

African American Moms Unite at the American Red Cross WIC

Encouragement, support, and lots of laughter were shared as 20 African American WIC peer counseling participants came together to celebrate Black Breastfeeding week at a support group organized by the Peer Counselors of the American Red Cross WIC Program.

The idea to celebrate Black Breastfeeding Week by hosting a special support group came from “wanting to better serve our African-American participants by encouraging optimal health for women and babies through breastfeeding. We wanted to create a space of support, healing, and advocacy,” states Esmi Sanchez, Peer Counselor. Adds Cory Burgamy, Peer Counselor, “familiarity about the importance of breastfeeding is increasing and hands-on lactation help is available from us Peer Counselors, but the missing aspect is a strong community of support. We aimed to fill that void and bring further awareness.”

The event featured a presentation by Black Infant Health of San Diego, an organization which works to ensure that African-American babies are born healthy and have the opportunity to grow into thriving children. Vanessa Simmons, photographer and breastfeeding advocate, was also on hand to share news about her breastfeeding awareness media campaign, “Normalize Breastfeeding.”

Participants were also treated to yummy, healthy snacks and raffles, but the real highpoint of the event, according to Jennifer Nolan, RD, IBCLC, was “hearing our super-star breastfeeding moms share their breastfeeding stories with their peers. You could really tell that the stories made a positive impact on our moms-to-be.”

The Peer Counselor team plans to make a Black Breastfeeding Week support group an annual event.

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