

# Starting Off Right

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

SPRING 2018



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## Thank You!

The Coalition would like to take this opportunity to thank our members and friends for their advocacy on our behalf during this challenging legislative session. The number of members that reached out to me individually was overwhelming — a testament of the true Coalition-building efforts established in the early 90's by my predecessors, and indicative of the current value the community places on both our role and the services we provide.

We also applaud the Florida Legislature for maintaining funding for Florida's Healthy Start program. The continued funding will allow us to provide essential services and community interventions to Florida's high-risk mothers and infants. Last year, we served over 280 pregnant women and infants in Jefferson, Madison and Taylor counties.

In 1991, the Florida Legislature, at the urging of Governor Lawton Chiles, formed the Healthy Start Coalitions as a public-private partnership. Coalitions are responsible for developing and maintaining a system of care for pregnant women and babies in each community. Coalitions form partnerships with hospitals, obstetricians, County Departments of Health, and other non-profits and programs to have collective impact on birth outcomes.

Since it was established, Healthy Start has helped Florida make

significant strides in increasing positive birth outcomes and reducing infant mortality by 35 percent. Our work is essential, and although far from complete, this funding will allow our efforts to continue to make a positive impact on infant mortality, prematurity, and healthy child development.

Healthy Start is currently working with the Florida Department of Health and Agency for Health Care Administration to develop a new care delivery structure that will reach into each community to increase our impact in helping Florida's highest-risk mothers and babies and further ensure our services are providing the highest return on investment.

We, again, thank both our advocacy team as well as the Florida Legislature for recognizing the value in investing in the health of our state's most vulnerable families and helping us continue on this positive path of success.



Donna Hagan  
Executive Director

## Contact Us

1336 SW Grand St.  
PO Box 568  
Greenville, FL 32331  
Phone: 850-948-2741  
Fax: 850-948-3072  
cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org  
www.healthystartjmt.org





## Pinwheels for Prevention Promotes Child Abuse Awareness

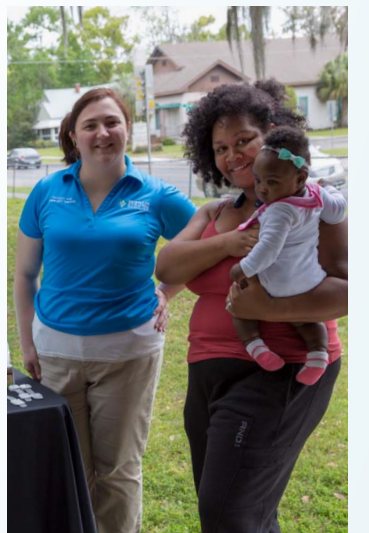
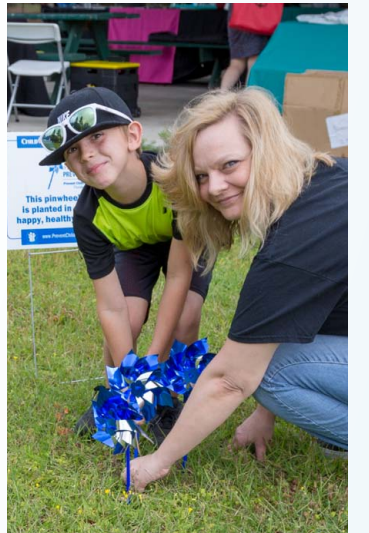
April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month, and in recognition of this vital cause, the 2018 Pinwheels for Prevention Fun Festival was held on Saturday, April 7, at the City Park in Perry. Taylor County leads the Coalition's incidence and prevalence of child maltreatment, with child abuse rates three times higher than the state average.

The Fun Festival has been an annual event, which is designed to bring awareness to community services available to children and their families, as well as a platform to share information concerning child health and safety in a fun and engaging atmosphere. Despite rain in the forecast, this year's event was a success with families of children ranging from newborns to teens. A plethora of service providers participated, including 211 Big Bend/Help Me Grow, Big Bend AHEC, Big Bend CARES, CDI-Head Start, Cricket

Wireless, Department of Children and Families, Healthy Families Seven Rivers, Healthy Start, Partnership for Strong Families, Taylor County Department of Health Tobacco Free/Chronic Disease Department, and The Refuge House.

Parents received information on safe sleep, breastfeeding, child care, survivor advocacy, child proofing homes, potty training, water safety, and healthy lifestyles to name a few. Children were able to exhaust their energy in the bounce house provided by Huggers How to Have Fun, the bubble station sponsored by Healthy Families Seven Rivers, and the coloring station sponsored by Cricket Wireless.

Child abuse is a crime that can last a lifetime; please report any abuse by calling the Florida Child Abuse Hotline at 1 (800) 96ABUSE — it's confidential and can make a difference to both the child and community!



## Tonya Bell Recognized for Minority Health Leadership



Jefferson County 2018 Day of Dialogue on Minority Health XII was a huge success with over 75 attendees. The audience heard from a number of speakers regarding the roles we play in contributing to poor health and the steps/strategies we must take to live healthier and longer lives.

*Tonya Bell is recognized for her role in an upcoming DoD event to be held in 2019 in Taylor County. Pictured left to right: Rev. J.W. Tisdale; Dr. Fred Seamon, Chairman of Day of Dialogue on Minority Health Organization; Tonya Bell; and Rev. Gloria Cox.*

## Best Practices Series Features Cultural Competency Workshop

The Coalition hosted the next installment in its Best Practices Series on Jan. 31: a multi-county Cultural Competency training. Over 50 Coalition

members attended! All agreed it was both informative and a must for those looking to bridge the gap between organizational goals and client acquisition/service.

For those that were not able to make the training, Dr. Hayes is available to provide her expertise and training, customizing the presentation to your agency's needs. Contact her directly:

Monica Hayes, Ed.D., MSW, MAT  
hayeseducationalconsulting@gmail.com  
850-294-3168





**Healthy Start Staff**

Donna Hagan, MBA  
Executive Director  
850-948-2741  
dhagan@healthystartjmt.org

Cindy Hutto  
Business Manager  
850-948-2741  
cjhutto@healthystartjmt.org

Tonya Bell, CCHW  
Community Health Educator  
850-253-5355  
tbell@healthystartjmt.org

**Direct Service Staff**

Supervisor - Jefferson & Madison  
Shanetha "Nita" Mitchell  
850-973-5000 (Ext. 2131)

Care Coordination - Madison  
Tangela Knight  
Tammy Hinson  
850-973-5000

Care Coordination - Jefferson  
Cumi Allen  
850-342-0170 (Ext. 107)

Supervisor - Taylor  
Kristie Lutz  
850-223-5117

Care Coordination - Taylor  
Sarah Bayes & Linda Murphy

**Healthy Families Seven Rivers Staff**

Program Manager  
Rebecca Severin, MPH

Parent Educators  
Elizabeth Gooden, Tonya Cason  
& Cynthia Monroe-Harris

Family Assessment  
Angelina Curtis

**Board Members**

Lynn Elliott President  
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Ernest Bruton  
Lucile Day

Taylor County Members:

Eric Scott

**Women's Health Remains Coalition Priority****Preconception health fair coming in May**

The Coalition continues its priority of delivering effective Women's Health messaging throughout its tri-county service area. Certified Community Health Educator Tonya Bell provides a variety of venues for this outreach as well, which is complemented by national activities. Please look for our upcoming preconception health fair, and contact Tonya Bell at (850) 253-5355.

**What is National Women's Health Week?**

National Women's Health Week is an observance led by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health. The goal is to empower women to make their health a priority. The week also serves as a time to encourage women to take steps to improve their health.

**What steps can I take for better health?**

To improve your physical and mental health, you can:

- Visit a doctor or nurse for a well-woman visit (checkup) and preventive screenings.
- Get active.
- Eat healthy.
- Pay attention to mental health, including getting enough sleep and managing stress.
- Avoid unhealthy behaviors, such as smoking, texting while driving, and not wearing a seatbelt or bicycle helmet.

**How can I participate in National Women's Health Week?**

The Office on Women's Health invites women across the country to:

- Spread the word through social media with our easy-to-use resources. Use the #NWHW hashtag.
- Join the National Women's Health Week Thunderclap.
- Take the National Women's Health Week quiz to learn about your health style.
- Organize events or activities.
- Learn what steps you should take for good health based on your age.

Visit [womenshealth.gov/nwhw](http://womenshealth.gov/nwhw) for resources and more information on how you can participate.

**Celebration of Mothers**

Friday, May 11 • 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Sumpter A. James Park  
MLK Drive, Madison