



Baby Blog

April 2013

Community Efforts Continue to Improve Infant Mortality Rates

In 2008, the Leon County Commission sponsored the Year of the Healthy Infant workshop in which caregivers, residents and organizations joined together to develop a community action plan to reduce Leon County’s high rate of infant mortality. The goal of the workshop was to create a common message and clear goals aimed at ending the cycle of babies dying in Leon County. Capital Area Healthy Start was one of thirty local and state organizations who participated in establishing priorities and creating action plans. Participants were divided into breakout groups to discuss each of the five Infant Survival Priority areas which included

premature delivery, racial disparity, maternal infection, poor pre-pregnancy health and unsafe infant sleep. All five groups concluded that health education and access to care were essential to addressing these problems.

In response to the goal of increasing health education, Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition, in collaboration with the Leon County Schools, has formed the Schools Working Group to review the health education curriculum in elementary, middle and high schools. The Schools Working Group recently met with school officials and provided Healthy Start’s health education curriculum for review. Meetings have already been held with school guidance counselors and social workers. Plans are underway to meet with high school principals. Local physicians have offered to make presentations they are currently making to high school students in surrounding counties. The Schools Working Group would also like to meet with PTA/PTO Presidents for their input, and have a member the Schools Working Group appointed to the Leon County School Health Advisory Committee.

Accessible care and provider awareness is an issue CAHSC is focusing on within the community. The Provider Working Group was formed as a result, and is teaming up with local providers to increase the awareness among health care professionals. This group is currently working with all provider offices to ensure pre/inter-conception health is taught and re-evaluate the screening and referral process for women with repeat poor pregnancy outcomes. Recently, members assisted with the implementation of a prenatal packet that will go to all providers in Leon County to increase the awareness about Healthy Start and screening.

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1311 N. Paul Russell Rd
Suite A101
Tallahassee, FL 32301
(850) 488-0288

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President's Corner

It is hard to believe that Ann Davis is retiring... For over 20 years, Ann Davis has been dedicated to serving moms and babies of the Big Bend area. Through her leadership, the Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition has developed several innovative and effective strategies for understanding and improving the lives of babies, their families and our community. Her dedication, her passion and her love for babies has given her the stamina to collaborate with local officials, state representatives and community organizations to research and search our community for answers on infant mortality. Ann is truly an extraordinary Executive Director who is an excellent role model and mentor locally and across the state of Florida.

"Thanks" does not seem to be enough for all that Ann has done for so many. It is difficult to put in words what she truly means to all of us. We have included in this issue of Baby Blog some heartfelt dedications and fond memories of Ann from colleagues, board members, staff and all that wanted to let Ann know how much they appreciate everything that she has done for them and for our community!

Congratulations Ann!! Best wishes on your retirement!
We will miss you!

Fran T. Close, PhD
President, Board of Directors

From the Executive Director

One Person at a Time

As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt...that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world: Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition (CAHSC) is the embodiment of this statement. Over the last 20+ years hundreds of individuals have worked through CAHSC to find practical ways to reduce infant mortality in our community. It's working one person at a time. Recent infant mortality data shows a statistically significant trend downward in Leon County. Of this, we can all be proud.

Personally, I have had the honor of leading this small group of thoughtful committed citizens for over two decades. It has been the great privilege of my life to work beside all of you...from Governor and Mrs. Chiles to the newest intern...it's been quite a journey. Now is the time to pass the torch with the light still shining brightly. My last day of work at CAHSC will be May 15, 2013. Let the retirement begin!

Knowing that my birthday is Halloween, please remember me as the good witch that stirred the brew.

Ann Davis
Executive Director

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Best Wishes to Ann Davis on the occasion of her Retirement She Will Be Missed!

Ann was THE first person I met when I started with Healthy Start in 1994. My first day on the job was at a meeting in Tallahassee. She took me under her wing and helped me understand what was going on, so I didn't feel so lost. She has been a true friend ever since. She is someone you can bounce things off and know that she'll tell you the truth about it and that she will always be your friend, even in the very few times we might have disagreed about an issue.

Healthy Start and I will truly miss you, Ann, and hope you are enjoying your retirement to the fullest.

Evie Fox

Executive Director

**Healthy Start Coalition of
Okaloosa-Walton**

It somehow always surprises me when I hear about all the shortcomings and foibles that people from other organizations find in their EDs and that's when I realize all over again that Ann Davis is truly exceptional. At CAHSC there is never a question of Ann's widespread and deep knowledge, her amazing ability to make things happen, her absolute honesty, her deep and abiding compassion for the mothers and babies she serves. She is loyal and supportive of her staff and board and it's obvious she loves what she does. We have been very fortunate to have such a wonderful person leading us through our first twenty years.

Francine Millinor-Allee

**Board Member and Former Board
President**

I met Ann while going through the Leadership Tallahassee program (class 18 – best class ever). I learned quickly that Ann was a leader in everything she does, but she also likes to have fun doing it. This observation was quickly proven when she hosted a toga party at her house and hired Greek Dancers to entertain us. While I will always remember the party I don't recall the direct LT correlation, but I'm sure it had something to do with the class focus for the month. As you would expect, the pictures of that event have gone missing, so I had to include a picture of Ann and Dwight feeding their alter egos as pirates.

I have developed a tremendous amount of respect for Ann over the past decade and have really enjoyed getting to know her. She is an asset to our community and a wonderful person. Congratulations Ann on your retirement!

Jeff Barbacci

Board Treasurer



Art to Save Babies

The second annual Art for Healthy Start event raised more than \$10,000 to help save moms and babies. It was held on Thursday, March 14th from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the home of Alisa Ghazvini, president-elect of the Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition board of directors. Back by popular demand, this year's event included several pieces by Joe Claborn and a charming watercolor by former Florida First Lady Rhea Chiles. Over twenty artists had the opportunity to showcase some of their signature pieces while guests bid on their favorite art through a silent auction. Drinks and appetizers were served throughout the evening. A heartfelt thank you to the planning committee for their hard work preparing this wonderful event: Alisa Ghazvini, Francine Millinor-Allee, Suzi College, Jerri Hanna, Rachel Sutz-Pienta, and Beverly Frick.



Art for Healthy Start II Hostess Alisa Ghazvini (right) with board member Suzi College (center) and guest



Artist Cassie Tucker donated her original watercolor, One Magnolia, for the event

“The second annual Art for Healthy Start was a great success due to the generosity of many supporters, artists, and board members who recognize the importance of providing information, resources, and support focused on healthy pregnancies and babies,” stated Alisa Ghazvini. “We are so appreciative of all of our donors and event attendees for their role in helping us make Leon and Wakulla counties healthier places for moms and babies!”



Artist Joe Claborn once again contributed several of his beautiful acrylics for the auction



Event Committee member Beverly Frick (center) with Sue and Jay Newman

Accomplishments



- Due to Dr. Walt Colon and Dr. Ed Zapert's efforts to educate new and expectant mothers of the importance of good oral health, women are now using preventative measures to reduce the risks of severe periodontal disease which may be at increased risk for pre-term delivery.
- Leon County is providing free dental care to Healthy Start clients.



- Tallahassee Memorial Hospital has distributed vitamins with folic acid to women and has been instrumental in increasing the awareness about the importance of women taking folic acid every day to prevent serious birth defects in babies they may have in the future..



- The Girls Afterschool Program was established by the Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition to encourage girls to take a more active interest in their health. The Coalition is partnering with Springfield Community Center to provide the program in the community. Activities, discussions, and field trips focus on individual, cultural and family views of health, exercise, nutrition, wellness, and personal hygiene. The girls are also provided with activities to promote positive character, increased self esteem and goal setting. S.T.R.O.N.G.E.R. is Strength to Trust and Respect; an Opportunity to be Nice, Graceful, Encouraging and Responsible.



- Safe sleep resources, which continue to be a necessary tool to inform parents of the dangers of co-sleeping, are distributed at health fairs, presentations and events.



- In December 2011, Leon County was awarded a \$130,000 grant from the Florida Department of Health, Office of Minority Health (OMH) to reduce racial disparity in infant mortality. This grant enabled the County to partner with Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition to launch the "Leon County Campaign for Healthy Babies."

According to Florida Charts, Leon County's infant mortality rate has been trending down in recent years. After many years of being substantially higher than the state as a whole, there is a clear downward trend in Leon County through 2011. The decrease is among both black and white infants in the last five years (2007-2011) with Leon being clearly below the state for three years, near the state for one, and higher than the state for one in both race groups. Most of the trend downward in Leon County relates to a decrease in the neonatal mortality rate.

Healthy Start Prenatal Screening Results

Fiscal year - July 2012 through February 2013

Congratulations to all of the provider offices with screening rates at 80% or higher. These rates are based on the number of participants screened. Even though the benchmark is 76%, we are encouraging all providers to screen 100 percent of their patients.

County	Leon	Wakulla	County	Leon	Wakulla
Dr. Jolita Burns	80%	0%	Dr. Whit Oliver	96%	100%
Dr. A.D. Brickler	95%	100%	Bond Community Health Center	97%	100%
Family Practice	71%	0%	Dr. Alex Davenport	92%	83%
Gynecology & Obstetrics	45%	38%	Azalea Women's Healthcare	83%	100%
Dr. Alfredo Nova	96%	83%	Diana Janopaul, L.M.	8%	N/A
North Florida Women's Care	87%	89%	Dr. Okoroji Chukwuma, The Women's Center at Impact Health	98%	N/A
Drs. Hall and Morales	80%	63%	Wakulla County Health Department	50%	86%
Dr. Wendy Thompson	100%	N/A			
Capital Regional Women's Health	94%	100%			
The Birth Cottage	73%	80%			

Healthy Start Infant Screening Results

Fiscal year - July 2012 through February 2013

Both hospitals are steadily improving, but much work has to be done to achieve the benchmark of 91%. Continue the progress, and screen those babies!

	Leon County	Wakulla County
Tallahassee Memorial Hospital	68%	72%
Capital Regional Medical Center	65%	50%

Filling Some Gaps in Breastfeeding Support- Lowering Infant Mortality

Susan Taylor, MA, BSN, RN, IBCLC
Capital Area Breastfeeding Coalition
March, 2013

Though the racial disparity in breastfeeding rates is narrowing (www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding), African American women continue to be less likely to breastfeed than non-Hispanic White or Hispanic women. None of these groups in the U.S. as a whole meets the Maternal, Infant, and Child Health breastfeeding objectives for Healthy People 2020 (www.healthy-people.gov/2020).

Tragically, African American babies have more than twice the infant mortality rate of non-Hispanic White babies (www.cdc.gov- NCHS Data Brief No. 74, 2011) Everyone agrees that to save babies in all racial and ethnic groups, all factors associated with infant mortality must be considered and appropriate evidence-based actions be taken. In line with this, some major recommendations for support by the health care community that will increase the initiation, exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding are:

- “Increase the proportion of employers that have worksite lactation support programs (MICH-22, Healthy People 2020 Breastfeeding Objective,)
- “Reduce the proportion of breastfed newborns who receive formula supplementation within the first two days of life.” (MICH-23, Healthy People 2020 Breastfeeding Objectives)
- “...advise pediatricians not to provide formula company gift bags, coupons, and industry-authored handouts to the parents of newborns and infants in office and clinic settings.” (2012 AAP non-binding resolution, Divesting from Formula Marketing in Pediatric Care www.aap.org/breastfeeding). Distribution of these items by other health care professionals in offices and birthing facilities also interferes with the initiation and duration of breastfeeding.
- “Increase the proportion of live births that occur in facilities that provide recommended care for lactating mothers and their babies (MICH-24, Healthy People 2020 Breastfeeding Objective.) Recommended care is found immediately below.
- “More hospitals can incorporate the recommendations of the UNICEF/WHO) Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.” (Dr.Regina Benjamin in the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, 2011). The Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding contained in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, and endorsed by the AAP and other organizations are:
 1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all health care staff.
 2. Train all health care staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy.
 3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
 4. Help all mothers initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth.
 5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation, even if they are separated from their infants.
 6. Give infants no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated.
 7. Practice rooming-in; allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
 8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand
 9. Give no pacifiers or artificial nipples to breastfeeding infants.
 10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from the hospital or birth center.
- Birthing facilities earn the international designation, Baby-Friendly, through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, administered by Baby-Friendly USA in the U.S.(www.babyfriendlyusa.org) For a modest fee, birthing facilities are provided with a sound structure of support for earning this highly esteemed designation.
- Birthing facilities incorporate standards of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative through the Florida Breastfeeding Coalition’s “Florida Quest for Quality Maternity Care Award.” (www.flbreastfeeding.org.) No fees involved.
- Follow other actions recommended in the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, 2011. (www.surgeongeneral.gov)

The Capital Area Breastfeeding Coalition is eager to continue a conversation with other organizations and individuals about the above and other measures in order to continue building a deeply supportive breastfeeding community for families and thereby protect more babies’ lives.

The entire Healthy Start community owes Ann a great deal of appreciation. She has been a key leader, not only for the local CAHSC but also in statewide efforts, for policies and services to support healthy moms and babies.

**Alisa S. Ghazvini, Ph.D.,
Early Childhood Consultant
Board President-Elect**

I worked with Ann for 17 years & both love & respect her. One of her greatest qualities as a leader is her ability to be proactive, not just reactive. That & being visionary while still attending to detail, an uncommon combination.

Mary Shannahan

My dearest friend, mentor and hero is Ann Davis. She has been the most helpful and considerate Coalition Director and solely responsible for preventing me from making poor decisions as a new Healthy Start Coalition Director. Her legacy for the Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions is the true spirit of unity – she would be the first to make a sacrifice for the good of the population we serve and the betterment of all the Healthy Start Coalitions. It is my hope to carry on that incredibly generous nature during my tenure as the Coalition Director in Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties. She will be remembered for her leadership, her fierce tenacity and debating skills when convicted on an important subject, and fundraising prowess. More importantly the genuine friendship she has given freely to her counterparts across the state. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Ann!

Donna Hagan

Thank you for your tireless dedication to mothers and babies in our area. Retirement is a chance for new adventures. Embrace it!

**Suzi Colledge
Board of Directors**

*How do you eat an elephant?
One bite at a time. I remember the first time Ann said these words to me. When I am faced with what seems like an overwhelming task at the moment, Ann's reassurance that everything will be okay is a constant reminder of why I admire her so much. I once told my parents I want to be like Ann when I grow up – and I can only hope to become like her one day. Ann - I wish you the best in your next phase in your life. Enjoy the many adventures that await you.*

*Kristina Abernathy
Community Liaison*



Ann has an unusual presence that makes you feel in awe of her, as if you're with a head of state, and, at the same time, feel at ease the way you would stepping into your mother's kitchen. Her words of encouragement are like fine silver. She is truly the treasure of Tallahassee.

**Lisa Grice, Executive Director
Chipola Healthy Start
Coalition**

Among the first words I heard when I started to work for Healthy Start were: Ann, you're the BEST! It didn't take long to understand what those words meant to the staff. It meant the way you encourage autonomy and creativity while providing unwavering support. It meant that you were the first to arrive and the last to leave when there was work to be done and approached everything with cheerful optimism. Over the years, I've added my own definitions, but the one that means the most to me is loyal friend. In that too, Ann, you're the best!

Joan Leggitt

I was a new board member in 2011 when I was recognized as one of the Tallahassee Democrat's "25 Women You Need to Know". I was delighted to see that our own executive director Ann Davis was recognized as one of the 25 with me in 2011. Not only was it an honor to be included in a group of distinguished women that included our accomplished leader Ann, it was a delight to share the experience of joining the Club 25 community with her. I have enjoyed getting to know Ann over the last few years and I look forward to her continued involvement in the Tallahassee community. Ann is truly one of Tallahassee's "Women You Need to Know" and a community treasure who has enriched the Big Bend area beyond measure. Thank you for your friendship and your service Ann! -- **Rachel Sutz Pienta, PhD**

I have known and worked with Ann since she began with Healthy Start. One thing she taught me early on was to read the newspaper first thing every day in order to prepare for the day. First to be sure if you are in it, you were quoted right and to be prepared for any follow up and secondly, to see what might affect moms and babies and that might need a response from Healthy Start.

Ann was an early adopter of the FIMR (Fetal and Infant Mortality Review) Process, no not a bone, but for Ann it was a bone she never let go of. This was another reason to read the newspaper, it was how she learned about deaths to babies in the community, some of whom had not been reported to the vital statistics office. It became one of the first interventions of the Community Action Team for FIMR. They began to train providers and others in the community about the importance of tracking fetal and infant deaths and the vital statistics reporting process--an immediate success, Ann was off on yet another important quest. Ann has diligently pursued expansion and funding for FIMR, and it is looking promising this year, how fitting!

Ann could always be depended upon to call me when something was going on, or hinted at, that would impact state maternal and child health issues. Whether it was a local issue that might make for "news" either positive or not so positive, Ann was on top of it. She participated actively in the editorial board process, in community task forces, worked with the County Commissions to educate, and more. Of course, because she was in Tallahassee, she was often called upon to be a voice for statewide Healthy Start issues, whether it be with the legislature, the Department of Health, or on a task force, etc. I often wondered if she would move or go into hiding, we called on her so much! No, Ann hung in there, often working with others in the area to share the load--Joy and Donna often share the table with Ann working on issues that affect all 3 Healthy Start Coalition catchment areas. Ann often went above and beyond, like the time she substituted for me to provide training at a national conference with only a few days notice when I was unable to attend.

Ann is also a great advocate for moms and babies and creative in garnering scarce resources to meet match requirements or to be used in unrestricted ways to meet community needs. She was active in many ways in the community, such as Rotary Club and other civic activities. Nominated for recognition of her volunteer activities, singing her praises brought additional volunteers and public awareness of Healthy Start and its importance. Ann never hesitated to ask people to step up and participate, and she always followed up with sincere thanks for all efforts. She even managed to get me re-engaged after my retirement!

I can't imagine Healthy Start without Ann at the table, but I am confident that she has worked hard to mentor her staff and prepare them to continue to move forward in the important work of Healthy Start, caring for hundreds of families every year.

Ann, whether you embark upon an encore career or focus on all the things you never had time to enjoy for the past twenty plus years, I wish you all of the best because you are one of the best! Fair winds and smooth sailing my friend,

Annette Phelps

Working for Ann has been a wonderful experience. She generates enthusiasm, encourages growth and is an excellent mentor. She will be missed –

Kristy Goldwire

After our initial meeting, Ann was absolutely convinced that I should come work for her. With her great certainty, she swept away my doubt and brought me on board. It was one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. Ann gave me a desk, a job title, and a few critical monthly and quarterly duties; other than that, she set me free to invent my role. She encouraged me to follow my instincts and expand our bereavement services, supporting me to gain many new skills along the way. Meanwhile, she gave me the flexibility to be with my children when they needed me, and supported opportunities that came my way. Ann has a remarkable capacity to nurture the professional creativity of her employees, while simultaneously doing the heroic work of shielding us from the vicissitudes of politics. I learned so much from working for Ann, and I am deeply grateful to her for everything.

Jane McPherson