

TEXAS

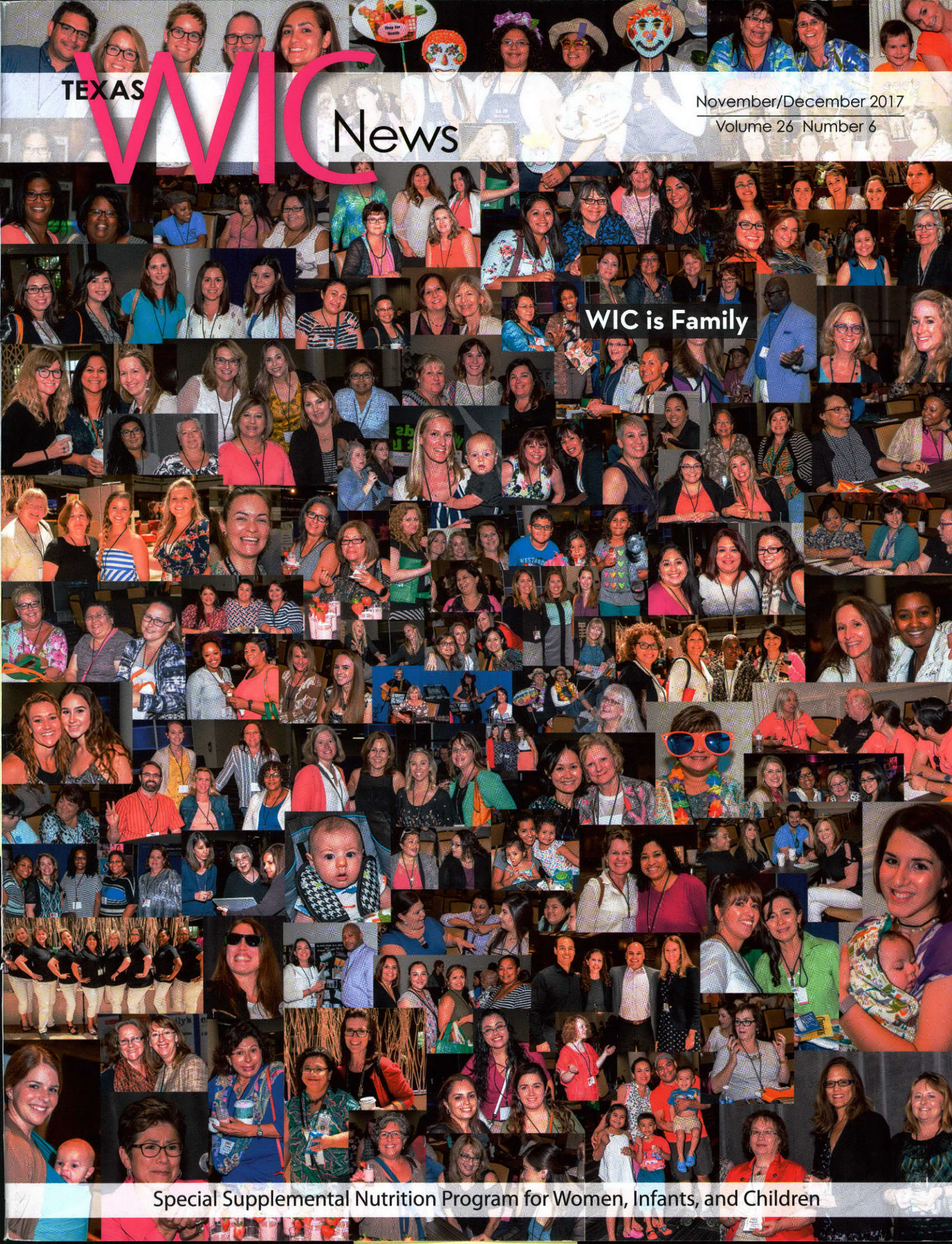
WIC News

November/December 2017

Volume 26 Number 6

WIC is Family

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children



Looking Ahead and Reflecting Back

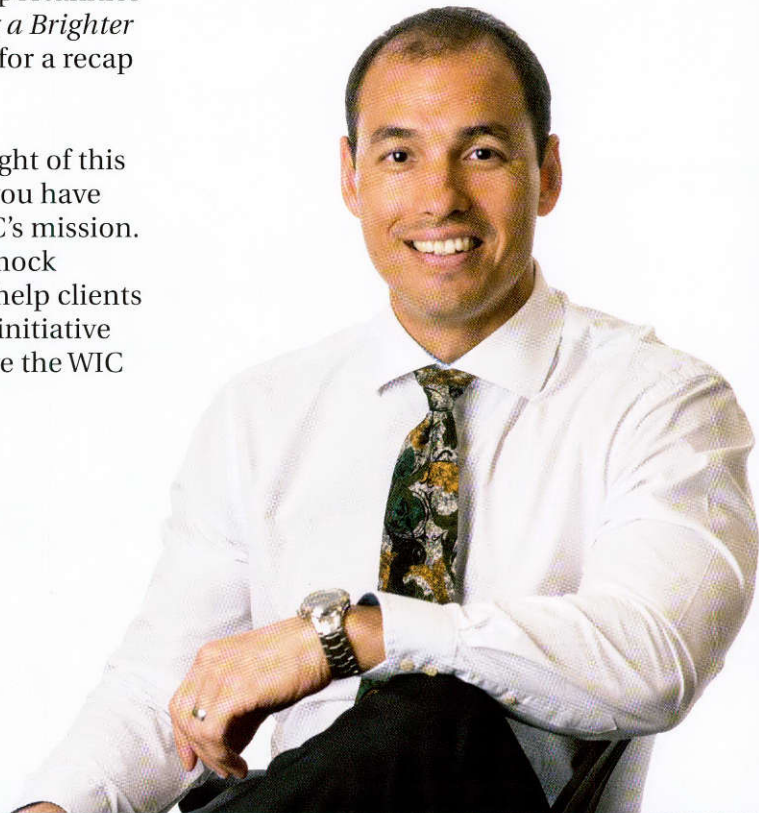
It's the time of year when many of us are looking ahead. We make plans to visit family and friends or celebrate a special occasion. This is also a great time to reflect on our accomplishments. That's what this month's edition of *Texas WIC News* is all about.

We saw the number of Baby-Friendly hospitals increase 50 percent. We also found inspiration at the Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference. From simulated sumo wrestling, to the TXIN demo and discussing sensitive topics like racial inequality, the conference offered several unique opportunities to prepare us for *Building a Brighter Future*. Turn to page four for a recap on the sessions.

Page 12 may be the highlight of this edition. We look at what you have been doing to further WIC's mission. From cooking classes to mock grocery experiences that help clients shop for WIC foods, your initiative and innovation to improve the WIC

experience is what will keep Texas recognized as a model program.

Over the last year you've demonstrated your ability to rise to planned and unplanned challenges. Your engagement, critical thinking and strategic agility are needed more than ever. I hope you find inspiration in this edition to keep the momentum going into 2018 and beyond as we *Build a Brighter Future* for Texans.



From the desk of Edgar Curtis — Texas WIC Director

in this issue

2017
Recap



- 2 Looking Ahead and Reflecting Back
- 4 Building a Brighter Future: 2017 Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference Recap
- Pull-Out Section** ► WIC Wellness Works
- 11 Test Your Nutrition IQ
- 12 Local Agency 2017 Spotlight and Retirees
- 16 Meet WIC's Extended Family
- 18 RD Corner: World Vegan Month

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS:

Texas WIC News is available online at <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/gi/wicnews.shtm>. If you are a current subscriber who would prefer to receive the Texas WIC News online, send your email address to WICNewsSubscriptions@dshs.state.tx.us and we will notify you by email as soon as an issue becomes available online.

Texas WIC News (USPS 016-975) is published bimonthly by Texas Health and Human Services, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347 <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/default.shtm>. Subscriptions are free. Periodicals postage paid at Austin, Texas.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WICNewsSubscriptions@dshs.state.tx.us or WIC News Subscriptions, Texas WIC News, Texas Health and Human Services, P.O. Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347.

- Edgar Curtis
Texas WIC Director
- Amanda Hovis
Director, Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
- Rachel Edwards
Manager, Clinic Services Branch
- Shirley Ellis
Manager, Nutrition Education Branch
- Tracy Erickson
Manager, Infant Feeding Branch
- Angela Gil
Manager, Publishing, Promotion, and Media Services
- Melanie Smith
Publication Coordinator/Editor
- Clare Wolf
Managing Editor/Designer
- Chris Coxwell
Photographer
- Lorise Grimball, Matt Harrington, Renee Mims, Jonell Clardy, Katie Coyne
Contributing Editors & Designers
- Clarissa Miles
WIC Publications Coordinator

TEXAS WIC NEWS SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

If you have a story idea you would like to submit for consideration in the Texas WIC News please send an email to Melanie.Smith@hhsc.state.tx.us.



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

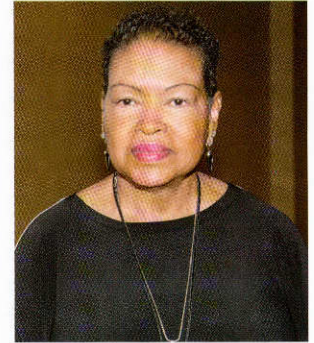
Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:
(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

An Analysis of Racial Inequities: Understanding How We Got Here & What We Can Do to Improve

JOYCE JAMES, LMSW-AP | JOYCE JAMES CONSULTING

How do we, as individuals within a public health institution, begin to break down the barriers that perpetuate racial inequities? After 3½ hours of animated discussion, we learned that we had just scratched the surface of understanding what needs to be done and why. One key understanding was the difference between inequality and inequity. At first glance one might think they mean the same thing. Equality is to provide everyone with the same resources while equity is to provide appropriate resources needed to give everyone the same access. Attendees planned to go back to their agencies and communities with a new lens to look for institutional barriers that prevent the families we serve from obtaining equitable access and to begin the challenging work of dismantling those barriers.

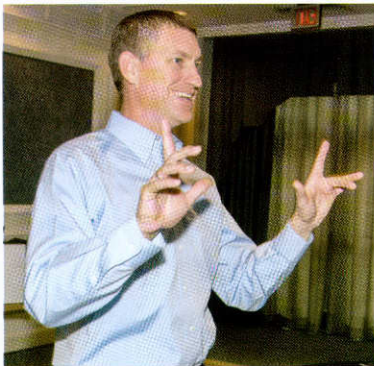
CONTRIBUTED BY SANDRA BROWN, MS, RD | FORMULA TEAM COORDINATOR



Joyce James

Creating a Culture of Excellence - The Leader's Role

MICHAEL DAGGS, MED | TUTT & DAGGS, INC.



Michael Daggs

Michael Daggs began his 2½ hour presentation with a simple question, “Are you looking for a workhorse? ...You may already be familiar with the following exercise: there’s a white team and a blue team throwing and dribbling a basketball to their team members, you are asked to count the times the white team’s ball bounces on the floor. In the meantime, a big gorilla comes into the picture and leaves and most of the audience didn’t even see the gorilla because they were focused on the assignment.” When you are so engaged in the activity, you often overlook what is occurring around you. A leader’s role is to be aware of their surroundings: (1) employee engagement level; how to motivate and develop the person, (2) the organizations expectations; ensuring all employees are familiar with them, (3) procurement of necessary supplies and materials; essential to meet expectations, and (4) reward and recognize; learn how each of your staff wants to be recognized/acknowledged when the performance supports it.

Employees fall under one of three levels of engagement: engaged, disengaged, and actively disengaged. Each level requires a different conversation level. The engaged worker is the workhorse, the high performer, the ideal employee. Studies show on average an organization has 30 percent engaged workers. These are the folks you can’t afford to lose. The conversation needs to start with thanking them, and your goal is to re-recruit them. The disengaged worker is a middle performer; they do a good job, but often they need more leadership and more confidence. They are influenced by both the top performer and the non-performer. They often help leadership be aware of problems. Some people may refer to them as “retired on active duty or R.O.A.D.” This is the largest type of employees averaging 54 percent of the organization. Always begin your conversation with letting them know they are valuable. The goal is to coach them and communicate with them. Lastly, we have the actively disengaged. These folks are the low-performers who have a negative attitude, are often passive aggressive, and blame leadership for problems. Studies say organizations on average have 16 percent of these type of employees. When communicating with them, start by setting ground rules. Your goal is to move them up or move them out. As a leader in creating a culture of excellence, keep your eye on hiring the engaged person, do not hire if you have reservations about the individual, and always trust your instincts.

CONTRIBUTED BY ELSA RODRIGUEZ, CTCM | PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Embracing Change for a Brighter Future

GLORIA STAATS, MS | QUALITY MANAGEMENT BRANCH MANAGER

This workshop helped attendees identify their response to change, how their response affects others, and how to develop strategies to help others through change. Gloria Staats discussed the four phases of transition in change: Denial, Resistance, Exploration and Commitment. She pointed out the characteristics of each, the importance of resilience during change along with ways to increase resilience through positive thinking, focus, flexibility, organization, and being proactive.

CONTRIBUTED BY PAULA KANTER, RD | CLINIC NUTRITION SPECIALIST | QA COORDINATOR



Gloria Staats

TXIN - The Future is Now

Candace Stohs-Krause and Karen Clements provided current updates regarding the TXIN Management Information System (MIS). Staff was eager to learn the details of the system. It is an exciting time for the WIC Program!

CONTRIBUTED BY LISA RANKINE, RD | CLINIC SERVICES PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Left to right: Candace Stohs-Krause, Karen Clements, and Dinorah Kline.

Texas WIC - Building a Brighter Future

Amanda Hovis and Edgar Curtis kicked off the NBF conference with a panel of distinguished guests sharing their insights on the upcoming Health and Human Services transformation and the future of WIC. Leslie French, Associate Commissioner, and Lindsey Rodgers, Deputy Associate Commissioner, Health and Developmental Services (HDS), discussed the upcoming organization structure and how WIC will work together with programs in HDS including Primary

Health Care and Title V as we see lots of the same population. Eddie Longoria, USDA, discussed the excitement and anticipation of the state of the art Mosiac system that will soon roll out. Evelyn Delgado shared her memories of the WIC Program and said, "so long" (Evelyn retired at the end of July). WIC awarded Evelyn a special gift for her 22 years of service to the women and children of the state of Texas.

CONTRIBUTED BY LISA RANKINE, RD | CLINIC SERVICES PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Edgar Curtis



Amanda Hovis



Evelyn Delgado



Lindsay Rodgers



Eddie Longoria



Leslie French

Ensuring a Brighter Future: A Fresh Look at Weighty Issues

BARB BANCROFT, MSN, RN, PNP | CPP ASSOCIATES



Barb Bancroft

Barb Bancroft delivered a truly entertaining and educational presentation as she dispelled several weight gain and weight loss myths, while providing helpful hints to help tackle weight issues. In her presentation, Barb shared that exercise, such as walking at least 10,000 steps per day,

portion control, addressing hormone imbalances, and getting plenty of sleep are key to achieving a healthy weight. In particular, she pointed out that sleep deprivation decreases leptin levels (the hormone that makes us feel full) and increases ghrelin levels (the hormone that tells us to eat more). Another interesting point Barb shared is how our gut microbiome can possibly affect weight gain and loss. Researchers discovered that when the gut bacteria of obese mice was transplanted into thin mice, the thin mice gained weight and vice versa. Research is underway to determine if the same affect can be seen in humans. Stay tuned.

CONTRIBUTED BY MELISSA MOUTON, MS, RDN, LD, CTCM | DIETETIC INTERNSHIP DIRECTOR

Determinants of the Infant Gut Microbiome and Childhood Obesity

NOEL MUELLER, PhD, MPH | JOHNS HOPKINS BLOOMBERG SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH



Noel Mueller

Dr. Noel Mueller, Assistant Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health delivered a fantastic learning session about the human microbiome and how it impacts childhood obesity. His presentation

outlined the advantage of vaginal versus cesarean births and the beneficial outcome to the child's gut, skin, and immune system. Infants who are delivered vaginally tend to have stronger immune systems, fewer health disparities, and are less likely to become overweight as they get older. Dr. Mueller is also a co-author of the manuscript, "The Infant Microbiome Development: Mom Matters" that reviews the role of the mother in shaping the infant microbiome, immune, and metabolic systems.

CONTRIBUTED BY TIFFANY BROWN, RD, LD | WIC CERTIFICATION SPECIALIST PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Rich vs. Poor, Native Born vs. Immigrant, Mother vs. Mother: A History of Wet Nursing in the U.S.

JACQUELINE WOLF, PhD | PROFESSOR AT OHIO UNIVERSITY, HERITAGE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL MEDICINE

Dr. Jacqueline Wolf related the sad history of wet nursing and the switch from breastfeeding to bottle-feeding in the 19th and 20th centuries. She shared how class divisions created a situation in which poor women were hired as wet nurses while their own babies often suffered and died.

Session attendees learned that for every 100 infants born in 1900, 13 died before their first birthday, usually from diarrhea caused by spoiled, adulterated cows' milk. Dr. Wolf described the dangers of a contaminated milk supply before pasteurization and the creation of government standards for the collection, transport, and bottling of cows' milk.

Dr. Wolf shared that there are lessons to be learned from the history that are applicable to infant care, motherhood, and breastfeeding today. Around the world in third world countries wet nursing is still common amongst families. As breastfeeding rates increase with increased knowledge about its importance, there are many women who are turning to wet nursing other mothers' babies as well as milk sharing. We are left with the questions, "what are the implications for wet nursing in the future?" and "how will it impact our communities, families, and babies' health outcomes?"

CONTRIBUTED BY MARGUERITE KELLY, IBCLC, RLC | TRAINING SPECIALIST IV



Jacqueline Wolf

Latest Research & Efforts to Promote Latino Childhood Obesity Prevention

ROSALIE AGUILAR, MS | SALUD AMERICA! UT HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT SAN ANTONIO



Rosalie Aguilar

Did you know that more than 38 percent of U.S Latino youth ages 2-19 are overweight and almost 21 percent are obese? These children are at a greater risk for developing diseases like type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, liver disease, and cancer as a result of being obese. Through the research and online user-friendly resources offered by Salud America! your community can improve the health outcomes of this

young population. Salud America! is a national nonprofit with a mission to promote a healthy weight for Latino children by empowering people to drive healthy changes in schools and communities. By using evidenced-based information, this program focuses on topics such as healthier schools, healthy weight by pre-k, active spaces, better food, and reduction of sugary drinks as strategies to promote a healthy weight for Latino kids. These topics are aligned with the nutrition education and messaging WIC provides to families and can be used throughout communities to reach the population beyond the WIC clinic. Each topic offers a scientific research review, bilingual issue brief, videos and infographics. The online Salud Report Card is a useful tool to find out information specific to the county you work in. To learn more about research and efforts to combat obesity, visit www.salud-america.org/research.

CONTRIBUTED BY YVONNE MARTINEZ, RDN, LD | NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Father's Role in Family Wellbeing

KAELEY BENSON, PhD | THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Fathers have a significant impact on the well-being of their children and their child's mother. Dr. Benson's session detailed the ways in which fathers are involved in their family's lives and the effect father involvement (or lack of involvement) has on their child and family well-being. Dr. Benson also described policies and programs that aim to enhance a father's positive influence on his family.

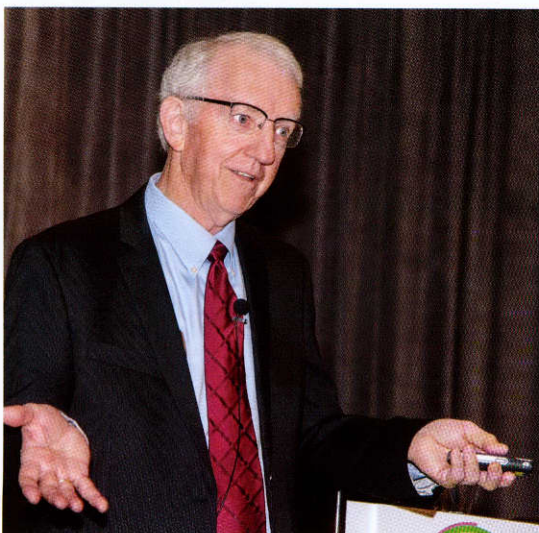


Laeley Benson

The main takeaways from the presentation include:

- Families are increasingly complex and less stable.
- Fathers are important contributors to children's healthy development.
- Most unmarried fathers are involved in their child's early development.
- Fathers who are not involved have many risk factors that prevent their involvement.
- Programs and policies to support fathers have evolved over recent decades.

CONTRIBUTED BY MATT HARRINGTON, MS, RD | NUTRITION EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Thomas Hale

In the Milk: New Research Data on Marijuana & Other Drugs

THOMAS HALE, PhD | TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Dr. Thomas Hale is considered one of the foremost experts worldwide in the field of perinatal pharmacology and the use of medications by pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. Hale brought his humor and wit to the very serious topic of recreational drugs. This session covered new research data on marijuana as well as other drugs of abuse, and described the transfer into human milk. He shared his recent research into the exposure of marijuana to infants during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Session attendees learned how to evaluate the relative risk of marijuana exposure in breastfeeding mothers, as well as the problems associated with chronic exposure to marijuana products and implications in pregnancy.

CONTRIBUTED BY MARGUERITE KELLY, IBCLC, RLC | TRAINING SPECIALIST IV

Using Design Thinking to Innovate WIC

HILDRETH ENGLAND, RD, LD | MIT MEDIA LAB

Hildreth England, Assistant Director of the Open Agriculture Initiative at the MIT Media Lab, invited staff to imagine a brighter future in an engaging session about design thinking. She shared insights from her work creating “food computers” in the MIT Media Lab and inspired staff to embrace their “inner designer” to innovate WIC. This involves having empathy for a problem and the people affected by it, curiosity to gather insights and prototype solutions, and creativity to fit a solution to the problem. She explained how amazing design often fuses art and science together in unexpected ways, and encouraged staff to try to “surprise” themselves. Overall session attendees left feeling inspired to learn more about design thinking and the possibilities it could bring to the future of WIC.



Hildreth England

CONTRIBUTED BY
ERICA HARRIS, MS,
RD, LD | NUTRITION
EDUCATION
STRATEGIST

Creating Brighter Futures for Women & Children: The Impact of Maternal Health Before, During & After Pregnancy

HELENE KENT, MPH, RDN | HM KENT CONSULTING



Helene Kent

Healthy pregnancies and healthy babies start before a woman even becomes pregnant. However, if half of pregnancies are unplanned how can we encourage women to make healthy lifestyle choices just in case?

Preconception health and screenings are an up and coming area of women's health and a new focus for health-care providers and public health programs. Data

shows that WIC makes a positive impact in health outcomes for women and babies. It is a challenge to reach women before they are pregnant and WIC has the unique opportunity to counsel women postpartum and before their next pregnancy. WIC is already addressing preconception health by focusing on nutrition and weight, chronic diseases, family planning, screening, and referrals to other health services.

CONTRIBUTED BY JESSICA LEYENDECKER, MPH | CLIENT
ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Infectious Disease and Its Transfer Via Human Milk

THOMAS HALE, PhD | TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

While this session may seem like it was dry, judging by the content, Dr. Hale provided a very engaging lecture that explored different infectious diseases that affect breastfeeding mothers. Most all of them were proven safe to continue breastfeeding, so we at WIC have the important job of doing the research and finding resources for mom to present to her health-care provider.



Thomas Hale

CONTRIBUTED BY KATIE COYNE, MS, IBCLC | BREASTFEEDING
COORDINATOR

Innovations in Municipal Anti-Human Trafficking Responses & Increased Victim Identification in Public Healthcare Settings

CHRIS GRAVES | OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
CITY OF HOUSTON

The information presented during this session was very interesting and helped to identify the various types of human trafficking that the City of Houston is working to address through their recent strategic planning. Toolkits

(<http://humantraffickinghouston.org/toolkits/>) are available for

WIC clinics and communities to use — a great set of resources! Having an understanding of the issues that our clients might be dealing with is so important and really makes you think twice about how their overall decision-making is impacted.

CONTRIBUTED BY VERONICA HENDRIX, LVN, IBCLC, RLC | TEXAS
TEN STEP PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Chris Graves

Red Flags in Infants and Children

SARA GIBSON, MD AND JORDAN REIS, MD | THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, DELL MEDICAL SCHOOL PEDIATRIC RESIDENCY PROGRAM

This session provided an overview of the types of red flags that could be seen in infants and children. Any WIC participant or potential participant should immediately



Sara Gibson and Jordan Reis

be referred to a source of urgent medical care (e.g. the Emergency Room) if these signs/symptoms are observed by any WIC staff. An in-depth review of red flags were provided along with visual and audio aids to supply a thorough explanation of each diagnosis/condition. Examples were provided of what would be considered normal observations in an infant/child versus that which would be alarming and would warrant urgent medical attention. Some conditions could be life-threatening and WIC staffs' immediate detection and referral is a lifesaving measure that is extremely valued by the medical community.

CONTRIBUTED BY LEONA DUONG, RD | CLINICAL NUTRITION SPECIALIST

Why Women Lose Their Milk: The Time-Sensitive Nature of Early Milk Production

BARBARA WILSON-CLAY, BSED, IBCLC, FILCA | BREASTFEEDINGMATERIALS.COM



Barbara Wilson-Clay

One of the main reasons Texas moms stop breastfeeding is either a perceived or real low milk supply. Renowned lactation consultant Barbara Wilson-Clay gave conference goers great insight into how and why some breastfeeding moms experience delayed onset of milk production and/or a real low milk supply and what the lactation professional can do to help them during this critical time. She provided key advice that WIC peer counselors, designated

breastfeeding experts, and lactation consultants can use to help WIC moms achieve their breastfeeding goals. CONTRIBUTED BY AKATA SANGHANI, MS, RD, LD, IBCLC | WIC FORMULA SPECIALIST

Driving Employee Engagement: The Leader's #1 Priority

MICHAEL DAGGS, MEd | TUTT & DAGGS, INC.



Michael Daggs

Michael Daggs immediately brought an energy to the room through his stories, interactive demonstrations, and serious conversation during this leadership session. He guided session attendees along the path to engaged employees which includes identifying employee strengths, finding the right fit, being an engaged leader, fostering engaged employees which all result in engaged customers. It was brought to light that there are three types of employees. 30 percent of employees are actually engaged, while 54 percent and 16 percent respectively are disengaged or actively disengaged. Anyone in a supervisory role would like to see all their employees achieve their maximum potential. What does it take to do this? Michael discussed the three keys to develop employees to their highest potential. Employees need to know the expectations, have the needed supplies and materials, and receive rewards and recognition. In a supervisory role, it is imperative that one gets to know their employees; this includes who they are, their strengths, and what they value. Michael emphasized that employees need engaged leaders. Without engaged leaders, employees cannot survive. Michael left us with the following, "People need to choose to love what they're doing. That's the only way you'll ever get engaged and stay engaged. You need to have a passion for what you're doing."

CONTRIBUTED BY DANITA ORTOWSKI, MS, RDN, LD | CLINIC SERVICES STRATEGIST

Scarcity: The Impact on Decision Making

JOYCE JAMES, LMSW-AP | JOYCE JAMES CONSULTING



Joyce James

Scarcity is a consequence of poverty, whether it be lack of money or time, and it captures the mind by taxing bandwidth. Scarcity is involuntary and affects cognitive capacity and executive control. Our ability to retain information, focus, and multitask is diminished.

Scarcity directly reduces bandwidth, not a person's inherent capacity but how much of that capacity is currently available for use. Diminished bandwidth is most often perceived as

carelessness, distraction, forgetfulness, etc., so being mindful and understanding the role of scarcity increases our ability to help improve our clients' bandwidth.

Scarcity also leads to tunneling, which is to focus single-mindedly on managing the scarcity at hand which then leads to borrowing of time or money hence digging ourselves deeper into scarcity in the future. In summary, the goal is to create solutions that examine scarcity as the potential root cause of failures that poor people experience.

CONTRIBUTED BY NOEMI HERNANDEZ, MBA, RD, LD, IBCLC | WIC FOOD/FORMULA SPECIALIST

Helping WIC Families: A Holistic Clinic Approach to Intimate Partner Violence

KRISTA DEL GALLO | TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

Krista Del Gallo opened the session by saying "WIC is one of the main resources that connects families to options for safety in domestic violence environments who are at risk of poor health outcomes."



Krista Del Gallo

Because WIC refers families to various programs, it is important for staff to understand the programs and what is offered to ensure the family walks away with a reason to call for assistance. For additional training information go to <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/>.

CONTRIBUTED BY RACHEL EDWARDS | CLINIC SERVICES BRANCH MANAGER

How to Be a Grande Extra-hot, No-whip Triple Espresso in a Short, Non-fat Vanilla Latte Extra-whip World

PAM MCCARTHY, MS, RD | PAM MCCARTHY ASSOCIATES



Pam McCarthy

Don't let the title throw you off. Pam McCarthy closed this year's conference invigorating WIC staff to continue making a difference in our clients' lives. Pam spoke about the importance of getting to the heart of what matters.

The good news

is you have a choice of being a "jolt of happy caffeine or a drizzle of bland fluff in life."

CONTRIBUTED BY KATIE COYNE, MS, IBCLC | BREASTFEEDING COORDINATOR

Recognizing WIC's Brightest Stars

ANNA JACKSON, MSSW | ALPINISTA CONSULTING

Anna Jackson initiated an impromptu session called "how you caught the WIC bug." I got to share with a staff member from the Lampasas clinic. She shared a touching story about how she was noticed as being a great WIC participant who was always prompt and kept her appointments.

Her work had been challenging in the past and she dreamed for a better opportunity. Staff reached out to her and asked her if she would like to work at WIC. She has never looked back and loves being in a position to help others.

CONTRIBUTED BY LISA RANKINE, RD | CLINIC SERVICES PROGRAM COORDINATOR



Anna Jackson

Practicing Mindfulness for a Happier and Healthier Life

CONTRIBUTED BY KATIE OLIVER, MS, RD, LD AND WIC WELLNESS COORDINATOR

Mindfulness

This year at the Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference the WIC Wellness Works (WWW) activity focus was mindfulness. The WWW team created a challenge that allowed participants to practice meditation exercises throughout the conference. There was even a room where participants could go to refocus or simply chill out! Participants could relax and work on their coloring skills with WIC coloring page provided at various stations. We had a really great response from all who participated in the Mindfulness Challenge and we hope that everyone takes the time to practice what they learned and



bring the idea of mindfulness back to their clinics.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of being. A way of living every day intentionally and with awareness of where we are and what we are doing, and not being overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us. This may seem oversimplified to you, but the fact is it's hard to stay focused in this day and age with so many distractions. Social media, smart phones, and distressing news stories can give us anxiety, obsessive thoughts, or make us fret about the future. We can use focused attention to pull

us back to where we are or what we are doing and allow ourselves to destress, refocus and not react in a negative way. The ultimate goal is to help ourselves make healthy, peaceful, compassionate choices and have actions and reactions mirror healthy choices.

You are probably already practicing some form of mindfulness. An example may be thinking twice before saying something hurtful to a loved one, and ultimately deciding not to say the comment because it would only make the situation worse. That's mindfulness, we already do it, it's not a special added thing we do. You don't need to change who you are; the practice recognizes and cultivates the best of who we are already. A few important things to remember, anyone can do it, it simply enhances the way you're already living, it's evidence based, and it has the power to spark innovation.

While mindfulness may come more easily to some people who have a more mellow temperament, meditation has been proven as a way to build up our mindfulness muscles and enhance our ability to positively react to situations. When we meditate we are able to zero in on sensations or thoughts and observe them without analyzing. Meditation can take many forms other than just sitting cross legged on the floor. You can practice meditation seated, walking, standing, moving, laying down (this may lead to falling asleep though), or merging your meditation practice with an activity like yoga or other sports.

(Continued on WWW — Insert B)

Practicing Mindfulness

(Continued from WWW — Insert A)

The definition of mindfulness is hard to nail down into words and you will find that different resources will have slight variations on how they describe the practice. Try not to get hung up on these variations and just give the basic actions described in the article a try for a little while. Make sure you take time to reflect and take note if you notice a change in your reactions to stressful events. Give simple meditation exercises a try, see if it makes your day better or less stressful. Look for links on the internet through YouTube, podcasts or websites that offer free and simple meditation activities. Remember sometimes the smallest changes in our day can have the biggest impact on how you see the world.

How to Practice Mindfulness During the Holidays?

The holidays can be a time of high stress, with family, work parties, and travel. Practicing mindfulness is a great way to reduce stress and maintain a calm and attentive perspective on this time of year.

We can practice being open and aware of what is happening in the moment by being present both inside and outside of our mind and body. Here are some tips to help you exercise mindfulness during the holidays.

1. **Practice active listening.** Put down your smart phones, turn down the TV or music and try to focus on what your friends and family are saying. People express themselves not only through their word but also their body language. So keep your eyes and ears open. Acknowledge and strengthen conversations by giving a smile or simple nod and respond to the talker directly.
2. **Pay attention to the emotions of others.** Notice how the people around are feeling during the holidays and be open to communication of those feelings.
3. **Allow yourself to feel a range of emotions.** The holidays mean different things to different people. This time of year can be a reminder of loss, grief, or loneliness. Be open to these feelings and allow yourself to acknowledge and make space for whatever emotions come up for you instead of trying to ignore them.
4. **Try to let go of judgement for yourself and others.** Examine what times of the year you are most often making judgements. For many, this may be the holidays. Try to not hang on to those feelings about yourself, or others, of being “bad,” “wrong,” or “inadequate.” Let criticism go completely, just notice when it is happening and let those thoughts arise and fall but don’t hang on to them, and give yourself distance from the feeling.
5. **Weigh the “should” vs. awareness of your own needs.** You may feel like all of those holiday obligations are important but be sure that you are balancing them with your own self-care. If you are only giving energy to obligations and spending too much time trying to please other people’s expectations, you could end up feeling burned out or resentful. By taking care of yourself, you will be able to be more attentive, calmer and kinder when you are with others during the holidays, all keeping in the holiday spirit.

(Continued on WWW — Insert D)

recipe

A lower calorie holiday treat for the whole family to enjoy!

Marshmallow Popcorn Treats with Dark Chocolate Drizzle

Makes: 12 treats
Serving size: 1 bar

Ingredients:

Cooking spray
1 10-ounce package miniature marshmallows
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
½ teaspoon kosher salt
10 cup salt and oil-free popped popcorn
1-ounce bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped



Preparation:

Coat an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. Line the pan with parchment paper to extend over the edge of pan. Next, coat paper with cooking spray. Combine marshmallows, butter and salt in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook mixture until melted and smooth, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in popcorn. Transfer mixture to pan, pressing with parchment paper coated with cooking spray. Place chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave at HIGH 1 minute, stir until smooth. Drizzle chocolate over popcorn mixture. Refrigerate 5 minutes. Lift mixture from pan and cut into 12 bars.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: (1 bar):

121 calories, 2.4 g total fat (1.2 g saturated fat), 3 mg cholesterol, 40 mg sodium, 26 g carbohydrates (1 g dietary fiber), 1 g protein

Texas Seasonal Produce

Fruits:

Apples, cantaloupes, grapefruit, oranges, persimmons, watermelon, seedless watermelons



Vegetables:

Beets, broccoli, green cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, mushrooms, kale, kohlrabi, field peas, sweet peppers, hot peppers, pumpkin, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, greenhouse tomatoes, turnips, zucchini



Practicing Mindfulness

(Continued from WWW — Insert B)

For more tips about mindfulness, meditation and dealing with stress during the holidays visit: www.Mindfulness.org

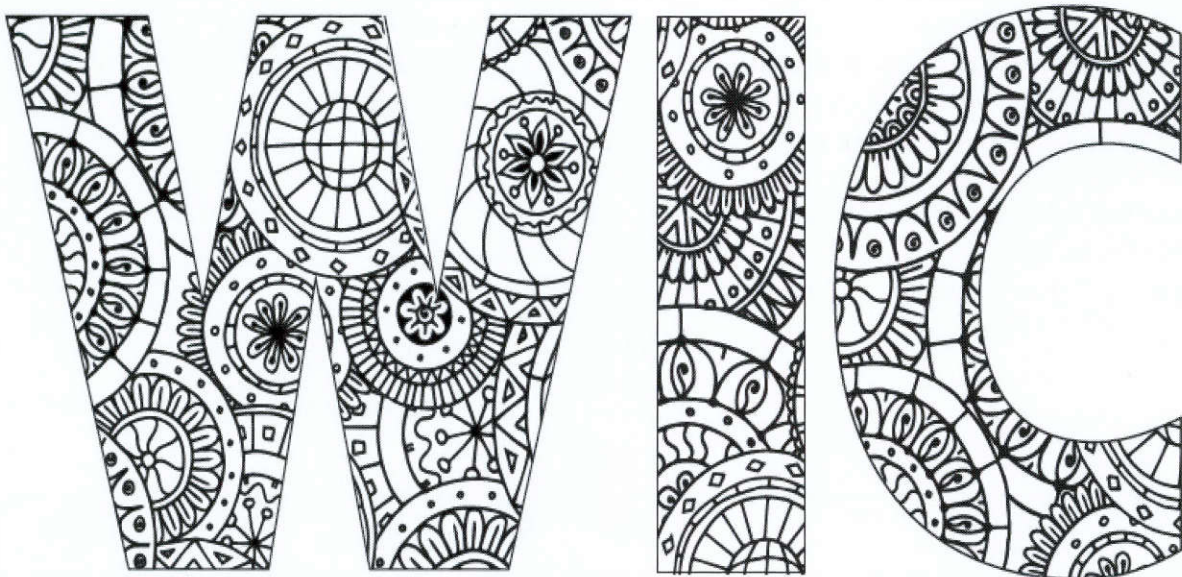
Resources

- Lazar, Sara W., George Bush, Randy L. Gollub, Gregory L. Fricchione, Gurucharan Khalsa, and Herbert Benson. “Functional brain mapping of the relaxation response and meditation.” *Neuroreport* 11, no. 7 (2000): 1581-1585.
- Corliss J., “Mindfulness meditation may ease anxiety, mental stress.” (2014, January 8). Harvard Health Publications, Harvard Medical School, Accessed August 17, 2017, from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/mindfulness-meditation-may-ease-anxiety-mental-stress-201401086967>
- What is Mindfulness? (2014, October 8). Accessed August 17, 2017, from <https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/>
- Wei, M. “8 mindfulness tips during the holidays.” (2016, December 13). *Psychology Today*, Accessed August 17, 2017, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/urban-survival/201612/8-mindfulness-tips-during-the-holidays>



Mind Games

It's official—coloring is good for you. Whatever your age, shading a picture in colors of your choice generates a sense of stillness and wellness, and is featured as part of this year's wellness theme.



Share your wellness success stories for a chance to be spotlighted in Texas WIC News and inspire other WIC staff! Contact your State Wellness Coordinator, Katie Oliver, at Katie.Oliver@hhsc.state.tx.us or 1-512-341-4596.

test your nutrition IQ

by Eaton Wright, B.S., NUT
Nutrition Expert

Holiday traditions. The food. The good times. The memories. The... stress!?! Ah, family. How can spending time with people you're supposed to love so much be so nerve-wracking?

Hello everybody, Eaton here to talk about a couple of tips you can use to survive the holidays with food and family.



Quiz:

1. True or False. Family relationships are complicated.
2. Tips for eating well during the holidays include everything, except:
 - a. Stick with your regular exercise routine (walking, gym, etc.).
 - b. Three words... pie, pie, pie.
 - c. Fill up on fresh fruit and veggie hors d'oeuvres.
 - d. Practice mindful eating.
3. True or False. Oyster stuffing is the perfect complement to a golden brown and totally delicious turkey.

Answers:

- 1 The answer is duh! Of course family relationships are complicated. How can it be that I'm forever 11 years old when I go home, even though I'm now in the autumn of my life?

Relax, it's normal for family members to treat each other like the people they once knew because that's how they often see each other.

It's at times like this that I'm reminded of the words of my much better half, Ms. Always B. Wright... Go with the flow. Enjoy your family for what they are... family... and ignore the petty stuff.

- 2 B. Everyone knows the equation π^*r^{good} (pi are good) but there is another equation you should become familiar with... $\pi + \pi \neq \text{good}$. Instead of gorging on delicious foods, try to continue your regular routine (as much as possible) ... go for an early morning walk, enjoy all foods in moderation and try a little mindful eating. Mindful eating is the practice of resisting the urge to plow through your meal in record speed. Instead, chew food slowly. Stop talking. Tune in to the textures and flavors of the meal.
- 3 False! No offense to my older sister, but the only suitable place for oyster stuffing is the city dump. Now does jolly old Eaton tell his most awesome and cool sister that her stuffing taste like a tire's inner tube? Heck no! He kindly takes a small serving and suffers through it, knowing that it means a lot to his sister. Again, he's reminded of Ms. Always B.'s words... Go with the flow — don't make a big deal out of a little oyster stuff(ing).

* π (pi) is the symbol used by mathematicians to represent the ratio of a circle's circumference and not actually something you eat.

Enjoy the holiday season and family get-togethers for what they are, a time of reconnecting with old traditions and maybe making a few new ones. Take care of yourselves, go for a walk, take a few deep breathes and enjoy a little bit of everything, including the oyster stuffing.

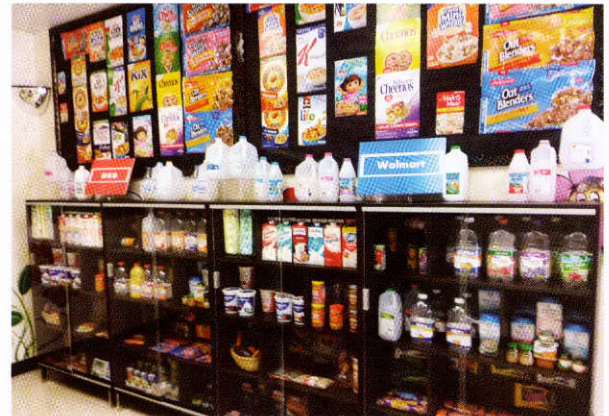
About the author: Eaton Wright is a certified NUT based in Austin, Texas.

Local Agency 2017 Spotlight and Retirees

Local Agency 22 – Waco

CONTRIBUTED BY LINDA RAINS-RUSSELL, WIC DIRECTOR

Waco-McLennan County Public Health District's Improving the Participant Experience (IPE) grant this year focused on the vendors. One of our projects was to develop a full “mock” grocery store displaying HEB and Walmart approved foods. We purchased shelving and had our facilities department help finish them with plexi-glass fronts and locks (so kids could not get into and rearrange) as well as build frames for above the shelves. We grouped the foods and had our graphics department make us HEB and Walmart signs. Participants use these constantly and ask questions/take pictures, etc. It has been very helpful to staff as well. The compliance manager for Walmart (who covers this area) is very excited about seeing the finished product.



Local Agency 31 – Temple

CONTRIBUTED BY ANNAMARIE GARCIA, RDN, LD, BREASTFEEDING COORDINATOR



At Bell County Public Health District, we want to make sure our community knows where to go for support and recognizes the faces of our infant feeding experts. That's why this year, LA 31 focused its time and efforts on reaching out to the community by participating in numerous local outreach events. We set up booths during local annual events, established weekly outreach at a local prenatal clinic and partnered with the Central Texas Food Bank setting up alongside their monthly mobile food bank. From fairs to hospitals to Headstart enrollment, if our participants or potential participants were there, WIC was there too!

Local Agency 89 – San Antonio

CONTRIBUTED BY CINDY MCCOMBER, BS, IBCLC, WIC MANAGER

Local Agency 89 now has two IBCLC's providing high risk assistance to more of our breastfeeding mothers. In August we were awarded the “Loving Support Award” presented to us at our breastfeeding celebration. Also in 2017, our annual health fair at Children's Hospital of San Antonio, our main office site, was a huge success with over 100 people attending. We partnered with the San Antonio Food Bank (SAFB) to distribute the farmers market coupons and had the farmers on hand so coupons could be redeemed. The clients enjoyed the fact that they could use them on site. We also had vendors for information on dental, healthcare, Medicaid, and offered back to school immunizations at no charge from our mobile health clinic.

Local Agency 126 – Brenham

CONTRIBUTED BY LEA R. HEARNSBERGER, RD, CLINICAL DIRECTOR, FAITH MISSION WIC PROGRAM



During the month of June, Faith Mission WIC participants were invited to participate in a project to honor dad. Children placed painted hand and/or footprints on pictures, poems, and cards for the special men in their lives. Many dads, grandfathers, uncles, and significant others were honored. The children had lots of fun and so did the WIC team.

Local Agency 07 – City of Dallas

CONTRIBUTED BY E. DARLENE IRWIN, MS, RDN, LD, WIC DIRECTOR

Happy Kitchen and Cooking Matters for Parents

WIC moms love cooking classes! The favorite recipe was Black Bean and Veggie Quesadilla on Whole Wheat Tortillas.

“It changed me for good, to cook more efficient, fast, and healthy. The most important for me was to practice with the recipes that were simple and my family liked,” said Hildelisa O.

Local Agency 07 in Dallas began the year with cooking classes. Yolanda Cepak, RDN, LD, coordinated the classes from October 2016 – March 2017 at three WIC Clinics. In partnership with the North Texas Food Bank, we provided Cooking Matters for Parents (CM) classes, and in partnership with Grow North Texas we offered The Happy Kitchen (THK). The 6-week series of classes were designed to engage WIC parents in a series of participatory cooking classes intended to empower them to get the most nutrition out of their budget. Cooking Matters classes also provided a professional chef to present the recipe. Participants received an incentive for attending classes such as, cookbooks, cutting boards, measuring cups and spoons, water bottles, and a reusable grocery tote bag. Best of all, the moms and their children sampled the delicious food at the end of each class. We had 56 graduates completing the 6-week long cooking and nutrition classes. Post-survey results showed that participants desired to learn more about healthy cooking and attend more of these classes together.



Above: Happy Kitchen with Vanessa Patterson, RDN, LD, at Site 9, below left: Cooking Matters with Professional Chef at Site 9, Below right: Cooking Matters Graduates at Site 9.



Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) — Fight Against Hunger This Summer!



Summer is the hungriest season of the year for children who have access to meals in school but may not have access to food at home when school is out. For a second year our WIC agency join the mission to help fight hunger during the summer months.

Twelve of our WIC clinics hosted the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) from June 12 – August 15, 2017, Monday-Friday. WIC children and their companions 1-18 years old received a meal and/or snack during meal service times. We also provided referrals to other SFSP locations close to their home. If we were their most convenient loca-

tion, we welcomed them to continue coming to their WIC clinic every day for meals for their 1-18 years old kids. We offered a two-week menu, to include hot meals three times per week, and cold meals twice per week. In addition, our sponsor, North Texas Food Bank, provided us with produce and nutritious snacks to distribute. Ana Torres, RDN, LD, was a guest on Univision 23 Studios TV station to discuss SFSP. In addition, the station posted a live Facebook interview about WIC and our hosting the SFSP. Univision also broadcasted a special report from WIC Site 26 on June 12 on WIC and the SFSP. All WIC sites advertised the WIC SFSP.

Local Agency 07 – City of Dallas continued

CONTRIBUTED BY F. DARLENE IRWIN, MS, RDN, LD, WIC DIRECTOR

WIC Farmers Market – Big in Flavor and Size!

WIC Farmers Market, in partnership with Grow North Texas, is open two times a month, April-September at two WIC clinics and accepts WIC Farmers Market Vouchers, SNAP and cash. Each WIC participant is eligible for \$30.00 worth of vouchers. We are all excited about being able to offer fresh produce right at our door step!



Retirees Local Agency 07 – City of Dallas

CONTRIBUTED BY F. DARLENE IRWIN, MS, RDN, LD, WIC DIRECTOR



Aster Reddick (LA 07), who worked for the City of Dallas Environmental and Health Services and the WIC program for 36 years, retired September 12, 2017. She served as senior administration coordinator and managed WIC's accounting department, along with the Technology Analyst division. Clinic supervisors relied on Aster's help in fixing facility problems. Aster used her expertise to expedite vendor contracts through the City of Dallas's BID process, City Controller's office and our purchasing system.



Deborah Parnell, IBCLC, LD, (LA 07) who worked for WIC for 33 years, retired in January 2017. Her position was senior breastfeeding coordinator when she retired. Under Deborah's leadership, Local Agency 07 received the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Service's Loving Support Award of Excellence in 2016 in recognition of breastfeeding performance measures, effective peer counseling programs, and strong community partnerships. Our breastfeeding initiation rates increased to an average of 95 percent. She also was responsible for the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite designation for the City of Dallas and set up a breastfeeding room at City Hall and the WIC Administration Office.



Cindy Wachtler, RDN, LD, (LA 07), who worked for WIC for 19 years, retired in March 2017. Cindy, one of the first counseling dietitians, helped to grow the High Risk Program. Cindy also worked as field support coordinator and provided oversight in the areas of NE, QA, Training, and the High Risk Program. She implemented the partnership with the North Texas Food Bank to establish the WIC Farmer's Market in Dallas, and even in retirement, Cindy volunteers at the WIC Farmer's Market through the North Texas Food Bank.



Michelle Davey, MS, (LA 07) worked for WIC for 29 years, retiring in January 2017. She started her career as a clinic supervisor and retired as QA coordinator. She also served as QA and training coordinator when the two positions were combined.



Anh Nguyen, RDN, LD, (LA 07) who worked for WIC for 17 years, retired in August 2017. Anh served as a counseling dietitian, area supervisor, and client engagement specialist. She helped promote services to a large refugee population located near one of our clinics. Anh also translated Nutrition Education and other materials into Vietnamese for the state WIC office.

Local Agency 48 – Houston

CONTRIBUTED BY JOLENE NORBERT-HARRELL, RD LD, WIC DIRECTOR

Spotlighting 20+ Years of Service

Harris County Public Health WIC Program in Houston is proud to recognize several employees who have 20+ years of service. These employees have been around through “thick and thin” and we are so very proud and appreciative of their dedication to our WIC participants and the Harris County community. On behalf of the thousands of clients that you have served over the years, THANK YOU!



*Tammy Williams
Training Liaison,
28 years*



*Carolyn Perez
WIC Certification
Specialist, 28 years*



*Amelia Day
Technical Systems
Manager, 26 years*



*Hannah Spencer
Senior Nutrition
Assistant, 21 years*



*Irene Trevino,
Nutrition Assistant,
24 years*



*Martha Gonzalez,
WIC Certification
Specialist, 21 years*



*Billie Rodriguez
Nutrition Assistant,
20 years*



*Connie Romo
Senior Nutrition
Assistant, 25 years*

Retiree Local Agency 76 – Waxahachie

CONTRIBUTED BY RITA DAVIDSON | WIC DIRECTOR



Ann Latham, RD, LD, Assistant Director for Local Agency 76 Outreach Health Services (OHS) Area Two, retired on November 1, 2016, in Seymour, Texas. Ann began working for OHS 23 years ago when OHS gained WIC from the Texas State Health Department. Ann had a passion for nutrition education and was nutrition education coordinator for many years. She mentored WIC nutritionists to be NE Specialists for their area. Many of Ann’s staff became WIC certification specialists and WCS supervisors to serve rural areas surrounding Abilene and Wichita Falls. In 2017, Ann returned to LA 76 in a new capacity — working part time in the “Improving the Participant Experience” grant. LA 76 hopes to have Ann back one more year with the grant.

Meet WIC's Extended Family

by Lacey Hamilton
Policy Advisor
Health and Developmental Services

HHSC welcomes the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. As a result of SB 200, 84th Legislature, Regular Session, WIC was transferred to HHSC on September 1, 2017, in the newly developed Medical and Social Services Division of Health and Human Services.

WIC joins 9 other service programs to form Health and Developmental Services (HDS), including Early Childhood Intervention, Children's Autism Program, Children with Special Health Care Needs, Title V Prenatal and Child Health and Dental Program, County Indigent Health Care Program, Epilepsy Program, Primary Health Care, Kidney Health Care, and Hemophilia Assistance Program. While all programs differ in services, all provide a direct health service to a specific target population in need.

Lindsay Rodgers, Deputy Associate Commissioner Health and Developmental Services, has experience as the Texas WIC Director prior to her current role and is excited to welcome WIC to HDS. Lindsay has held various roles for the state of Texas with an emphasis on nutrition, including Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Food and Nutrition Division at Texas Department of Agriculture, where she helped oversee administration of 12 USDA federal nutrition programs. A dietitian by trade, Lindsay has worked in numerous roles focusing

on chronic disease prevention and community capacity building for improved health.

What This Means for WIC

WIC services will not be altered or lapsed, this change is only at the state agency level. What this will mean is that WIC program staff will be able to work closely with programs that reach similar clients with alternate needs.

Meet WIC's New Family Programs

Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) provides infants and toddlers with disabilities and developmental delays, and their families, with early intervention services designed to enhance the child's development and also the capacity of families to meet their child's needs.

The program serves children from birth through three years of age who meet eligibility requirements by having a developmental delay documented on a standardized testing tool; a medically diagnosed condition; and/or an auditory or visual impairment. Prospective ECI clients are evaluated for ECI eligibility prior to admission into the program.

Children's Autism Program

The Children's Autism Program provides applied behavior analysis (ABA) treatment services to children ages 3-15 with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. ABA is a treatment that uses behavioral principles to evaluate and teach socially relevant behavior and new skills, while also increasing desirable behaviors through positive reinforcement. ABA treatment is the most recommended, evidence-based treatment for this condition. ABA services are customized to the individual child's needs based on an assessment and treatment plan. The team that develops the plan assesses progress and affects any adjustments necessary to bolster the child's needs and strengths. Services may take place in the home, a clinic, or familiar settings in the community.

Children with Special Health Care Needs

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Services Program is a state and



*Lindsay
Rodgers*

federally-funded program that provides health care benefits to clients with physical or developmental disabilities. CSHCN Services Program is a payor of last resort.

The CSHCN Services Program provides benefits to low income children — ages 20 and younger — with special health care needs, and people of any age with cystic fibrosis (CF). The program assists clients with: medical, dental, and mental health care; prescription drugs; special therapies; case management; family support services; travel to health care visits; insurance premiums; and transportation of deceased clients.

County Indigent Health Care Program

Counties, public hospitals, and hospital districts are mandated to provide health care services to indigent clients residing within their geographic boundaries. The County Indigent Health Care Program (CIHCP) serves Texas residents who are at or below 21 percent of the FPL, not eligible for Medicaid, and could not otherwise access basic health care services. It is the responsibility of the individual indigent care entities to track the number of individual clients served, and this data is not reported to HHSC. There are 304 entities in Texas responsible for administering the CIHCP (143 county-run indigent programs, 144 hospital districts and 17 public hospitals).

Epilepsy Services

The Epilepsy Program provides comprehensive outpatient care (diagnostic, treatment, and support services) to eligible persons who have epilepsy and/or seizure-like symptoms through sub-recipient providers in selected areas of Texas.

Hemophilia Assistance Program

The Hemophilia Assistance Program (HAP) provides a limited range of benefits to individuals diagnosed with hemophilia who are not eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, or other third-party coverage. HAP is considered a payor of last resort.

The program serves Texas residents with a diagnosis of hemophilia who are 18 years or older, without any other public or private healthcare benefits.

Kidney Health Care Program

The Kidney Health Care Program (KHC) improves access to health care by providing a source of limited benefits for eligible Texas residents with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and residents who have had a kidney transplant.

The program serves Texas residents with ESRD who receive regular dialysis treatment or who have received a kidney transplant and are not Medicaid eligible.

Primary Health Care Services Program

PHC is intended to ensure that needy Texas residents who do not qualify for other state or federal health care assistance programs have access to primary health care services. The Primary Health Care Services Act, (H.B. 1844, 69th Texas Legislature, 1985) required the creation of the PHC program (codified in HSC, Chapter 31).

PHC is for Texas residents who are at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level (FPL) and do not otherwise receive primary health care, including preventive health care services and education.

Title V Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Fee-for-Service Program

The Title V MCH Fee-for-Service Program provides preventive services, minor acute care, dental referrals, and preventive and therapeutic dental services. The program serves all Texas residents from birth to 22 years, pregnant women with prenatal medical services for up to 60 days during the CHIP Perinatal program enrollment process, and prenatal preventive and therapeutic dental services up to three months postpartum that meet the eligibility criteria until the total amount awarded through the block grant is exhausted.



Lacey Hamilton



World Vegan Month

by Akata Sanghani, MS, RD, LD, IBCLC
WIC Formula Specialist

When I was asked to write a WIC News article for World Vegan Month, I was so excited! It just so happens that I started transitioning to a vegan diet this year and, in the last few months, I have followed a full vegan diet. Before we dive to learn more about the vegan diet, I wanted to give you a background of why I went vegan.

I have been a lacto-vegetarian my whole life. Yes, since birth. As a lacto-vegetarian, I consumed dairy products and honey but no eggs, gelatin or other animal by-products. As high school came around, I became a lacto-ovo vegetarian and consumed eggs in the form of desserts – ice cream, cakes, etc. I tasted eggs for the first time in college and thought they were gross. So, I stuck to the dessert “variety” of eggs.

Fast forward to 2016 when I, along with other dietitians, took a tour of a conventional “medium sized” dairy farm with roughly 225-250

dairy cows. Although the living conditions and practices were okay and similar to other dairy farms, they weren’t great for the cows or their offspring, but even as an animal lover, it still wasn’t enough for me to change my diet. So when did I decide to go vegan?

Let’s fast forward again to 2017 and lab work that revealed my hemoglobin A1c was high. My doctor wanted to start me on Metformin, a blood sugar medication, and told me I probably had impaired glucose tolerance, a precursor to diabetes. Now, I’ve been vegetarian my whole life and for those of you that haven’t met me, I’m well within the normal BMI range for my weight and height. Needless to say, this was the shock I needed to do something about my diet. I knew that there had been research showing a vegan diet was beneficial in controlling blood sugar, and as a vegetarian, I knew it would be easier for me to become vegan than to count my carbs. Plus, the im-

ages of the cows and calves on the dairy farm were forever engrained. And so, thus began my journey to veganism.

What is a Vegan Diet?

A vegan is one who does not consume any fish, meat, poultry, and other animal/insect-derived products including dairy products, eggs, honey, and gelatin. The Vegan Society takes it a step further and defines veganism as “a way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practicable, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing or any other purpose.”

Is it Healthy?

According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ position paper on vegetarian diets, “appropriately planned vegetarian, including vegan, diets are healthful, nutritionally adequate and may provide health benefits for the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. These diets are appropriate for all stages of the life cycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, adolescence, older adulthood and for athletes.”

Plant-Based Trends

With the 2015 update to Dietary Guidelines for Americans, we saw recommendations to not only increase fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and plant-based proteins, such as legumes, but also to decrease the consumption of meat and poultry. With these changes, our grocery stores have also seen a surge in plant-based products. From Beyond Meat’s vegan burgers that “bleed” and sizzle (each has a whopping 20 grams of protein!) to a non-dairy milk from Ripple Foods that contains the same 8 grams of protein per cup as dairy milk. The plant-based diet trends have taken off so much that a report by MarketandMarkets, a leading market research firm, predict by 2020, the meat substitutes market will be worth \$5.96 billion and the dairy alternatives market will be worth \$14.36 billion by 2022. Wow! Looks like I’m not the only one who’s eating a more plant-based diet.

Is WIC Vegan-Friendly?

With all this talk of trends and the vegan diet,

you might be wondering is Texas WIC vegan-friendly? Yes, very much so. At Texas WIC, we have a variety of foods in our food packages which can be appropriate for the vegan WIC participant. All of our standard food packages can be provided without milk, yogurt, cheese and eggs, and in the case of the exclusively breastfeeding package for infants and moms, without baby meats or tuna. For WIC participants wanting soy alternatives, Texas WIC has a soy food package for women and children which replaces dairy milk and yogurt with soy milk and cheese with tofu. Just remember to remove the eggs from all food packages as well as the tuna from the exclusively breastfeeding packages. For our WIC participants who are not exclusively breastfed or need formula after they turn one, WIC has soy formula options.

Celebrating World Vegan Month

So, how can you celebrate November’s World Vegan Month? If you’re feeling curious and determined, try going vegan for a day, a week or a month. If changing to a vegan diet seems overwhelming, there are other ways you can celebrate World Vegan Month. I encourage each member of the WIC family to try small changes in your diet. I started out with small changes — reduced my non-vegan meals to 4 meals a week and then continued until I got to zero. You may be surprised how easy it can be. The next time you are eating Italian, try whole grain pasta with vegetables in a tomato sauce and skip that shake of parmesan. When going to your favorite Tex-Mex restaurant, choose guacamole as your appetizer instead of queso or order vegetable fajitas. Step out of your comfort zone a little. Try a tofu stir-fry, black bean burger or some cashew-cheese sauce for vegan nachos. They are delicious! And lastly, you can celebrate World Vegan Month by simply learning more about veganism. Check out www.vegetariannutrition.net or www.vegansociety.com to learn recipes, why people go vegan, and the benefits to your body, the environment and of course, the animals.



Update: I started this journey with a hemoglobin A1c of 6.0 (abnormal) seven months ago. Now it’s back to normal at 5.4 and I’m 13 pounds lighter!

Texas WIC
Texas Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

PERIODICALS



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Publication No. 06-10664

Texas WIC News is also available on the Texas WIC website!
<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/wichd/gi/wicnews.shtm>



next issue:
New Year —
New Clients

For information about subscriptions to Texas WIC News, email WICNewsSubscriptions@dshs.texas.gov or call 1-512-341-4888.