

The Healthy Start Coalition of Flagler & Volusia Counties, Inc. Community Circle



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Leadership Update *by Dixie Morgese*



Dear Community Partners,

I thank you for taking the time to review our third quarter newsletter. It is a challenge to print a newsletter about “after-the-fact” events and still address the timely issues of the day. Therefore, I want to write this letter about some issues that have taken place during our fourth quarter – particularly the impact of the legislative session.

First of all, I must thank our legislators for their support of Healthy Start. We had a roller-coaster ride with a threat to our very existence and wisdom prevailed. Our funding is intact and thus our ability to support our pregnant women and infants. Unfortunately, the Healthy Families program, which serves over 200 families in our community, took a severe blow this session. When all was said and done, almost 40% of its funding was cut. It still remains to be seen how hard this will hit us locally. We thank all the people who made phone calls and wrote to legislators on our behalf. A special thanks to Daniel Webster, former speaker of the Florida House and Republican Leader of the Florida Senate, who testified before the Health and Human Services Committee and wrote a noteworthy article about the program in the newspaper.

I reflect upon the Florida Child Abuse Death Review, a document published as a result of expert analysis of the human and economic toll of deaths from child abuse and neglect in our state. The recommendations put forth in this review, such as the recommendation to support Healthy Families, an evidence-based and proven child abuse prevention program, should be carefully considered by our leaders. A single case of child abuse and neglect costs the tax payer \$64,377.00. This amount does not include the future economic toll an abused child will have on society as he or she forges into adulthood with a myriad of social and functional deficits. Despite the need to balance Florida’s budget, what we do spend should be invested wisely. In the words of Frederick Douglass, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” I hope we do a better job next year of helping our legislators prioritize. They only know what we tell them.

These events pale in the wake of the loss of our Board member and friend, Mayor Blaine O’Neal, who passed away on Friday, April 9th. Blaine was an energetic and compassionate supporter of our mission, a wonderful husband and father, and leader to the City of South Daytona. Many will feel the void created by his loss. I conclude this letter with one of his favorite quotes from the writings of the Children’s Defense Fund: “Thou art my child, I love thee best. I could not love thee half as much, loved I not all the rest.”

Sincerely,
Dixie L. Morgese

The Healthy Start Annual Meeting was held on 1/27/10. It was well attended and featured an address by Jack Levine, and former program participants sharing their experiences with the Healthy Start program. Mr. Levine gave pre and post meeting seminars on developing self awareness and community involvement skills. Board President Pat Northey and Executive Director Dixie Morgese gave Mr. Levine an award for his work on behalf of children and families.



Coordinating Family Assistance

The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” has never been so true. More families than ever are at risk due to job cuts and budget cuts to family support and health care services. In addition to its assessment and support services, Healthy Start’s response has been to coordinate with other agencies to provide a network of resources for the most needy families in our community.

In February, Healthy Start began coordinating a Bridge the Gap project with funds provided by the Early Learning Coalition through a grant from Volusia County Children and Families Advisory Board. Healthy Start hired staff from Outreach Community Care Network to provide family support services for 30 families at the Star Shelter. The family support staff is assessing the parents’ and children’s medical needs, and helping them obtain the documentation and stable child care services they need to apply for work through the Center for Business Excellence. Once they have work, the family support staff will assist each family in creating an action plan to maintain a stable job, and find stable child care and housing outside the Star Shelter. The Chiles Academy (*See Family Assistance pg 2*)

Healthy Families News

Congratulations to Healthy Families Volusia Flagler for a Proven Record of Child Abuse Prevention!

For 2009, 100% of children in families in the program from 12 to 24 months had no "verified" findings of child maltreatment within 12 months after program completion. Great job, HFVF team!



Healthy Families Assessment Worker Jamie Szaroleta Provides Services at Florida Hospital Memorial Medical Center

Jamie visits all postpartum patients the day after delivery, and helps them complete the Healthy Start Infant Consent form, and Healthy Families Record Screen. If the family qualifies for Healthy Families services she does an assessment, during which she offers area services and resources to the family, including: Healthy Families, Healthy Start, Car Seat Checks, First Call for Help, The Children's Advocacy Center, WIC, and the Florida Hospital Memorial Medical Center Mommy to Mommy Class. Jamie also updates the BirthCare Center case management social worker and nurses about the status of each family so they can help meet their needs. Jamie's hope is that all families learn more about area resources, have a great experience with the services she represents, and feel ready for the adventures of parenting whether it is their first or last time. Director of BirthCare Services Becky Vernon, RNC, BSN, says "We are delighted to offer our families information and resources. It is a pleasure to work with Jamie and our patients are blessed to have her as a [Healthy Families]/Healthy Start resource."



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Family Assistance (Continued from pg 1)

welcomed the children and families with open arms. Special thanks goes to Anne Ferguson, Tracey Lasenby, Becky Taylor and Cue Sampson for their work on this project.

In the past year Healthy Start also has begun to:

- assist grass roots efforts to inform federal, state and county legislators about the importance of maintaining prenatal and family services
- provide assessment, prenatal and referral services for pregnant women at the Volusia County Branch Jail
- work with area hospitals to provide services to pregnant women at risk from methadone addiction
- create bereavement trainings to assist staff in dealing with families who have suffered an infant or fetal demise.

FIMR Bereavement Support Trainings

One of the most devastating things that can happen to a family is the loss of a baby or loss during a pregnancy. Last year, in Volusia and Flagler counties, 56 babies did not live to see their first birthday.

Our Fetal Infant Mortality Case Review Team (FIMR CRT) is a group of local experts who convene to examine and recommend implementation of systemic improvements. This quarter, they coordinated a two part training event for staff who work with our families.

Part one was held on 2/11/10, furnished an overview of the case review process, and provided staff the opportunity to participate in review of two actual infant/fetal demise cases. Part two, in March, provided comprehensive training about responding to grieving families with bereavement support services. In addition, staff received information and increased awareness regarding their own responses when a family they work with is grieving.

We thank **Matthew Pearce** of Halifax Health Hospice and **Kathleen Moore** of Florida Hospital Hospice Care for their expert facilitation. Additional thanks to **Dr. Debra Suto-Henry** of Florida United Methodist Children's Home and **Don Johnson**, Chaplain of the Volusia County Sheriff's Office for coordinating these extremely powerful and beneficial staff development opportunities.



We would also like to highlight the dedication and work of our two FIMR Case Abstractors, **Joan Hulett, RN** (left) and **Sandra Lennon, RN** (right), who perform the arduous task of abstracting the most pertinent information possible from the voluminous infant and fetal death case files for the FIMR CRT to review. Our dedicated FIMR CRT Team has a difficult job and we commend them all!



Are you interested in supporting printing costs for our Grief and Loss Toolkits?
Call Dixie Morgese at 386-252-4277

Healthy Start Funders

Florida Department of Health



Healthy Families Florida/Ounce of Prevention



Volusia County,
Children & Families
Advisory Board



Healthy Start Providers

Flagler County Health
Department



Volusia County Health
Department



Stewart-Marchman-ACT



Healthy Communities



Halifax OB/GYN Associates



Providers continued on pg 4

A Day in the Life of a Family Assessment Worker

by Gladys Roman and Dixie Morgese

The Family Assessment Worker (FAW) is one of an elite team that travels Volusia and Flagler counties, collectively contacting over 285 families per month. She starts her day early, checking emails, following up on phone messages, and meeting with her supervisor. She reviews the families she will visit, and the reasons and risk factors that brought them to Healthy Start. She gathers resource materials, educational handouts, and pertinent client information she may need for her home visits, consults her map and sets off through rain or shine.

Some visits are scheduled. Others are attempts to find families that have missed appointments, have no phone, and were referred by their medical provider. An initial visit may be in a hospital room, clinic, library, restaurant, or job site. A home visit may be in an upscale neighborhood, an impoverished inner city project, a trailer in a poor rural community, a jail, or a homeless shelter. The FAW may encounter a teenager, a woman in her 30's pregnant for the first time, a successful businesswoman with a history of postpartum depression, or a mother grieving the loss of her baby. Often the FAW must explain what Healthy Start is all about and how we may be able to help her.

Each day, local families face many barriers that their FAW helps them with. Barriers include fear of the system, fear of judgment, health literacy and language problems, and recently, intensified economic struggles. It is the FAW's job to develop a trusting relationship and remove these barriers. An FAW must be persistent, persuasive and greatly determined to engage families with a passion for the Healthy Start and Healthy Families mission.

Once the FAW is face-to-face with a participant or family, the real work begins. Issues may include: child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues. The FAW also addresses more basic every day concerns that include: housing, transportation, food, clothing, and access to medical care. First the FAW must assess the home's stability and safety and risk factors that might impact the family's safety and well being. Her responsibilities also include advocating, providing guidance and education on the importance of prenatal care, postpartum follow-up, good nutrition, family planning, smoking cessation, SIDS and Shaken Baby awareness, as well as general health care. *(See A Day on pg 4)*



Annette Jackson



Doris Rivera



Trecca Lewis



Myrna Roche



Patty Navarro



Fran Thomas



Brandy Panariello



Gladys Roman
Supervisor

Healthy Start Board of Directors

The Hon. Patricia Northey
Volusia County Council

Anne Ferguson, MPA
The Chiles Academy

Isalene Montgomery
Daytona State College
Women's Center

Karen Turner
Thompson Well & Pump

Rev. Richard Hills
Private Citizen

Kassandra Blissett
Private Citizen

Steve Forsyth
SunTrust Bank

The Honorable Bob Garcia
Mayor, City of DeBary

Patrick Johnson
Flagler Co. Health Dept.

Missy Kelly
Private Citizen

Tracey Lasenby
The Chiles Academy

John Meyers, MD
OB/GYN Health Center

Jennifer Morgan
The Center for
Business Excellence

Ray Salazar
United Way

Bonita Sorensen, MD
Volusia County Health Dept.

Pastor Loverso Walker
Faith Temple, C.O.G.I.C.

In memory of
Dr. Blaine O'Neal
Mayor, City of South Daytona



A Healthy Start Board Member and a great advocate for the families of Volusia County. You will be missed!

One of Blaine's favorite quotes:

"Thou art my child,
I love thee best.
I could not love thee half as
much
Loved I not all the rest."
~Children's Defense Fund

Healthy Start Interns and Volunteers



Healthy Start salutes it's interns and volunteers, who supply the power to complete additional projects vital to our continued growth in the community.

Interns **Becky Ellis, RN** (top left) and **Karen Edmondson, RN** (top right), come to us from University of North Florida, Brooks College of Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice Program. They assist the Fetal Infant Mortality Review Community Action Group in creating physician's and patient's grief and loss toolkits. We thank them for their expertise in this important area.



Intern **Jazzmin Smith** (bottom left) comes from Daytona State College Human Service Program. She is gaining first hand experience in all our programs. We thank her for her enthusiastic participation.

Volunteer **Wilma Conte** (bottom right) provides clerical and technical support for Leslie Pearce, Healthy Start Contract Manager. Wilma also volunteered at the Volusia Literacy Council as a tutor. We thank her for her much needed help and spirit of community involvement.



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www.healthystartfv.org



Mailing Label

**Healthy Start Providers
continued from pg 2**

Mental Health Association
of East Central Florida, Inc.



Birth Blessings, Inc.



Bethune-Cookman
University
Odessa Chambliss Wellness
Center

Agape Midwifery Services

Susan Bekken, RNC, CLC
at Florida Memorial
Medical Center

Central Florida Breastfeeding and
Parenting Center at
Florida Hospital DeLand



The Children's Advocacy
Center of Volusia and Flagler



Outreach Community Care
Network

Capital Campaign Donors 1/1/10-3/31/10

We thank all those who stepped forward in the second quarter to provide funds so that Healthy Start can find a larger, more permanent home from which we can better serve our community.

Gold Hero

John Meyers, MD

Other Donors

Jose A. Lopez-Cintron, MD

Richard Hills

Karen Sue Hale

Isalene Montgomery

Douglas D. MacDonald

Carrie Baird

Sandra H. Gray

Nora Strong

Kassandra Esposito Blissett

Healthy Start Hometown Heroes 1/1/10 – 3/31/10

We thank all those who donated their funds, time, and talents to help provide goods and services to support moms and babies in our community.

Fourtownes Rotary River Fest Volunteers for Healthy Start: Leslie Pearce, Carmen Diaz, Yvette Velazquez, Joanne Main, Rebecca Taylor, Clarissa Tate, Gabrielle Tate, Alicia Watson, Dixie Morgese, Dominic Morgese, Anne Ferguson, Cathy McLaughlin, Brandy Panariello, Patty Navarro, Jean MacCoy, Jason Olivia, Kassandra Blissett and Devon Blissett, Pat Northey. Proceeds from the event are donated to Healthy Start and other community organizations. Go to <http://www.north-florida-family-fun-guide.com/fourtownesrotaryriverfest.html> for more information and a YouTube video of this great event.

Other donations of funds, goods, services and meeting space came from: GO BEYOND, LLC, Florida Department of Financial Services, Florida United Methodist Children's Home, United Way, Volusia County Health Department, Center for Business Excellence, Wilma Conte, Jazzmin Smith, Shelley Spore.

A Day (continued from page 3)

The FAW also provides and offers support and linkages to community agencies to address mental health issues, childbirth education, nutrition and breastfeeding support and education

As the sun goes down, the Family Assessment Worker reflects on the day's events. If she was able to touch and engage one family, then it was an awesome day!