

# Starting Off Right

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

SPRING 2015



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## Tonya Bell Recognized in First Certification Class

### Community Health Workers are First in Florida to Earn Professional Credential

Members of the Florida Community Health Worker Coalition, the Florida Legislature, and the Florida Certification Board came together in Tallahassee to celebrate the state's first credentialed Community Health Workers, which included Tonya Bell, the community educator from the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties. As a Community Health Worker (CHW), Tonya demonstrates a close commitment to — and understanding of — her community.

As the trusted voice in prenatal and early childhood health care, the Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties has been home to Tonya for five years, where Executive Director Donna Hagan echoes the sentiments of the state officials.

"Tonya is an exceptional professional who serves the tri-county area with expertise and passion. Being recognized for this outstanding achievement is a great accomplishment, and we are so proud and pleased to have her on our staff," Hagan noted.

Program administrators explained that this trusting relationship enables the CHW to serve as a liaison, link, and intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. In addition to improving access to care, CHWs are a solution to address health disparities as well.

Tonya Bell can be contacted at (850) 253-5355 or by email at [tbell@healthystartjmt.org](mailto:tbell@healthystartjmt.org). She is available for confidential, one-on-one consultations or to assist organizations by creating awareness for their human services. Tonya is a regular contributor at service fairs and workshops throughout the communities that she serves.



*Tonya Bell joins community partners in the prevention of domestic abuse.*



*Tonya hosts teen events to promote positive lifestyle choices.*



## Healthy Start Thanks Pine Tree Craft and Quilters

The Pine Tree Craft and Quilters held their 19th Annual Brunch and Quilt Show on February 21, 2015 at their quilting location, the United Methodist Cooperative Ministries' facilities at 135 NE Dill Street. 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 will go to infants in Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor Counties. They also make their signature "baby bundles," which include baby quilts, baby items, and a layette, which are delivered to the Florida Department of Health in Madison County. In total, the quilters made and distributed 139 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 these 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: Sandra Bass, Hilda Dixon, Sally Hubbard, Irene Rowell, Mary Dees, Linda Doud, Gean McCullough, Joyce Bosscher, Mildred Basescu, Diana Rehberg, LaNora Zipperer, Debbie Brown, Betty Sirmon, Geraldine Harden, Jeanette Mitchell, Glenda McClamma and Suzy Krause.



## Human Services Fair Feeds Body, Mind and Soul

Feb. 18, 2015, the Healthy Start Coalition office in Greenville hosted a Human Services Fair in collaboration with Renewed Life Outreach Center, Whole Child Tri-County and Florida Department of Health in Jefferson and Madison counties. Several dozen health and service providers hosted numerous visitors, many of whom were also on hand to participate in the food distribution program sponsored by Healthy Start and Renewed Life.







## Taylor County Recovery Center's Mother's Day Fundraiser

**Mother's Day Basket! Tickets are \$2.00 for a beautiful basket valued at \$50.00. Drawing is Friday May 8.**

Help TCRC to continue to serve the Taylor County-Perry community and give a Mother in your life a beautiful gift basket! Contact TCRC for basket details at (850) 584-2772 today!

## 400 mcg a Day to Keep the Doctor Away!

January was National Birth Defects Prevention Month, with Jan. 5–11 being recognized as National Folic Acid Awareness Week. Approximately one in every 33 babies is born with a birth defect in the United States and is at high risk for lifelong disabilities or infant mortality.

Folic acid is an important B-vitamin that should be taken before and during pregnancy to prevent major birth defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly. Because 49 percent of

pregnancies in the U.S. are unplanned (even higher in the tri-county area), it is important for every woman to take folic acid as part of their preconception health routine. The recommended daily dose for women is 400 mcg.

To improve awareness of this key nutritional fact, Healthy Start staff and leadership joined community partners, going door to door in high-risk areas to distribute information and useful handouts, while wearing t-shirts that simply read, "400 mcg."



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## Pinwheels for Prevention Placed to Recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month

Pinwheels for Prevention were placed again in parks throughout the state, including Perry, in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month. State agencies, including Healthy Start, participated in the annual event that raises awareness and recruits resources to combat this growing concern. If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, please call the Florida Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).



## April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



## April is National Minority Health Month

Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor counties have a history of poor health outcomes, especially among minority populations. Many chronic health issues, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, occur at rates that are double, even triple, state averages. To address these concerns, the Coalition continues to facilitate the activities of local Health Equity Commissions, which are committed to finding solutions, big and small, to these challenges that rob children and adults of basic quality of life, not to mention productive livelihoods. In recognition of April 2015 as National Minority Health Month, concerned citizens are urged to take just a moment to educate themselves, or perhaps volunteer a few minutes to this worthwhile effort.

This year's theme is "30 Years of Advancing Health Equity; The Heckler Report: A Force for Ending Health Disparities in America," commemorates

the 30th anniversary of the *Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health* (also known as the Heckler Report). This theme reflects the collective efforts to achieving a community and nation free of disparities in health and health care.

Locally, please contact Cindy Hutto at (850) 948-2741, or email her at [cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org](mailto:cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org) for more information on health equity activities taking place in your community.

