May 21, 2007

To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Katie Kurutz, public affairs officer, First 5 LA at kkurutz@first5la.org or (213) 482-5902.

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CALENDAR

May 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Natural Laws of Breastfeeding: New Paradigms and Teaching Tools with Nancy Mohrbacher presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Northridge Hospital Medical Center, 18300 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org and go to Upcoming Seminars for registration.

May 29, 8:30am-4:30pm: "Preparing Your Program to Capture New Funding Opportunities", sponsored by Futures in Management Institute, at the San Diego County Office of Education, 6401 Linda Vista Road, Room 401, San Diego 92111. $100 Registration Fee. Call Claire at (415) 362-4880 or go to www.childlinkca.org.

June 1, 9:00am-12:00pm or 1:00pm-4:00pm: "How Does It Feel: A First Hand Experience of a Sensory Processing Disorder" by Nancy Kislak, M.A., OTR and Joni Schumacher, M.S., CCC. sponsored by the Infant Development Association of California, South Chapter, at Braille Institute, 741 N. Vermont Ave. Los Angeles CA 90029, $50 IDA, $75 non-IDA members. To register call 916.453.8801 or visit www.idaofcal.org

The Health of Angelinos: Key Indicators Report Just Out

How healthy is L.A. County? The county’s Department of Public Health just may have some answers to that big question. And when it comes to children's health, the news in too many parts of the county isn't good.

A recently released report, "2007 Key Indicators of Health," provides a snapshot of health and well being among L.A. County residents. Researchers analyzed 78 markers of physical, mental, and social health, and uncovered the disparities that exist across the region in health status, health behaviors, insurance coverage, injury, access to medical care, chronic disease and mortality.

The report found significant disparities in the well being of children countywide. For example, parents in Central and South L.A. were most likely to report difficulty accessing medical care for their children and were more likely to describe their children as being in fair or poor health. Also, the most uninsured children resided in South and East L.A.

Information presented in the report was obtained from the 2005 L.A. County Health Survey, as well as various public health programs. The comparative information serves as an excellent tool for program planning and research.

"Ideally, this report will serve as a catalyst for change, so that the next generation of Angelenos is healthier than the last," said Susie Baldwin, Chief of the Health Assessment Unit for the department's Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology.

To find out more about the status of people's health in L.A. County, click here to download the full report, or for hard copies call (213) 240-7785.

Website Launched To Combat Perinatal Depression

Pregnancy and childbirth can bring sadness, anxiety, and frustration for many mothers. According to the national Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), as many as 80 percent of women experience some type of depressive symptom during pregnancy or soon after birth. These symptoms can increase the chance of preterm birth, low birth weight, or learning and behavioral problems later on for the premature child.
To combat the debilitating effects of perinatal depression, DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Department has launched a new website to give parents and providers helpful tips, tools, and steps a woman can take if she believes she is experiencing symptoms. The site includes a free, downloadable 22-page booklet with a symptoms checklist, information for family and friends on how to support a depressed mother, and a list of resource numbers and helpful books.

"Perinatal depression can be an isolating and debilitating illness," said Carolina Reyes, Executive Director of LA Best Babies Network, a First 5 LA-funded organization and coordinating body of the Healthy Births Initiative. "Support and treatment can break the isolation and improve quality of life for both the mother and her newborn."

To view the HRSA site and download or order the free materials, click here or go to mcgb.hrsa.gov. For further information on the LA Best Babies Network go to www.labestbabies.org, or call (888) FIRST5LA.

GRANTEE PROFILE
Second in a series highlighting the Best Babies Collaboratives - four grantees who are part of the Healthy Births Initiative.

Get Ready, Get Set... Pregnancy Preparation and the Harbor Corridor BBC

Most of us think of prenatal care as medical assistance for an actual pregnancy. A woman finds out she is pregnant and then goes to the doctor for a check up. But at the Harbor Corridor Best Babies Collaborative (BBC), a First 5 LA-funded program and part of the Healthy Births Initiative, prenatal care starts even earlier. For the BBC, a healthy pregnancy starts the moment a woman begins thinking about getting pregnant.

From this BBC's perspective, inter-conception care, the technical term for a woman's pre-pregnancy preparation, has four primary components: an annual physical, three follow up examinations a year, family planning, and dental and mental health. These combined components prepare a woman to be emotionally, psychologically and physically ready to have a baby. And when she gets pregnant and has the child, she continues to be cared for post-birth - all within the seamless referral system between participating agencies.

The model, formalized by Dr. Kristen Koon at St. John's Well Child and Family Center, fills in the gaps of a disjointed insurance system that often leaves disadvantaged women, pre-pregnancy and post-birth, in the lurch. A woman living below the federal poverty level only receives Medi-Cal coverage during her pregnancy. Once the baby is born, that woman is no longer eligible for the insurance and often has no follow up care. In contrast, a woman enrolled in the BBC free clinic system is able to have follow-up visits with her doctor after her child is born.

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June 2, 9am-1pm: 46th Assembly District Community Health Fair, at Salt Lake Park-Community Center, 3401 E. Florence Ave., Huntington Park 90208.

June 2, 9am-3:30pm: "Stepping up Together" to Support Thriving Communities, at the Carson Community Center, 801 E. Carson St., Carson 90745. Families and Caregivers are encouraged to attend. Call Cathy Cesarz of Karina Martin at (310) 414-2090 or visit www.sbaycenter.com.

June 2, 10:00am-5:00pm: Feria del Libro; A Family Book Fair at Los Angeles City Hall. Visit www.feriadel libro.net.

June 2, 10am-3pm: Resource Fair and Block Party, sponsored by South Los Angeles Youth and Young Adult Self-Determination Center and Loving Your Disabled Child, held in Los Angeles, the block of 7th Ave. between Jefferson Blvd. and 36th St. Contact Theresa, Ray or Susie at (323) 373-0483.

June 2, noon-5pm: La Feria de Los Niños, sponsored by El Curacao, KMEX 34, and KFTR 46, at El Curacao Los Angeles, 1650 W. Olympic Blvd., LA 90015. Call Marguerite at (213) 427-7425.

June 6, 12-2pm: Transforming Well Child Care: Implications for Early Childhood Systems, presented by the First 5 LA Fellowship Program in collaboration with UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, at First 5 LA, 750 N. Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Early childhood and healthcare professionals are encouraged to attend. Space is limited; please RSVP Marcell Shannon at marcellshannon@mednet.ucla.edu by June 1. Lunch will be provided.

June 9, 7am-5pm: Play+Learn+Grow: The Quest for Quality Child Care Conference, sponsored by Crystal Stairs, at the Los Angeles Convention Center/West Hall. Call Tina Esposito at (323) 421-2494 or tesposito@crystalstairs.org.

June 18, 8am-4pm: Transforming Our Community, for parents, caregivers, transitional age youth, and mental health professionals, sponsored by LA County Department of Mental Health Services and the California Endowment, at The California Endowment 1000 Alameda, LA 90025. Contact Luz Mora at moranl@dcfs.lacounty.gov.

June 25, 9:00am - 4:00pm: Depression and the Breastfeeding Woman presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles at San Gabriel Valley Medical Center's Community Health and Education Center, 261 Junipero Serra Dr., San Gabriel, CA. For more information call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org and go to Upcoming Seminars for registration.
June 25-29, 2007: “SUMMER 2007 ‘A Head Start on Science’ Workshop” for preschool Teachers & Administrators. The Head Start on Science Project at CSULB is a full-week hands-on training. For registration form and fees click here, or contact Head Start on Science, 562.985.4802 or email SCI4KIDS@CSULB.EDU.


EVIE’S DESK
Magda Gerber

At First 5 LA we often consult child development experts to help shape our programs. Their important work is vital to the process of creating safe and healthy environments for children. Sadly, we recently suffered a significant loss in this critical field of experts. I’d like to take a moment to acknowledge the passing of a contemporary and influential figure in child development, Magda Gerber, and to honor her many contributions. She died on April 27th in her Silver Lake home and was believed to be in her 90’s.

Gerber was an infant education expert. She was one of the first people in the United States to focus public attention on infants as competent, self-initiators of their own development. She was also the first to promote the practice of learning from and respecting infants as they explore their worlds.

Among her many accomplishments, Gerber authored several books and founded RIE, or the Resource for Infant Educarers (caregivers who are educators), a non-profit, world-wide membership organization based in Los Angeles, that is dedicated to sharing her philosophy on infant development.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Magda Gerber for the thousands of lives touched by her teaching.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

"If it was not for the Collaborative, there would not be this level of care for women with high risk pregnancies," said James Mangia, Executive Director at St. John’s, the collaborative’s lead agency. And many women in the economically-depressed Harbor Corridor are considered high risk due to financial and environmental stress.

Harbor Corridor BBC provides classes, in-home and in-clinic case management, regular health assessments and counseling. Since July 2006, they have served over 7,500 women in the inter-conception care program, and brought on more than 180 clients for more intensive Case Management Services.

To learn more about the Harbor Corridor Best Babies Collaborative go to www.labestbabies.net, or call Patricia Banks, Program Coordinator, at (323) 541-1600.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Tamar Andrews: Mentor, Teacher, Advocate

Tamar Andrews is the preschool director at Temple Isaiah Preschool and Kindergarten in the Century City area. With approximately 450 students, the school is part of a larger Jewish temple that has a half-dozen programs for children and youth. Also serving as the school’s parent educator, Tamar teaches three parenting classes a week at no cost to participants.

On faculty at UCLA Extension and Cal State L.A., Tamar has taught courses in Child Development and the Administration of Early Child Education for over 10 years. In the last year, Tamar has used her experience to mentor twelve preschool program directors throughout L.A. County.

Tamar is a validator for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation program and has assisted in the opening of several childcare centers. She also serves on the board at two preschools. With a friend, Tamar is currently building a program intended to bridge the gap between non-English speaking nannies and members of their English speaking households.

She is also the mother of four children, including her youngest son, Joshua, who is autistic.

Which book has most influenced your life?
Actually, it was a poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T.S. Eliot. It teaches the lesson that we all need to “disturb the universe” in our lifetimes.

Which historical figure do you admire most and why?
Magda Gerber. She helped train adults to forge mutually respectful relationships with all people, even infants.

What is your idea of a perfect world?
One where governments focus their energies on building quality in the world, and not destroy it.
What is the greatest challenge the children and families of LA County face today?
That early childhood is still not a top priority at the city, county and state level, so funding for programs that would really impact L.A. County is in short supply.

Which living person do you most admire and why?
Any parent who realizes that every action he or she takes will have lasting implications; not only on that child, but on everyone that child ever touches. I admire caregivers that take their responsibility seriously.

What is your motto?
A true hero is one who lives to inspire and to be inspired so that the world may change.