

Starting Off Right

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

SPRING 2014



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*The Healthy Start Coalition of
Jefferson, Madison, & Taylor Counties*

Cordially invites you to a community forum

"State of the Infant"

Taylor County

Monday, June 23

Nine-thirty in the morning

Taylor County School Board

meeting room

Madison County

Wednesday, June 25

Nine-thirty in the morning

Madison Public Library

meeting room

*Please join us for insight into the picture of health and well-being for the most
vulnerable citizens: our children. A voluntary donation or gift, such as diapers or
other infant and maternal items, is encouraged and greatly appreciated.*

Please contact the Coalition at 850-948-2741 for additional information

Florida's Medicaid Managed Care:

Did you know the Medicaid Managed Care kicked off in our area on May 1?

Will medically needy change?

What are the plans covering my region?

Find the answers to these and other
most frequently asked questions here:

<http://ahca.myflorida.com>

Affordable Care Act: The healthcare.gov site is officially closed, but if there were errors in an application, and/or changes and corrections need to be made, this can still be done by contacting the Navigator, Demetrie Tillman, at (850) 875-3806, or by email at demetrie_tillman@paec.org.



Show Your Love Campaign Highlights Importance of Healthy Habits Before Pregnancy

Women's Health before Pregnancy Important for Future Health of Mother and Baby

Show Your Love is a national campaign developed by the Preconception Health and Health Care Initiative (PHHCI) in partnership with the Healthy Start Coalitions in Florida to help women prepare for healthy pregnancies. The campaign's message points out that if a woman chooses to have a child, she can show love for her child by first loving herself by adopting healthy habits well before becoming pregnant.

"Living a healthy lifestyle is a way to show love to yourself and your future baby long before a baby is in the plans," said Kristie Lutz, Healthy Start Program Director at the Department of Health in Taylor County. "By taking a few simple steps toward becoming as healthy as possible before pregnancy, women can experience long-lasting benefits for herself and her future children."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), preconception health is the health of women and men during their reproductive years. Preconception health focuses on women taking important steps now to protect their health and the health of the family they may want to have sometime in the future. These steps include working with their doctors to control and treat medical conditions, e.g. diabetes and high blood pressure, quitting smoking, drinking less alcohol, becoming physically active, and making healthy food choices.

"While most women know that improving their health once they become pregnant is important, many women don't know that improving their health before pregnancy—even long before it's a consideration—is also important for the health of a mother-to-be and her baby" (Donna Hagan, Healthy Start CEO).

As part of the Show Your Love campaign, the Florida Department of Health in Taylor County hosted a women's health fair on May 23 providing information on nutrition, family planning, breastfeeding, tobacco cessation, STD/HIV prevention, and hosted community partners representing domestic violence, mental health and substance abuse counseling, civil legal services, and Whole Child Connection access.

The Show Your Love campaign focuses on women during their childbearing years—between the ages of 18 and 44. The campaign is designed to speak both to women who are currently planning to become pregnant and those for whom pregnancy may not be in their immediate plans.

"Our goal is to ensure that every woman who hopes to become a mom one day understands the importance of preconception health. By taking steps to improve her health before pregnancy, a woman will be her very best self and her family will thank her for it. And for those women who don't want to start a family, our message is that they should be healthy and love and take care of herself—for her—so she can achieve the goals and dreams she has for herself" (Pad Juarez, Health Officer in Taylor County).



Volunteers for the Show Your Love campaign pictured here at the Taylor County Health Department.



Linda Murphy from the Healthy Start team at the Taylor County Health Department promotes breastfeeding.



Brenda Newman, ARNP, left, represents the Health Department, promoting family planning services and women's health services.

Student Nail Techs Pamper Expecting Moms

Students from the Madison County High School Nail Technology Program are gaining valuable experience while putting huge smiles on the faces of expecting moms who are enrolled in Healthy Start's local "MomCare" program. Nail Technology is among the many successful Career and Technology Education courses now offered at the high school, which is garnering great praise for its notable achievements and rapid growth.

"Being able to pamper our ladies and have these nail techs gain valuable experience is a big win-win for everybody," noted Shanetha "Nita" Mitchell, director of Healthy Start in Jefferson and Madison Counties. "We are always excited to form these types of useful partnerships."

Dedicated to ensuring every baby gets a healthy start, from pre-conception through early childhood development, the coalition realizes that a little pampering goes a long way to building lasting connections.



Shanetha "Nita" Mitchell stands by her Baby Wall of Fame. "All our babies are special!" she exclaims. ►

Whole Child Praises Partnership

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church to host Whole Child kiosk

Whole Child Tri-County continues its commitment to facilitate sustainable access to health and social resources. Partnering with Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church of Madison, Fla., a ribbon cutting was held on Thursday, May 8, as church leadership took possession of a promotional kiosk donated by Donna Hagan, Executive Director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties, the Whole Child sponsor in the tri-county area.

Church officials will now facilitate staff training on the new technology, which was made possible by funding from the Florida Office of Minority Health. The kiosk provides online access to the Whole Child Tri-County website and ACCESS Florida. Allowing families one-stop access to state services and referrals to service providers throughout the Whole Child Tri-County network, the Whole Child Connection is an automated tool that consists of a comprehensive, confidential "profile" that essentially walks users through an online needs assessment. Identifying gaps and generating provider recommendations, this activity will eventually need to be performed by church staff. Whole Child Community Educator Tonya Bell will conduct activities in the interim as she trains church staff over the next few months.

"The Healthy Start Coalition is so grateful for the level of commitment Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church has for its community. The Whole Child kiosk is designed to provide an easy venue for families to access services, and Mt. Zion officials have embraced this idea as a means to increase resiliency for families. We are very proud of this partnership and are expecting great outcomes," Hagan noted.

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Pastor Charles W. Evans shares the excitement and positive expectation. The church's location near downtown Madison and surrounding residences is also ideal for families with transportation limitations. Pastor Evans

and his family have often been praised for their dedication to community service, so adding the Whole Child kiosk to their community resources was a perfect partnership.

"The Whole Child kiosk is wonderful technology, and it's great to be able to offer this resource to our community," Evans said. "Accessing important family services promotes a healthier community, and we are very pleased to be partnering with Whole Child," he added.

Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church is located at 576 SW Dade Street, Madison, FL 32340. For more information about Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church community outreach, please contact Jerome Wyche at (850) 464-0196, or for more information on Whole Child Tri-County, please phone Tonya Bell at (850) 253-5355.



Whole Child Tri-County is pleased to welcome Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church as a community partner. Pictured left to right are Joyce Frank Wilson, Jerome Wyche, Margie Evans, Charles W. Evans, Donna Hagan, Tonya Bell and Deveda Bellamy.



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Madison County Members:
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Bonnie Webb

Taylor County Members:
Dawn Taylor
Corrie Willis

Tonya Bell: Our Community Cornerstone

Serving as Healthy Start Community Educator and Whole Child Advisor, Tonya Bell is quickly becoming a cornerstone in the tri-county area, providing families useful and timely screening and referral services.

Whether partnering with organizations like the Florida Departments of Health in Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties, or with various student and faculty service programs at North Florida Community College, Tonya cultivates contacts to ensure the vital services that she provides reach all who might benefit from them.

"Tonya isn't just a great member of our staff; she treats everyone like family. And she isn't afraid to talk about the tough topics necessary to promote awareness and change. She is a valuable asset to all of us," Donna Hagan, Executive Director of Healthy Start in Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties, noted.

Tonya gratefully requests that those planning community events or needing to make client referrals please contact her at (850) 253-5355, or email her at tbell@healthystartjmt.org.



Tonya provides handy resources to an expecting mom during the Health Fair held on the Madison County Courthouse lawn.



A North Florida Community College student is pleased to receive valuable information while passing through the Student Center.

Pinwheels for Prevention Building Lasting Legacy

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 5 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 prior successes, the early learning community in Taylor County

has effectively used the fun festival for over a decade to reach parents regarding these vital issues. Florida's Pinwheels for Prevention campaign turns a simple child's toy into an icon that reminds everyone that communities play an important role in preventing child abuse.

The Pinwheels for Prevention campaign is part of a national movement to change the way people think about prevention by focusing on community activities and public policies that prioritize healthy child development so abuse and neglect never begin. Like the saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."



Pinwheels line the park fence in Perry to remind us that communities must work together to prevent child abuse.