



# getting off to a Healthy Start

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## NHTA & HEALTHY START PROJECTS COMMEMORATE NATIONAL INFANT MORTALITY AWARENESS MONTH

CELEBRATE DAY 366...EVERY BABY DESERVES A CHANCE

**T**his past September, the National Healthy Start Association, along with Healthy Start projects and other national organizations that work to improve birth outcomes, commemorated Infant Mortality Awareness Month. This year, NHTA launched a new campaign, Celebrate Day 366 Every Baby Deserves a Chance, to celebrate babies surpassing the age of 1, which is a huge accomplishment for many families. Through this campaign, NHTA sought to promote the effectiveness of ongoing programs and efforts implemented to reduce infant deaths, low-birth weight, pre-term births and disparities in perinatal outcomes, not only in September, but all year round.

This year NHTA promoted infant mortality awareness all the way to Capitol Hill! On September 23rd, NHTA held a briefing to educate Congressional staff and the public about infant mortality and federal efforts to serve and support disadvantaged pregnant women, children, and families across the nation. This was one of the first times a congressional briefing focused solely on infant mortality. The inaugural event was held at the U.S. Capitol and included a diverse audience of Congressional staff, officials from federal agencies, and representatives from various national and local organizations committed to improving maternal and child health. The briefing highlighted the work of the federal Healthy Start programs and NHTA around infant mortality, and also

discussed were an array of federal and program strategies implemented across the nation to ensure every baby has a healthy start. Speakers included Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN); NHTA Board President Estrellita "Lo" Berry; NHTA Executive Director Stacey Cunningham; Director of the Division of Healthy Start & Perinatal Services, HRSA/MCHB, Maribeth Badura; Mirtha Beadle, Office of Minority Health; Siobhan Dolan, March of Dimes; Roland Warren, CEO of the National Fatherhood Initiative; and Judy Meehan, Executive Director, National Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition. The

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## REGISTRATION IS OPEN

**NHTA 12th Annual Spring  
Conference  
March 6-10, 2011**

**Hyatt Regency Washington on  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, DC**

**For more information, visit  
[www.healthystartassoc.org](http://www.healthystartassoc.org)**

**REGISTER NOW!!**

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The National Healthy Start Association is a 501 [c] (3) nonprofit organization. Its mission is to promote the development of community-based maternal and child health programs, particularly those addressing the issues of infant mortality, low birth weight and racial disparity.

## message from THE PRESIDENT

Telling the Healthy Start story effectively...

This is a time of great rejoicing for our federal Healthy Start sites. Now more than ever before, people across our nation are talking about Healthy Start and the positive impact we have made in some of our most disadvantaged communities. They know that we are a "shovel ready" network, willing and able to offer an array of core services provided through evidence-based and promising home visitation practices. This means that we use the current and best research and evidence in making decisions about what services to offer and how to offer them.

This national conversation about Healthy Start would not exist without some very hard work on the part of our 104 Projects. Therefore, it is with much pride and appreciation that I extend my gratitude to our Healthy Start Projects for their great work and to the authors of the first National Healthy Start White Paper, *Federal Healthy Start Initiative: A National Network for Effective Home Visitation and Family Support Services*.

This white paper, like all others, is an authoritative report that addresses issues and how to solve them. It clearly shows how the recent health reform legislation and the federal Healthy Start Initiative are aligned as both a strategy and response for the delivery of services for addressing the health and health care needs of women and families. The white paper helps tell the story in such a way that those who fund home visiting and other maternal and child health and community and family health programs can look to Healthy Start to get the work done.

If you have not done so, please take the time to read this work. The authors (Lo Berry, Carol Brady, Stacey Cunningham, Lisa Derrick, Mario

Drummonds, Belinda Pettiford, Alma Roberts, and Susan Wilson) were deliberate and strategic in showcasing the strengths and competencies of the federal Healthy Start Initiative. However, we are not finished; there is much more to tell.



So as we continue our efforts in establishing, developing, and maintaining partnerships with our local Title V agencies and others, let us remind them that the 104 federal Healthy Start sites around the U.S. are well positioned to play a crucial role in the national effort to build quality, comprehensive, statewide early childhood systems for pregnant women, parents, caregivers, and children from birth to eight years of age. I look forward to all of us being engaged and active in the movement to eliminate health disparities in our own lives and communities across the nation, thus improving our nation's overall health.

Moving Forward Together,

Estrellita "Lo" Berry, President  
NHSA Board of Directors

greetings from

## THE NATIONAL OFFICE

I am constantly in awe of the amazing work of the Healthy Start projects. As I read over all of the highlights that projects sent us on how they commemorated National Infant Mortality Awareness Month, I said to myself “WOW!” I only wish I could have been at each and every event to see first-hand, the profound impact you have on the families and communities you serve. You are to be commended for your ongoing dedication and passion but also for your creativity. From celebrity softball games to radio shows, Healthy Start projects took the awareness of infant mortality to the next level. I thank you for all that you did this month and that you do every day to ensure this country understands the effect that an infant death has on a mother and a father but also an entire nation. Next year, we will celebrate twenty years of Healthy Start and I can't wait to see what projects will do for September 2011!



As the fall season settles in, know that NHTSA was hard at work over these last few summer months. We are officially settling into our new home and excited to host visitors. Feel free to stop by the office when you are in the Washington, DC area. NHTSA is also expanding and pleased to welcome two graduate interns from the George Washington University School of Public Health. You will read more about them later in the newsletter and the experience they bring to the organization. Increasing staff capacity is one of the Association's priorities. To that end, the NHTSA Board of Directors met in June and September to conduct board development and strategic planning. They are committed to taking the organization to new heights. As we work to strategize our priorities, we are also focused on enhancing our visibility. NHTSA will finally have a new website along with a new logo by early 2011! We are so excited about these communication tools and can't wait to share them with you. Stay tuned for the unveiling in the coming months.

From home visitation to infant mortality, NHTSA remains at the forefront of issues affecting families. We released two publications over the summer – [It Takes Two to Tango: Defining the Role of Fathers](#) and [A National Network for Effective Home Visitation and Family Support Services](#). Take a moment to read both of these documents to learn more about NHTSA and Healthy Start programs. Lastly, the planning of the 12th Annual Spring Conference is well underway and registration has opened. We look forward to hosting conference attendees and beginning the twenty year celebration of Healthy Start in March. Continue to visit our website for conference updates and information. You won't want to miss this event!

We definitely accomplished a great deal, and I am looking forward to what's next on the horizon. While there is a lot going on in the months to come – the Project Directors' meeting, the 75th Anniversary of Title V, the Leadership Training Institute and a host of upcoming conferences; I am looking forward to these opportunities to connect, celebrate and strategize with Healthy Start programs, partners and friends. This time together keeps me refreshed and energized as I work every day to ensure every baby, every family has a healthy start.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacey D. Cunningham'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stacey D. Cunningham, MSW, MPH  
Executive Director

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

briefing culminated with a personal story from the Cooper Family of the Baltimore Healthy Start project.

NHSA was not alone in promoting awareness around infant mortality and commemorating the month. Healthy Start projects were hard at work in their communities across the U.S. throughout September. Below are highlights from Healthy Start events held across the country to celebrate the month.

#### **NIMAM 2010 Highlights:**

**St. Petersburg Healthy Start Federal** led a balloon walk in an effort to raise awareness about infant mortality within one of the communities impacted by it. The walk was designed to not only increase public knowledge about this important issue, but also to show their united effort to make sure all babies have a healthy start. Each step put us that much closer to ending infant mortality. The Mayor of St. Petersburg, Bill Foster, kicked off the walk. Walkers carried balloons that represented babies who never reached their first birthday.

**Family Road Healthy Start** held its 2nd annual memorial event that acknowledged the loss to the community whenever a child dies, honored families and caregivers and raised awareness about infant and child loss in Acadiana. In 2009, the memorial site was designed and dedicated by many community partners, including local businesses, civic groups, health care providers, social service agencies and faith organizations. It features a statue that has been placed in a peaceful setting, under a canopy of trees on the Vermilion River in Lafayette, LA.

**Shelby County Healthy Start Initiative** held a Fatherhood Forum, "A Healthy Baby Begins with Two," to increase father and partner involvement in the birth outcomes and development of children in Shelby County. This event challenged the attendees to change policies within their organizations that limit male involvement and to receive training to provide services to fathers, in addition to the services provided to the mothers served. The Fatherhood Forum has pushed the Healthy Start program to think critically about how to address the needs of the fathers and other men that are connected to program participants, and they have decided to develop a Fatherhood Sub-Committee as a part of the consortium to facilitate the community-wide discussion and ensure appropriate training for the staff and community.

**Music City Healthy Start Program** in Nashville, TN hosted their 2nd annual 1st birthday celebration for the children who were born in the year 2009 and had reached or were about to reach their 1st birthday. There were over 100 people in attendance! The event included vendors who gave out educational materials from car seat safety to dental health information. Congressman Jim Cooper who has been an advocate for Healthy Start attended and addressed the crowd. There was a birthday cake

(congratulating the class of 2026), as well as healthy snacks, face painting, hand prints, free haircuts, and a beautiful baby photo contest. One of the highlights was a raffle that included three \$500 scholarships for the 1-year-olds to use towards furthering their education after high school, setting the standard that for Healthy Start babies, college is not only a possibility, but an expectation!

**Healthy Start Rochester** submitted an op-ed piece to the local newspaper on how Rochester and Monroe Counties can increase the number of babies who celebrate "Day 366" by creating social and physical environments that make it as easy to make good health behavior choices. The Healthy Start also hosted a birthday party for HS participants in honor of their 366 days and invited staff, colleagues, board members, local officials and took a moment of silence for those babies that did not live to their 1st birthday. There was also a proclamation of September being Infant Mortality Awareness Month in the county of Monroe, Rochester, NY!

**Cleveland MomsFirst Project** partnered with the CEOCG Baby and Mommy Support Program (BAMS) to host the 3rd Annual Happy Healthy Babies Event (HHB). The four hour event focused on prenatal education, safe sleep practices, shaken baby syndrome, literacy, partner communication, medical homes, early entry into prenatal care, lead poisoning awareness and testing, health insurance, fatherhood services, and community resources relevant to parenting and self-sufficiency. All attendees were able to engage in four workshops on topics that included: Safe Sleep, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Partner Communication, and Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco and pregnancy.



**Central Oklahoma Healthy Start** and other community based organizations hosted a vigil, "Celebrate day 366 every baby deserves a chance," to remember 119 infants who died in Oklahoma County in 2009 by releasing a balloon for each life lost.

**Louisville Metro Healthy Start** had a Prenatal Resource Fair for Infant Mortality Month. There was a Grand Prize drawing for a crib if participants brought a dad or another expecting mom. There were snacks, giveaways, and exciting interactive booths.

**Missouri Bootheel Healthy Start Regional Consortium** held a National Infant Mortality Awareness Campaign Mini-Conference featuring motivational speaker, Radmilla Cody, to increase awareness in partnership with the National Healthy Start campaign (Celebrate Day 366 every baby deserves a chance) about the factors that contribute to infant mortality in the Missouri Bootheel and the United States.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

**Northwest Florida Healthy Start Coalition** in partnership with the Jacksonville Suns hosted a celebrity softball game. Each day, doctors step up to the plate to hit homeruns for Jacksonville families seeking quality health care and solutions. Last month, thirty area physicians did just that as they gathered at the Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville to make "Rounds at the Grounds" in recognition of Infant Mortality Awareness Month. Dr. C.B. McIntosh, Jacksonville's first African American pediatrician, threw out the first pitch. The teams – black and gold – were coached by Eugene Monroe, Jacksonville Jaguar, and his teammate, Eben Britton. The teams played a fun 60 minute game as they dodged raindrops. The players not only played an entertaining game but helped raise awareness about the ways to prevent infant mortality. Baseball cards with health tips were passed out to the people who attended the softball game and to the more than 4,000 people who attended the Jacksonville Suns game.

Olympic gold medalist, Shannon Miller, and local commentator, Al Emerick, served as celebrity correspondents and helped make the game very colorful with their fun commentary. The buzz surrounding the "Rounds at the Grounds" was incredible with more than 500 people attending the game. Nearly 20 dedicated sponsors of all levels supported Healthy Start's efforts by donating more than \$21,000 and attending the game to cheer on the doctors who were making a noise and making a difference to prevent infant mortality!



**Baltimore Healthy Start, Inc.** held its "Healthy Relationships! Healthy Families! and a Rally for Healthy Babies!" It was a day full of free fun for the community. There were health screenings and a healthy eating village, along with the Cradle of Hope 3rd Annual Rally for Healthy Babies. The day also included a Starting Smart Kids Village with live entertainment, the Love & Happiness Radio Show, Live Learning Parties (LP) Cooking Demonstrations, exercise classes, giveaways from area vendors and much more.

**The Women's Health Initiative (WHIN)** program had a successful Infant Mortality Awareness Month in Palm Beach County. The project had its first pastor's breakfast in the target areas of Riviera Beach and Belle Glade. During the event, infant mortality information was discussed and flyers were distributed for the pastors to distribute to the congregation. As expected, many were not aware about infant mortality or the impact it is having in the black community. They have since asked for more information and will continue to work with the community to help eradicate this enormous issue. On September 15, Dr. Michael Lu, Lo Berry, and Carol Brady went to Palm Beach

County and spoke on the life course model and the disparities in health care. This event was an excellent platform for discussion on Infant mortality and the impact that racism has on this national problem. On September 25, Tonya Lewis Lee was the keynote speaker for the Community Voice Anniversary graduate program (a component of the WHIN program). The documentary "Crisis in the Crib" was shown to the 110 graduates in attendance. Ms. Lee provided motivational words to the graduates so they will continue to spread positive health information in their communities. The event was a BIG success with a total of 212 people graduating during the first year of program implementation.

**Healthy Start, Inc.** teamed up with Comcast® to promote infant mortality awareness. Comcast Newsmakers offers a free forum for nonprofit organizations to present events and important issues. Healthy Start, Inc. was the featured organization during September to promote the importance of Infant Mortality Awareness month. Host Tonia Caruso interviewed Roslynn Wilson, Ed.D., Healthy Start, Inc. Board member, and Janice Maker, R.N., Chair of the Fayette County Perinatal Task Force. Dr. Wilson and Nurse Maker highlighted the services Healthy Start, Inc. provides to families which reduce the risks associated with infant mortality.

**The Jasmine Project** was launched September 25, 2010. The only newly funded Federal Healthy Start will focus on reducing racial disparities in black infant mortality and health outcomes among pregnant women, new mothers, infants and women of child-birthing age in Miami-Dade County, FL. The Jasmine Project is a community-based collaboration of organizations dedicated to the health of pregnant women and infants in Miami Gardens, Opa-locka, and North Miami. The Jasmine Project held a Kick Off Celebration that included free health screenings (cholesterol, pregnancy tests, BMI, etc.), parenting and family engagement classes, nutritionist consultations, Afro-centric storytelling for kids and much more to promote healthy family lifestyles.



From left: Elizabeth Perry, Michaelyn Meave, Stacey Cunningham, and Ania Prenata at the NICHD 5k walk for Infant Mortality Awareness Month.

## PARTNER'S CORNER:

Founded in 1997, Children's Dental Health Project is a national nonprofit organization with the vision of achieving equity in children's oral health. To that end, Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP) designs and advances research-driven policies and innovative solutions by engaging a broad base of partners committed to children and oral health, including professionals, communities, policymakers, and parents. Founded as the voice for children and their oral health, CDHP was purposefully named a "Project" to reflect the reality that tooth decay is a preventable problem. As an alternative to efforts that treat one child at a time, CDHP works to eliminate barriers to oral health and develop innovative solutions to ensure that all children reach their full potential – both of which have been a natural linkage between CDHP and the National Healthy Start Association.

A growing body of research that indicates possible connections between poor oral health and poor birth outcomes and the unfortunate increase in young children that have cavities present significant opportunities for CDHP and NHTSA to work together. CDHP has valued the relationship with NHTSA over the last five years that has built around the joint CDHP/American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's Improving Perinatal and Infant Oral Health project. That project has supported both medical/dental providers' knowledge and consumer understanding of the importance of oral health during pregnancy and the child's first year. NHTSA has provided a strong partnership for advancing the perinatal and infant oral health messages and the incredible success of that project. Resources that have been developed from that project can be found at: [http://www.cdhp.org/improving\\_perinatal\\_and\\_infant\\_oral\\_health\\_aapd/about\\_program](http://www.cdhp.org/improving_perinatal_and_infant_oral_health_aapd/about_program).

In addition to existing collaborations, CDHP offers the following resources to Healthy Start programs to advance oral health policies including new opportunities through health reform.

The National Maternal and Child Oral Health Policy Center was created in 2008 as a collaborative effort of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP), Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD), Children's Dental Health Project (CDHP), Medicaid/SCHIP Dental Association (MSDA), and National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) with funding from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The Policy Center promotes the understanding of effective policy options to



address ongoing disparities in children's oral health. The joint initiative has set out to map a course for improving family oral health by building knowledge and skills of professionals with the ability to steer systems changes. The Policy Center has numerous resources available for advocates and policymakers to better understand their options for improving the oral health of pregnant women and children. To review the Policy Center's TrendNote publications and other resources, please visit: [www.nmcohpc.org](http://www.nmcohpc.org).

The CDHP Health Reform Center was created to provide a central resource for advocates and policymakers to find comprehensive information on the oral health provisions in health reform. The online resource was initiated during the health reform debate and now provides timely information on the developments and implementation of the more than 20 dental provisions that were included in new health reform law. The Center also has an electronic newsletter that provides updates with the latest federal information on oral health in health reform. The CDHP Health Reform Center is found at: [http://cdhp.org/cdhp\\_health\\_care\\_reform\\_center](http://cdhp.org/cdhp_health_care_reform_center)

Children's Dental Health Project regards the work of National Healthy Start Association and their community-based network of programs to be an essential partner in implementing the efforts necessary to achieving oral health in families. CDHP looks forward to expanding our partnership with NHTSA and responding to feedback from local programs regarding useful resources that CDHP could develop to assist programs and families advocate and achieve oral health.

# HEALTHY START LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

## NOVEMBER 17-18, 2010

Can you believe that summer is over already and that the fall Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute is next month? Well it's that time of year again, and we look forward to hosting the Healthy Start project directors and staff in Raleigh, NC, November 17-18 at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel. This Leadership Training Institute is designed to:

- Provide new Project Directors and other staff with an in-depth orientation to the Healthy Start community-based model and the core services and systems;
- Provide senior staff information they need to administer and operate a Healthy Start Project efficiently and feel competent while doing so; and
- Develop leadership skills to serve project staff now and in the future.

The excellent speakers and presenters will provide participants with tools and skills that will further enhance their leadership and professional development. This year's session tracks include:

- **Track 1: Healthy Start Strategies for Success** (This track is for all staff new to Healthy Start and the Leadership Training, and MUST be completed in order to register for other tracks in the future).
- **Track 2: Leadership Practices for Managers**
- **Track 3: Grants from A to Z**
- **Track 4: Meeting Leadership Challenges with Inspiration**
- **Track 5: Developing Community-Based Leaders and Sustaining and Growing a Healthy Start Program**

[Click here](#) to register for the fall HSLTI and to view a detailed description of each track and the agenda. We will have an exciting luncheon keynote speaker on the first day, as well as time set aside to meet and network with other Healthy Start project directors and staff.

For your hotel reservations, please call the Sheraton Raleigh at (800) 325-3535 and ask for the "National Healthy Start Association Meeting" OR [click here](#) to go online to make your reservations. Please make your hotel reservations. The cut-off date is October 17, 2010. For more information, contact Phyllis George at [pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:pgeorge@nationalhealthystart.org).

*We look forward to seeing you all in November!*

# MALE INVOLVEMENT WHERE DADS MATTER :

## KNOWING A FATHER'S NAME AND MORE

*Based on birth and death data for 217,798 children born in Georgia in 1989 and 1990, infants without a father's name on their birth certificate (17.9% of the total) were 2.3 times more likely to die in the first year of life compared to infants with a father's name on their birth certificate.*

*Source: Matthews, T.J., Sally C. Curtin, and Marian F. MacDorman. Infant Mortality Statistics from the 1998 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. National vital Statistics Reports. Vol. 48, No. 12. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics 2000.*

Male Involvement Where Dads Matter continues to be a key part of the fabric of Healthy Start nationally as well as locally. Many volunteers have committed much time and effort to making sure that the message of Dads Matter and the importance of the father's name is not lost in the work we do. Many have served and many more are poised to serve as we frame our future work around dads and the critical role they have in the lives of their children.

September is an especially critical month in the work of the National Healthy Start Association and gives reason to why we exist. This month marked Infant Mortality Awareness Month, a national observance that focuses on providing education and awareness about infant mortality. We must be cognizant of the fact that although the funding focuses on mothers and infants, funding is not always family-focused and resources are not available to work with fathers. There is no mention of men and fathers in maternal and child health, but we have to pay close attention to what's in a name – that is the father's name. As we look at the opening statistic above, it is clear that a name really does matter! Therefore, we must work extra hard to make sure that his name is evident in our work; else much of our work may be in vain!

Working on including his name, while not diminishing the current work of Healthy Start, has proven to be a formidable balancing act and a shift in much of our thinking as well as the thoughts and understandings of those we serve (consumers) and the culture at large. But the evidence shows that staying the course is a worthwhile effort and the focus this month is a reminder for the work to continue.

Why is his name missing begs the question? There can be a multitude of answers and reasons in response to the question of why his name is missing, but its absence does have a fatal impact that we must seek answers to. The missing nature of his name does strongly suggest limitations in his involvement. Whether his name is absent by design or by consequence, we believe that the Male Involvement Initiative Where Dads Matter is an essential initiative to help answer the question of why his name is missing and to find solutions to include his name as well as his involvement. Moreover, our work must serve as a constant reminder of the value for his name (father's) being present and his involvement versus the deficit of not having his name included!

Finally, our role is not to judge the reason(s) why his name is missing, but our work must invite ways to create an environment for his involvement for the good of the child, family, and their future. We can and we must come up with strategies and solutions to reduce the large number of deaths facing our nation and our communities. If better outcomes require that we work extra hard and/or make some shifts in our attitude and efforts, let's go full speed ahead to get not only his name added, but get him actively involved. In doing so, maybe one day we can alleviate the need for a month that emphasizes infant mortality.

Thank you for the great work you do! Keep Watching This Fall For The Future Framework For The Male Involvement Initiative Where Dads Matter.

If you are interested in joining and volunteering with the Male Involvement Initiative Where Dads Matter, please email [kscarborough@reachupincorporated.org](mailto:kscarborough@reachupincorporated.org) or call 813.712.6320.

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## [Congressional Resolutions Recognizing NIMAM](#)

For the second consecutive year, resolutions were introduced in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives recognizing September as National Infant Mortality Awareness Month. Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland and Senator Richard Burr of North Carolina introduced the Senate resolution, and Congressman Steve Cohen of Tennessee introduced the House resolution. The resolution includes statistics related to the infant mortality rate in the United States, highlights the importance of prenatal care, and concludes by stating, “Congress supports efforts to understand racial disparities and the rate of infant mortality in order to lower the rate of infant mortality in the United States.” To read a full copy of the House resolution, [click here](#).

## [Appropriations Update](#)

The annual appropriations process continues to slowly limp forward. This is an especially tough year as Members of Congress gear up for elections in November amidst an economic recession and growing federal deficit. It is expected that a massive omnibus appropriations bill will be passed by Congress later this year or even in early 2011. This bill will provide funding for Healthy Start and the other thousands of programs across the federal government. The final funding level for Healthy Start is uncertain. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed a funding bill in July that included \$103.2 million for Healthy Start. However, the House has failed to pass a funding bill for federal health programs, although several House staffers have indicated that they are committed to securing \$110 million for Healthy Start. Healthy Start is currently funded at \$105 million, and the President requested \$110 million for the program.

## [Evidence of Effectiveness for Home Visitation](#)

At the request of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the National Healthy Start Association submitted comments focused on the proposed criteria for evidence of effectiveness of home visiting program models. NHTSA used this opportunity to encourage HRSA to improve the evaluation of the Healthy Start program. NHTSA also pointed out that individual clinical interventions alone are unable reduce infant mortality or low birth weight rates in poor communities. NHTSA urged HRSA to determine program effectiveness based on domains that embrace a systems approach to improving maternal and child outcomes, such as economic, housing, education, and health systems deficits.

## [Senate Staffer Visits Healthy Start Program in Aurora, CO](#)

Adrienne Hallet, a staff member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, took time during the August Congressional recess to visit the Healthy Start program in Aurora, CO. Special thanks to Pamela Craig for coordinating the visit and hosting Adrienne. Adrienne spent time at the site learning about Healthy Start and meeting some program participants.

Every Healthy Start site has a responsibility to educate elected officials about the impact of Healthy Start and the need to increase support to community-based programs that serve disadvantaged pregnant women and families. Contact Jon Terry ([jon.terry@capitol youth.com](mailto:jon.terry@capitol youth.com)) if you would like assistance in inviting a Congressional staff person to visit your program.

## HEALTHY FROM THE START THE NHSA BLOG

Visit the blog to stay current on:

[Healthy Start in The News](#)

[Policy Today](#)

[The World of MCH](#)

You will also find a page of [Resources](#) with published papers, tips from the CDC, and other links to partner websites.

Please comment on posts or [send us](#) articles you'd like for us to share!

[healthyfromthestart.wordpress.com](http://healthyfromthestart.wordpress.com)

## CONSUMER SPOTLIGHT:

# RONETTA MATTHEWS

Ronetta first learned about the Healthy Start Program through a cousin who was also a participant. According to Ronetta, "I enrolled in the program because I was at a low spot and crossroads in my life where I needed as much support as possible. I needed moral support, financial support, and encouragement. I was a single mother of a 10 year old daughter at the time. I had just lost my job, my apartment, and my car had just been repossessed. To top it all off I was in my first trimester of pregnancy with no place to go but back home to my mother's house." After calling her local Neighborhood Place, Bridges of Hope, in the fall of 2003, she was contacted within a few weeks by a nurse who enrolled her in the program. And she has been involved with her local consortium ever since as a consumer, chairperson, and advocate.

After completing two years in the Louisville Metro Healthy Start Program, Ronetta graduated and began serving on the Healthy Start Consumer Committee. She was later elected Co-Chair of that committee which is a subcommittee of Healthy Start and is made up of a group of previous participants. The committee meets once monthly and does everything from planning community conferences, voting on advertisement for the local Healthy Start, planning graduation ceremonies for the two year graduates, and giving feedback on what they would like to see happen on behalf of the Healthy Start consumers.

Ronetta was eventually elected co-chair of the Healthy Start Advocates Group. The Advocates Group is a group of local community leaders who advocate for Healthy Start. At the end of 2008, she was offered a contract position to perform case management for Healthy Start as a resource worker and she began her contract in January of 2009. After ending her contract she began working as an outreach consultant for Healthy Start under the Norton Hospital Grant. As an outreach consultant, her job was to bring new families into the Healthy Start Program with a goal of reaching high risk pregnant women in certain geographical areas in the hope of giving them and their babies a



Ronetta K. Matthews: 40 year old single and proud parent of two beautiful daughters. Her 16 year old, Kimber Nave'tte, is a junior at DuPond Manual High School and a dance major at the Youth Performing Arts School. Her 5 year old, TyeTiana Kamberlie, is a kindergartener at Kennedy Montessori Elementary School.

healthy start.

"I have benefited from healthy start in so many ways. Having a nurse that provided education on my body during pregnancy, development of my baby and ways to keep my baby safe during my pregnancy were so helpful to me. My resource worker not only provided me with moral support but she also provided me with resources on

developmental stages for my baby. I have accomplished so much through the Healthy Start Program. I have learned how to be a better mother to both of my

children. I learned how to advocate for my children's health and well being."

Ronetta started school to pursue a degree in Nursing. She graduated From Galen College of Nursing January 23, 2009 as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). And just three days later she started back at Galen working towards an Associate degree as a Registered Nurse (RN) and will graduate with this degree in October 2010. After graduation, her goal is to work on a bridge for her Bachelor to Master Degree in nursing in order to become a Nurse Practitioner. Ronetta plans to specialize in Women's Health in her local clinics and stated, "This way I can still service at-risk pregnant women and their children and advocate for Healthy Start." Her case manager had this to say about Ronetta, "I have watched over the years as her leadership and advocacy skills have sky rocketed. Not only is she the biggest advocate for her children, but Ronetta is one of the best advocates that Healthy Start has. She has advocated for Healthy Start locally and twice, 2008 and 2009, on Capitol Hill at the National Healthy Start Association Spring Conference. Ronetta has been a huge asset to our program as a dedicated consortium member and consumer. She is determined to reach her goals and she will so that she can give back. That's what Healthy Start is all about."

# HEALTHY START IN THE NEWS

National Healthy Start Association extends a warm welcome to our 2 new interns: Michaelyn Meave and Ania Prenata.

Michaelyn Meave, the Communications Intern, will work with staff to maintain correspondence and communication within the organization and to the NHTSA membership by assisting with updating databases and mailing lists, sending out e-mail alerts and notifications, drafting newsletters and articles. Michaelyn is a second year graduate student at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services. She is originally from Michigan, where she earned her undergraduate degree in Women's Studies: Gender and Health from the University of Michigan. Currently, her focus in Public Health is in Maternal and Child Health where she hopes to establish a career. In her free time, Michaelyn serves as the Vice President for the Black Public Health Student Network, a student organization aimed at advocating for the health and well-being of minority populations.

*It is a privilege to be working this fall at the National Healthy Start Association. I have always had a passion for maternal and child health. I began working in this field in May of 2006 when I assisted as a birth doula to a young woman in Morazan, Honduras. Ever since then I have tried to do all that I can to ensure that all women have the same opportunities to deliver and raise healthy children. Working with the devoted staff here at NHTSA has given me a chance to see how a national organization is run in order to keep field offices supplied with resources and materials. It is wonderful to see how all the hard work done by staff, volunteers, and participants in Healthy Start Programs comes together to truly make a difference in communities all across the country. And I'm very happy to be a part of that.*

Ania Prenata, the Policy Intern, will help staff keep our membership and organization up-to-date on health policies that affect Healthy Start by assisting in writing policy updates, white papers, and attending meetings, briefings, and hearings on Capitol Hill and throughout the city with partner organizations. Ania, originally from Boston, Massachusetts, completed her Bachelor's Degree at Wesleyan

University (CT) in Government, with a concentration in International Relations. She is currently a second-year graduate student at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, where she anticipates a Master in Global Health Policy. Her interests lie primarily in international comparative health systems as they relate to maternal and child health. In the coming year, she plans on applying to medical school. In her free time, Ania enjoys traveling and playing tennis.



Michaelyn Meave and Ania Prenata at the NICHD 5k walk for Infant Mortality Awareness.

*I am very excited about working at the National Healthy Start Association this fall. My interest in public health started when I was working at Project Health a few years ago. I worked at an inner city hospital that serves mostly low-income residents of Boston,*

*and I frequently spoke to families with pregnant or expecting adolescents. These mothers were often ill-equipped for handling a pregnancy and came to us for resources. This experience made me question how uninsured women, especially those burdened with low socio-economic status and those who lack access to health facilities can ensure positive birth outcomes both on a domestic and global scale. It is a pleasure to be working with an organization that has the same values and missions, especially in the United States where closing the gap between socio-economic status and infant mortality can become a reality even for the uninsured with the help of federally funded programs.*

**Has your Healthy Start project been in the news lately? Send links to newspaper articles, TV news stories or radio and TV PSAs to [info@nationalhealthystart.org](mailto:info@nationalhealthystart.org) so they can be shared with your fellow members.**



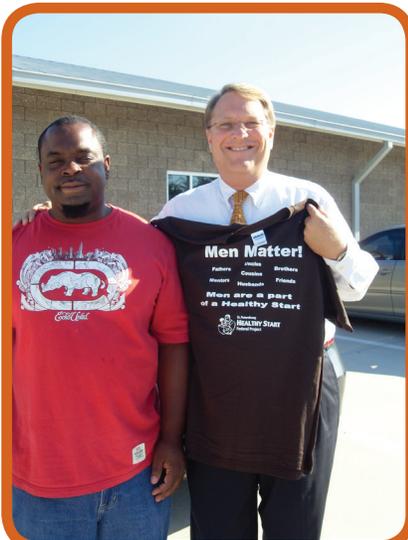
# NIMAM 2010: PHOTOS AND EVENTS



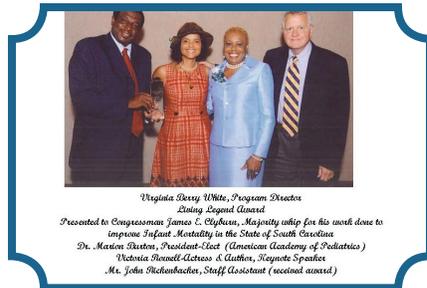
Family Road Healthy Start, Baton Rouge, LA



Family Road Healthy Start, Baton Rouge, LA: Cortana Mall provided a store front to display a visual representation of the 67 infants that died in East Baton Rouge Parish in 2007.



Mayor Bill Foster at the St. Petersburg Healthy Start Federal Project walk for NIMAM.



Virginia Bessy White, Program Director  
*Dining Legend Award*  
 Presented to Congressman James C. Clyburn... Majority whip for his work done to improve Infant Mortality in the State of South Carolina  
 Dr. Marlene Davison, President-Elect (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
 Victoria Powell-Adesso & Cathryn Keynote Spinkes  
 Ms. John Richardson, Staff Assistant (recipient award)



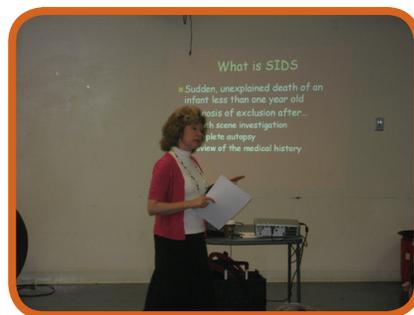
St. Petersburg Healthy Start Federal Project (HSF) led a balloon walk



Above and below: Northeast Florida Healthy Start hosted "Rounds at the Grounds," a celebrity softball game to raise Infant Mortality Awareness.



Virginia Bessy White, Program Director  
 2009-2010 Cozy Scholarship Winner  
 Sherina Jaxell



Left: A presentation on SIDS at Cleveland MomsFirst Happy Healthy Baby Event.





Above and below Baltimore Healthy Start Inc. hosts Cradle of Hope 3rd Annual Rally for Healthy Babies.



Indianapolis Healthy Start

Right: Pack-n-play winners at MomsFirst, Cleveland event.



Lauren Sogor from Text4Baby attends Cleveland MomsFirst event.



Cleveland MomsFirst Happy Healthy Baby event.



Baltimore Healthy Start Inc. hosts Cradle of Hope 3rd Annual Rally for Healthy Babies.

Left: Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Right: Starting Smart Kids Village



## RESEARCH NEWS – FAST FACTS & HOT STATS:

# OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) originally developed from the “Day of Unity”. In October 1981, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence initiated this day as a way to connect advocates from around the country who were working to end violence against women. Soon the Day of Unity evolved into a week-long event filled with local, state, and national activities, and just six years later in 1987 the first Domestic Violence Awareness month was observed.

In 1989 Congress passed Public Law 101-112 which officially assigned October as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Every year since then legislation has passed to that effect, with the first Monday of October designated for the Day of Unity.

This October 1, 2010 President Obama released a Presidential Proclamation for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In this proclamation, the President had the following things to say about this DVAM 2010:

“In the 16 years since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), we have broken the silence surrounding domestic violence to reach thousands of survivors, prevent countless incidences of abuse, and save untold numbers of lives. While these are critical achievements, domestic violence remains a devastating public health crisis when one in four women will be physically or sexually assaulted by a partner at some point in her lifetime. During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we recognize the tremendous progress made in reducing domestic violence, and we recommit to making everyone’s home a safe place for them.

My Administration is committed to reducing the prevalence of domestic violence. Last year, I appointed the first-ever White House Advisor on Violence Against Women to collaborate with the many Federal agencies working together to end domestic violence in this country. Together with community efforts, these Federal programs are making important strides towards eliminating abuse.”

We hope you will join NHTSA this month in raising awareness about the ways that domestic violence shapes all of our lives, and get involved to help put an end to it.

To read the entire Presidential Proclamation [please click here](#).

For a list of local events please visit the Domestic Violence Awareness Project [here](#).

This October marks the 26th anniversary of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Since the start of this program, mammograms have increased for women over 50 and breast cancer deaths have decreased. However, women in minority groups and women over age 65 are still less likely to receive mammograms, and they are much more likely than average to develop breast cancer. This year National Mammography Day will take place on October 15. The day was established during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month by former President Clinton in 1993 to encourage women to receive a mammogram or schedule an appointment.

In the lead up to National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Nancy G. Brinker released a new book, *Promise Me*, on September 14, 2010. *Promise Me* highlights the story of her sister, Susan G. Komen’s fight with breast cancer, and the promise Brinker made to help end this disease.

Additionally, on September 1, 2010 the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) released research that shows preventive surgery is an effective treatment for women with breast cancer gene mutations and even increases survival. Preventative mastectomy and removal of both ovaries and fallopian tubes (bilateral prophylactic salpingo-oophorectomy) among women with BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations have been associated with a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancers. The report abstract can be accessed here: <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/304/9/967>.

### References

National Mammography Day. National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Available at: <http://www.speakersfor-nurses.com/planning/CancerB.htm>.

Brinker, Nancy G. LKL Web Exclusive: *Promise Me*. CNN. September 13, 2010. Available at: <http://larrykinglive.blogs.cnn.com/2010/09/13/lkl-web-exclusive-promise-me/?iref=allsearch>.

Phend, Crystal. Preventive Surgery Works for BRCA Mutation Carriers. August 31, 2010. Available at: [http://www.breastcancer.org/risk/new\\_research/20100831.jsp](http://www.breastcancer.org/risk/new_research/20100831.jsp).

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## November

- **Prematurity Awareness Month** – (Prematurity Awareness Day November 18, 2010) March of Dimes Foundation. For more information please visit [www.marchofdimes.com](http://www.marchofdimes.com) or email [askus@marchofdimes.com](mailto:askus@marchofdimes.com).
- **17-18:** Healthy Start Leadership Training Institute, Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, Raleigh, NC.
- **18:** Family Violence Prevention Fund hosts a webinar titled “Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Health Cares about Domestic Violence Day: Resources and Planning.” For more information, visit [www.endabuse.org/health](http://www.endabuse.org/health).

## December

- **8-9:** America’s Fit for Life and Family Wellness Conference & Today’s Child Champion Awards Luncheon. Hotel Pennsylvania, New York City, New York. For More Information please visit <http://www.todayschildcommunications.com/fit2010/info.html>.
- **10-14:** National Head Start Association’s 27th Annual Head Start Parent Conference in Virginia Beach, VA. For more information, visit [www.nhsa.org](http://www.nhsa.org).
- **15-17:** 16th Annual Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology Conference, Using Epidemiology to Improve Maternal and Child Health. San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, Texas. Pre-Conference Trainings on December 13-14.

## January

- **National Birth Defects Prevention Month.** National Birth Defects Prevention Network. For more information please write to [nbdpn@nbdpn.org](mailto:nbdpn@nbdpn.org) or visit [www.nbdpn.org/current/resources/bdpm2010.html](http://www.nbdpn.org/current/resources/bdpm2010.html).
- **National Folic Acid Awareness Week.** National Council on Folic Acid. For more information email [ncfa@sbaa.org](mailto:ncfa@sbaa.org) or visit [www.folicacidinfo.org/pages/folicacid\\_info.php](http://www.folicacidinfo.org/pages/folicacid_info.php)
- **13:** Health Cares About Domestic Violence Day. For information, visit [www.endabuse.org/hcadvd](http://www.endabuse.org/hcadvd).