



healthy mothers, healthy babies

CAMDEN

## Camden Healthy Start

Camden Healthy Start is an initiative under the direction of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Camden City supported by a grant from the USDHHS.

Camden City HMHB is a program of the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative.



Southern New Jersey PERINATAL COOPERATIVE

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### Lowering Stress May Save Babies' Lives

Infant mortality is the public health risk HMHB was established to fight. While progress has been made, one challenge that persists is the racial disparity in infant mortality rates. NJ health statistics show the black

federal program, "A Healthy Baby Begins With You," public policy is encouraging women to take greater control of their overall health.

"The next step is to introduce more young women to the concept of discussions of preconception health," says Rozier. "Preterm labor, which increases the risk of infant mortality, is affected by sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy. Without education, young women may be unaware of the threat."

infant mortality rate (BIMR) is double that of white infants.

"The general health differences faced by at-risk mothers are only heightened by race and ethnicity," says Joye Rozier, Project Director of Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies-Healthy Start. "We're trying to level the playing field."

"September is **Minority Health Month**, which offers a good opportunity to discuss the disparity in the black infant mortality rate and plan our response," says Rozier.

Although its root causes are unknown, some factors can limit the risk of infant mortality.

Early prenatal care and substance abuse treatment and prevention all help. But the general stress of pregnancy is now seen as a key risk for black infant mortality.

"We need to encourage women to learn how to lower their own risk factors for stress," says Rozier. "Some of the populations we serve are especially at risk, including military wives, women dealing with substance abuse, and women in the penal system."

New Jersey is working statewide to expand the kind of case management support offered at HMHB-HS; namely, intensive home visitation and group outreach. Together with the new

**"If we empower women with information, we make them active guardians of their bodies and of their babies," says Rozier**



HMHB-HS Project Director Joye Rozier discusses stress-free pregnancy tips on "Camden on the Move", a 1/2 hour public service program shown daily at 9:30 am on Channel 19.

### A Call to Action

At our Annual Meeting this spring, I asked the people of Camden to renew their commitment to the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

My mother used to say, "miracles happen to those in motion." We are more likely to achieve our goals if we set ourselves on the path to action.

That is why I ask you to join the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition. The Coalition gives life to the partnerships that support Camden families. We are working to raise stronger children, reduce the infant mortality rate, and help women have healthy pregnancies.

Please join us for our next meeting on Tuesday, November 25th. Details to follow. We need your ideas and energy as we plan our activities for the future.

We in Camden can do the work to build a healthier city for our children.

Joye Rozier

Project Director

Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies-Healthy Start



A mouth watering display attracted many visitors to our new Nutrition Exhibit at the Camden Farmer's Market which featured tips on selecting and preparing healthy meals.

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## 2008 Annual Meeting

It was a "family affair" at the 2008 Annual Meeting, where kids of all ages enjoyed the wonders of the Adventure Aquarium.



2008 Award Recipients (L-R): Silver Rattle, Luis Valentino Al Rio, Dey; Mother of the Year, Angela Paige Williams; and Father of the Year, John Jenkins.



## Breastfeeding Support for Camden Mothers

Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies—Healthy Start (HMHB-HS) has launched a pair of new initiatives to help Camden City mothers reach their breastfeeding goals.

The Breastfeeding Support and Advocacy Group and Breastfeeding-Friendly Facility Initiative will supplement the education HMHB-HS clients already receive through the WIC breastfeeding program.

"While WIC offers valuable one-on-one counseling, our new programs should make the day-to-day aspects of breastfeeding easier our clients," says Marina James-Velardo, Health Educator.

"We hope the group experience will encourage more women to breastfeed," says Sarah Chaikin, Lactation Consultant with the WIC Breastfeeding Initiative.

For mothers to breastfeed effectively, they need information, support, and education, says Chaikin. New breastfeeding mothers will be able to take confidence and practical advice from meeting other breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

The Breastfeeding-Friendly Facility

Initiative will help the Camden community at large better accommodate breastfeeding women.

"New Jersey has laws that protect public breastfeeding and that encourage breastfeeding mothers to return to work," says James-Velardo. "By helping facilities designate safe, private areas for breastfeeding, we can make the city more accessible for Camden." •

### Breastfeeding Support and Advocacy Group Meeting Schedule

**Thursday, October 9**  
*I Feel Overwhelmed With My New Baby*

**Thursday, November (TBD)**  
*Going From Breast Milk to Healthy Foods*

*all meetings held at the Galindaz Court Community Club House, 9th and State Streets, Camden, NJ*

## Baby Cruiser is Back!

The Camden Baby Cruiser sports a colorful new look that announces its arrival to neighborhood families. The van helps increase public awareness of HMHB services and priorities.



Jesus, a happy toddler, is doing well thanks to the help he and his mom Amelia receive from HMHB-HS.

## Amelia's Story

"Amelia" was 15 when she found out she was going to have a baby.

Pregnancy was confusing, even scary. Her family was unsupportive. She was forced to quit school, and later, her job. She felt isolated.

Amelia looked all over for help. But as an undocumented immigrant, she was not eligible for certain kinds of aid.

Finally, Amelia found what she needed when a friend referred her to Camden Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies—Healthy Start.

"The program helped me get things together and get my life organized," Amelia says. "They connected me with a doctor. They helped me find a car seat, a high chair, a crib, even diapers."

Like Amelia, many Hispanic women rely on HMHB-HS. Spanish-speaking case managers are available to attend

doctor visits with their clients. Staff helps with translations, paperwork, scheduling, and even make referrals for help with immigration.

"The program gives us the help we need," Amelia says.

HMHB-HS clients also help to create their own network of community resources, like Circle of Friends, a monthly support group in which Amelia participates.

"At Circle of Friends, we share resources and information," Amelia says. "We get to know each other's kids. We go to activities and events together. We bond with each other. It makes things easier." •

## Helping Camden Fathers Get on Track

Although HMHB-HS is known by its service to pregnant women and babies, helping fathers is also a priority. Fathers on Track is a 13-week program developed in cooperation with the HMHB Fatherhood Committee and Planned Parenthood of Southern New Jersey.

The program gives fathers access to the education and support services that will help them raise healthier families.

Group members meet weekly for moderator-led discussions and activities related to health, parenting, and self-sufficiency.

"The support members receive from each other lets them know they can do great

things," says program coordinator Henry Williams.

Fathers on Track also has a career development component designed to help dads prepare for their professional lives. Taken collectively, this information provides knowledge that can help new fathers improve their parenting skills, become more self-sufficient, and support one another in the process.

"You see them doing things differently than before," says Williams. "You hear them speak and even dress differently. When someone changes, there is a visible difference in attitude that is not reflective of how a person once was." •



Fatherhood Fun Day gathers Fathers on Track Dads and their children for a chance to spend some time in the sun. The program strengthens the bonds between parents and across generations.

### Next from Fatherhood Committee

*Legal Rights of Fathers About Child Support, Panel Discussion*

October 15, 2008, 6–8 pm  
Walt Whitman Arts Center  
2nd & Cooper Streets  
Camden, NJ

*This free event gives fathers an opportunity to learn about their legal rights and how the child support system operates. Invited agencies include the Department of Youth and Family Services, Camden Regional Legal Services, Superior Court Family Division, and the Board of Social Services.*