy Smart Day.



Whole Child Advisor Tonya Bell (right) performed Whole Child surveys throughout the day, which created a profile—a comprehensive review—and referrals for healthcare and other family needs.



WCTV reporter Garin Flowers covered the event as part of an ongoing commitment of support for youth health in the tri-county area.



Vendors and healthcare providers line the grounds at the Jefferson County Health Department.



Following registration, parents walked their children through the screening stations that were located throughout the Jefferson County Health Department.

A Good Time for a Good Cause

Each year in Taylor County, the community looks forward to the annual Children's Fun Fest, a time of fun for children, and an opportunity to educate parents on early childhood services. The early learning community in Taylor has used this outlet to reach parents for over a decade. In 2011, the Child Abuse Prevention theme, adopted from the National Pinwheels for Prevention Campaign, was infused as the primary theme for the event. For 2012, 75 families were reached during the event and given information on child care resource and referral, social connections, family resource guides for strengthening families, and a host of opportunities to involve their children in community activities.

Prevent Child Abuse Florida's Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign uses a simple child's toy to remind us that we all play an important role in children's lives. The Pinwheels for Prevention campaign is part of a national movement to change the way we think about prevention by focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize healthy child development so abuse and neglect never begins.

Taylor County is home to over 1,200 children ages 0–5. These children are the future parents, teachers, business owners, employees and leaders of this community. Whether these children will achieve their full potential and develop into healthy, productive members of our community depends largely on each of us.



Heirlooms of Love

The Pine Tree Craft and Quilters held their 16th annual quilt show on Feb. 18, 2012, at their quilting location, the United Methodist Cooperative Ministries' facilities on Colin Kelly Hwy. These talented ladies spend countless hours making quilts of love for those less fortunate in our area. Each year, 36 handmade baby quilts are distributed to the Healthy Start Coalition at this event, which go to infants in Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor counties. This doesn't include their signature "baby bundles" they make from more baby quilts, some baby items and a layette. These attractive gift bundles (60 total last year) were delivered to the Madison County Health Department. In total, the quilters made and distributed 155 quilts to various organizations in the tri-county area.

Please join the Coalition in thanking these women for the effort, time, and love that goes into making the wonderful heirloom quilts for our local babies! These are the most philanthropic women in our community in terms of the time they give to our families.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our

quilters: Mazie Arnold, Sandra Bass, Ruth Bishop, Laurretta Bottomley, Mary Dees, Beth Dees, Hilda Dixon, Nell Dobbs, Linda Doud, Jean Ann Fiori, Louanna Forness, Sarah Freytag, Elizabeth Gant, Mary Guidinger, Geraldine Harden, Joyce Holton, Sally Hubbard, Kay Hudson, Millie Leonardson, Gean McCullough, Jeanette Mitchell, Sandy Origer, Effie Pate, Irene Rowell, Joyce Rutherford, Betty Sirmon, Louise Strickland, Karen Sutton, Helen Whitten, and Ila Willis.



**BIRTH CONTROL:
ALL ABOUT IT,
COMPARE METHODS,
TELL OTHERS**

**THE contraceptive
website is**

www.bedsider.org.

**This site provides
great information
about family planning
methods and myths
targeting young adults.
Check it out.**

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QI Director

Tonya Bell
*Whole Child Advisor
and Community Health
Educator*

**Jefferson County Reaches Out to Young Men**

Jefferson County Whole Child Safe & Nurturing Environment Dimensions Team, along with Taylor County Men's Ministry and Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties sponsored the 4th Annual Boys 2 Men Lock-in on March 9–10 in Taylor County at Taylor County High School.

The group was greeted by Perry Mayor Emily Ketring, who encouraged the young men to have fun throughout the night and not to forget the importance of education, as they are future leaders.

John Lilly, Jefferson County Extension Office Director, noted, "Our purpose is to provide accurate, wholesome, fun-filled, informative activities that enrich the lives of our young men as well as enable them to grow up to be educated, respectable, productive citizens of Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties."



Young men attending the Jefferson County 4th Annual Boys 2 Men Lock-in play basketball in Taylor County High School's gymnasium.

Deveda Bellamy, Minority AIDS Coordinator Area 2B Leon County Health Department, followed with a discussion regarding prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Jefferson County Young Ladies: Steppin' Out

Jefferson County Whole Child Safe & Nurturing Environment Dimensions Team hosted its 2nd Annual Pretty Girl Talk event. This year's theme, "Steppin' Out," attracted 75 young ladies from the tri-county area on Friday, April 27. The event was held in the cafeteria of the Old Howard Middle School in Jefferson County. Donna Hagan, Executive Director of Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties, welcomed everyone, emphasizing that all of the Whole Child dimensions—a safe and nurturing environment, economic stability, social development, physical and mental well-being, quality education and spiritual strength—must work together for children to thrive. Superintendent Brumfield, Chief Mosley, Assistant State Attorney Phil Smith, Commissioner John Nelson and Keynote Speaker Judge Kathy Gardner provided encouragement and wisdom to the young ladies.

During the "Let's Get Pretty" pampering sessions, most of the young ladies had the opportunity to receive a manicure, a pedicure,

hair styling, or a Mary Kay facial. Afterward, the young ladies moved into breakout sessions with Deveda Bellamy and Joseph Ward from Leon County DOH Prevention Team, Kimolyn Ferrell of Dare to Dream Inc., and Malverna Streeter of Camp Encouragement.

Well over 20 vendors and community partners participated in this awesome event.



Young ladies attending the Jefferson County 2nd Annual Pretty Girl Talk enjoy Mary Kay makeovers.



**June is National Congenital
Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month**
Find Out More from The CMV Action Network
www.stopcmv.org

— NOTICE —
The Coalition is seeking one board member from Jefferson County. Please contact us with your recommendation.