

Starting Off Right

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

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Jefferson County Whole Child Hosts 2nd Annual Healthy Smart Day

***"Developmental screenings are essential
to helping our children thrive."***

***~ Donna Hagan, Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson,
Madison & Taylor Counties Executive Director***



On Tuesday, April 2, parents brought their children ages six months to five years to the 2nd Annual Healthy Smart Day, which was hosted at the Jefferson County Health Department from 1-5 p.m. The special event provided free developmental screenings, including vision, hearing, dental and other motor and behavioral skills, which were designed to ensure each child was off to a healthy start. Dozens of agencies donated staff and resources, along with prizes and treats to make a great day of fun as these essential services were being performed.

Lead sponsors were Whole Child Tri-County, Jefferson County Health Department, Early Steps Children's Medical Services, Florida Diagnostics & Learning Resources System, Jefferson County District Schools, Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region, Communication and Early Childhood Research and Practice Center, and the Parent-Child Home Program.



Nick Williams (right) entertains a family, as he introduces them to the valuable resources of the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend Region.



Edna Henry, JCSD parent outreach coordinator, continues her commitment to school readiness by supporting Healthy Smart Day.



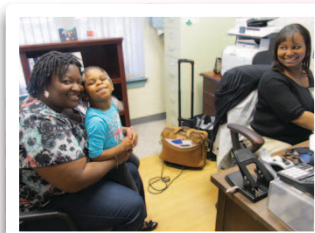
Karen Pennington (right) was one of the great professional health department staff that escorted families through the developmental screening process.



Kristin Jackson of the Jefferson County Extension Office has become a fixture in the community, leading the charge for youth and family throughout Jefferson County.



Craig Wilson (left) and super volunteer Angel Trejo (right) brought their leadership and passion to promote the vital importance of developmental screenings.



Community Health Educator and Whole Child Advisor Tonya Bell (right) conducts a Whole Child Connection profile for a family attending Healthy Smart Day.

Early Childhood Children's Fun Festival & Pinwheels for Prevention a Great Success

Each year in Taylor County, early childhood service providers collaborate to host the Children's Fun Festival, which is designed to educate parents about the early childhood development services available to them. Held on April 13th from 10 a.m. until noon and sponsored by Taylor County Head Start, Taylor County Pre-K, and the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties, the annual Pinwheels for Prevention campaign was also held in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Building on the prior year's successes, the community looks forward to the annual Children's Fun Fest, which the early learning community in Taylor County has effectively used for over

a decade to reach parents on these vital issues. 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 begin.



Taylor County Head Start Director Eric Scott



Pinwheels for Prevention organizers sent a clear message: Each child deserves a safe and nurturing environment.

Day of Dialogue on Minority Health Addresses Tri-county Health Equities

In order to combat the chronic health issues facing the tri-county area—including health disparities—the faith-based communities of Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor counties gathered to discuss these critical concerns. Sponsored by Concerned Citizens of Faith, Capital Health Plan, Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, and Bethel Health Ministry, this event is typically conducted in each county; however, because these rural communities are so similar and share common resources, organizers elected to combine events. In addition to faith-based leadership from each county, there were also over 30 vendors on hand to provide

health screenings and services. Special thanks goes out to Dr. Penny Ralston, FSU Professor; Dr. Elsie Cromwell; Bethel AME-Tallahassee Health Ministries; Madison-Jefferson Interim Health Administrator Kim Allbritton and staff; Taylor County Health Administrator Steve Tullus and staff; Deveda Bellamy, Area 2B Prevention & Control Team of Leon County Health Department; Dr. Esias Lee; Madison County District Schools; BOND Community Health Center Mobile Unit; participating ministers; the Day of Dialogue on Minority Health Planning and Advisory committees; and, of course, all the great community attendees.



L-r: Ms. Cheryl Graham with the Florida Department of Health, Office of Minority Health; Deveda Bellamy, LCHD Area 2B Prevention and Control Team; and Minister Barbara Reddick, Substance Abuse Counselor at Taylor Correctional Institute contributed to the success of the Day of Dialogue.

Healthy Start: a professional family serving tri-county families

Recently, Craig Wilson, Pam Robinson, and Merv Mattair shifted from their activities with the Healthy Start Madison team to launch the new Abstinence program at the health department. Nita Mitchell became the new supervisor and

was joined by Care Coordinator Michele Stout. Executive Director Donna Hagan praised the performance of her new and transitioning associates, noting her excitement for the expanded community services.



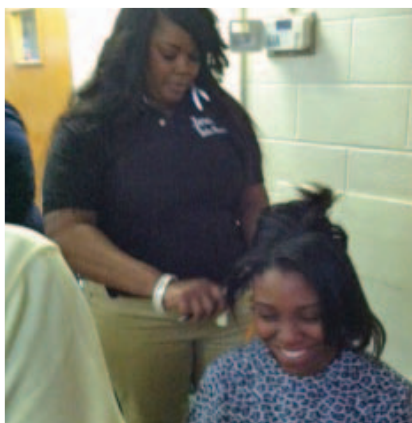
Merv Mattair, Pam Robinson, Shanetha “Nita” Mitchell, Michelle Stout, and Craig Wilson (l-r) are dedicated to making healthier communities by helping others with better lifestyle choices.



Tonya Bell (right) and Timako Glanton (left) were all smiles during a local health fair. They are vital members of the superb Healthy Start field staff serving the tri-county area.

3rd Annual Pretty Girl Talk Event

The Beauty & Brains theme provided an environment where youth could learn to be empowered and to become respected, productive adults where they live, work, play and visit.



Tykeria Norton (sitting) received a beauty treatment from Lametris McBride of Jewel's Hair Studio at the 3rd Annual Pretty Girls Talk, which was hosted by Whole Child Safe and Nurturing Environmental Team.



Nicolette Castagna, MPH, with Community Health Improvement and Chronic Disease Prevention at the Jefferson and Madison Health Departments, provides beauty and health tips to teens at Pretty Girls Talk.



Parents as Teachers™



Mothers and babies are benefiting from the wonderful Parents as Teachers program taught by Healthy Start Case Coordinator Linda Murphy in Taylor County.

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and Community Health
Educator*



Partnership for Strong Families Celebrates 10th Anniversary

“10 Years and Growing” campaign sets strategy for welfare transformation

Partnership for Strong Families, the lead community-based care agency for Florida's Judicial Circuits 3 and 8, hosted its “10 Years and Growing” campaign event on April 4 to celebrate its 10th anniversary. Welcoming child welfare service providers, agency stakeholders, and key community leaders to reflect on the child welfare transformation PSF has accomplished during the past decade, PSF leadership presented the agency's future goals and new Strategic Plan. Since 2003, PSF has provided child welfare services to more than 50,000 victims of child abuse and neglect. The agency has finalized more than 1,400 adoptions and has reduced



the number of children in foster care by 46% since 2009. While the reception served to highlight these accomplishments, the main focus of the celebration was to look and plan ahead.

“We want to show the community not just what our agency and system partners have done, but what we plan to do,” stated Shawn Salamida, President/CEO of PSF. “As a system, we have made great strides for the children and families in our care with the support of this community, and we know that together we will accomplish much more.”

To learn more about Partnership for Strong Families, please visit www.pfsf.org.

Department of Children and Families Town Hall

On March 18, Department of Children and Families held a Circuit 3 Town Hall meeting in Perry. The event, which was held in conjunction with the Healthy Start Coalition of JMT, was extremely well attended, with over 60 community leaders present. The agenda included updates and presentations on core topics, including the changes to the Florida Abuse Hotline Command Center, updates regarding the Child Protection Transformation, last year's legislative changes, and a brief video on human trafficking to raise awareness. There was also an update regarding the activities of the lead Community Based Care agency, which included details of its recent contract with a consultant to provide



further outreach into rural communities. Representatives from the local health departments, faith based community, law enforcement, and elected officials joined multiple community advocacy groups in these discussions. In addition, two of the Dependency

Judges from the Circuit cleared their dockets in order to participate, while presenters travelled from Tallahassee, Jacksonville and Ocala in order to provide the most up-to-date information. Feedback was very positive; all agreed they learned much and committed to learn more.



Shawn Salamida, President/CEO of Partnership for Strong Families (far right in left photo, standing), addresses the audience at the well attended DCF Town Hall meeting held in Perry.