



WIC's 50th Anniversary is Coming *It is Time to Celebrate!*

In 2024, the WIC program will celebrate its 50th anniversary. There are reams of studies indicating improved health outcomes as a result of participating in WIC. Key to the success of the program has been an enduring commitment and passion from staff, in communities across California and the nation, to be there for families, especially in difficult times. Grocers, farmers, technology partners, health care providers, childcare providers, decision makers, the list is long, can



all celebrate as contributors to WIC's success and stand with WIC for the future of children and their families. Continuous quality improvement, partnerships, innovation and participant centered care will lead WIC into a bright future.

This fall, a time of reflection and thanks, we can include our gratitude to those who make the WIC program successful. And let's get ready to be loud and proud to celebrate in 2024 for this impactful program that contributes to intergenerational healthy outcomes, supports local economies and builds community.

Inside this edition of the WIC Watch you can enjoy just a small sample of the many efforts by WIC staff and partners to work together. We share a few examples of employee wellness and having fun together. Be sure to read about opportunities for staff to learn and stretch as leaders.

Here at CWA, we are grateful for the opportunity to support the California WIC program and we are making plans for celebrating WIC in the coming year.

Karen, Jodi, Lena, Sarah, and Vanessa

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Celebrate 50 Years With WIC!

WIC Celebrates 50 years in 2024! Join us in providing an exceptional educational opportunity for WIC staff and community partners. If you would like to share on a topic you are passionate about with the WIC community, contact Jodi regarding being a speaker: jmulliganpfile@calwic.org.

This will be the California WIC Association's 32nd Annual Conference & Trade Show. We will host this event virtually May 6-10, 2024. A multi-track pre-conference will be offered on Monday, May 6, followed by a dual-track conference May 7-10.

CWA offers continuing education units for Registered Dietitians (RD/RDN), International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC/CLC/CLE), and Contact Hours for Registered Nurses (RN). We are working on providing contact hours for Certified Health Education Specialists (CHES) and will know more in the coming months, so stay tuned!



Welcome & Thank You - CWA Board Members

As a non-profit organization, CWA is supported by a board. Board positions reflect the geography of the WIC regions and additional representation with a Small Agency Caucus, Native American Local Agency Caucus, Legislative Ambassadors and Members-at-Large. CWA board president and president-elect also participate in the National WIC Association local agency calls. Starting this year, four additional California local agency representatives with voting rights will be included in NWA.

The CWA staff greatly appreciates the support of the board, and intentionally does not ask members to take on projects. The biggest request of members is to inform CWA of issues of concern, elevate successes, ask for CWA's support and ask questions. The board meets once a month during which half the meeting covers CWA business and local agency support, and half the meeting is a discussion with state WIC leadership.

Board positions term out in the fall with varying lengths of time for each position. We would like to introduce the 2023-24 board. Please check out the Board members on our webpage and on the last page of this magazine. We will be honoring WIC staff whose board terms are completed and welcoming new members during the Fall Meetings.



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"Having the opportunity to serve on the CWA Board of Directors over the last 5+ years has been a highlight career opportunity for me as a new WIC Director. I have learned so much from my colleagues and have gained a greater understanding of our California WIC Program on a larger scale. Karen and the CWA team really make serving on the CWA Board an easy task which has always been appreciated. They value and understand the hard work and challenges our WIC programs face and really help support grand efforts to move our program forward to better serve WIC families. I would encourage any WIC Director, new and experienced, to consider joining the CWA Board of Directors.

Your voice and experience matters!"

—Andrea Weiss, Community Medical Centers, Stockton
.....

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(Search for California WIC Association or calwic.)



Hospital, Medi-Cal and WIC Partnerships for Lactation and CalAIM Goals

In an effort to support a successful start to lactation, some hospitals have for many years kept and issued WIC pumps to new WIC parents, notified WIC agencies of births and sent referrals for lactation support. These partnerships satisfy many aspects of care and staffing. With WIC pumps available seven days a week in a hospital, families have ready access to a high quality pump when the birthing parent, or dyad, is discharged. This provides greater access than WIC clinics are able to provide.

Some hospitals are also working with WIC local agencies to alert them of births and send referrals for WIC enrollment. WIC staff can reach out to the parent and begin care. Some WIC staff are co-located in a hospital and others make rounds to streamline WIC enrollment or provide lactation support, practices that were interrupted in the pandemic.

Earlier this year, all 84 WIC local agencies completed a survey conducted by CWA of their data linkages and partnerships. Responses indicated that 36 WIC agencies receive referrals from hospitals for enrollment and 35 agencies receive referrals for lactation support. Twenty-two hospitals have a pump closet to provide WIC breast pumps to eligible parents. A fact sheet summarizing these results is available to share with hospitals and home visiting partners.

These partnerships between WIC and hospitals fulfill requirements for hospitals designated as Baby Friendly, or using comprehensive model policies, to comply with the policies and practices required by California law [starting in 2025](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB402) (https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB402). Strong connec-

tions for parents from hospital to community support is key and this connection with WIC supports a continuum of care and best practices for hospitals and WIC agencies.

Timely access to lactation support and breast pumps, especially of adequate quality, is not consistent or adequate across health plans. To fill the gap, for decades WIC has provided pumps of a high quality and WIC agencies extend their lactation staff as the main support for parents. The CalAIM health reforms are an opportunity for the Medi-Cal plans to be an equal partner in lactation support, as required in statute. The work underway to define the Birthing Care Pathway should include comprehensive lactation support. It is also an opportunity to increase the reimbursement rates for [breast pumps](https://www.calwic.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Impacts-of-Breastfeeding-Support_CWA-05-30-2017.pdf) (https://www.calwic.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Impacts-of-Breastfeeding-Support_CWA-05-30-2017.pdf) and reimagine lactation support, both a [cost savings for Medi-Cal](https://www.calwic.org/storage/documents/WIC-BFF_AA_Analysis_R8.pdf) (https://www.calwic.org/storage/documents/WIC-BFF_AA_Analysis_R8.pdf), as described



Until the pandemic, for many years, Barbara Dockery, Merced WIC, visited many new parents and infants in the hospital.

in CWA briefs. WIC agencies are excellent partners also for the new CalAIM benefit to provide navigation from hospital to home.

For the fact sheets or more information, contact Karen, kfarley@calwic.org.



Data Linkages and Healthcare Integration

The [CalAIM](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Pages/CalAIM.aspx) (<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/CalAIM/Pages/CalAIM.aspx>) initiative, instituting major reforms for California health care, moves ahead and WIC agencies are beginning to be part of the new benefits and opportunities. Monthly meetings, provided by CWA, have been a venue for sharing updates, and meeting with key partners. Here are some of the highlights from the last few months.

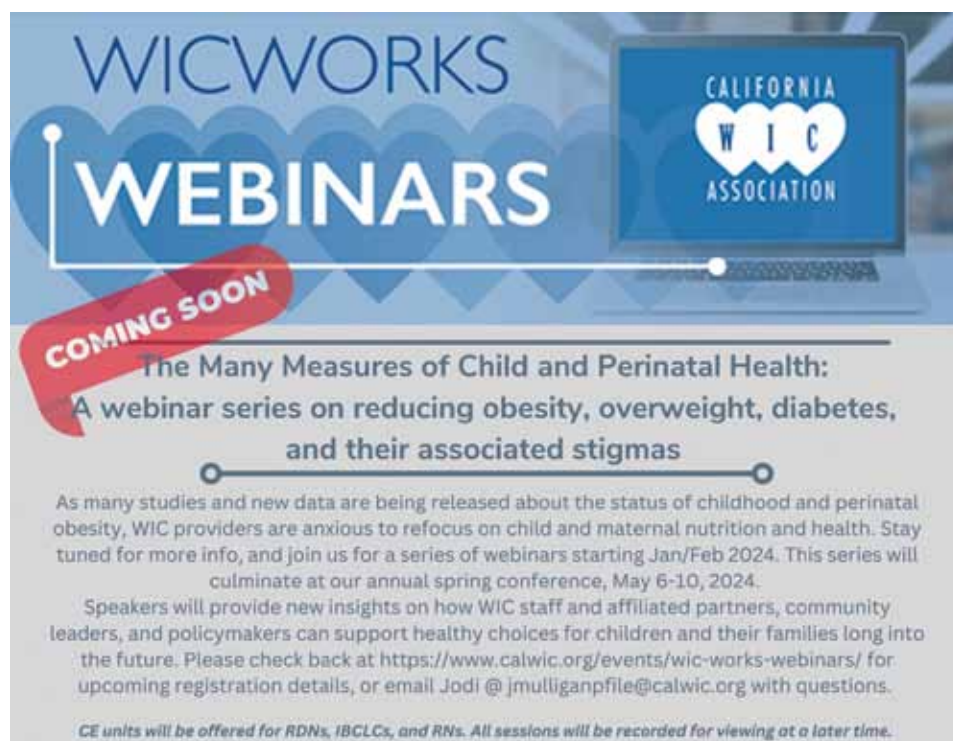
- All 84 local agencies completed a survey on their data linkages and partnerships, a follow up to a survey in 2018. Despite the very busy last 3 years, local agencies have more electronic linkages for referrals and access to needed data. CWA provides these fact sheets summarizing key findings.
- The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is beginning the process of redefining perinatal benefits. Development of a Birthing Care Pathway is underway that includes stakeholder interviews and workgroups. WIC Directors, Marisela Montoya, Lundquist Foundation, and Nina Ayala, Native American Health Center, are participating on the social determinants work group.
- WIC local agencies were briefed by DHCS staff on October 5 on an updated MOU with managed care plans. Local agencies contributed to the development of the MOU.
- WIC staff heard about the [Data Exchange Framework and Agreement](https://dxf.chhs.ca.gov/) (<https://dxf.chhs.ca.gov/>) in a presentation from BluePath Health consultants.
- Local agencies are attending PATH (county collaboratives) meetings to

speaking up about the importance of WIC.

- During the public comment period, CWA provided comments to California Department of Health Care Access and Information ([HCAI](https://hcai.ca.gov/)) (<https://hcai.ca.gov/>) on the qualifications to become a Community Health Worker (CHW), recommending that WNA training be considered adequate to certify as a CHW. Through attestation this is possible and CWA will follow up.
- CWA provided a cost analysis of becoming an IBCLC to HCAI requesting IBCLCs be added to the scholarship opportunities for allied health care providers. This was favorably received and is under review.
- HCAI staff met with WIC staff to discuss the scholarship and loan forgiveness opportunities for RDNs.

- Priti Rane, San Francisco WIC, presented in Maryland at the Civitas Networks for Health annual conference, along with Dan Chavez, Serving Communities Health Information Organization (SCHIO), on successful linkages for WIC local agencies in San Francisco and Santa Cruz.
- CWA is the recipient of one of two NWA grants, funded by the Kaiser Permanente National Community Benefit Fund, to improve local agency linkages to health information exchanges. CWA will work with Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services ([LANES](https://lanesla.org/about-us/)) (<https://lanesla.org/about-us/>), the health information exchange serving Los Angeles, and the WIC local agencies serving Los Angeles, to improve referrals and data linkages.

For any questions, please contact Karen, kfarley@calwic.org.



WICWORKS WEBINARS

COMING SOON

The Many Measures of Child and Perinatal Health:
A webinar series on reducing obesity, overweight, diabetes, and their associated stigmas

As many studies and new data are being released about the status of childhood and perinatal obesity, WIC providers are anxious to refocus on child and maternal nutrition and health. Stay tuned for more info, and join us for a series of webinars starting Jan/Feb 2024. This series will culminate at our annual spring conference, May 6-10, 2024.

Speakers will provide new insights on how WIC staff and affiliated partners, community leaders, and policymakers can support healthy choices for children and their families long into the future. Please check back at <https://www.calwic.org/events/wic-works-webinars/> for upcoming registration details, or email Jodi @ jmulliganpfile@calwic.org with questions.

CE units will be offered for RDNs, IBCLCs, and RNs. All sessions will be recorded for viewing at a later time.

State and Federal Policy Updates

State Policy Updates

California wrapped up its legislative season in mid-September, and CWA's bill list fared pretty well! We are grateful to be part of a strong community of partners in the California Work and Family Coalition (CAWFC), and our bill list this year included several CAWFC bills, including SB 616 (Gonzalez) which boosts California's paid sick days from three to five, AB 518 (Wicks) which would expand paid family leave to include chosen family, AB 524 (Wicks) which would include family caregivers as a protected class against employer discrimination, and AB 575 (Papan) which would make multiple improvements to California's paid family leave policies. While SB 616 and AB 524

from 60 days to one year after giving birth, ensuring parents and babies receive necessary care and support during this critical period.

For CWA's full bill list, check here: <https://www.calwic.org/policy-center/state/>

Federal Policy Updates

Throughout the year, the WIC community has been advocating for WIC and in particular the cash value benefit (CVB) bump, which was set to expire unless Congress acted to extend it on September 30th. On September 30th, Congress passed a continuing resolution, three hours before the deadline, narrowly avoiding a government shutdown.

The Biden administration had requested \$1.4 billion in emergency funding for WIC as part of a short-term government funding deal. While the continuing resolution bill did not include the requested supplemental funding for WIC, it does provide spending flexibilities to allow USDA to spend WIC funds at the rate necessary to sustain increased program participation. The continuing resolution also maintains the CVB bump implemented in 2021, allowing WIC to continue issuing fruit and vegetable

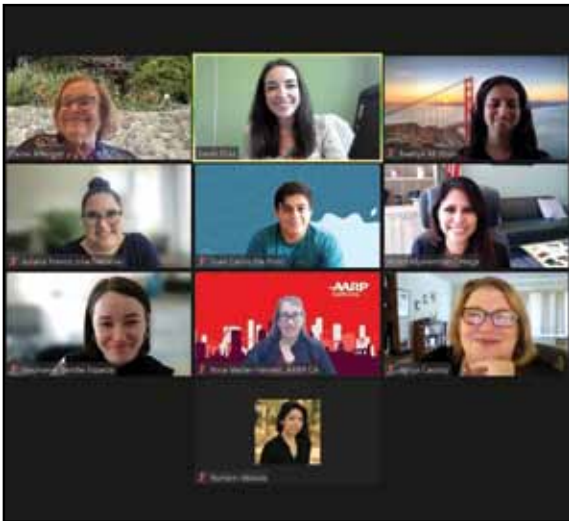
benefits at heightened, evidence-based levels. This situation highlights the impact of budget decisions on vulnerable communities and the need for continued support for programs like WIC. A future government shutdown could further exacerbate the challenges faced by low-income families relying on WIC.

The CVB will remain at current levels and WIC will remain able to serve all

participants through November 17th, after which the future is uncertain. Recent analysis from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities indicates that the WIC program will require increased funding for the upcoming fiscal year due to unexpectedly higher levels of participation and ongoing elevated food costs.

The House's funding proposal of \$5.5 billion, which was presented prior to the August recess and then withdrawn due to lack of support, would not have supplied WIC with the necessary resources to accommodate the expected number of recipients, potentially resulting in the program resorting to waitlists for the first time in nearly thirty years. The Senate's proposal of \$6.3 billion which mirrored President Biden's budget plan released earlier this year, would (unlike the House plan) leave the increased CVB intact, but would also fall short of the amount needed to serve all eligible participants and likely result in waiting lists.

It remains critically important for the WIC community to forge and maintain good relationships with our members of Congress. There are multiple opportunities throughout the year for local agency staff to attend meetings with their Congressional representatives or staff members, and WIC staff are WIC experts! If you are interested in participating in meetings with legislators, contact Sarah: sdiaz@calwic.org.



CWA and other California Work and Family Coalition Members meet with Assemblymember Ortega on SB 616.

and AB 575 all passed through the legislature and are headed to the Governor's desk, AB 518 was unfortunately ordered to the inactive file.

Another CWA-supported bill that found success in the legislature this year and awaits Governor Newsom's signature is AB 608 (Schiavo). It extends coverage of services provided by the Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP)



Samar McGregor of PHFE WIC and Congressman Lou Correa.

Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove Visits Lundquist WIC

To see firsthand how WIC is addressing food insecurity, Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove visited Lundquist WIC's Central Avenue WIC Office in California's 37th Congressional District, which she represents.

Her visit, in August, came only one week before the White House urged Congress to approve 1.4 billion dollars in WIC funding as part of any short-term funding

and throughout the state and country.

"Working to improve the quality of life for families and children in Los Angeles has been a priority of mine for years. Combating hunger and ensuring our most vulnerable have food on their tables is essential."

One of her goals is to draw her fellow legislators' attention to food insecurity and its inherent dangers, and to convince Congresspersons that combating hunger with nutrition programs such as WIC is essential.

Several Lundquist

WIC staff, among them Dr. Marisela Montoya, Executive Director, and Nancy Avila, Chief of Site Operations,

provided an extensive overview of WIC, emphasizing that a cut to funding would result in the inability to serve all who are eligible.



(Left to Right) Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove discusses concerns with Nancy Avila, Chief of WIC Site Operations, and Dr. Marisela Montoya, Executive Director of South Los Angeles Health Projects.



Congresswoman and WIC mom share lovely moment as mom recounts her touching breastfeeding journey.

proposal that may be passed to avoid a government shutdown.

The Congresswoman said she wanted to underscore the importance of nutrition assistance in her district



Lundquist WIC staff host Congresswoman Sydney Kamlager-Dove (center) at Central Ave. WIC Office in South Los Angeles.

A breastfeeding WIC mother spoke at length about how difficult breastfeeding had been until being referred to WIC. She expressed her gratitude to WIC for the support she is receiving.

During the Congresswoman's tour, she commented that some legislators have argued that low-income people should not be offered food assistance because they don't work to support their families. Lundquist WIC staff explained that many WIC participants work but because of low wages are still eligible for WIC benefits.

Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove has stated that she will continue to support nutrition assistance programs through important legislation such as the Farm Bill and has prioritized protecting WIC and SNAP funding.

"We are pleased to have played a role in assisting the Congresswoman to strengthen her argument about the necessity for maintaining WIC funding," Dr. Marisela Montoya said.

Congressional Reps Connect With WIC

CWA is always encouraging our elected officials to take the time to tour a WIC office. We think showing is better than telling, and we're grateful whenever local agency WIC staff take time out of their very busy schedules to host a visit and show a legislator or member of their staff around!

This summer CWA was lucky enough to be able to attend two such visits, one with Congressman Costa visiting a Fresno EOC WIC office, and one with Congressman Valadao's Constituent Services Director, Helen Jbeily. August is a great time for a Congressional visit to a WIC site, because there are so many opportunities to show members what we do at WIC, not just every day, but for National Breastfeeding Month as well. This particular August came on the heels of the passage of the PUMP Act, so local agency staff were able to take the opportunity to extend their thanks to Congressman Costa and Congressman Valadao's staff for their support of the PUMP Act.

Fresno EOC staff were hosting a Books for Kids event on the day of

Representative Costa's visit, so he was able to meet with WIC families while they picked up their books and chatted with staff. Helen from Representative Valadao's office was fortunate enough to participate in the Tulare-Kings County Breastfeeding Coalition's Lunch & Learn event that highlighted new national workplace protections for nursing parents.

A huge shout out to teams at Fresno EOC and at the Tulare-Kings County WIC Lunch & Learn event. They created such a welcoming environment, and showcased the different types of support that families can receive at WIC. Their warmth, knowledge and flexibility always ensure that WIC puts its best foot



WIC Staff give Helen Jbeily of Congressman Valadao's staff a tour of a Kings County WIC office.

forward with our elected officials.

Of course, CWA took the opportunity to chat about the House's proposal for WIC funding, and how it would fall far short of what would be needed to continue serving all eligible participants, as well as the bump to the fruit and vegetable benefit and the importance to our WIC families of keeping that increase.

Would you like your member of Congress to visit your WIC office? Chat with Sarah (sdiaz@calwic.org). CWA can help you identify which members cover the district(s) that your sites are in, connect you to district schedulers, put together the wording for an invitation, and provide you with a variety of tools for these visits, and we always love to attend if we are able!



Tulare Kings County Breastfeeding Coalition Group with Helen Jbeily Constituent Services Director for Congressman Valadao.



Congressman Costa addresses a team from Fresno EOC WIC.



Sarah Diaz of CWA and Annette Thornton, Michelle Tutunjian and Jack Lazzarini of Fresno EOC join Congressman Costa at a Fresno EOC WIC site.



Congressman Costa with Fresno EOC WIC staff.

Congressman Costa greets a WIC kid.



WIC Wellness Newsletter Team

For the second half of 2023, we are excited to announce that our wonderful W3 Newsletter has a brand-new WIC Wellness Newsletter Team and Senior Editor. This amazing group of 10 undergrad and graduate students from San Diego State University (SDSU) and Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) is led by the American Red Cross WIC. We are grateful to have such a unique and skilled group of students on our Team. They will endeavor to curate timely wellness topics, recipes and resources into every W3 Newsletter to help inspire and empower our WIC staff to be well. Below are the faces and details of our distinctive Team.

Stephanie Alcala (Senior Editor): Originally from Long Island, NY, Stephanie is a graduate student at SDSU studying Nutritional Sciences and completing the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). Her goal is to become a registered dietitian and share her love for cooking in food service and/or private practice. A favorite quote of hers is an Italian saying, "chi mangia bene, vive bene", which means "he who eats well, lives well."

Ashley Gubicza: Ashley is from the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles, CA. She is in her second year of the Nutritional Science Master's Program at SDSU. Ashley will become a registered dietitian and plans to work in the field of research, specifically involving neurological and other geriatric-related conditions. A quote to live by: "Life is tough but so are you."

Ashley Henson: Ashley grew up in Dallas, TX, and currently lives in San Diego, CA, where she attends PLNU as a senior Dietetics student. Ashley has always loved science and food, and these passions have guided her toward becoming a registered dietitian. As a future RD, she hopes to serve patients in oncology or gerontology. One of her favorite

quotes is: "There is nothing stronger than a soft soul".

Ashley Woo: Ashley is from Orange County, CA and is currently a sophomore at SDSU studying Foods and Nutrition with a minor in Gerontology. She is interested in becoming a registered dietitian with an emphasis on geriatric medicine and longevity. She has a strong passion for food and community, and hopes to utilize her specialty to create an impact in the health and wellness industry. She likes to believe "Patience Provides Prosperity".

Caitlyn Jones: Caitlyn is from Simi Valley, CA. She is majoring in foods and nutrition at SDSU and minoring in social psychology. Currently, Caitlyn works at an eating disorder recovery center as a diet technician. She is striving to become a registered dietitian, specializing in eating disorder recovery. Overall, Caitlyn is seeking to improve individual health through specific dietary needs and is passionate about the expansion of wellness. One of her favorite quotes is: "The first wealth is health" – Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Ivette Ramirez: Ivette was born and raised in San Diego, CA. This fall, she will enter her senior year at SDSU, majoring in foods and nutrition. One of her career goals is to become a registered dietitian to help educate pregnant moms to build a healthy eating journey for their families. "I got this" is her favorite quote from her friend to live by.

Jack Galliver: Jack grew up in Orange County, CA, and currently attends SDSU as a senior studying to obtain a B.S. in Economics. His newly found passion for healthcare has pushed him to pursue nursing school after he receives his degree. He is looking to provide help for those with mental health diseases in hospital and outpatient settings. One of

his favorite quotes is, "No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world." – Robin Williams

Kacey Van Duzer: Kacey grew up in San Diego, CA, and recently graduated from SDSU with a Bachelors in psychology. She is currently exploring her graduate school options and working in the field to gain experience. Her overall career goal is to work with health and psychology. A quote she likes is "It's only a thought and a thought can be changed."

Lauren Flotman: Lauren grew up in Orange County, CA, and currently attends SDSU as a senior studying for a B.S. in Foods and Nutrition with an enrollment in Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). Her sincere passion for healthcare, specifically patient care, has driven her to pursue an educational journey to become a Physician's Assistant. She hopes to work for organizations that value the promotion of healthy, ongoing lifestyles through outstanding care and education to their communities. One of her favorite quotes is by Tess Guinery, "Keep your eyes lifted high upon the sun, and you'll see the best light in everyone."

Stacy Wells: Stacy is a second-generation San Diegan and a senior at SDSU majoring in Foods and Nutrition. She currently works as an In-Home Caregiver but is on her way to becoming a registered dietitian. Stacy has a strong belief that food is medicine and wants to work with children to help them make lifelong good choices to be happy and healthy adults. "Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food." – Hippocrates.

To access the W3 newsletter: <https://www.calwic.org/local-agency-support/wic-worksite-wellness/wic-worksite-wellness-newsletters/>



Ashley



Jack



Kacey



Ashley



Lauren



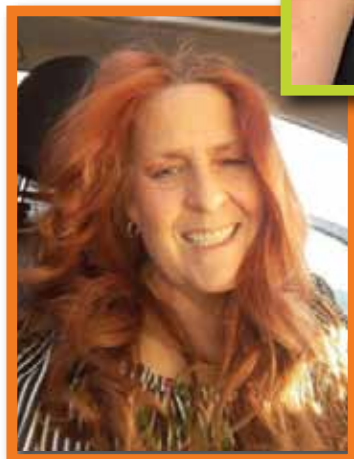
Ivette



Stephanie



Caitlyn



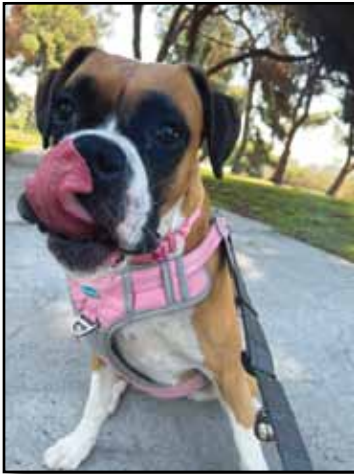
Stacy



Ashley

WIC Walks Sizzling Summer Challenge

CWA hosted the *WIC Walks Sizzling Summer Challenge* on the Pacer for Teams App, for the month of July. It was a big hit with 41 teams and 400 walkers from WIC agencies throughout California. We braved the heat and walked 38,260.5 miles, which is like walking or running around the Earth's equator once and making it over half-way around the equator again. New this challenge was the



Sizzling Summer Extras weekly drawing for a \$25 gift card of choice that participants could enter if they posted their other physical activities on the challenge feed. Additionally, there were new daily posts within the Pacer App that aimed to boost engagement, motivate participants, and promote wellness. Topics covered physical, environmental,

social, and emotional wellness, as well as disease prevention and motivational affirmations. Challenge participants walked, ran, hiked, involved their families, friends, and coworkers, and showed off their fur friends too. Congrats to this challenges team and individual winners!



WINNERS

1st Place Team: WIK WOK, City of Long Beach. \$250 Gift Card of Choice

2nd Place Team: Charlie's Ankles, City of Long Beach. \$150 Gift Card of Choice

3rd Place Team: Walking on Sunshine, tricare. \$100 Gift Card of Choice

Individual Distance Prize: Angie Hart, CRP WIC Walkers. \$75 Gift Card of Choice

Social Butterfly Prize: Valerie Bradford, PHFE Westside Wellness Walkers. \$25 Gift Card of Choice

Congrats to all of our Sizzling Summer Extras Winners as well who each got a \$25 gift card for doing Sizzling Summer Extra workouts during the week.

Week 1's Winner: Hideko Schroeder, WICness the Fitness, Pasadena

Week 2's Winner: Jessica Rollin, Outgoing OC Walkers, PHFE

Week 3's Winner: Hideko Schroeder, WICness the Fitness, Pasadena

Week 4's Winner: Leticia Martinez, Fresno Walkathoners, Fresno EOC



Mina Penunuri walking while traveling with family, The Gardeners team, CompreCare.



Julia Araiza doing a Sizzling Summer Extra Workout, Westside Wellness Walkers, PHFE WIC.



Valerie Bradford out on a walk with family, Westside Wellness Walkers, PHFE WIC.



Amber Keegan taking the stairs, The WICKed Walkers, Shasta County WIC.



Jayne Lee hitting the pavement, Team Tater Trots, PHFE WIC.



Ivette Quinones taking a walk out by the water, team Walkin' On Sunshine, PHFE WIC.

We're Hiring!

The California Department of Public Health/Women, Infants and Children Division (CDPH/WIC) is looking for **energetic** and **innovative** individuals who have a **passion** for improving the lives of California families statewide.



Apply today at
go.cdph.ca.gov/workatwic
or scan the QR code.

What we offer:

- ♥ Professional and personal growth opportunities
- ♥ Telework opportunities for *all staff*
- ♥ Wide range of career options
- ♥ Generous benefits
- ♥ Flexible work schedule



Teri Ewell, MPH, RD, IBCLC, RM*, Solano County WIC, Retires

After I graduated with my degree in Nutrition, Dietetics and Food Science from UC Berkeley many decades ago, I applied to but did not get into my dietetic internship. However, another door opened and I began my ultimate journey into Public Health by joining the Peace Corps as a Health Educator. I was



posted in the mountains in Ecuador and was tasked with organizing women's groups throughout the province, teaching health

and nutrition education in the one room classrooms, working with the Ministry of Health to bring latrines to a place that had no sanitation or electricity and assisting with a vaccination campaign. I have so many stories of love, grief and growth. The Peace Corps motto, "the hardest job you will ever love" is absolutely true.

I returned to the U.S. 11 years later (I stayed a little longer than usual), learned how to use a telephone again and was introduced to music on CDs. I was accepted into the MPH, RD program at UC Berkeley and ended up in Solano County for my community rotation. One of my projects was to initiate our Breastfeeding Coalition and bring in community and program members to help develop our LacTrack system in WIC that followed pregnant women and offered breastfeeding support postpartum. This became a County program called Babies First that offered home visits from Public Health Nurses. At the time, WIC only had six breast pumps to loan to women and one part-time contracted Lactation Consul-

tant. Our WIC manager worked with the MCAH program managers and we were able to hire Jeanette Panchula, a Spanish speaking IBCLC who was a Public Health Nurse and Social Worker. She became my mentor and together, we began our task to provide breastfeeding education to every department in our Health and Social Services department.

I really enjoyed bringing in different partners to work on our projects. One of my earliest accomplishments was when we engaged our Employment and Eligibility department to partner with WIC to have an integrated Welfare to Work program that included nutrition and breastfeeding case-management. Breastfeeding women returning to work rented breast pumps from a contractor. What I discovered was that case-managed women were breastfeeding longer. At the time, our Managed Care Health Plan (PHC) was paying for monthly pump rentals. After gathering data for a year, I showed the managers it would be more cost effective for PHC to buy a pump vs renting for their members. As a result, Partnership Health Plan became one of the first organizations in the country to offer free personal breast pumps through their insurance.

There are many memories I carry from working with amazing staff locally and at the State. I was honored to be part of the initial meetings that eventually became the California Breastfeeding Coalition. When CDPH got funding for the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling program, I was at the first meetings to help design our policies and create the foundation for our Regional Breastfeeding Liaison program. Our local Breastfeeding Coalition of Solano County is the longest running community meeting in Solano.

WIC is an outstanding program.



Whenever I'm at an outreach event, I always have people stop by and say "I had WIC with my kids and it helped so much" or "WIC helped me get through tough times". That's why I do what I do - making a difference in the world and inspiring others to be all they can be.

I started in WIC as an unpaid intern, then a Public Health Nutritionist/RD and within a couple of years, Supervising Public Health Nutritionist. Now I'm the IBCLC for the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program helping the next generation to become IBCLCs and take over the reins. It has been a heart-filled journey and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve.



*RM=Reiki Master

Dr. Monique Sims, City of Berkeley WIC Program

Dr. Monique Sims has been the Director of the City of Berkeley WIC Program since August 2021. Her career has included various WIC management positions in Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano Counties. She has also worked for WIC as a dietitian, Regional Breastfeeding Liaison, and Breastfeeding Coordinator. Her WIC program experience spans 23 years. "I absolutely love the WIC program!" she says.

Dr. Sims earned a BS in Nutrition & Clinical Dietetics, MPH in Public Health Nutrition and DrPH from UC Berkeley. Her dissertation entitled "Engaging the Faith Community

to Improve African American Breastfeeding Rates" led her to develop the nonprofit A More Excellent Way Health Improvement Organization (MEW). The organization has been conducting breastfeeding peer counselor trainings, community perinatal programs involving churches, mentor-



ing diverse IBCLCs, and hosting breastfeeding classes and support groups for over 18 years. This year, Dr. Sims received the Golden Nugget Award at the 2023 California Breastfeeding Summit.

Since becoming Director of the City of Berkeley WIC Program, she has expanded services to include Books for Kids, a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) Program, and a monthly diaper drive distributing over 120 diapers and wipes per month. Their caseload has increased as they streamlined procedures and have a more efficient delivery of services to the community. Dr. Sim's goal for this year is "to fully implement the BFPC program and to form more bridges with our community partners to link our clients to housing and other critical safety net services".

Dr. Sim's hobbies include line dancing, swimming and hanging out with family and friends!

New Director

CHELSEA MANNING Clinica Sierra Vista WIC

Chelsea Manning is the new director of Clinica Sierra Vista WIC (CSV), having taken over when former director Tina Canales became the new state career coordinator! Chelsea feels that as a full-time single mom she would not be where she is today without WIC and CSV. She graduated in 2010, and started at CSV in 2013 as a degreed nutritionist for a time before completing her dietetic internship at CSV and becoming an RD and supervisor. She then worked in the role of assistant director for eight years before becoming the director. Chelsea is appreciative of the opportunities she has been given at CSV and wishes that she'd known all that WIC teaches before becoming a mom. In addition to her many duties at WIC, Chelsea completed an MBA in 2020 and is also a culinary school-educated chef and wine expert!



New Directors

JULIET BARWIS El Dorado County

I was born in Nevada and moved to El Dorado County to work in adolescent mental health after graduating from the University of Nevada, Reno. I have been in my position as the El Dorado County WIC Director since the end of September 2022, nearly five years into my service with the County. My professional journey working in various programs across the Health and Human Services Agency helped me realize my heart

is in Public Health. I am passionate about maternal health, breastfeeding, supporting families, and helping to create systems that promote health equity.

When the opportunity arose, I was honored to come on as WIC Director and join such a strong team of dedicated WIC staff. Our WIC agency is small, but our impact is not! I am excited to see our program develop new opportunities to meet

the needs of our participants in a unique and rural county. We are currently focusing on effective outreach and engaging as many eligible participants as possible, promoting the flexibilities we have in service delivery.

When I am not at work, I enjoy adventures in the outdoors with my husband and two daughters, consuming a questionable amount of coffee, and taking short trips back to Nevada just for the landscape and nostalgia.



ANNIE DUNN Humboldt County

Annie has worked for Humboldt County Public Health Department for over 10 years and officially started her role as WIC Director in July. She completed her bachelor's degree in applied nutrition (didactic program) through Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Wanting to learn more about how other cultures achieve health, following graduation Annie worked in a variety of jobs that allowed her the flexibility to see more of the world and study different health systems. Annie was ultimately drawn back to community nutrition, accepting a job as a WIC nutrition aide (WNA) with Humboldt County WIC. While at WIC, she completed her Certified Lactation Educator certificate, served as one of the agency local vendor liaisons and received the degreed nutritionist status.

She then was promoted to a Health Education Specialist within the Healthy Communities Division of Public Health working with the Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention program. As part of this program, she regularly presented in schools, senior centers, and to several different recovery groups. She also partnered with the local food bank to regularly conduct healthy cooking demonstrations throughout the county, facilitated the Community Nutrition Action Partners meetings, and helped plan a variety of local health fairs.

Annie then returned to WIC as the Program Coordinator where she served as the supervisor for the Humboldt County WIC clinics. During this time, she worked closely with the WIC Director to prepare for the roll out of the new WICWISE system and worked to continuously adjust services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the past year and a half, with the previous WIC director on extended leave, she assumed the duties of the WIC director. In May 2023, Annie officially took on the "interim" director role and accepted the permanent position in July 2023.

Her goal for this next year is to work with WIC staff to adjust services in alignment with the new American Rescue Plan Waiver and to create an environment at each of the WIC clinics that feels warm and welcoming to WIC participants. In her free time, Annie loves to practice and teach yoga, dive deep into a variety of arts and crafts, travel, and spend time out in nature with her husband and their dog Roxy.



New Directors

THOMAS BRAND Kings County



Thomas Brand has been the WIC Director for the Kings County Department of Public Health since August 2022. He obtained a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and Food Administration in 2008 from Fresno State University and joined the WIC family in 2009 as a Degreed Nutritionist for United Health Centers.

He was admitted into the Central Valley WIC Dietetic Internship in 2011. It is there that he discovered his absolute disdain for clinical work. His love of community nutrition, however, was only reinforced, and he quickly rejoined the WIC family soon after completing the internship.

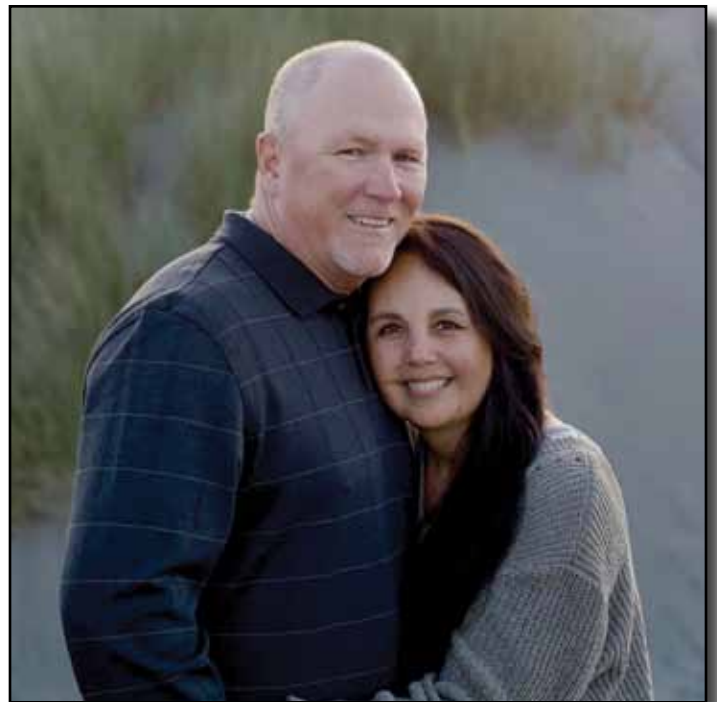
After working 10 years at United Health Centers he moved on to join Kings County as a Senior Dietitian, where he was quickly promoted to Director. A firm believer in the power of WIC, he remains dedicated to promoting the benefits of the program and its role in preventative healthcare for the communities of the Central Valley.

His pastimes include art, history, woodworking, and blacksmithing. Ever the tinkerer, he has convinced himself that he can fix anything, regardless of having more spare parts remaining than he started with. "I can fix it! Probably. I don't warranty my work."

WENDY JOYNER United Indian Health Services

Hello. I am the new WIC Director for United Indian Health Services in Arcata, California. I have been with WIC for a little over 8 years. I started as an Admin and quickly moved into a WNA position. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice with a minor in Sociology. Soon after that we decided to have a family, so I changed my mind about a career. I then worked at Costco for 17 years and decided I needed to do something different which led me to WIC. I feel I made the best decision for myself and my family, and I get to work with our local tribes. I am from the Sierra Miwok tribe and grew up on the Tuolumne Indian Reservation. I am certified as an Indigenous Breastfeeding Counselor as well. I love working at WIC and am excited for my new adventure.

In my free time I love to spend time with my family. We like camping, fishing, and love traveling to our family home in Alaska. I coach volleyball at a local high school. My husband and I were blessed with two wonderful kids. Both of our kids are in college thriving. Our daughter, Sierra, is working on her second masters, and our son, Bode, is 2 classes away from his AA in fire science and plays baseball at Napa Valley College. I have been with my husband for 31 years. We have 2 dogs which I adore. Diesel, an English bulldog, and Tuke, our French bulldog, keep us empty nesters busy and on our toes.



New Directors

LAURA FLORES, Ventura County

I've worked for the WIC Program within the Ventura County Public Health Department for almost 20 years. I started as a Public Health Nutritionist, then worked as the Nutrition Education Coordinator, Training Coordinator and Breastfeeding Coordinator for 12 years and have now been the Director since 2020. I really enjoy being a part of the Public Health Team and the collaboration and camaraderie that comes along with it. I feel so fortunate that I was able to take on the WIC Director position at this time in my career and I think we are all so lucky to do what we do in WIC. It is an honor to serve our community and know that we are improving health outcomes for so many children. Our WIC team is full of committed, compassionate, intelligent, and talented individuals which makes my job here that much more rewarding.

I received my BS in Nutrition from Cal Poly SLO in 1998. While I enjoyed studying nutrition I wasn't excited about a career as an RD at the time. I finished a study abroad, completed the Certified Lactation Counselor course, got married and I felt like the RD track wasn't for me. I was considering going back to school to pursue a related degree when I moved back to my home county, Monterey. Coincidentally, I had a friend working already as a RD at Monterey County WIC, Niaomi Hrepich. She convinced me to give it a try, and I learned it was a great fit for me. I got to improve my Spanish-speaking skills, continue to work in lactation and talk to moms for the benefit of children's health; I couldn't believe that I hadn't known before about WIC. Because of this experience I serve as a preceptor for Dietetic Interns every year to ensure they experience WIC. My husband Alex and I moved to Ventura



County in 2003 and I was fortunate that Ventura County WIC was hiring at the time. They hired me even though I was pregnant and still needed to take the RD exam!! During the next year I became a mother to Elijah, became an RD, and the adventure has never stopped. Elijah is now 19 and my daughter Emma is 16 and other than my husband they are my favorite people in the world.

Katie Rowe was the previous WIC Director in Ventura County and a great mentor to me. With Katie I learned to make program planning fun! We remain good friends today and I am thankful that she was available to me for questions during the first couple of years in my new Director position. We were 3 months into the WIC WISE rollout and 2 months into the COVID pandemic when I stepped into this role, so there was a real need to call her, or as we joked, to call the WIC Director Hotline.

This year, as we are moving past some topics that have been looming for some time, the return of Separations of Duties, federal waivers, etc, I am mostly looking forward to this new norm that is emerging. I am excited to no longer feel "stalled," to finally settle plans for how we deliver services and continue to find ways to work more efficiently than ever. It feels safe now to take a step back and look at the big picture and ask "What more can we do?" and "How can we combine forces with other programs to do better?" I'm on track to complete my master's degree in nutrition, in 2024, which is really satisfying. In the next year I plan to continue to advocate for the local use of donor milk and expand our farmers' market nutrition program to increase access to local fruits and vegetables for the families we serve.

Goodbye, Rosalie

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of our beloved colleague, Rosalie Ramirez, who has been an integral part of our Alameda County WIC family for an impressive 14 years. Rosalie had decided to embark on a new journey by accepting a position with another company, and while we will miss her dearly, we are truly happy for her in this new endeavor.

Throughout her tenure here, Rosalie exemplified the qualities of a dedicated and compassionate team member. Her unwavering commitment to providing exceptional customer service, informative nutrition education, and counseling touched the lives of countless families in our community. Her relentless pursuit of excellence in all she does will continue to

inspire us in our mission.

Not only did Rosalie positively impacted our clients, but she also fostered a harmonious work environment by getting along seamlessly with her coworkers. She was a pillar of support, always ready to lend a helping hand and offer guidance to her coworkers. Her ability to collaborate and engage as a stellar team player contributed to the unity and success of our team.

As a heartfelt gesture before her departure, Rosalie composed a poem that beautifully captures her profound connection to her work. Her words and positive impact will continue to resonate in our hearts and memories.



WIC is a program where participation is welcome.

Open to everyone who meets the income.

Many working families may qualify.

Even if income is high, with active meds you automatically qualify if not you will be disqualified.

Now that food prices are high, I encourage you to apply.

Ideal staff you'll meet.

Nice and welcoming will greet.

Family representatives are created.

Applicant/Individual ID is added.

Nurturing food you receive.

Tasty and healthy you achieve.

Specific goals you'll meet just follow our suggestions, tips, and believe.

Achievable assessment on guided script

Nutrition recommendation and goals you met or not met.

Documentation on nutrition education and your productivity is set.

Cert action is acquired.

Health and nutrition question is now required.

I will miss a call on benefits inquiry.

List of missed appointments and pump inventory

Daily schedule is all purple, everything is done

Reports at the end of the month will be none.

Environment is fun and friendly

Nutrition journey will always stay with me, I will miss you all, my WIC family.



Much Love, ❤️

Rosalie Ramirez

101RRAMIREZ

5/24/2023

UCB Dietetics Internship

The UC Berkeley School of Public Health is excited to announce our partnership with California WIC Association (CWA) as part of a new Dietetic Internship (DI), in coordination with the long-standing Master of Public Health (MPH). Students interested in working with WIC will be offered a 12-week immersive experience – with rotations at the California Department of Public Health WIC Division, CWA, National WIC Association, and local WIC agencies, including Native American Health Center, City of Berkeley, Marin County, Solano County, and Sonoma County. The Berkeley Public Health DI is currently under review by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Assuming the program is approved in Fall 2023, UC Berkeley will be offering two different dietetics programs.

- The Berkeley Public Health DI is intended to have a heavy emphasis in public health nutrition (outpatient dietetics, public policy, research, and food systems) and interns will be concurrently completing an [MPH in Public Health Nutrition](https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/academics/community-health-sciences/public-health-nutrition/) (https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/academics/community-health-sciences/public-health-nutrition/) at the School of Public Health. This program requires students to have completed a Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD). Email eesparza@berkeley.edu for more information.
- The [Master of Nutritional Sciences & Dietetics Graduate Program](https://nst.berkeley.edu/mnsd/about) (https://nst.berkeley.edu/mnsd/about) provides candidates professional dietetics training with a focus on clinical nutrition and the underlying biological basis of human health and disease, through advanced dietetic coursework, supervised internship practice, and an immersive research experience. This is a Future Educa-

tion Model Graduate Program that launched in 2022 and welcomes students from any academic background, as long as the required prerequisite courses have been completed. Email dietetics@berkeley.edu for more information.

For individuals interested in increasing their knowledge and impact in real-time, Berkeley Public Health offers an [online 27-month MPH program](https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/academics/online/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw3JanBhCPARIsAJpXTx4V5xfD0Vqs-s1kl2eo2eYcsuPx1RCcS_SxMG_DH8b5Tx_oBOyUdEwaAvPKEALw_wcB) (https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/academics/online/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw3JanBhCPARIsAJpXTx4V5xfD0Vqs-s1kl2eo2eYcsuPx1RCcS_SxMG_DH8b5Tx_oBOyUdEwaAvPKEALw_wcB) designed for working professionals across the world. You can learn more about

this program from their [feature in Study International](https://studyinternational.com/news/uc-berkeley-school-of-public-health-where-tomorrows-public-health-nutrition-leaders-are-made/) (https://studyinternational.com/news/uc-berkeley-school-of-public-health-where-tomorrows-public-health-nutrition-leaders-are-made/). Individuals who work or reside in a rural community are eligible for **fully paid scholarships** through the [Rural Health Innovation Program](https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/admissions/fees-and-financial-aid/rural-health/) (https://publichealth.berkeley.edu/admissions/fees-and-financial-aid/rural-health/). Email oomphadmit@berkeley.edu for more information.



Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



2023-2024 WIC Leadership Academy

*Please welcome our dedicated WIC cohort to the
2023-2024 WIC Leadership Academy!*

NAME AGENCY

Alaina Coffey PHFE WIC
Alejandra Rodriguez PHFE WIC
Ana Rivera Solano County WIC
Anna Cardenas PHFE WIC
Annie Dunn County of Humboldt WIC
Camisha Nettles Alameda County WIC
Cristian Mercado PHFE WIC
Cynthia S. Tovar Fresno EOC WIC Program
Elizabeth Polivka Butte County Public Health –
WIC Program
Elizabeth Oregel PHFE WIC
Jacqueline Razo PHFE WIC
Jade Knight City and County of Long Beach WIC
Jennifer Chiprich Lundquist Institute WIC
Jenny Carr County of Riverside – RUHS WIC
Johanna Escalante Northeast Valley Health
Corporation WIC
Joseno Vargan Lundquist Institute WIC
Juliet Barwis El Dorado County HHSA - WIC
Kaline Lecoq Plumas Rural Services WIC
Kim Schott E Center WIC
KongPeng Moua Community Medical Centers WIC
Latrice M. Reid American Red Cross WIC
Lauren Cameron PHFE WIC

NAME AGENCY

Leni G. Espiritu Orange County HCA WIC Program
Letisia Rosales Tehama County Health Services
Agency, WIC
Lorena Gutierrez Lundquist Institute WIC
Maria Isabel Rodriguez Northeast Valley Health Corporation-
WIC Program
Miranda Valenzuela American Red Cross WIC
Monica Mendoza Lundquist Institute WIC
Mylien Nguyen Orange County HCA WIC Program
Niccole Maldonado Fresno EOC WIC
Nicole Westbrook PHFE WIC
Pauline Perez PHFE WIC
Rosa Vasquez Planned Parenthood WIC
Roxanne Cameron Del Norte County WIC
Sandra Salazar Inyo County WIC
Sandy Lemus Lundquist Institute WIC
Siham Hami American Red Cross WIC
Stephanie Kuo City and County of Long Beach WIC
Trudy N. Adams United Indian Health Services WIC
Veronica Villalba Lundquist Institute WIC
Wendy Cervantes Butte County WIC
Yessenia Garcia Lundquist Institute WIC
Yvette Muniz Silva Stanislaus County Health Services
Agency WIC Program



California Advocates Recognized by USBC

The United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) held its annual National Breastfeeding Conference and Convening in Bethesda, Maryland in June and three individuals from California were recognized for their efforts. The California Breastfeeding Coalition founding Executive Director, Robbie Gonzalez-Dow, received the organization's Legacy Award; Southern California IBCLC Ashley Sayers received the Native Knowledge Award; and Sonoma County Perinatal Services Coordinator Lucy Tyrala received the Emerging Leader Award.

Robbie Gonzalez-Dow, Legacy Award

The Legacy award honors extraordinary commitment, dedication, and leadership in the field of breastfeeding. Robbie Gonzalez-Dow, the Founding Executive Director of the California Breastfeeding



Coalition, received this well-deserved acknowledgment for 25 years spent spearheading collabor-

ative efforts in California to strengthen lactation rights and support the protection of those rights. Robbie has started local coalitions, served as a Regional Breastfeeding Liaison, and helped bring lactation education and support to parts of California with the lowest breastfeeding rates. Through California's Lactation Action Network, she has created opportunities for advocates throughout the state to develop their own relationships with elected officials and work to protect, promote, and support lactation in their own communities.

Although Robbie has stepped down from the Executive Director position at the California Breastfeeding Coalition, she

is busy supporting CDPH/WIC with the rollout of the new USDA Breastfeeding Curriculum. She is training the trainers, updating the curriculum and organizing the pilot training.

In her introduction, former Executive Director Pauline Sakamoto, USBC Board member and Executive Director of the Mothers Milk Bank in San Jose, stated that everything California is known for within the First Food Field has a direct line to Robbie's work. Many of us have enjoyed her friendship and experienced her commitment to lactation advocacy and leadership in WIC, CWA, and as Executive Director of the California Breastfeeding Coalition. Robbie's leadership has been a motivating, uplifting force towards progress.

Ashley Sayers, Native Knowledge Award

Ashley recently moved to Southern California from Washington where she was Chair of the Kitsap County Breastfeeding Coalition and worked to reduce disparities in the lactation workforce. She created a program to produce 10 new breastfeeding specialists from marginalized individuals for the Kitsap community. Ashley is Turtle Clan, Ojibwe. In addition to being a mother of six and a full-time student, Ashley currently provides lactation services in person and via Telehealth.

Ashley is the founder of the Na-



tive Breastfeeding Coalition of California. The goal of this coalition, currently in its infancy, is to work collaboratively as an umbrella organization to share resources with the native community. In California, there are over 110 tribes with varying levels of resources. Ashley has been contacted by WIC employees interested in being involved in the coalition and is looking forward to collaborating with WIC staff.

Lucy Tyrala, Emerging Leader Award

The new perinatal services coordinator for Sonoma County Public Health, Lucy Tyrala, was recognized for her community work to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding. She has worked in the hospital in labor and delivery, postpartum as a Public Health Nurse with Nurse Family Partnership, and has provided breastfeeding assistance in the management of barriers to successful breast/chest feeding.

The changes Lucy would like to see in Sonoma County include assessing the impact of perinatal education on lactation initiation and duration and documenting parents' lived experiences. She also plans to educate providers on the harm caused to families by rigid sleep recommendations. "Safe co-sleeping can and does occur with an exclusively breastfed infant" she stated. "... I want to bring more attention to the structural inequities in place that are the actual culprit of increase in SIDS risk, including not promoting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding equitably as the norm — the default — to our most marginalized, pregnant birthing people."



New California Breastfeeding Leader Proud of WIC Roots

In July, the California Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC) appointed Jasmine Pettis Marquez to the role of executive director. Marquez has worked with the coalition since 2020. She's also had a longtime relationship with WIC. She interned with the California WIC Association while attending Sacramento State, and was hired on after graduation in 2010. She left CWA to pursue a master's in public health at San Jose State, where she found herself in a WIC nutrition assistant role with the Tiburcio Vasquez WIC clinic in Union City.

"Raised by a single mom in the Bay Area, I knew the benefits of WIC, Section 8, and SNAP," she recalls. "Giving back to the program that put much-needed food on our table felt right. As an intern, I learned WIC was more than just milk, eggs and peanut butter. I learned how lactation and breastfeeding affected the overall health and wellbeing of families — especially moms and babies."

That experience is what led her to pursue a career in lactation and to become an Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) in 2016. Richmond WIC was among the many locations that provided her with intern hours and gave Marquez the vast experience she has in helping families with lac-

tation and breastfeeding.

"I would not be an IBCLC or the public health advocate I am today without the guidance and support of Karen Farley over the past 14 years," she said.

In her role as executive director, Marquez is the general manager and chief executive officer of the coalition. She oversees CBC staff in fulfillment of the coalition's mission to protect, promote and support breast, chest and human milk feeding in the state of California.

Committed to addressing the systemic barriers that hinder lactation success, Marquez is resolute in her pursuit of dismantling racist systems and structures that perpetuate inequities in breastfeeding support. She believes all families should have access to informed infant-feeding choices and the necessary resources to achieve the breastfeeding experience they desire.

"California has some of the strongest



lactation policies and practices in the nation, but we still see a huge gap in the number of families whose breastfeeding experiences do not align with their desires. These families don't need to try harder. We need to work harder to support them," Marquez said. "Wouldn't it be great if we could extend the evidence-based practices WIC has implemented throughout the state and beyond the WIC program?"

Marquez lives in Vacaville with her husband, Michael, and their children, Margot, 5, and Malcolm, 2. To reach her, email jasmine@california-breastfeeding.org.



CALIFORNIA BREASTFEEDING COALITION

Antelope Valley Breastfeeding Support Group

Earlier this year, the Antelope Valley Medical Center and WIC Program hosted its first Black Breastfeeding Support Group. In honor of Mother's Day, families were invited to celebrate their breastfeeding successes over refreshments. Newly breastfeeding families received information in support of their lactation journey. Community partners were also present to provide additional resources in the Antelope Valley. Those in attendance received donated baby items such as highchairs, pack-and-plays and diapers. WIC also provided gift cards that were raffled to families in attendance.



Black Breastfeeding Support Group

Please join us monthly for our Black Breastfeeding Support Group, hosted by Antelope Valley Medical Center. Mom, baby, and support person welcome!

When: Every 2nd Tuesday of the month 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM	Where: Community Resource Center (next to City of Hope) 44151 15th Street West Lancaster, CA
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Registration is not required. For more information or questions, please contact Lauren at 661-726-6210 or lauren.snyder@avmc.org.

 **Antelope Valley Medical Center**

Rev. 07/23

Delta Health Care Breastfeeding Celebration



Every year Delta Health Care celebrates and recognizes our breastfeeding community in San Joaquin County. Our 12th Annual Breastfeeding Celebration was held on Saturday, August 5, 2023. We had over 400 people who attended. The event included a human milk drive coordinated by the Mother's Milk Bank, free community resources and services, story time with the Stockton Library Bookmobile, along with fun activities and free raffle prizes and giveaways for all. It was a family friendly community event reaching out to prenatal moms and expectant families, while celebrating current and future breastfeeding moms!



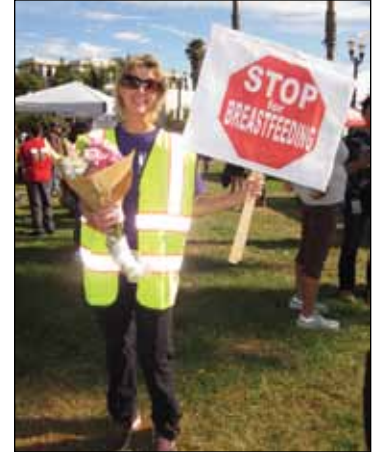
National Breastfeeding Month 2023



Alameda County WIC



Community Bridges WIC



Butte County WIC

TrueCare Awarded IBCLC Care Award

TTrueCare Health Center and WIC Program are proud to have received the IBCLC Care Award from ILCA® and IBLCE® for excellence in lactation support. This award recognizes hospitals and community-based agencies for staffing and utilizing currently certified IBCLCs. TrueCare provides full-time dedicated lactation support for their patients in Women's Health, Pediatrics and the WIC Program.

TrueCare was awarded this accolade for their project entitled, "Breastfeeding Friendly Health Center Staff Education." 'Staff Education' is Step 2 in the "9 Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly." For this project, a series of Learning Management System (LMS) training modules were developed by WIC IBCLCs to teach health center staff various aspects of breastfeeding and baby behavior principles. Topics include: 1) an overview of the 9 Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly and highlighting our Lactation Accommodation Policy, which is required training annually for existing staff and new staff during onboarding, regardless of their position; 2) Why Breastfeeding Matters; 3) How Breastfeeding Works; 4) Learning to Breastfeed: Understanding Baby Behavior; 5) Breastfeeding and Returning to Work or School; 6) Clinical Management of the Breastfed Infant (for providers only).

The outcomes of the project have been positive, with staff feeling more confident and willing to promote breastfeeding and human milk as the standard for infant feeding. This has resulted in a more breastfeeding-friendly atmosphere with staff eagerly referring breastfeeding mothers and babies to our IBCLCs for assessment, support, and education.



Fresno EOC Wins IBCLC Care Award

Fresno EOC received the Community-Based IBCLC award for their commitment to providing professional lactation support as an integral part of maternal-child services. During the pandemic, all their WIC sites were closed, the majority of staff were working from home, and appointments were being conducted over the phone. When they were no longer able

to provide the hands-on breastfeeding support that families needed, "Weigh-In Wednesdays" became their solution. "Weigh-In Wednesdays" provided Fresno EOC WIC



moms an opportunity for in-person help. They had one IBCLC, one Spanish speaking Certified Lactation Consultant, and a support staff in a centrally located site. Mothers could come in for breastfeeding help from an IBCLC. Staff also loaned electric breast pumps and performed weight checks. During the 6 months of this project, from April to September 2021, they were able to help over 50 families.

In Oct 2021, staff were back on-site with a hybrid schedule and all WIC offices were open. Now, there are breastfeeding specialist staff available at each site and moms can pop in for latch support and weights.



Every August, there is a breastfeeding topic/speaker at the monthly in-service. In 2021, Laurel Wilson, via Zoom, educated staff on Mind What You Say - Using Mindfulness and three communications strategies. Throughout 2022, all staff were trained on the USDA Breastfeeding Platform Level One. To update staff on current evidence-based breastfeeding information, since time is always a concern, they had to be creative. "Tuesday Tips" are prepared by an IBCLC and sent to all staff. These Tuesday Tips provide a valuable opportunity to share topics from dysphoric milk ejection reflex to the Lancet's recent publications highlighting the continuing struggles mothers face meeting their breastfeeding goals.

San Diego WIC Agencies Celebrate Black Breastfeeding Week with Drive-thru Event

San Diego WIC agencies partnered with Black Infant Health and Global Communities Healthy Start to host their 8th annual event. Black Breastfeeding Week was created to call attention to the racial disparities in breastfeeding rates, and to celebrate Black families who choose to breastfeed. Attendees received a goody bag filled with items that will support them on their breastfeeding journey. Attendees were also able to connect with valuable resources at this event.

Here's what some of the attendees said about the event:

"It was way more awesome than I expected, a lot of good resources and a lot of goodies."



"Thank you so much for the support!"



"It was a great event! I didn't expect it to be that wonderful and really smooth."



SEE A VIDEO FROM THE EVENT HERE:

<https://youtu.be/pR87D3FMYWw?si=TwIQzP--gsuVdeEP>

Breastfeeding Celebration WIC Picnic 2023

Breastfeeding Celebration came early this year for CRP WIC!

In Sacramento, Community Resource Project WIC held their 23rd annual Breastfeeding Celebration in early July to beat the heat and the fire season that caused last year's Celebration to be postponed.



This year's theme was "WIC Picnic" and the Breastfeeding Celebration consisted of a Latch On event, free food and resources,

guided yoga, free produce distribution, kid's garden crafts, bilingual story time, and more! The Celebration took place at McClatchy Park in Sacramento where families could gather in the shade and children could play on multiple play structures and a splash pad.

The "WIC Picnic" amassed over 150 attendees with 15 community partner exhibitors, 8 WIC education and resource tables, and several other free enrichment activities. Thanks to our sponsors, kids could plant basil, learn how to care for their herb garden (in a yard or window sill), learn how to use their new plant in meal preparations, and finally decorate their new garden pot.

Families gathered for guided yoga and then stayed to join the Latch On

event. Attendees latched their babies and toddlers while Peer Counselor, Tatiana Diaz-Valdes, read a children's story all about breastfeeding/lactation in both English and Spanish. Staff also passed out snacks and drinks to the Latch On participants in order to encourage them to stay and mingle with other attendees who were latching their babies.

Along with these activities, community partners also brought their own enrichment. CHP set up a booth to discuss car seat safety. The county Public Health Department set up a free vaccine clinic so that folks could receive their booster shot. The Public Library set up a toddler play area, and many other partners brought their own unique contributions. One of the favorite give-away items, among both staff and attendees, was a reusable, packable picnic blanket. Attendees also appreciated the many giveaway items, from both CRP WIC and other community partners, that filled

their goodie bags.

After sending out an attendee survey, the preliminary results conclude that 89% of respondents said that their breastfeeding experience was enhanced by this event and 100% of pregnant respondents said that they are more likely to breastfeed after attending this event. Community Resource Project WIC hopes to continue this new way of hosting their Breastfeeding Celebration in the park with plenty of resources and activities. It was a great way for families and caregivers to celebrate their accomplishments, mingle, and receive free community resources.



Gardner Family Health Network WIC Celebrates National Breastfeeding Month

During the month of August 2023, The Gardner Health Services' WIC program organized a few activities in celebration of National Breastfeeding Month and World Breastfeeding Week.

We celebrated with two events in San Jose where we distributed useful breastfeeding handouts, supplies, coloring pages, and showcased our breastfeeding participants' and their babies' photos. We invited our participants to share their breastfeeding stories with WIC and featured these stories on Gardner's social media in the month of August.

Most importantly, we participated in the WBW2023 Pledge to inform people about working parents' perspectives on breastfeeding and parenting. We set up to collect breastfeeding and working parents' stories in order to offer a channel for them to share their voices and express their needs while juggling breastfeeding their babies and employment. In this mission, our hope is to know more about the life of working parents and the barriers they may be facing, and to coordinate with healthcare providers, human resources, and community partners to create steps and policies to make breastfeeding and working successful.



A Participant's Story

Our participant, Claudia, shared her breastfeeding story:

"As early as I can remember, I saw so many parents breastfeed their children. I knew that when it was my turn to have children, I would strive to provide such nutrients and benefits to my children. Little did I know, it would not come easy.

When my son's weight became a concern, I was devastated and blamed myself and my body for not being able to "properly" produce for my son. My sisters would visit me frequently and spend hours helping me and my son with latching and researching methods because they knew how important it was to me. The challenge truly impacted my emotional well-being. Luckily, right when I felt like giving up, Uyen, at Gardner WIC, became our lactation consultant. Since then, I have felt it was possible to provide breast milk for my son.

During our visits to WIC, we worked with our lactation consultant to create a long-term plan by exploring different options. I was provided with a breast pump, along with useful breastfeeding tips, breast milk facts, reassurance, and so much more. I gained confidence in my own body and my milk production.

I am now three months postpartum and proud of myself for being able to provide for my son as an exclusive pumper. I have learned whether you are feeding your children at breast or pumping, you are indeed breastfeeding your children. As a new mother, I will never forget the help my family, Uyen, and the Gardner WIC program provided for me, especially during the early and challenging part of my postpartum journey. Finally, a round of applause to ALL mothers because we are doing the best we can to provide for our babies."

Making a Difference for Working Parents

Our participants answered some of the questions we posed regarding breastfeeding and employment. As working parents, most shared they needed space, time, opportunity and household support to combine breastfeeding and work. As partners, and family members, offering mental support and help at home allows the breastfeeding parent to relax and focus on their baby and building their milk production. Our Gardner's WIC program will continue to collect and share our breastfeeding and working parents' perspectives.

Uyen Tran, MBA, CLC, IBCLC, CMI is a lactation consultant at the Gardner Health Services' WIC Program. She can be reached at uyentran@gfhn.org.



Innercare WBW 2023 Highlights

On August 4th, Innercare WIC celebrated World Breastfeeding Week by hosting a resource fair at the local mall. (Our summer temps reach 120 degrees, so an indoor venue was a must!) The event featured a multitude of community partners with tables of information, many WIC tables showcasing the robust aspects of the WIC program (including information on the WIC program, Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, WIC Pumps, Regional Breastfeeding Liaison, and Local Vendor Liaison) and a chance to chat with the Managers and Director.

In addition to the tables, we had a wonderful presentation on the importance of breastfeeding by local OB/GYN Dr. Allan Wu and an unveiling of the newly redesigned mall lactation room which was sponsored by our parent agency, Innercare!



World Breastfeeding Week & National Breastfeeding Month at Long Beach

To celebrate the annual breastfeeding recognition of our WIC participants during the month of August, the City of Long Beach WIC Program hosted our first in person celebration since the pandemic era. The event was held at our Health Department WIC location. There were 52 WIC families in attendance. We invited some of our Health Department Programs to attend and host a table including Medical outreach, Black Infant Health and our Long Beach Public Library. The event included multiple opportunity drawings, and tables with our Peer Counselors offering information on returning to work, pumping and other breastfeeding topics. There was a live story time presented by our local librarian and photo booth opportunities. Each mom that came through received a sticker celebrating the number of months she has been breastfeeding. One of the WIC tables also featured the distribution of Farmers' Market checks for families who have not received the benefit yet. The families who attended had great feedback and enjoyed the event. Each of our breastfeeding moms were very grateful and enjoyed being appreciated and recognized for their breastfeeding efforts!



National Breastfeeding Month 2023



Glenn County WIC



August 16th, 2023

BREASTFEEDING WALK REPORT

WIC STAFF DID IT AGAIN!



Group photo in Salinas

In August of this year, a wonderful team of multiple WIC staff from Monterey County got out on a Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Health Fair as part of the World Breastfeeding Week celebration. The goal: promote breastfeeding in the community by organizing two events, one in Salinas and one in Seaside.

This year's theme of World Breastfeeding Week was "Teaching Breastfeeding. Making a difference for working parents," which was reflected throughout both events as members of the community had a chance to learn about topics related to breastfeeding and going back to work.

Multiple vendors were invited to the event to share health-related resources available in Monterey County: Bright Beginnings, Behavioral Health, CA Highway Patrol, CalFresh Healthy Living (CHLH), Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey, CCHS, Central Coast Pediatric Dental Group, CHOP, Childhood Lead Poisoning, Central Coast Energy Services, Child Support Services, Community Health Partnership, H&AP, MCHL, Monterey County Health Department, Mother's Milk Bank, Nativedad Hospital, Nurse Family Partnership, Parenting Connections, Special Kids Connect, and Ventura Wildlife Society.

REPORT FROM BOTH EVENTS

The first event took place in Salinas on Tuesday, August 1st. This was the 10th Breastfeeding Walk ever held. The event occurred in the parking lot of the local WIC clinic on the same day as the Farmer's Market. It started at 11 am and ended at 1 pm. The turnout was great, more than 200 people came to learn about the services and 270 people participated in the walk around the block in celebration of the breastfeeding week.

The second event took place in Seaside on Thursday, August 3rd. It was held at the Community Center. This was the 3rd walk for Seaside and even though the turnout was much smaller (20 participants) than in Salinas, it allowed time for the agencies to network.

Upon arrival to both events, the participants received teal T-shirts with a breastfeeding logo. The staff wore navy blue T-shirts. All participants signed release forms allowing them to have their picture taken. After the participants were given water to drink, they were given a chance to take photos of WIC's Photo Booth and take a break to breastfeed their babies at the Lactation Booth. The walk itself started at noon and ended with participants receiving coffee prizes.

Big thank you to all agencies and WIC staff that got involved in the event. You are all Breastfeeding Champions and make the world a better place one event at a time!

Thank You!

Sylvia Klos, MAS, RD



Photos: Walk in Salinas

Monterey County WIC



Lundquist WIC



Tiburcio Vasquez WIC



National Breastfeeding Month 2023

This year has been very exciting for our San Ysidro Health Agency since it is the first year after the pandemic that we have held an in-person event. Both the staff and the participants were encouraged to attend, and the response was very positive.

To honor this year's theme "Enabling breastfeeding: making a difference for working parents", we chose to have an education segment where we discussed the laws that protect breastfeeding parents in their workplace and/or school. We also talked about our breast pump loaner program and showed them how to assemble and use a couple of the different options we have available. After the class was over, we prepared 3 simple recipes that contained WIC authorized foods and everyone in attendance left very happy with their samples.



San Ysidro Health Agency WIC



Coun



Solano County WIC

We had about 50 families join us in our celebration and Donor Milk Drive August 17.

Merced County Breastfeeding Graduation and Family Resource Fair

The Merced Breastfeeding Network, with the support of the MCCA WIC Program, First 5 of Merced County, The Merced County Department of Public Health, and Valley Onward, celebrated National Breastfeeding Month with a Breastfeeding Graduation and Family Resource Fair. This event celebrated and honored mothers in Merced County that exclusively breastfed their babies for the first 6 months of their baby's life. These "graduates" received gifts, raffle prizes, and certificates of accomplishment from The Merced Breastfeeding Network, Senator Anna Caballero's office, and Assemblywoman Esmeralda Soria's office.

In addition to celebrating breastfeeding families, this event was open to all families in Merced County and provided a space for our community to come together to learn about breastfeeding, play games, have fun, and learn about the many community resources available to them. There were so many families in attendance that helped make this event a great time. We are grateful for our 30 community organizations that were in attendance to discuss all of the wonderful

resources they provide to pregnant/postpartum families and families with children under the ages of 5. We also thank the offices of Senator Anna Caballero and Assemblywoman Esmeralda Soria for their continued support of breastfeeding in Merced County. Most importantly, we are so proud of all of the incredible breastfeeding families in our community that have chosen to provide their babies with the optimal source of nutrition in their early months of life. The goal of this event is to encourage and

celebrate breastfeeding families, raise awareness of the importance of breastfeeding, and highlight all of the different support services available to families in Merced County. We had a great time celebrating National Breastfeeding Month and we are excited for next year's celebrations!



Merced County Celebrates National Breastfeeding Month with a Photoshoot

When a local photographer reached out to the Merced County WIC Program's Regional Breastfeeding Liaison with an idea to host free photoshoots of breastfeeding mothers, we knew this would be a great way to celebrate, promote, and advocate for breastfeeding families in our county.

In collaboration with our WIC Program, the Merced County Breastfeeding Café Support Group, and a few incredible local photographers, mothers in the County were asked if they would like to be a part of a breastfeeding group photoshoot. The goal of this photoshoot was to celebrate these breastfeeding champions and provide them with free photos (courtesy of the amazing photographers). Additionally, with the consent of the mothers, these photos will be used for updated marketing material and breastfeeding education material for our WIC program.

The mothers had a great time during this photoshoot and the results were even better than we could have asked for. We are excited to have these new photos to show off all of the incredible breastfeeding champions in Merced County.

It is collaborations like this one that make us so proud to be a part of such an incredible community that supports breastfeeding families. We are grateful for local photographer, Sierra Dias, for spearheading this idea and taking such



beautiful photos of our Merced County mothers and appreciate all of the mothers that participated in this project. We hope to continue collaborating with local photographers to capture more beautiful moments like these.

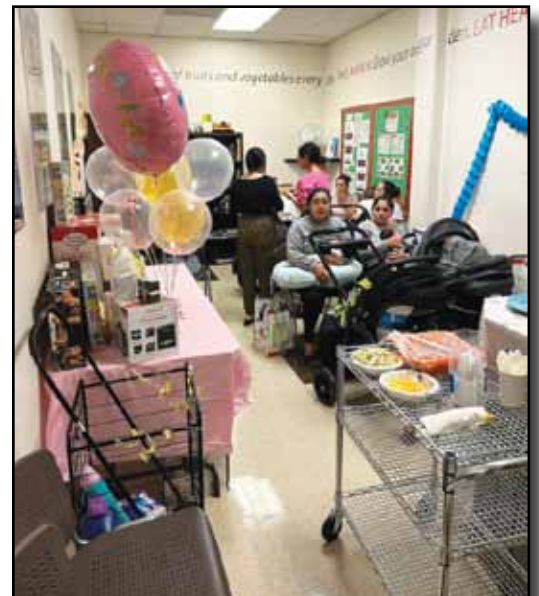


Planned Parenthood WIC's Breastfeeding & Paint Event

The theme for Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties (PPOSBC) WIC this year varied from site to site but with the intent to bring in our breastfeeding moms. At our Stanton site they celebrated with "Breastfeeding & Paint." The families enjoyed a fun, relaxing and informative time. Canvases were pre-drawn with breastfeeding images, and messages, and guests only had to fill the drawings in with paint. As families painted, our IBCLC led a discussion about what piece of information each mom would share with new moms and also debunked breastfeeding misconceptions.

At our Costa Mesa site, we had a rainbow theme this year with each arc representing a benefit of breastfeeding for both mom and babies. We made a rainbow salad as a demo and had samples of our lactation smoothie. Our Community Education Manager, from our sister company Planned Parenthood, had a presentation on self-care. We facilitated a FAQ session on breastfeeding issues and participants shared tips/stories. Our celebration was bilingual and we were happy to hear families sharing stories and interpreting for one another. It was our first live event in several years and we were happy with the turnout. Our families were happy to join us in person.

Lastly, our theme at Santa Ana WIC was "Baby Shower" with a color scheme of pastel blue, pink and yellow. We handed out goodie bags, raffled off big items, and held a live food demo of overnight oats. We had a great turnout including a dad who participated in a discussion about breastfeeding. It was great to have our breastfeeding peer counselors host this event in preparation for our peer counselor program launching in September!



TrueCare WIC Launches New Virtual Breastfeeding Support Group

After months of preparation, TrueCare WIC launched its new Virtual Breastfeeding Support Group in July 2023! English and Spanish groups are offered once a month in each language through ZoomforGov.com. Prenatal and breastfeeding participants are invited by staff during their WIC appointment, as well as via TeleTask. The Virtual Breastfeeding Support Group is also promoted by staff in TrueCare Health Center's Women's Health and Pediatrics departments, and by the local birthing hospital.

Each month, the Support Group includes introducing TrueCare WIC's lactation staff (IBCLCs and PCs), presenting a brief teaching on a breastfeeding topic (e.g., Benefits, Breastmilk vs Formula, etc.), followed by an open discussion and Q&A. The group is facilitated by an IBCLC, while a PC gives input and monitors the Zoom chat.

TrueCare WIC is excited to provide this opportunity for our prenatal and breastfeeding moms to meet together, support each other, and have their questions answered. Having this support group enhances the services we already provide and is another way we take care of our participants and their families.

TrueCare WIC would like to thank Byanka Melgar of NEVHC WIC for her time and expertise in helping us with the many details involved in getting our support group started.



Join us!

WIC Virtual Breastfeeding Support Group

Your Breastfeeding Questions Answered

While breastfeeding is natural, it's a learned skill. We are here to help. **Pregnant and Breastfeeding women are welcome.**

English: 3rd Wednesday of the Month
Join ZoomGov Meeting:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1612648352>

Spanish: 1st Thursday of the Month
Join ZoomGov Meeting:
<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1613080665>

1:00PM - 2:00PM



TrueCare's 3rd Annual Breast Milk Drive and Health Fair with UC Health Milk Bank

T rueCare's annual family-friendly health fair and breast milk drive took place August 12th from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM, with over 450 people in attendance. Four breastfeeding mothers donated 2,343 ounces of breastmilk, equaling 18.3 gallons, which will help UC Health Milk Bank provide life-saving nourishment to preemies and fragile babies!

The San Diego Blood Bank was also onsite collecting much-needed blood donations. In total, 27 donors contributed 25 units of blood. Each donation can help three lives—that's up to 75 people in need!

Activities for the kids included playing games, spinning wheels for prizes, face painting, making crafts, and collecting free goodies at the booths. Families also received bags of food and diapers. In addition to giveaways and activities, attendees received health information and screenings from various TrueCare departments such as WIC, Pediatrics, Women's Health, Dental, and Behavioral

Health. TrueCare's community partners, like Home Depot, Empowering Latino Futures, Palomar Health, Cal State San Marcos, Southern Caregiver Resource Center, and San Diego County's Migrant Education Program were also there to provide additional information and resources to families.

Representatives from the offices of County Supervisor Jim Desmond, San Marcos Mayor Ed Musgrove, and State Senator Brian Jones were in attendance, demonstrating their support for the TrueCare community and the importance of donor human milk and the UC



Health Milk Bank. The event was featured on KPBS news, and Geena the Latina, a local radio personality, enhanced the atmosphere and promotion of the event. A good time was had by all!



Annual Breast Milk Drive and Health Fair

Donate Your Breast Milk
Share the benefits and help a baby thrive.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2023
9:00AM-12:00PM
TrueCare San Marcos
150 Valpreda Rd., San Marcos, CA 92069

Health Fair Activities Include:

- Free diapers
- Food distribution
- Activities for kids
- Blood Drive benefiting the San Diego Blood Bank
- Dental screenings/fluoride varnish
- Health screenings

To learn more about donating breast milk:
email - ucmilkbank@health.ucsd.edu
call - 858-249-MILK (6455)

100 OZ MINIMUM DONATION

Must Register to Donate Milk.
Scan code to start!

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH Milk Bank

San Bernardino County DPH Celebrates National Breastfeeding Month

This year, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (SBCDPH) celebrated National Breastfeeding Month in some bee-utiful ways. Between our WIC site celebrations and our bee-themed community baby shower, we were able to reach many moms-to-bee and breastfeeding moms with positive breastfeeding messaging.

Our 14 WIC sites were provided with bulletin board materials to bring awareness to National Breastfeeding Month and promote breastfeeding products and services offered to our nursing participants. Some sites had games, food, decorations, and gifts to further celebrate breastfeeding moms.

On Saturday, August 26, 2023, the SBCDPH celebrated National Breastfeeding Month and Black Breastfeeding Week with our inaugural Community Baby Shower and Health Fair. The event was held at the Ayala Park Community Center in Bloomington, CA from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

WIC along with Black Infant Health (BIH), SmileSBC, Lead Poisoning Prevention and the Health Ambassador Program honored pregnant and breastfeeding moms with gifts, games, education/resource tables, and a bee themed photo booth. Attendees were provided with a passport that they took to each station to be stamped as they learned about the various programs and services offered. Completed passports were then turned in for opportunity drawing tickets, increasing their chance to win a prize.

A 45-minute panel discussion was hosted by lactation consultants and breastfeeding moms, including a WIC participant, who shared their experiences and answered audience questions about breastfeeding. Based on survey feedback, this was the "most helpful" part

of the event. There was also an "Ask a Lactation Consultant" table hosted by Kanisha Neal, RD, CLEC, Birth Doula who was able to help moms one-on-one. Another popular station was the WIC breast pump display table. Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator (RBL) Cecilia Maldonado, and Training Coordinator Josie Ortiz were very busy sharing information about the variety of breast pumps and support services WIC offers to breastfeeding moms.

Many attendees received gifts such as diaper cakes, diaper bags, children's books, bathing supplies, baby wipes, toys, clothing and more. Several local agencies provided donations for the event, including a grand prize \$100 VISA gift card. We were thrilled to have 105 adults and over 30 children attend this event. Next year we hope to expand the celebration to another region of the County to reach even more residents.



National Breastfeeding Month 2023



**Community Resource
Project WIC**



Ampla Health WIC



TrueCare WIC



National Breastfeeding Month 2023



City of Berkeley WIC



Fresno EOC WIC



E-Center WIC



"Tulare County Breastfeeds" Media Campaign

Tulare County initiated a county-wide Breastfeeding Media Campaign to normalize, promote, and encourage breastfeeding practices in our community. Eleven mothers with babies from 3 months old to preschool age were recruited. We photographed each dyad actively breastfeeding and bonding, as well as entire families, to illustrate the father and sibling roles. Over the course of three days, our photo sessions were staged in different areas around the county - our local farmer's market, downtown Visalia, Mooney Grove Park, and Lake Success in Springville. We invited families to dress to highlight their cultures and backgrounds.

The media campaign includes three digital billboards and six bus advertisements which will run for three months. Also, weekly social media and newspaper WIC ads display photos of the mothers and families breastfeeding and bonding with their children.

Additionally, Tulare County WIC, MCAH, and Nurse-Family Partnership came together at the podium during an August Board of Supervisors meeting to present a summary of why breastfeeding is essential for the health and well-being of infants and mothers. Following the presentation, we received a signed Proclamation by the Board of Supervisors.

Lastly, on September 19th, WIC and the Tulare Kings Breastfeeding Coalition hosted a Breastfeeding Photo Gallery Event open to the public to show our gratitude for the moms who participated in the campaign. The event featured live music, food trucks, and information about breastfeeding practices.

The project came with both expected and unexpected challenges. From the design to the approval process, we ran into several bumps. While learning to navigate the political landscape, we found that breastfeeding is still very controversial in our region. We gained a lot of knowledge throughout this experience, and we came to one major conclusion: we have a lot of work to do.

As a result of working closely with our own HHSA and Public Health administrative staff in workgroups, we have seen a shift in some mindsets and an increased level of interest and passion. Time spent in meetings also allowed us to educate our own colleagues, and now there is more buy-in from our administrative staff to help support this message of "normalizing" chest/breastfeeding practices and providing human milk. Support within our organization means WIC is not alone, and we now have a larger village for change.

Continued on page 43

Tulare County WIC Program

PHOTO GALLERY

"TULARE COUNTY BREASTFEEDS"

A CAMPAIGN TO NORMALIZE BREASTFEEDING

Featuring local breastfeeding families and locations from across Tulare County!

September 19, 2023
4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Visalia Elks Lodge
3100 W. Main St., Visalia, CA 93291

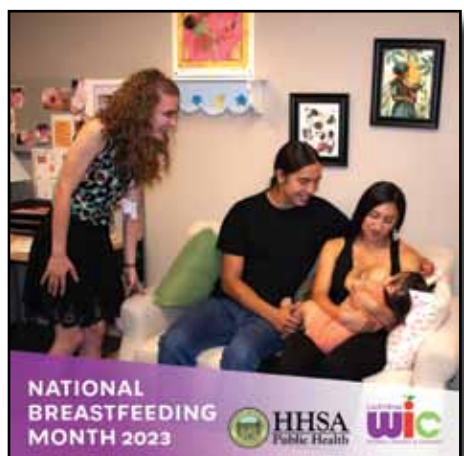
Live Music, Food Trucks & Refreshments

WIC Tulare Kings Breastfeeding Coalition

MORE INFORMATION: (559) 623-0827



Continued from page 43



You Take Care of Your Family; Let WIC Take Care of You!

WIC is a nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children.

You may qualify if you:

- Are pregnant, breastfeeding, just had a baby (or recent pregnancy loss); or
- Have a child or care for a child under age 5; and
- Have low-to-medium income or receive Medi-Cal, CalWORKs (TANF), or CalFresh (SNAP) benefits; and
- Live in California.

WIC provides:

- Nutrition tips and health information
- Breastfeeding support
- Monthly benefits for healthy foods (like fruits & vegetables)
- Referral to medical providers and community services

Newly pregnant individuals and working families, including military and migrant families, are encouraged to apply!

Call us today to see if you qualify

**1-800-360-8840 or
visit MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov**




USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER
California Department of Public Health




WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence

Congratulations to the five local WIC agencies that received the Gold Level Breastfeeding Award of Excellence from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)! The County of Alameda, Native American Health Center, Northeast Valley Health Corporation, Public Health Foundation Enterprise, and Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency agencies were recognized.

This award, formerly known as the Loving Support Award of Excellence, was developed to recognize and celebrate WIC local agencies with a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor program that provide exemplary breastfeeding support services. The purpose of the award is to provide models to help other WIC agencies strengthen their breastfeeding programs to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates nationwide. WIC local agencies that have operated a peer counseling program for at least a year and met all of the Breastfeeding Model Components, or USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Peer Counseling requirements, were eligible. Applicants were required to demonstrate that they had breastfeeding promotion and support policies and processes in place that enabled them to provide praiseworthy breastfeeding services to WIC participants.



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



WIC Information Notice
No. 2023 – 58

Local Services Branch
Attachments: 0

Information Only

DATE: August 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding Award of Excellence Recognition


The California Department of Public Health/Women, Infants and Children Division (CDPH/WIC) is thrilled to announce that five California WIC local agencies have been awarded the WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The following WIC Programs received the Gold Level Award:


- County of Alameda
- Native American Health Center
- Northeast Valley Health Corporation
- Public Health Foundation Enterprise (PHFE)
- Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency

Congratulations to the awardees for a job well-done!

The WIC Breastfeeding Award of Excellence, formerly known as the Loving Support Award of Excellence, was developed to recognize and celebrate WIC local agencies with a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program that provides exemplary breastfeeding support services. Model programs, such as this year's awardees, can motivate other WIC local agencies and clinics to strengthen their own breastfeeding promotion and support activities. Ultimately, this serves to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants.



CDPH Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Division
3901 Lennane Drive MS 8600 Sacramento, CA 95834
P.O. Box 997375 MS 8600 Sacramento, CA 95899-7375
(916) 928-8500 [Division Website](http://www.wicworks.ca.gov) (www.wicworks.ca.gov)





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**WIC
BREASTFEEDING
SUPPORT**

LEARN TOGETHER. GROW TOGETHER.

Ventura Milk Depot & Memorial

And the impact of her legacy continues...

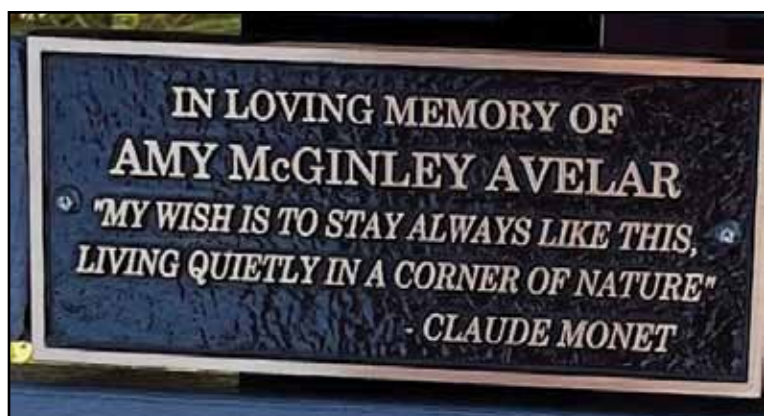
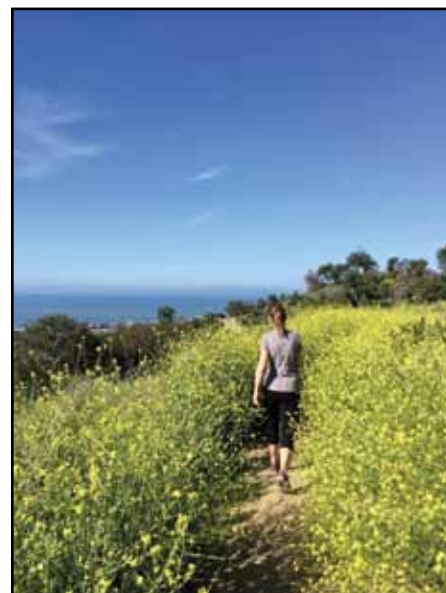
One year later, after the passing of our dear WIC colleague Amy Avelar, we can see the profound impacts of her work and legacy continue. Amy's impact on Ventura County is well known in our community and will be felt for generations to come.

Earlier this year, the very first donor human milk depot for our county was opened by the Ventura Coast Milk Bank and UC Health Milk Bank at the North Oxnard WIC location. This could not have been possible without the vision and work of Amy Avelar. Her advocacy to bring the local milk depot to a WIC location has shined a positive light on the work and collaborating WIC does in our community. Since the grand opening in March 2023, Ventura County WIC has been featured in local newspaper articles and on the syndicated radio program, NPR. The milk depot brings awareness to the benefits of human milk to our community and has received over 1,000 ounces of human donor milk since opening. To learn more about the Ventura Coast Milk Bank go to www.vcmilkbank.org.

Amy's work at the Ventura County WIC generated multiple collaborations with community partners. This included her representation and leadership within the Breastfeeding Coalition of Ventura

County, which led to a grant funded collaboration with the California State University Northridge (CSUN). The CSUN/BCVC 3-year collaboration provides quarterly education webinars with local lactation speakers discussing various roles and careers in lactation. Over 600 lactation students and healthcare professionals have attended these webinars since they began. In honor of the work Amy Avelar contributed towards bringing the collaboration to inception, the education series has been named in her honor: "The Amy Avelar Careers in Lactation Speaker Series." Learn more at <https://www.csun.edu/health-human-development/lactation-education/careers-human-lactation>.

In addition to Amy's passion for her work within the WIC program, Amy had a love for nature and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Thank you to all who donated to her memorial bench, which is located in Ventura's Harmon Canyon Preserve, overlooking the rolling hills and beautiful Pacific Ocean. This is a beautiful way to remember her: she would love that family and friends are taking a 4-mile hike to visit her bench as she was always encouraging others to get out into nature and get moving. It is another reminder of Amy's long-lasting contributions to the Ventura County WIC program and her community.



Mono County Outreach

Mono County WIC LOVES Breastfeeding Month and hosted 2 events this year. Families were invited to have a free professional photo taken by a lactation-enthusiastic photographer to memorialize their lactation journey. They also had access to parent resources such as medication lock boxes and oral health supplies. To encourage attendees to print their photos once they received them by email or text link, they were each supplied with a picture frame. In partnership with the local library, a screening of *The Milky Way* documentary, on breastfeeding in the US, was open to the public.

Mono County WIC posted weekly breastfeeding-related questions on a local mom's Facebook page, encouraging parents to share their lactation stories to support other local lactating parents. A weekly winner was randomly chosen from the commenters and awarded a reusable water bottle imprinted with I Make Milk, What Is Your Superpower?.

Mono County WIC also did outreach to local businesses, providing education on supporting lactating employees and patrons, and offering lactation space door hangers and window decals to signify being breastfeeding friendly. This outreach effort will continue over the next few months in order to reach as many businesses as possible.



Inspire.



Inspire others to join WIC. Share your WIC Story.

CDPH/WIC is looking for service providers, participants, and anyone else who has been impacted by WIC to share their unique stories on camera. We want the world to know how WIC changes lives—whether it is through working with WIC families or as a participant.

If you would like to volunteer to share your story or want to nominate a person to share theirs, please email us at WICOutreach@cdph.ca.gov



CinnaMoms Turns 8!

We are thrilled to extend a warm welcome to CinnaMoms Crenshaw, a groundbreaking space within the PHFE WIC program! As we step into the future of maternal health, breastfeeding, and reproductive justice, we invite you to join us in celebrating the birth of a truly unique and empowering space.

A Vision Realized: CinnaMoms Crenshaw

In June 2023, CinnaMoms proudly unveiled its pioneering project, a non-traditional WIC Center tailored to the CinnaMoms model. CinnaMoms Crenshaw stands as a beacon, the first of its kind, in our community. Nestled in the



heart of the Crenshaw Blvd and Obama Blvd area, we've transformed 1400 square feet of the WIC center, thanks to generous funding from Heluna Health. This space serves as a haven for prenatal and postpartum mothers, birthing individuals, and their families. It's a place to rest, nest, and connect.

The Three Pillars of CinnaMoms Crenshaw

Our values and mission are guided by three foundational pillars:

1. **Rest:** Inspired by Tricia Hersey's "Rest is Resistance Manifesto," CinnaMoms Crenshaw is dedicated to prenatal wellness support, postpartum self-care, and restorative practices. Here, you'll find solace and rejuvenation.
2. **Nest:** We understand the importance of nesting during pregnancy, as mothers-to-be prepare their homes (their "nests") for their newborns. At CinnaMoms Crenshaw, we offer comprehensive prenatal support, including prenatal yoga, OB appointment assistance, access to doulas, nourishing foods, first foods guidance, and expert lactation support.
3. **Connect:** Connection is at the heart of CinnaMoms. In-person gatherings include prenatal and postpartum support groups and classes, wellness sessions like yoga and cooking demonstrations, culturally relevant lactation support, and access to a dedicated team of professionals, including WIC Registered Dietitians, Lactation Consultants, Peer Counselors, the CinnaMoms Team, and invaluable community resources.

A Joyous Celebration

Our grand opening was a joyous occasion, attended by esteemed representatives from various organizations, including the California WIC Association,



California Department of Public Health, LA City Mayor Karen Bass' Office, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Kaiser Permanente, LA Care, and Heluna Health, among others. We had the privilege of hearing inspiring stories from CinnaMoms WIC participants and a heartfelt tribute to our dear colleague and WIC pioneer, Ms. Sharen Anthony.

A First of Its Kind

CinnaMoms Crenshaw is more than a physical space; it's a testament to the power of community, the strength of connection, and the hope of a joyful and healthy future in maternal health. We invite you to join us on this remarkable journey as we continue to uplift and support one another in the beautiful tapestry of motherhood.

*With love and warmth,
The CinnaMoms Team*



National Nutrition Month

Clinica Sierra Vista WIC Dietetic Intern, Berenice Vasquez, accepted the National Nutrition Month proclamation from Kern County Supervisor, Leticia Perez, at the Tuesday morning 3/28/23 meeting of the Kern County Board of Supervisors. The theme, "Fuel for the Future", emphasizes the importance of fueling our community with healthy, local foods that are grown sustainably. Mrs Vasquez presented information on the Academy's National Nutrition Month promotion and the role nutrition (and RDs, NDTRs) play in health, prevention, and treatment.

This activity fulfilled one of the competencies for her dietetic internship rotation in Advocacy/Private Practice in the Community setting.

Contact Tina Canales chelsea.manning@clinasieravista.org.



PHFE's Wendy Fung Recognized at PACLAC

Congratulations to Wendy Fung, Breastfeeding Services Manager and Regional Breastfeeding Liaison (RBL) at PHFE WIC, who recently received the Perinatal Advisory Council: Leadership, Advocacy and Consultation's (PAC/LAC) Mitchell Goldstein Dedication to Community Award! Each year, this award is given to a perinatal health community leader who demonstrates exceptional dedication and commitment to improving pregnancy outcomes.

Wendy has worked tirelessly to provide quality care by managing breastfeeding services at PHFE WIC and advocating for Baby-Friendly hospitals. Her commitment to meeting educational needs for parents and professionals helps improve the breastfeeding support families receive. With maternal and child health services and leadership team partnerships, she continually works on improving breastfeeding rates throughout the community.



Wendy is one of the founding members of the Asian Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Task Force of Los Angeles County formed in 2017. Her passion is to promote positivity with breastfeeding in Asian and Pacific Island communities within Los Angeles County by educating and supporting parents to help minimize breastfeeding obstacles while overcoming stigma and bias.

Congratulations to Wendy for her advocacy towards breastfeeding and thank you for all the support provided to our breastfeeding parents, hospitals, and professionals in our communities!

Congratulations!

Books for Kids at Fresno EOC!

Our 2023 Books for Kids has been a huge success! We have been holding book drives at our WIC offices where participants can stop by and pick up books with their WIC card. We also held a story time with Sofie Garcia, WIC Intern, at our Clovis WIC clinic where children can come in and have books read to them in both English and Spanish. In addition, we have been giving out books at the Farmers Market and everyone is excited to get these books. A local author even reached out to us to see if she could read books in the WIC clinic.

Our last book order included all English/Spanish bilingual books including titles such as "From Head to Toe," "The Animals Would Not Sleep," "Diapers are Not Forever," "Goodnight Moon," "The Rooster Would Not Be Quiet," and "Mother Goose Rhymes." We have additional titles in English/Hmong and a small selection of other languages including Russian, Cantonese, and Arabic. In 2022, we gave out 26,000 books and 9,000 books so far in 2023. We just ordered 6,000 more books and expect them to be gone in about 2 weeks. The books are in nice drawstring bags with tips on raising a reader.

We also teamed up with the Fresno County Library to hand out "Baby's First Library Card" when clients arrived for book pick up. This card was not activated but clients could stop by any Fresno County Library to activate the card and check out books for their child. We wanted to provide another avenue to get more books into the hands of children. Many of our parents were surprised that there was no age restriction on the library card and that their baby could already have their own library card.

Free Books for Kids

What your child will receive

Join us for the following events:

- 4/20/2023 from 9:30am - 5:00pm
788 W Shaw Ave, Clovis
- 4/21/2023 from 2:00pm - 4:00pm
5104 N West Ave, Fresno
- 4/27/2023 from 2:30pm - 4:30pm
3257 E Shields Ave, Fresno
- 4/28/2023 from 11:00am - 2:00pm
1920 Mariposa St., site 100

We also offer these books during normal business hours:
Monday - Thursday 9:30am - 5:30pm
Friday 8:30-4:30pm

This institution is an equal opportunity provider



Fresno EOC WIC
Map 4 at 12:00 PM

Bring your children to our Clovis WIC location (788 W. Shaw Ave) for our "Story Time With Sophie." Sophie will read to the kids in English and Spanish. Also, while supplies last, your kids can take those same books home with them to keep! Come and join us!

Story Time With Sophie

When: 5/3/2023
Time: 1:30pm-4:30pm
Where: Clovis WIC (788 W Shaw Ave)

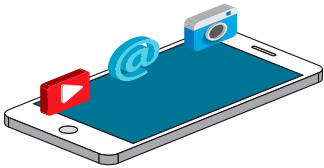
Books read in English & Spanish
Books available to participants while supplies last



San Bernardino County WIC Wins 2 National Association of Counties (NACo) Awards

This year, the San Bernardino County WIC Program was awarded two NACo awards in recognition of their innovative programs.

The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health WIC Program utilizes several outreach methods to educate residents about services. Outreach efforts include a website, social media postings, educational brochures/flyers available at WIC offices,



community event participation, word of mouth at WIC appointments, and text messages. The goal of this project was to use technology to increase access to WIC services. By placing a QR code on posters, residents could obtain information about whether or not they qualify for the WIC Program simply by using their smartphone to take a picture. Program staff created several posters aimed at diverse audiences. The posters focused on education about who qualifies for WIC and were field tested with residents. A survey was used to obtain feedback about the posters. The posters were piloted in the department's Health Clinics, Health Promotion and Education

Services, Vital Statistics and Black Infant Health (BIH) Programs. Results showed 31 scans were recorded for the posters during the pilot. By utilizing technology, the WIC Program was able to obtain valuable feedback about another outreach method that can be used to increase WIC Participation rates in San Bernardino County.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY | Public Health
Women, Infants and Children

Let WIC be there for your family.

See if your family qualifies for WIC.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program provides a variety of healthy food benefits, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and many more resources to families who:

- Are pregnant
- Have a new baby
- Have children under the age five
- Have low to medium income
- Receive Medi-Cal, CalWORKS (TANF) or CalFresh benefits
- Live in California

Apply Today!
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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Scan Here

We encourage military families, fathers, grandparents, and migrant families to apply!

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WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN
improving lives through nutrition

John Haubenstricker of American Red Cross WIC Publishes Bodybuilding Research

Beginning at age 15, I became completely engrossed in lifting weights, and in particular bodybuilding. I dreamt of being a bodybuilder, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, and contribute to the sport in a meaningful way. Since that time, I have been on a lifelong quest to not only live and breathe the bodybuilding lifestyle, but also learn everything I could about it.

After completing my undergrad in Kinesiology from the University of Maryland, I decided to relocate to San Diego to pursue the Dual Masters in Exercise Physiology and Nutritional Sciences at San Diego State University (SDSU), while concurrently working on becoming

a Registered Dietitian. I was sure this would not only help me be a better bodybuilder but also help others live a healthy lifestyle. I was able to help others as a personal trainer and also taught SDSU undergrad students on how to become personal trainers. During this time, I began competing in bodybuilding competitions and continued to learn more about the sport. Towards the end of my master's program, I became involved in a study called Pasos Adelante — steps forward — a public health lifestyle intervention study. It was a study that among other things promoted physical activity and healthy eating in the underserved communities of South Bay San Diego.

This study piqued my interest in public health and research.

The combination of my interest to help others with my newfound interest in public health and research thrust me back into school one more time to pursue a doctorate in Public Health at Loma Linda University. Prior to starting my doctorate, I competed in my fourth bodybuilding competition and finally became a professional natural bodybuilder. A professional natural bodybuilder is someone who wins

the bodybuilding competition without the use of performance enhancing drugs. I was in awe of my accomplishment and finally felt I was an official bodybuilder. Although I had won this title, I still needed to contribute to the sport in my own meaningful way.

Thankfully, my final doctoral requirement — the dissertation — was my chance to make my mark on bodybuilding! As I read the literature, I noticed that there was limited research done on competitive women bodybuilders and the little research that was there, was mostly outdated. Eureka! This was my chance to contribute to the sport in a meaningful way. Starting in the fall of 2018, and for the next four years, I worked tediously and tirelessly from concept design to my dissertation defense to study dietary intake and behavior in competitive women bodybuilders.

Although I completed the study, wrote up two manuscripts, and successfully defended my dissertation, I still needed to publish my work. Finally, this past August 2023, I found a home for both manuscripts and am proud to say that I've completed my goal of making my contribution to the sport of bodybuilding. If you would like to read both manuscripts, you can now find them in Sports and BMC Public Health.



American Red Cross WIC Cooks Up Some Content

In the fall of 2020, the American Red Cross WIC program and CWA began a one-of-a-kind collaboration to bring wellness to all California WIC Agencies via our W3 Newsletter. Since the newsletter's inception, our team of 10 undergrad and graduate student volunteers have been providing unique and timely pieces on various wellness topics, wellness resources, and healthy recipes.

Although the wellness and resource sections of the newsletter have lent themselves well to the newsletter format, recipes are often better displayed, and more enjoyable, via video. The video format not only entices you to try the recipe, but also shows you how to make

it step by step. In addition, soon-to-be nutrition experts need to have these skills as Registered Dietitians to be effective communicators and educators. Given this, it seemed like a win-win to begin making recipe videos.

In the early spring of 2022, we began creating these videos. The recipe section and video for the newsletter is created by three student volunteers: The first creates the nutrition education and does the cost analysis; the second writes up the recipe and performs the nutrition analysis; and the third creates the recipe video and photo. Every month a different group of three student volunteers come together to create the recipe and video.

The monthly rotation of student volunteers provides everyone with an opportunity to create each part of the recipe section and video.

As with all new things, there has been a learning curve to making these 90-second recipe videos. Our team has gotten increasingly better at it over time. Thankfully, with the help of Naomi Nolte-Carroll in early 2023, we have really honed our skills and are making the videos increasingly professional and polished. We hope you'll watch and enjoy them. Please feel free to let us know your thoughts, suggestions, and ideas. We would love to hear from all of you. Thank you!



Check out the full recipe library here: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLg7w6wDfwIWvy4WwcChT6T3xQXFnx5Z-&si=oYpUdQz45Q1bpXtp>

WIC Participant to RDN to IBCLC



Cynthia Tovar, from Fresno EOC WIC, has had an inspiring career! She was a WIC participant, then started working for Fresno EOC WIC in 2014. She says "they have supported me every step since I joined the team as Dietetic Technician supervisor". In 2020, she became a Registered Dietitian, and in 2022 she passed the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) exam.

"I am grateful to have been able to pave the way for others to follow; with a little hard work, tenacity, determination, and a WIC scholarship, I was able to achieve my dream. According to the Commission on Dietetic Registration, less than 13% of dietitians identify as part of a racial or ethnic minority group. I am grateful to be part of a small minority of Spanish-speaking dietitians in the Central Valley."

Cynthia serves as the California Delegate to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for the Central Valley District and Coastal Tri-Counties Region and has held various leadership roles within the district. She functions as a WIC Ambassador and also works as a per diem clinical dietitian. Cynthia is married with four children ages 4 to 15.

What Could Be More Fun Than Story Time!

What fun *Story Time* is for everyone—for wee small ones, parents, the librarian and staff. Librarian Karlyn Evans has been bringing Story Time from the Junipero Serra Branch Library to the Lundquist WIC Manchester Office every month since June. The Junipero Serra Branch Library is among many in the Los Angeles County Public Library System. “*Story Time* is a gift,” Erin Sevilla, Lundquist WIC site supervisor, said. “It’s lovely to see children interact with each other and with a book. Story Time also allows families to connect. You can tell that some parents get excited.”

Parents and children at the Manchester WIC Office, one of 11 Lundquist WIC offices, look forward to Karlyn’s arrival and *Story Time*, as do the staff. “Karlyn brings excitement to the stories and the kids,” Erin said. “She enjoys what she’s doing. And she comes with so much experience. She touches the children in a meaningful way.”

“What I have experienced is amazing!” Noelia Gonzalez-Salas, a member of the Lundquist WIC staff, said. “The children are excited about coming. It’s one thing to think about it and another to experience it.” Noelia serves as the child development specialist at the Manchester WIC Office, as well as a WNA and the lead for *Little by Little*, a child development program funded by First 5 LA.

Each month, Karlyn, the librarian, reads four books to the children in English, and Noelia reads them four books in Spanish. One day, a little girl about four years old approached Noelia. “She came up to me and hugged me as soon as I took out the book. She was responsive and attentive. Then she hugged me while I was reading the book and hugged me after I’d finished!” Karlyn and Noelia also sing with the children.

“It’s clear that Noelia’s dedicated to

child literacy,” Erin said. “She has been enthusiastic about ensuring the children experience storytelling in their Spanish language. We both wanted to make sure that this Spanish session happened.”

Parents are very focused on the words of the songs. “Usually, I sing a song related to the book,” Noelia said. “For example, I read the children *La pequeña araña* (The Itsy Bitsy Spider.) “When I sing the song, I sing it twice. The parents sing it too.”

Noelia, who used to teach toddlers and preschoolers, discusses the importance of selecting age-appropriate books. “One of the most valuable aspects of *Story Time* is encouraging language and literacy,” she said. Noelia also reminds



parents that reading is bonding time for adults and children.

The Manchester WIC Office staff give each family three books as they depart.

“If you give a child a book, chances are they’ll want another,” Erin said. “I’m so excited that we are bringing these dear children the magical world of reading.”



“If you give a child a book, chances are they’ll want another.”

Nora Mendoza—Leading from the Heart

When it comes to leadership, Nora Mendoza shines. Nora, Lundquist WIC project manager, was already playing a leadership role when the Rockwood Leadership Institute selected her approximately a year ago to participate as one of 24 fellows from the State of California in its prestigious fellowship program.

At Lundquist WIC, Nora manages the agency's vendor liaisons. She oversees the Child Development Services Program and collaborates with Lundquist WIC child development specialists and local Regional Center staff. "It was the perfect time; the fellowship program changed me," Nora said. "This fellowship has grounded me as a person with a greater understanding of what I stand for and how I can engage with others professionally and in my everyday life," Nora said. "I was touched and surprised by how much the fellowship resonated with me. I found my home, my language of leadership, and a path of support and encouragement I had not known before."

The fellowship program was rigorous. Nora took part in 13 training days spread over seven months—three virtual trainings, a fourth training in Stockton,



and the fifth in San Jose. Nora and the other Rockwood fellows may have been surprised when they learned some of the topics to be covered: self-compassion, self-love and self-care, grounding, co-powering, empowerment, courageous conversations, inner wisdom, resilience, inner healing, living with purpose, and mental health.

Every time the fellows met, they committed to their accountability partner to care for themselves. In Nora's case, it was ensuring that she didn't ignore her needs when at work: to take breaks, eat when hungry, or go for walks. In the past, she hadn't done these. But now she does. She also committed to journaling and participated in discussions about "co-powering."

Learning about "Courageous Conversations" was necessary, Nora said. "Having a difficult conversation with someone you manage can be challenging." She gained new and valuable methods. Even though Nora has been leading effectively

for many years, she now integrates the Institute's Practices of Leadership into her management. "Because of the Rockwood Leadership Fellowship, I feel more capable of stepping into my leadership role," Nora said.

Nancy Avila, Deputy Chief of WIC Services at Lundquist WIC and Nora's supervisor, has seen her evolution as a leader firsthand. "We profit greatly from having Nora onboard."





California WIC Association

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Read this and past issues of the WIC Watch online at
<http://calwic.org/news-a-publications/wic-watch>.

Share the link with colleagues, family & friends!



I've been coming to this office since I had my first baby in 2012 and have received nothing but excellent service through out these years which is why I still go to this location! The staff here is absolutely amazing and have helped me through so much when it came to preparing for my babies to be born, breastfeeding and nutrition. Even the ladies at the front desk are kind and I'm always greeted and asked how I'm doing when checking in. They care and if you are looking for a clean friendly environment full of supportive people then this is the place!

-Lisa, American Red Cross WIC Mom