

Getting off to a *Healthy Start*



A NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL HEALTHY START ASSOCIATION, INC.

Spring 2005

400 Attend Spring Conference

They came from the northern plains of South Dakota, and the tropical paradise of Hawaii...from the cold northeast and the sunny southwest...from the Windy City and the Appalachian mountains. Almost 400 members of the Healthy Start family descended on the Nation's Capitol in March for the NHSA's Sixth Annual Spring Education Conference. This year's theme was *Healthy Start: The Success of a Real Community-based / Community-driven Program*, with an overarching goal of giving attendees proven tools and information to use back home to foster the Healthy Start community-based model.

This year's conference again featured a consumer orientation session, and a thorough training on grassroots advocacy. Past President Belinda Pettiford was honored twice – once with the presentation of an original piece of art and a “montage” of pictures and tributes set to music to recognize the completion of four years in the Association's top office, and the other, to present her with the inaugural C. Michael Savage Outstanding Leadership Award at the Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill (see article).

The keynote address was presented by Kathleen Mitchell, Vice President and National Spokesperson of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

With the topic *Preventing and Treating Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders is Everybody's Business*, Ms. Mitchell tied her well-received remarks right back to the community-based nature of the Healthy Start program. Peter C. van Dyck, Associate Administrator of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), offered greetings and an update on the Healthy Start program, as did Maribeth Badura, Director of the MCHB's Division of Healthy Start and Perinatal Systems.

Also honored at the conference was Jan Denton, who will retire in July from Navigant Consulting, the NHSA's government affairs firm. Jan has worked with the NHSA since 2000, and was presented a certificate and other tokens of appreciation at the Kick-off for Hill Day session on the last day of the conference.

Members of the conference planning committee were pleased with the three-day format used again this year. Said Board Member and Planning Committee Chair Lo Berry, “I was honored to have such a wonderful committee to work with and thank them for their hard work. Thanks also to all the projects that donated ‘goodies’ to be used as give-aways; your response was overwhelming and appreciated. Now, it's on to next year!”

Many of the presentations from the conference can be found on the NHSA's web site in the Archive section.

NHSA Receives Grant from HRSA

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently awarded the NHSA a five-year grant for Partnerships to Promote Maternal and Child Health. This grant will allow the NHSA to carry out a wide array of activities, including upgrading the newsletter, expanding our web site and offering more technical support services to members. Watch this space for news as we develop an implementation plan to share with you.

Beginnings Guides Available at Discounted Prices to NHSA Members

NHSA members receive a discount on orders of the *Beginnings Guides*' “Pregnancy Guide” and “The New Parent's Guide.” The special price is available at any time. Practice Development, Inc., the publishers, makes a donation to the Association based on member orders. For more information about the *Guides*, visit www.BeginningsGuides.net.



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Family Foundations, Medford (OR)

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

Letter from the President

Greetings:

I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the membership of NHTSA for this opportunity to serve as President. The Association is in the midst of a transitional period in its history, especially as the Healthy Start program embarks on its fourth generation of funding beginning this June. Our role in serving our membership grows clearer each day as the needs of our membership continue to emerge. The Board of Directors and its leadership remain committed to advocating for and securing resources to support Healthy Start communities across the country to ensure that the needs of our membership be met.

For those who may not know, I began as the Consortium Development Manager with the Boston Healthy Start Initiative in 1991. I moved to Connecticut in 1997 to become the Project Director of the New Haven Healthy Start program, where I remained until May 2003. Although I am no longer a project director, I continue to focus on women's and children's health as the Executive Director of Abba Restoration Center, Inc. And like Belinda Pettiford, our past president, I also tend to eat, sleep and live Healthy Start at times! Belinda not only will serve as past president, but she was re-elected to the Board of Directors and will serve on the Executive Committee, as well. She also joins other maturates who rotated off of the Board as a member of the Legacy Advisory Committee. Along with the Executive and Legacy Advisory Committees, I am pleased to be supported by a dynamic Vice President, Carlton Purvis, and a diverse Board of Directors.

This is a critical year for Healthy Start program, as the program is up for reauthorization. Therefore, we are asking that you remain ready to respond to any legislative advocacy and action that may be requested of you over the next few months. This newsletter entails important information for you, so we hope that you will enjoy! My mentor, Amos Smith, always used to say to me, "Lead from where you are." And I say to you—our membership—lead from where you are. We look forward to your continued support.

Kenneth Harris, President

Mark Your Calendar

CityMatCH's Annual Urban MCH Leadership Conference, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, September 10-13, 2005, www.citymatch.org.

National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center's National Conference, "Substance Exposed Newborns: Weaving Together Effective Policy and Practice," Washington, DC, October 6-7, 2005, http://aia.berkeley.edu/training/annual_conference.html.

Association of Maternal and Child Health Program's Annual Conference, Arlington, VA, March 4-8, 2006, www.amcp.org.

NHTSA's Seventh Annual Spring Education Conference, Washington, DC, March 26-29, 2006, www.healthystartassoc.org.

The 109th Congress and Healthy Start

Since January and the start of the new Congress, some old friends and some new friends will head the key congressional committees that oversee Healthy Start. Among the new faces is the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), who has one Healthy Start program in his state. On the House side, Jerry Lewis (R-CA) is the new chairman of the Appropriations Committee, and while he does not have a federally funded Healthy Start project in his district, his state of California has three sites.

Among the old friends of Healthy Start who have maintained their positions are chairman of the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), as well as Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the ranking member of this subcommittee. Congressman Ralph Regula (R-OH) remains the chairman of the House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, and Congressman David Obey (D-WI) remains as the ranking member.

Of particular importance is the sustained support from Senators Jim Talent (R-MO) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), who took the lead last year in collecting signatures from their colleagues in support of an increase for Healthy Start of \$150 million, and have done so once again this year. As we go to press, those who have signed the request for an increase to Senators Specter and Harkin are Senators Bond (R-MO), DeWine (R-OH), Voinovich (R-OH), Lugar (R-IN), Smith (R-OR), Rockefeller (D-WV), Kohl (D-WI), Lincoln (D-AR), Dodd (D-CT), Bingaman (D-NM), Salazar (D-CO), Bayh (D-IN), Levin (D-MI), Dorgan (D-ND), Landrieu (D-LA), Kerry (D-MA), Pryor (D-AR), Boxer (D-CA), Akaka (D-HI), Nelson (D-NE), Lieberman (D-CT), Durbin (D-

IL), Stabenow (D-MI), Feinstein (D-CA) and Obama (D-IL). House members were asked to send individual letters supporting an increase to Regula and Obey.

The president's budget, submitted to Congress in February, included cuts to many domestic programs. Healthy Start was included at \$98 million, less than the increase in FY05 of \$102 million. There will continue to be pressure to reduce the federal budget this year, and strong support for Healthy Start will be essential. The hundreds of visits made on Capitol Hill during the NHSA's Spring Conference are just the opening round of grassroots advocacy efforts to support Healthy Start.

Reauthorization in 2005

In addition to the Appropriations committees, the NHSA will work with the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) to ensure that the Healthy Start program is reauthorized this year. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY) is the new chair of this committee, while Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) remains the ranking member. In the House, jurisdiction for reauthorization is under Congressman Nathan Deal (R-GA), who is the new chairman of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee. Although he has no Healthy Start sites in his district, there are four in the state of Georgia. During the NHSA's Hill Day on March 16th, Congressman Deal expressed support for the program in a meeting with Georgia Healthy Start representatives. Congressman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) remains the ranking member on this committee. Congressmen Fred Upton (R-MI) and Congressman Ed Towns (D-NY), both of whom serve on this key House committee, will take the lead in introducing the Healthy Start reauthorization bill this year.

Healthy Start Project Honored with Indian Health Service Award

The Winnebago Pre-Natal Team of Winnebago Healthy Start, part of the Northern Plains Healthy Start project, was presented with an Indian Health Service National Director's Award in Bethesda, Maryland, on April 22nd. In recognition of this honor, NHSA President Harris sent a letter of congratulations, commending the Team for their community-based efforts via abstinence-based education in schools and perinatal education in the community. The Winnebago Reservation is located in northeast Nebraska.

New Documentary on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Available

NHSA Friends' member, the Children's Research Triangle in Chicago, Illinois, has recently produced a new film on fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) that is excellent for professional and community education and prevention efforts. *The Listening Heart*, produced and directed by Gabe Chasnoff, was shown at the NHSA's Spring Conference. It chronicles the day-to-day challenges of children, parents and families who struggle with the consequences of FAS. To learn more, go to www.thelisteningheart.com.

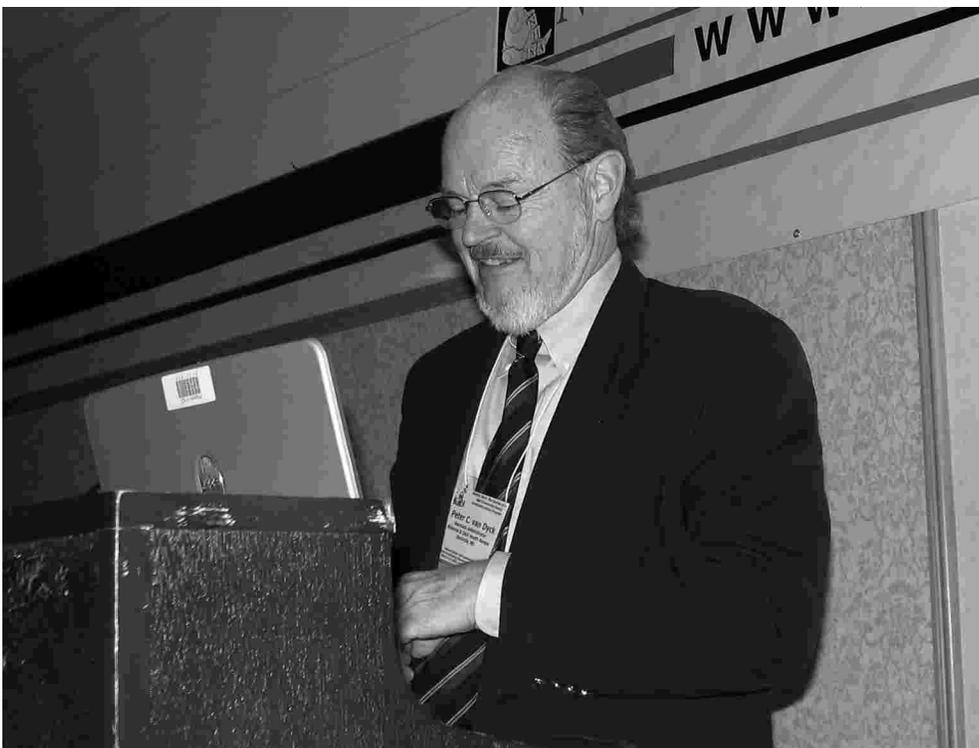
NHSA's 2005 Spring Conference and Congressional Reception

All photos in this issue are by Jan Denton unless indicated otherwise.



Vice President Carlton Purvis and President Kenn Harris present Past President Belinda Pettiford with the C. Michael Savage Outstanding Leadership Award

Photo credit: George R. Smith, Jr.



MCHB Associate Director Peter C. van Dyck welcomes conferees

NHSA's 2005 Spring Conference and Congressional Reception



Chief of Staff David Brog and Health Care Legislative Correspondent Carolyn Doyle display NHSA's award for Senator Arlen Specter. With them are President Harris and Vice President Purvis, and representatives from the Pennsylvania projects



March of Dimes Ambassador Family member Justin Washington talks about prematurity



Board Member Tamela Milan reflects on Mike Savage

NHSA's 2005 Spring Conference and Congressional Reception



Board Member Mario Drummonds from New York City with Congressman Charles Rangel (D-15th NY)



NHSA Vice President Purvis introduces keynote speaker Kathy Mitchell



Spring Conference Planning Committee Member Latrice Morgan and Tairen Morgan of New Orleans with NHSA's Operations Manager, Bea Haskins

Research News

Homicide is One of the Leading Causes of Pregnancy-Associated Injury Deaths

Homicide is the second leading cause of traumatic death for pregnant and postpartum women. From 1991 to 1999, for every 100,000 live births in the U.S., at least two women died as a result of homicide during pregnancy or within one year of pregnancy. Those are among the findings of a new study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published in the March 2005 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

The study found that homicide ranks behind motor vehicle accidents and ahead of unintended injury, suicide and other causes. Homicides accounted for 31% of the maternal injury deaths documented during this period. Women age 20 or younger and African-American women were at highest risk for pregnancy-associated homicide. More than half of the victims of these homicides were killed with firearms. Women who were abused during pregnancy were three times as likely as women who were not abused during pregnancy to

be murdered. Women who received no prenatal health care, or prenatal care only late in their pregnancies, were more likely to be murdered than women who received prenatal care throughout their pregnancies.

Researchers relied on reports that were provided voluntarily by state health departments, and recommended improved data collection techniques. They were unable to determine the number of homicides of pregnant or postpartum women that were committed by their husbands or boyfriends. The study's authors are Jeani Chang, MPH; Cynthia J. Berg, MD, MPH; Linda E. Saltzman, PhD; and Joy Herndon, MS. "Because most pregnant women received prenatal care or visit their health care provider repeatedly during their pregnancy," they wrote, "prenatal and postpartum clinical visits represent an opportunity for discussion about violence and for referral and possible intervention."

News Flash, Family Violence Prevention Fund, www.endabuse.org, March 18, 2005.

BECOME A FRIEND OF HEALTHY START!

The NHSA depends on contributions from supporters, as well as members. If you would like to become a Friend of Healthy Start, please complete the form below and send it today with your check.

I/we want to be a Friend of Healthy Start and enclose a check to National Healthy Start Association, Inc.

- \$ 25 Individual
- \$ 50 Community-based organizations; local businesses and corporations
- \$ 100 State or regional organizations, businesses or corporations
- \$ 200 National organizations, businesses or corporations
- Additional contribution enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Please return this form with your check to: National Healthy Start Association, Inc., P.O. Box 25227, Baltimore, MD 21229-0327.

The National Healthy Start Association, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor.

Copies of NHSA's annual financial report may be obtained by writing to National Healthy Start Association, Inc., P.O. Box 25227, Baltimore, MD 21229-0327.

Documents and information filed under the Maryland charitable organization laws can be obtained, for the cost of copies and postage, from the Office of the Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, (800) 825-4510 (for residents of Maryland).

Senator Specter Receives NHSA Award

In conjunction with the NHSA's Spring Conference, the NHSA hosted its third annual Congressional Reception on the evening of March 15th in the Hart Senate Office Building, where over 300 conference attendees gathered to greet their congressional invitees. All were treated to a special performance by the Bible Way Temple Radio Choir of Washington, DC, which sang gospel music during the reception.

Singled out this year to receive special recognition from the Association was Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Chairman of the Senate Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Although Senator Specter was not able to be present, a number of his professional staff attended, and his Chief of Staff, David Brog, accepted the award on his behalf. In addition, the first C. Michael Savage Outstanding Leadership Award was presented to former NHSA President Belinda Pettiford. The award is named in honor of founding board member Mike Savage of Chicago, Illinois, the former chairperson of the NHSA's Sustainability Committee, who passed away tragically last summer. The reception was sponsored by Navigant Consulting, Inc.

On the following day, March 16th, Congressman Charles Rangel (D-15th NY) opened the day's activities by describing his participation in the early days of the civil rights movement, and how this profound experience has guided his congressional career. He thanked those who work on behalf of Healthy Start and emphasized the importance of educating Congress about program effectiveness. Following Rep. Rangel's address, hundreds of attendees visited their respective congressional offices in Washington, and passed out educational materials specific to their Healthy Start sites.

Stay in Touch!

Be sure to notify the Association if you change project directors or contact information, such as e-mail addresses or phone numbers. This will keep our records up to date so we can easily notify you of important news.



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