

Natural Times

Chicago Health Connection Has Changed Its Name To HealthConnect One

Our agency has grown and gone through a major transformation over the past year. On October 30, 2008 at our annual fundraiser and during our conference, we announced and unveiled the changing of our name and look.



Photo by Flint Chaney

For many years, our agency has been doing national training and replication. After an extensive evaluation of our agency, we were able to crystallize our vision and articulate a strategic plan for ongoing operations. During the process, we realized a few critical points: 1) Our work extends beyond the Chicago area, in fact, it's national. 2) Our core competencies encompass program development, training, and replication. 3) Our greatest strengths lie in our ability to integrate community stakeholders and build skills that lead to sustainable growth and change.

These insights resulted in a change to our mission. Today we are an organization that provides technical support and consulting services to community-based organizations that focus on maternal and child health and well-being. We are an agencies' agency – not a direct service provider.

To mark this change in our focus, we renamed the organization HealthConnect One (HC One). Why this name? Health – because we retain our focus on maternal and child health. Connect – because we connect underserved populations with support from within their communities for better results on a grassroots level. One – because we believe in the power of one. One caring health worker like you, and the engagement of one on one to enhance and strengthen parent-child bonds that help women and children live healthier lives.



Photo by Flint Chaney

Therefore, the name better reflects the work we do. Yes, it takes some getting use to, especially if you have been around for a long time. We do hope that you will join us in our excitement over our new name and look. One thing that hasn't changed is that we believe our success has been that the most important one is you, the community health worker that gets out there on the front lines and personally touches and changes the lives you work with.

Calendar & Dates to Remember

C.L.C. Training in Chicago

March 16–20, 2009 at Stroger Admin Building
For more information go to
www.healthychildren.cc/

La Leche League of IL Breast for Baby, Best for Mom Conference.

March 20-22, 2009 in Urbana, IL for more info visit
www.llofil.org

IL Breastfeeding Conference – “Breastfeeding Success is Everyone’s Business”

April 8 & 9, 2009. For more info contact
Brenda Snyder at 312-793-1643

Advanced C.L.C. Training in Chicago

Date, Place, & Time TBA
For more information go to
www.healthychildren.cc/

HealthConnect One Networking Picnic

Date, Place, & Time TBA
For more info contact: chericeingram@yahoo.com or
tomekajohnson27@yahoo.com

Breastfeeding Walk

August 28, 2009 at Rainbow Park in Chicago

Save the Date!

Birth, Breastfeeding and Beyond Conference, Embracing the New Era

September 23, 24, & 25, 2009 in Chicago

Chicago Region Breastfeeding Task Force meets
every 2nd Friday of the month at Stroger Hospital.
If you are interested in joining, please contact Helen
312.243.4772 ext. 229
or visit www.freewebs.com/chicagobreastfeed

Natural Times

is published by:



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Foundation News

As we gear up for a growing national role in developing cutting-edge maternal and child health programs, we are more than ever grateful for the new Foundation and Corporate supporters who make it possible for us to grow carefully and sustainably. On behalf of the board of directors and staff, thank you for helping us continue to create healthy communities locally and across the country.

Thank You!

Advocate Health Care
Ameda
A Woman’s Place Birth & Health Resources
Birthlink, Ltd.
BirthBall Chicago
BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois
Bloom Yoga Studio
Deloitte
Elite Realty Partners, Inc.
Circle of Service Foundation
City of Chicago Children and Youth Services
City of Chicago Department of Human Services (WIC)
Community Organizing Around Family Issues (COFI)
Field Foundation of Illinois,
The Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA)
Hirsh-Schwartz Foundation
House Calls Behavioral Health, P.C.
Maddy’s Organic Meals, LLC
March of Dimes
McKnight Kurland Baccelli
Medela
More Than Midwives
Office of Women’s Health (Region V)
PCC Community Wellness Center
Polk Bros. Foundation
Scanlon & Mathews
ShoreBank
Swellbeing, Inc.

From the Frontlines...



Photo by Flint Chaney

My name is Kaja Cook. I have a daughter whose name is Khalia and a six month old son named King. I breastfed my daughter for the first four months of her life. I plan to breastfeed my son until he is two years old.

I was first informed about the peer counselor training by my doula Tracy Wilhoite when I was in my third trimester. Within the first ten minutes of training, I knew I was in a safe place. The environment was so playful and comfortable. I learned countless things. I've learned how to educate moms about breastfeeding and to dispel the myths. I have become more confident in my ability to counsel women who understand that breastfeeding is best. The guest speakers were an excellent source of education. I am so excited that I am going to be taking all of this information and sharing it with others.

I enjoyed the training (Access Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training) so much that I was sorry it had to end. I found comfort in knowing that our patient trainers, Lawon and Brenda, will be sharing their wisdom with many classes to come.



Photo by Flint Chaney

My name is Binbin Meng. I have a 1 year old son Jacob. At home we call him by his nickname, Xiao Bao. When I joined a breastfeeding celebration, organized by Belinda Sayadian at Mile Square Health Center, I was asked whether I wanted to join a peer counselor program to help other moms. I signed my name there.

Before the first class I didn't really know what breastfeeding peer counselors do. This class was an eye-opening event for me. I thought the training was very professional and informative. I was happy to meet nice classmates there.

I really got a lot from this training, not only the knowledge but the skills about breastfeeding; also the information and resources to improve the health of moms and babies. Helen and Brenda are so professional in the training. Both of them are considerate ladies. Besides, we had several speakers come to address specific topics. They are specialists in their fields.

What impressed me most is the generosity of my classmates. They are working in different agencies or communities to help other people. Their jobs are great because their work will impact the future of the babies. I was really lucky to work with all of the trainers, classmates, and other people in the (HC One) network. I am thinking to find some volunteer job to promote breastfeeding and to help other moms' breastfeed their babies correctly. I am sad because we will not meet on every Wednesday in the future. I will miss every face and the great tuna salad made by Vee.

From the Frontlines... - continued



Photo by Flint Chaney

Hello. My name is Tyrise White. I have a baby boy named Deviere Devon Tyler. When I first came to breastfeeding training, it was just wonderful. It was like a therapy support group for mothers. I thought to myself, "this is just what I need."

What stood out for me in training was that every woman had a heroic story that was packed with encouragement and strength that will be passed down for generations. I have received a

wealth of knowledge to spread and give to mothers. This class has taught me to accept my own breastfeeding experience that wasn't so good and use it to encourage other moms to breastfeed. This class has stirred up a gift in me to present to the world. I loved our trainers, Helen and Vanessa. The trainers were just fabulous. They busted myths about formula and breastmilk. I will take everything I've learned and present the gift of breastfeeding to every woman that I come in contact with.

Trainings, Trainings, Trainings.....Graduation!

This fiscal year has been a very exciting training year. We had three 10 week trainings going on concurrently in Chicago. Two were breastfeeding peer counselor classes and one was a community health worker training. Our trainers also traveled to Seattle, WA, Brooklyn, NY and St. Louis, MO to replicate the doula program. We had 4 peer counselor trainings in Georgia as well as several continuing education classes throughout the Atlanta area.

In addition to staff trainers, we had contractual help with the trainings. 2007 PC graduate Vanessa "Vee" Stokes was recruited as co-facilitator for the annual fall peer counselor training. Tikvah Wadley also trained along with Wandy. Tikvah, who was trained by Wandy, says that "although I was on the other side of the table and it was strange at first, Wandy made me feel comfortable." She also remarked, "I was so impressed with the participants at their readiness to hear and learn!" Tikvah was trained as a doula by Wandy in 1999. Jere along with others, trained alongside with Kim Bugg in Georgia and Lawon Tidwell worked with Brenda.

Our annual fall community-based peer counselor training had 15 participants and 15 graduates. Classes were held at Unite Here! union building. This was a new place for us. It was a place conducive to learning and bonding. The graduation was held at the Greek Island restaurant in Greektown Chicago. It was well attended by friends, family, board members, partners, and past graduates. Gaylean Woods was the guest speaker. Tyrise did a wonderful job as M.C. Kudos also to Kisa and Cynthia for their presentations!

There were also 2 trainings for Access Community Health, one for Community Health Workers and the other was a peer counselor training. Access had a total of 15 graduates; 8 CHWs and 7 PCs. Access combined the graduations for their participants. The celebration was held at the Sinai Community Institute on West Ogden in Chicago. The event was catered and a lovely ceremony with the participants sharing their experiences that led them to the training. The guest speaker was Daniel Cantrell, aide to U.S. Rep. Danny Davis. Congratulations to all!

We've been busy!

2008 Community-based Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Graduates

Cynthia Bloodgood
Maria Caref
Karen Danley
Nicole Hall
Vanessa Herman
Cherice Ingram Buckley
Tomeka Johnson
Sharon McCall
Kisa McCormick
Deanna McDonald
Binbin Meng
Kathy Richardson
Debra Riley
Veronique Robinson
Tyrise White

2008 Access Healthy Start Community Health Worker Graduates

Kamona Andrews
Jacqueline Gutouski
Alicia Jennings
Charmeka Johnson
Talibah Johnson
Tiara Lagrone
Sandra Porter
Andrea Russell

2008 Access Healthy Start Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Graduates

Shere Brown
Kaja Cook
Devona Johnson
Shannon Simms
Lonita Stokes
Monique Weaver
Armonia Wilson



Access Peer Counselor Class



Community-based PC Class



Role Playing!



Graduation Day!

HealthConnect One Awarded HRSA Grant!



Replication Manager Jere McKinley with IL-D Senator Durbin and President Obama (then Senator Obama)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/ Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded HealthConnect One (formerly Chicago Health Connection) a 2-year grant to provide training, technical assistance, and cross-sited evaluation to a cohort of six HRSA-funded community-based doula programs across the country. The result of tireless advocacy by HC One's doula network and other MCH stakeholders around the country, this is the first federal funding stream for community-based doula programs. Congratulations to all of you who helped to make this vision real!

HC One also extends sincere appreciation to Senator Richard J. Durbin (D-IL) and Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-IL) for their support of community-based doula programs, and to President Barack Obama, who demonstrated his support of the community-based doula model as a previous co-sponsor of Senator Durbin's funding request.

The community-based doula model has received increasing media attention the past few years, as people have begun to comprehend its effectiveness. According to HRSA's press release of October 3, 2008, "Doulas provide culturally sensitive pregnancy, breastfeeding and childbirth education and counseling. They also promote links to health care and social services, labor coaching and parenting skills." Catalyst Chicago describes the impact in an article of January 6th, saying, "Helping young moms bond and build a healthy relationship with their baby before it is born are the first steps that, down the road, foster school readiness and better performance in school, say early childhood experts." Following the HC One model, community-based doulas mentor women within their own communities during pregnancy, and for at least twelve weeks following birth.

As the Community-based Doula Leadership Institute, HC One is thrilled to partner with:

- Access Community Health Network, Chicago, IL
- Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Atlanta, GA
- Migrant Health Promotion, Weslaco, TX
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Onamia, MN
- Queen of Peace Center, St. Louis, MO
- Tewa Women United, Espanola, NM

HealthConnect One

Umbilical Cord Blood Donation Initiative

In 2008, The Coleman Foundation approached HealthConnect One to take the lead on an Umbilical Cord Blood Donation initiative. The Message and Messenger Initiative: Promoting Cord Blood Donation among Minority Families focuses on defining appropriate messages and developing a structure of support to increase the donations of umbilical cord blood among African American and Hispanic families, birthing at Mt. Sinai and Mercy Hospitals in Chicago. Following are facts you may not have known about cord blood collection and transplants:

- ✓ **Treatment of Disease:** Umbilical cord blood transplants can treat leukemia, lymphoma, sickle cell disease, and various inherited immune system disorders, to name a few, according to the National Marrow Donor Program.
- ✓ **Better than Bone Marrow:** Cord blood matches need to meet only 4 out of 6 criteria, while bone marrow matches must meet 6 out of 6 criteria.
- ✓ **Donations are Growing:** The National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) provided nearly 650 cord blood units for transplant in 2007, an increase of more than 144 percent over 2006.
- ✓ **Chance of Family Match:** Only 30 percent of patients in need of a marrow or blood cell transplant find a matched donor in their family. The other 70 percent may turn to the National Marrow Donor Program (NMDP) to search for an unrelated donor or cord blood unit. (www.marrow.org)
- ✓ **Ethnicity Matters:** Because tissue types are inherited, patients are more likely to match someone from their own race or ethnicity. Adding more donors and cord blood units from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to the NMDP [Cord Blood] Registry increases the likelihood that all patients will find the match they need. (www.marrow.org)
- ✓ **NOT Embryonic Stem Cells:** While ethical controversies still rage over the collection and use of embryonic stem cells, umbilical cord blood stem cell collection is approved by the Vatican for its safe and ethical collection techniques.
- ✓ **NOT for Cloning:** Umbilical cord blood donations are used for the treatment of disease and NOT for research in areas like cloning.
- ✓ **Pain of Donation:** Donating cord blood is quick, simple, and completely painless to both mom and baby.
- ✓ **Cost:** Cord blood donation to Illinois' public bank, ITxM Clinical Services, is FREE.

If you want more information on this project or are interested in developing or piloting of these messages, please contact info@healthconnectone.org.



SISTER 2 SISTER

Congratulations to recent graduate Cynthia Bloodgood on her new position at Access Community Health Network!

Congratulations to LaKisha Hudson on her new PC position at at the Prentiss Ambulatory Clinic at Northwestern Hospital.

Congratulations to Belinda Sayadian on her big accomplishment of receiving her I.B.C.L.C.!

Congratulations to Keisha Lemmons on her position at Henry Booth House.

Also to community health workers Charmeka Johnson, Talibah Johnson, Andrea Russell, and Alicia Jennings on their placements at Westside Healthy Start, we wish you the best!

Much happiness and best wishes to peer counselor Veronique Robinson on her recent marriage to Dorian Daniels.

We have many birthdays around this time of the year. We wish a Happy Birthday to all our HC One families and friends.

The PICNIC RETURNS!

Many of you may remember the picnics we hosted. Two newly graduated peer counselors are co-chairing a committee to bring back our picnics. Tomeka Johnson and Cherice Ingram-Buckley will be co-chairs for the picnic. If you are interested in serving on the picnic committee, volunteering or attending, you may contact the co-chairs at: 312-243-4772, ext. 229 or chericeingram@yahoo.com or tomekajohnson27@yahoo.com.



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