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Texas

# WIC NEWS

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

January 1997  
Volume 6, Number 1

## The Precious Jewels Challenge

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*And the winner is...*

# About this special edition

By Debra Stabeno  
Associate Commissioner  
TDH Health Care Delivery

This special issue of *Texas WIC News* is dedicated to the staff members of Texas WIC Project 26, City of Houston Health and Human Services.

This group of 186 men and women recently earned top honors in the Texas WIC Precious Jewels Challenge. Their intensive outreach work and customer-service efforts have made a lasting impact on the expansion of WIC benefits to even more eligible recipients.

## Contest reached new clients

The Precious Jewels Challenge was a client-expansion contest held from April through September last year in Texas WIC local agencies across the state. The projects competed in three categories:

- ◆ **Greatest number of participants added**  
Awarded to Project 26, with 4,451 new clients.
- ◆ **Highest percentage increase in clients**  
Awarded to Project 93 in Gilmer, with a growth of 124 percent during the contest's six-month period.
- ◆ **Most points earned for outreach efforts**  
Awarded to Project 12 in Hidalgo County, with more than 12,000 outreach points earned.

Each of these three first-place local agencies was awarded a commemorative plaque.

Also, a staff member from each will be able to attend this year's annual conference of the National Association of WIC Directors. NAWD's 1997 conference will be held in San Francisco.

## Winners of grand prize

When results were compiled for each local agency in each category, Houston's Project 26 came through as the grand-prize winner in overall points.

Second in overall points was Project 48, also of Houston. Third was Project 13 of Laredo.

State-agency outreach coordinator Marsha Canright presented Project 26 director Faye Walker with her local agency's awards — one plaque for first-place standing in the number of new clients added, and the other for earning grand prize in overall points — on Dec. 2 in Houston during Project 26's annual staff-appreciation banquet. As the grand-prize local agency, two more of its staffers will also be able to attend the 1997 NAWD conference.

In this special issue of *Texas WIC News*, we are proud to display photographs of all of the Project 26 staff members so that our readers can see the faces of the men and women who exemplify what all of us at Texas WIC believe to be our mission: respecting clients, providing outstanding customer service to each of them, and continuing to improve the nutritional health of the women, infants, and children in Texas.

## The real precious jewels

Personally, I wish to recognize the day-to-day hard work and dedication that is shown by so many Texas WIC staffers across the state, and to thank each of you for taking care of our real precious jewels, the infants and children and parents we serve. We are here to serve their needs; we are here to help.

Future issues of *Texas WIC News* will resume next month in the standard format and with a balanced mix of regularly appearing columns, news from our local agencies, letters from clients, articles on breastfeeding and nutrition, and the annual listing of Texas WIC local agencies.



Faye Walker, left, WIC director at Houston's Project 26, accepts her local agency's Precious Jewels Challenge awards from Marsha Canright, outreach coordinator at the state agency. Walker holds the plaque for winning first place in the category of participation growth, and Canright holds the grand-prize plaque, both won by Project 26.

**Texas WIC News**

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Texas

# WIC NEWS

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*Cover: Texas WIC staffers across the state participated in the Precious Jewels Challenge expansion contest conducted from April to September 1996.  
Cover design by Christine Grether.*

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# *Project 26 highlights accessibility*

## **Houston Health and Human Services Department (Site 26-00)**

WIC Nutrition Services Administration  
8000 N. Stadium, 3rd Floor  
Houston, Texas 77054  
(713) 794-9095

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Faye M. Walker, M.S., R.D., L.D.*  
Project 26 WIC director

To increase participation, Project 26 staff members "concentrated on accessibility for our clients," says WIC director Faye Walker. She says the staff participated in health fairs, conducted mass certifications at walk-in clinics, extended clinic hours, and worked Saturday and Sunday clinics as part of the statewide Precious Jewels Challenge expansion drive held from April to September 1996.

One challenge faced by Walker was funding the staff to work extended hours. She also needed to ensure that enough people were available to work or to be on standby for the extended hours and weekends. "Preventing burnout was another challenge, but we tried to provide motivation to our staff members," she says. "Internal contests motivate some people to work harder toward a goal."

She encourages other clinics in heavily populated areas to experiment with evening and weekend hours "even if you have to sacrifice some hours during the week." Walker found that the evening and weekend hours are "very popular" with clients.

Walker says these hours allow working families to come to the clinic after work, without taking their children out of school for an appointment.

"We are pretty lenient and give clients another appointment if they miss theirs," she says. "We have a good interview process over the phone to see if we should give a client

another chance. We try not to turn anyone away."

Walker urges each unit coordinator to "share with the rest of their staff how the number of participants influences our salaries." Walker believes that employee satisfaction is important. "The more they know, the more reason they have to make it work," she says. "In WIC, you earn your keep."

Photo, page 7

*seated in front row, from left:*

Jessie Washington, accounting service supervisor  
Shirley Scott, administrative aide and time and attendance coordinator  
Loretta Peters, system support analyst II  
Bridget Zanovich, nutrition consultant and breastfeeding coordinator  
Rhonda Bankett, senior secretary

*seated in second row, from left:*

Ola Malone, nutrition consultant and supervisor for north-northeast area  
Candida Gomez, administrative aide and appointments supervisor  
Maria Cerna, senior appointments clerk  
Thelma Sanchez, senior immunizations clerk  
Faye M. Walker, WIC director

*standing in third row, from left:*

Proserpina Saavedra, nutrition consultant for private-doctor sites in north-northeast area  
Maria Ruiz, senior appointments clerk  
Mara Drais, senior clinical-education coordinator  
Veronica Paredes, senior outreach clerk  
Emma Lois Washington, health program specialist, breastfeeding/training



*standing in third row, from left, con't:*

Vera Petteway-Nyormci, senior breastfeeding trainer  
 Jane Van Nort, lactation consultant  
 Teresa OseiBoama, community liaison and outreach coordinator

*standing in fourth row, from left:*

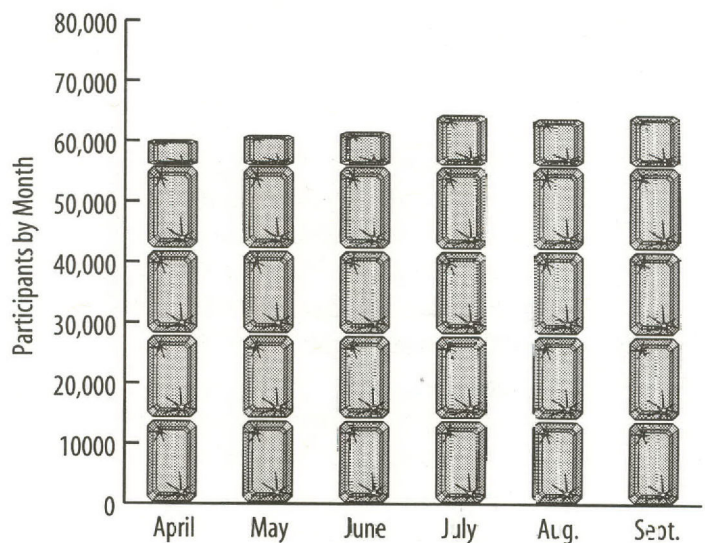
Richard Barchue, office supervisor and vendor-relations and voter-registration specialist  
 Joel Scott, senior clerk  
 Quincy Simpson, motor-vehicle operator and courier  
 Robert Gonzales, motor-vehicle operator and courier

*not pictured:*

Rhonda Blair, receptionist  
 Tony Mendez Jr., administrative aide – food delivery  
 Lillie Peter, public health nurse II and immunizations coordinator  
 Gay Quartey, nutrition consultant and supervisor for northwest-southwest-central area  
 Charlotte Stroud, administrative aide  
 Ephraim Ukaegbu, health program specialist

## Project 26 Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**7.40% Increase**

# *Aldine hosts 1 of 5 WIC centers aimed at high schools*

## **1. Aldine ISD/Nimitz Senior High WIC Center (Site 26-19)**

2005 W. Thorne Drive  
Houston, Texas 77073  
(713) 631-4069

Second Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Leanna Rimmer*, site manager  
*Yvonneya Brown*, health program specialist

## **2. Denver Harbor WIC Center (Site 26-12)**

6400 Market St.  
Houston, Texas 77020  
(713) 675-7164

Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Wednesday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Leanna Rimmer*, site manager  
*Yvonneya Brown*, health program specialist

## **3. H.P. Carter WIC Center (Site 26-65)**

1700 Gregg  
Houston, Texas 77020  
(713) 631-4069

Third Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Leanna Rimmer*, site manager  
*Yvonneya Brown*, health program specialist

## **4. North Forest ISD WIC Center (Site 26-01)**

10726 Mesa Drive  
Houston, Texas 77078  
(713) 631-4027

Monday and Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*Leanna Rimmer*, site manager  
*Yvonneya Brown*, health program specialist

## **5. Wheatley Senior High School WIC Center (Site 26-55)**

4900 Market St.  
Houston, Texas 77020  
(713) 631-4069

Fourth Thursday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Leanna Rimmer*, site manager  
*Yvonneya Brown*, health program specialist

Project 26 staffers known as the “Teen Team” maintain WIC sites in five high schools in the Houston area. Services are usually provided on one or two days in each month during the academic year. Nutritionist Leanna Rimmer manages each site with assistance from health program specialist Yvonneya Brown. Clerk Rita Canales accompanies them regularly to one of the five sites, Denver Harbor (Site 26-12). Rimmer and Brown work alone at the other four locations: Aldine ISD/Nimitz Senior High School (Site 26-19), H.P. Carter (Site 26-65), North Forest ISD (Site 26-01), and Wheatley Senior High School (Site 26-55).

Because the sites are located at high schools, says Rimmer, she and her staffers deal with the schools’ counselors for outreach. “They then work with the teachers and students through word-of-mouth information about WIC,” she says. “We have a smaller caseload than most centers, so we’re able to do what we do.”

The centers’ young clients are often frightened when they first come to WIC, says Rimmer. “With everyone there is a need,” she says. “All of the students are overwhelmed, especially when they get pregnant. We even have pregnant 14-year-olds here. But it’s a big relief to them when they hear about WIC and know that they can do something on their own to help their baby. They feel more adult, like they’re contributing something. They put themselves on the program, they go to the stores, they get the vouchers.”



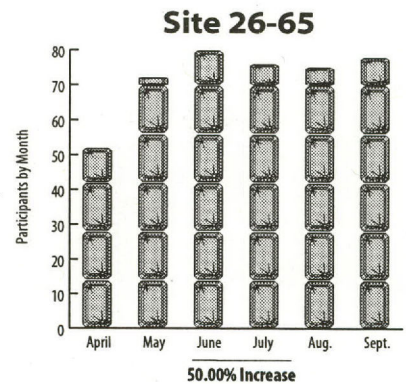
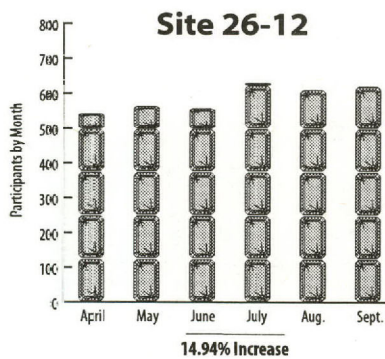
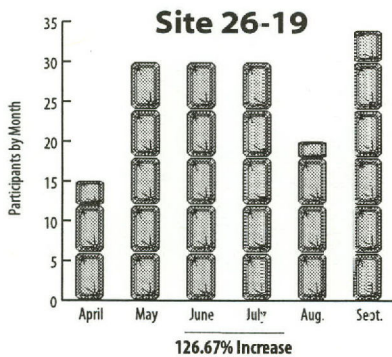
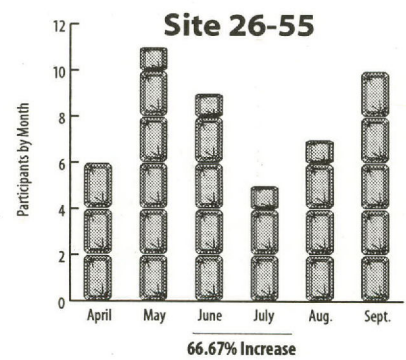
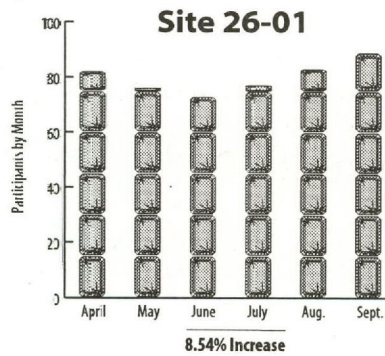


from left:  
 Leanna Rimmer, nutritionist and site manager  
 Yvonneya Brown, health program specialist  
 Rita Canales, clerk (Site 12)

## Clinics' Results

Total participants added for Sites 01, 12, 19, 55, & 65

April - Sept. 1996



# *Flexibility helps Alief WIC Center build participation*

## **Alief WIC Center (Site 26-06)**

6787 Wilcrest, Suite A  
Houston, Texas 77072  
(713) 568-1192

Monday to Tuesday, Thursday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

2nd and 4th Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Zahra Koopaei*, clinic supervisor

The Alief WIC Center added almost 500 new clients by holding mass certifications and walk-in clinics on Saturdays, distributing WIC information through its VISTA volunteers, and encouraging current clients to bring in their WIC-eligible friends.

Clinic supervisor Zahra Koopaei says the Alief WIC staff keeps its current clients happy by rescheduling makeup appointments for the same day. "If a client is late or misses an appointment, we keep slots open for them that same morning. If the client arrives without the right documentation, we can send them home for it and still give them a makeup appointment on the same day," she says. "If a pregnant mom makes an appointment for herself, we go ahead and do as much paperwork as we can on her other kids."

She says that this kind of flexibility has helped the clinic build its caseload and improve its customer service.

Because the Alief WIC Center serves clients of various nationalities, the staff must be versatile, says Koopaei, who speaks Farsi (Iranian), Arabic, English, and Spanish. "Our clinic serves many clients from the Mideast and from Mexico," she says. "We use the 1-800 translation line a lot."

Koopaei and her staff have also used the "deaf relay-phone" service for a pregnant woman with a hearing disability. For the client's following visits, Koopaei provided an interpreter. "The baby was born with full hearing

and a well-developed ability to yell," she says.

According to Koopaei, the majority of the Alief site's clients are working parents. "I'd say that 80 percent to 85 percent of our clients are working moms," she says. "These people are just drained, and it's a big challenge for us to assure them that it's OK to be getting help from the government, that we know they've never asked for any before. We tell them, 'This is not welfare. This is your own tax money. You're not getting handouts.'"



*front row, from left:*  
 Ana Brizuela, health program specialist  
 Zahra Koopaei, senior nutritionist and clinic supervisor  
 Sylvia Tovar, information coordinator

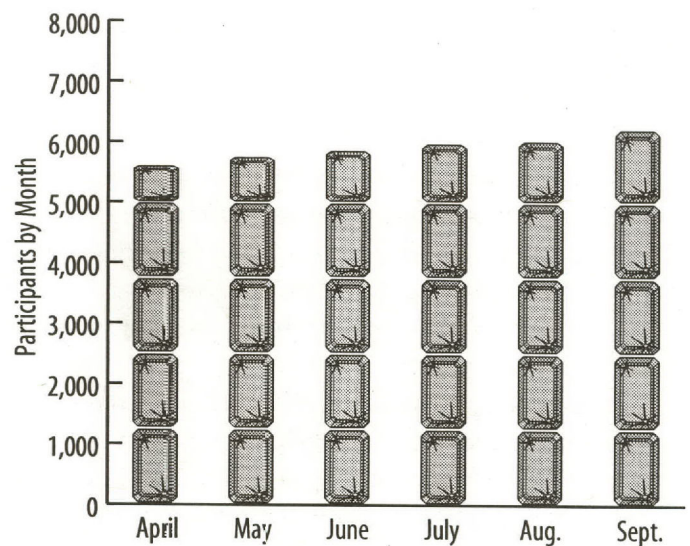
*middle row, from left:*  
 Carolin Holmes, senior clerk  
 Cao Minh Thuy, clinic assistant  
 Lan Hoang, senior clerk  
 Linda Floyd, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

*back row, from left:*  
 Magdalena Gonzalez, clerk  
 Alisa Smith, senior immunizations clerk  
 Regina Mannings, senior clerk

*not shown:*  
 Mario Esquivel, information coordinator  
 Racquel Williams, breastfeeding peer counselor

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**11.21% Increase**

# *Ben Taub Hospital WIC site has built-in contacts*

## **Ben Taub Hospital WIC Center (Site 26-60)**

1504 Taub Loop, #3NI82003  
Houston, Texas 77030  
(713) 793-2278

Monday to Tuesday, Thursday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Jalileh Sanjari*, site manager

Staff members at the Ben Taub Hospital WIC clinic use the other hospital departments to help them spread the news about WIC services. "We walk the floors of the hospital and capture sick or well people to spread our message," says Carole Small, site manager at Ben Taub WIC throughout the Precious Jewels Challenge. "We distribute posters and fliers to the prenatal and OB/GYN units, the insurance offices, the pharmacy, and the other specialized clinics in the hospital."

The WIC staff also stays in constant contact by phone with representatives from each of these departments, she says.

With a concentrated population, it can be easy to make contacts. "At Ben Taub, we were able to capture 75 percent of the mothers visiting their premature babies to get them to breastfeed," Small says. "We also target the teenage pregnancy group by working closely with that clinic here at the hospital. This is a population we need to focus on."



*from left:*

Naomi Muniz, health program specialist

Carole Small, senior nutritionist and former site manager (now site manager at West End Multi-Service WIC Center)

Maria Rivera, health program specialist (now at La Nueva Casa de Amigos WIC Center)

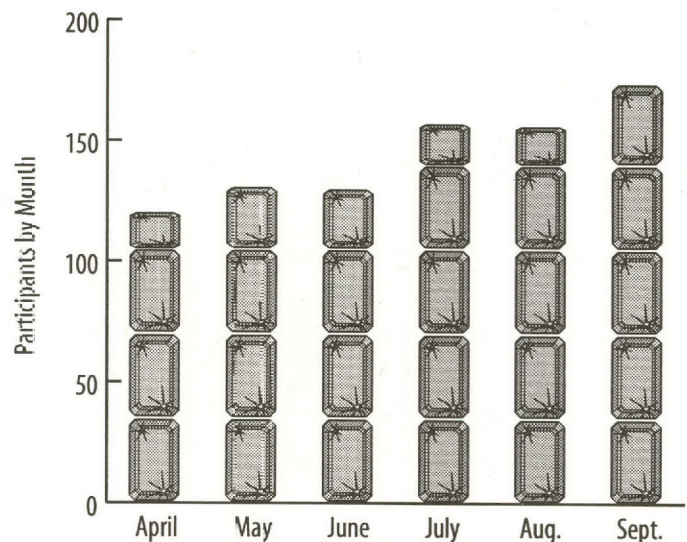
*not pictured:*

Jalileh Sanjari, senior nutritionist and current site manager

## Clinic Results

**Total participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**45.00% Increase**

# *New Casa de Amigos site to serve with friendliness*

## **La Nueva Casa de Amigos WIC Center (Site 26-24)**

1809 N. Main  
Houston, Texas 77009  
(713) 547-8029

Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Patricia Casillas, L.V.N., site manager*

*L*a Nueva Casa de Amigos WIC Center opened Nov. 25, 1996, under the same roof as the La Nueva Casa de Amigos Health Center. The WIC clinic represents a sort of rebirth of an earlier WIC site at an earlier Casa de Amigos Health Center, says Project 26 WIC director Faye Walker.

"Quite a long while ago," says Walker, "we had to close our Casa de Amigos clinic and move those participants to the West End, Northside, and Magnolia sites." Interim site manager Tiffany Battle adds, "Outreach is done a lot by our clients. After they left the old Casa, they told others about WIC in the multi-service center, immunizations clinics, and family clinics that they went to."

Battle, a traveling nutritionist, resumes her regular duties this month when new site manager Patricia Casillas, L.V.N., completes her training.

## **Another new site opens**

The Eastwood WIC Center (Site 26-25), another new clinic site that was not involved with last year's Precious Jewels Challenge, opened in August 1996.

Nutritionist Olevia Biglow manages the site alone. The Eastwood WIC Center is open on Sundays from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. The phone number for the site is (713) 926-6229, and its address is:

Eastwood WIC Center  
412 Telephone  
Houston, Texas 77023.



*from left:*

Maria Rivera, health program specialist

Tiffany Battle, nutritionist and interim site manager until mid-January

Patricia Casillas, L.V.N., site manager after mid-January

## *WIC clinic in doctor's office triples participation*

### **Dr. H.S. Chana (Site 26-16)**

5990 Airline, Suite 120  
Houston, Texas 77076  
(713) 691-0575

Monday to Wednesday, plus Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Melissa Townsend*, clinic supervisor

*W*IC staff members located in Dr. H. S. Chana's office tripled its participation numbers from 400 in May to about 1,200 in September by taking walk-ins, according to senior clerk Yvonne Alvarez.

"It's challenging to work with so many clients, and we get a lot of transfers, but we've never said no to anyone," she says. Alvarez says many women come in because they don't have any infant formula. "We give them formula samples, and they usually end up qualifying for WIC," she says.

Alvarez encourages other WIC staffers to "work with your clients and do the best you can to get them in and serve them quickly."



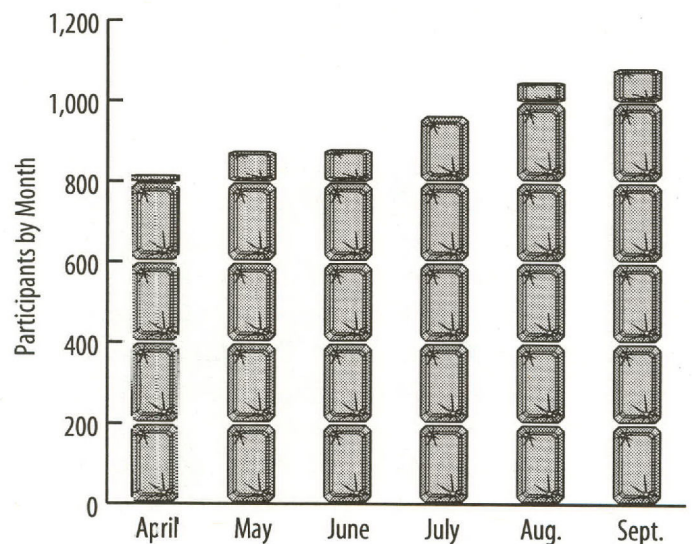


from left:  
Yvonne Alvarez, senior clerk  
Rita Canales, clerk

not shown:  
Melissa Townsend, senior nutritionist and  
clinic supervisor, on maternity leave

## Clinic Results

Total  
participants added  
April - Sept. 1996



**32.88% Increase**

# *Channelview WIC Center reaches out to medical professionals*

## **Channelview WIC Center (Site 26-17)**

15055 E. Freeway, Suite A20  
Channelview, Texas 77530  
(713) 457-5514

Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

*Alisa Nwachokor*, site manager

*W*ith its clinic across the street from a hospital, the Channelview WIC Center has easy access to medical professionals and new mothers, according to site manager Alisa Nwachokor. "We hand out information and posters to the OB/GYN unit, and we make sure the new mothers get our information before they leave the hospital," she says.

Staff members also drop off information in doctors' offices, the general waiting-room areas of the hospital, the YMCA, and the area Head Start programs. "They all like the WIC program, and they cooperate with us," Nwachokor says.

She encourages WIC staff members to attend as many health fairs as possible. "They are a great way to get the word out about WIC," she says.

Gloria Harris, health program specialist at the Channelview WIC clinic, adds, "Be sure to give the clients the education and information they need on becoming a mother. Get one-on-one involvement to see the real needs they have. Do it as a caring person."

Harris still sees confusion in her clients about WIC eligibility. "You'd think everyone would know about WIC, but lots of folks think they're ineligible because they're married, or because their husband works," she says. "We had a teen come in who had never heard of WIC, very young and pregnant, on her own,

living in an old condemned building. Now that she's on WIC, she's in a home for the homeless and is breastfeeding her baby. We hear that they're both doing well."

"Most of our clients are so appreciative of WIC and are thankful that we can help their families," says Nwachokor. "We get thank-you cards from them, and that's a nice feeling."



Alisa Nwachokor, senior nutritionist and site manager

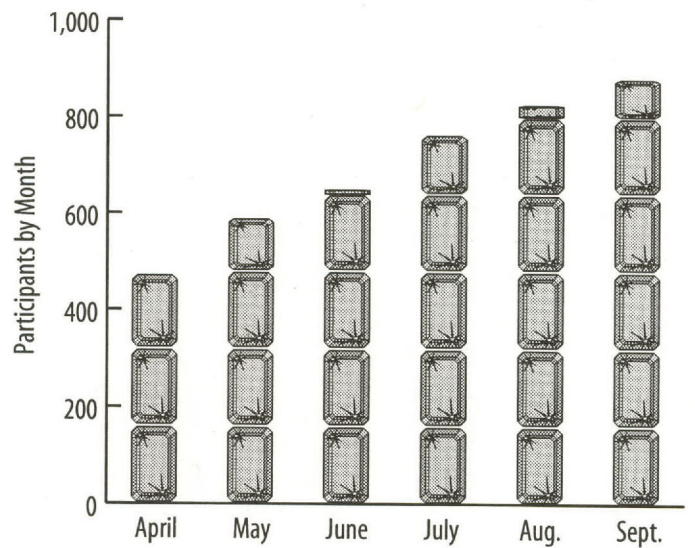


Gloria Harris, health program specialist

## Clinic Results

**Total  
participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**85.65% Increase**

## *WIC in doctors' offices proves successful*

### **Downtown WIC Center (Site 26-09)**

2000 Crawford St., Suite 1010  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 759-6835

Monday to Tuesday, Thursday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

*Clara Harris*, site manager

Staff members at the Downtown WIC Center distribute WIC pamphlets, brochures, and fliers in physicians' offices and waiting rooms as well as in other medical clinics in the downtown area. "We work with our clients as they are waiting for their doctor appointments, and we also take walk-ins, so we have to be really flexible," says Clara Harris, site manager.

She says more WIC local agencies need to try to establish sites in doctors' offices because it really works. But doctors' offices aren't the only places to spread the word about WIC, she says.

"Just go where there are people. If you see people with children, ask them if they know about WIC. Explain it to them. All you have to do to build your participation numbers is just ask everyone you see if they know about WIC," Harris says. "I ask every pregnant woman I see if she knows about WIC and tell her what we can do for her and her family."

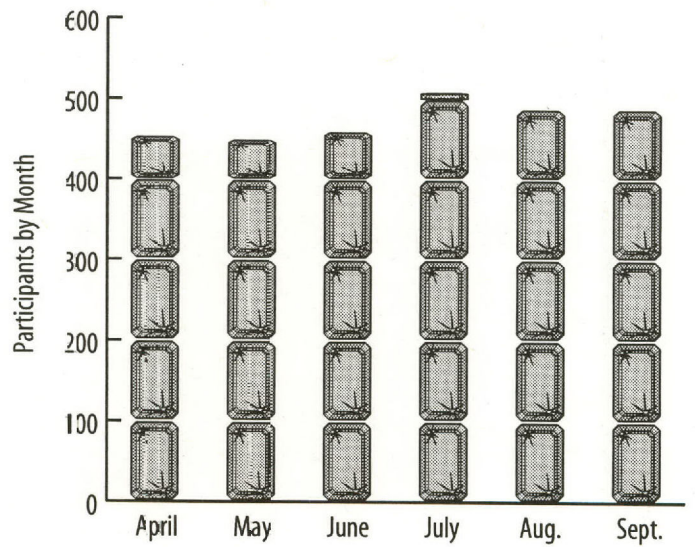
Harris says it's heartwarming when mothers come back to thank the WIC staff. "It's rewarding to be able to watch the progress the infants and mothers make, knowing you are helping them be healthy and get healthy," she says.



from left:  
Deborah Jones, health program specialist  
Clara Harris, senior nutritionist and  
site manager

## Clinic Results

**Total  
participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**7.73% Increase**

## *Time can be asset — or setback — in doctors' offices*

### **Dr. B.T. Hollins (Site 26-10)**

2105 Jackson, Suite 100  
Houston, Texas 77003  
(713) 951-9243

Tuesday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Bridget Zanovich*, site manager

Nutrition consultant Bridget Zanovich distributes WIC informational materials in several doctors' offices and waiting areas in addition to seeing WIC clients in the waiting area of one doctor. "All of the doctors and pediatricians I've approached have been very interested in promoting the WIC program and in cooperating with us," she says.

Zanovich says it is tough to balance the time spent with each client. "Sometimes they are in a hurry or we are in a hurry because we don't want our other clients to have to wait too long," she says. "But because we are in a doctor's waiting room, and our clients are waiting anyway, sometimes we are able to spend more time with them face to face. It's very nice to be able to get that personal. When people need something, you have to be willing to help them out."

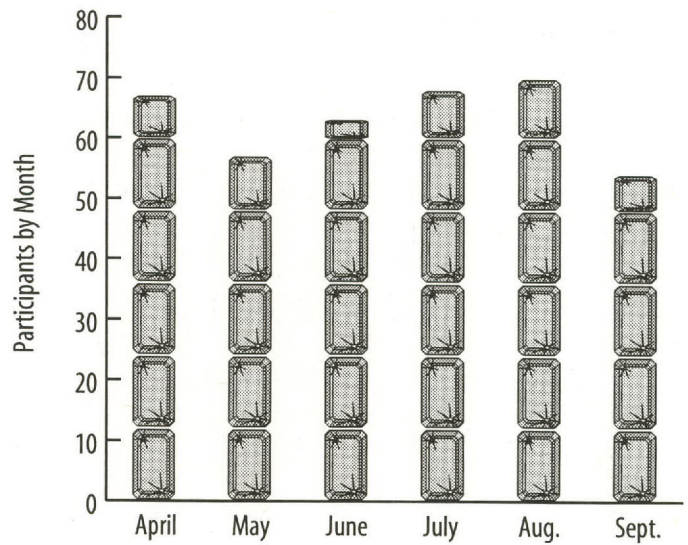
She stresses that communication among WIC staff members is a high priority. "Share with your 'network' of contacts," she says. "When one of us goes to a training session, we come back and share with the other staff members. We share ideas on how to bring in more participants."



Bridget Zanovich, nutrition consultant and site manager

## Clinic Results

**Total  
participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**19.40% Decrease**

## *Mass certifications boost participation numbers*

### **Kashmere Multi-Service Center WIC Center (Site 26-14)**

4802 Lockwood, Suite 115  
Houston, Texas 77026  
(713) 676-1016

Monday, Thursday, and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

*Esther Olubunmi*, site manager

WIC staff members at the Kashmere Multi-Service Center held mass certifications every other weekend from June to August 1996. Each time, they certified about 100 to 200 people. "A lot of people say they like the mass certifications because they are able to get back on the program," says Esther Olubunmi, site manager.

The staff also offers extended hours twice a week and attends community events to display WIC information and to sign up people. "We get a lot of compliments because we help out our clients so much," Olubunmi says. "If they miss an appointment, we work with them to reschedule it, or we work them in."

She says customer service is still a priority for the staff. "We talk politely to our clients and encourage them to bring their friends, who we promise to see," Olubunmi says. "We give the clients a little reward when they refer their friends, and their friends actually do come in."

Local WIC agencies need to do more outreach, according to Olubunmi. "We need to let more people know about WIC and that WIC is a nutritional program that is different from Food Stamps," she says. "We need to show clients how to use our products in food preparation, and we need to educate pregnant women about nutritious snacking for vitamins instead of relying on prenatal vitamin supplements alone."





*front row, from left:*

Debbie Aguilar, senior clerk  
 Yolanda Cerda, senior immunizations clerk  
 Esther Olubunmi, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Sharon Bradford, senior immunizations clerk  
 Alma Villagrana, senior clerk

*second row, from left:*

Fancrea Nazir, breastfeeding peer counselor  
 Maria Arreaga, receptionist  
 Prisci la Mata, senior immunizations clerk  
 Patricia Elmore, clinic assistant  
 Cassandra Gordon, L.V.N., immunizations nurse  
 Becky Medira, senior clerk

*third row:*

Reginald Harris, information coordinator

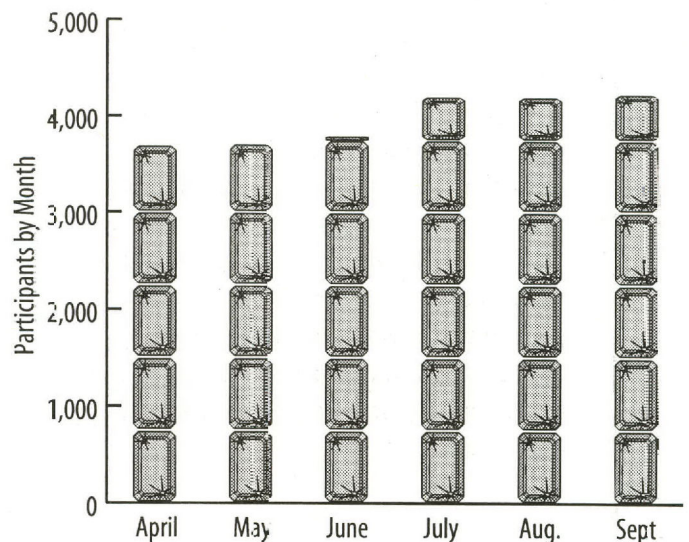
*not pictured:*

Marsha Lewis, health program specialist  
 Glenda Middleton, senior clerk

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**14.42% Increase**

## *LBJ Hospital WIC site works closely with hospital staff*

### **LBJ Hospital WIC Center (Site 26-11)**

5656 Kelley, #2NS 20004  
Houston, Texas 77026  
(713) 636-5783

Monday, 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

*Rosa Shelton*, site manager

WIC staffers located in LBJ Hospital have built-in access to new mothers. "We work closely with the First Step program, which is for newborns," says Rosa Shelton, site manager. "We explain the WIC program to the hospital staff so they can pass the information on to the patients. We let them know how they can sign up."

Shelton says she and her staff distribute WIC pamphlets and brochures to patient rooms and work closely with the social workers and the teen clinic at the hospital. "We also attend as many health fairs as we can to promote the WIC program," she says.

One challenge the WIC clinic faces is the fact that its clients have to pay to park, which many of them can't afford to do, Shelton says. Another challenge is the site's location on the second floor.

"Sometimes it's hard to find us," Shelton says. "We make sure we communicate with the receptionists and administrative personnel downstairs so they know where we are and so they can direct people to us."

She encourages other WIC clinics located in hospitals to "just get out there and let people know you are there for them." Her advice is simple: "Just get out and work it."



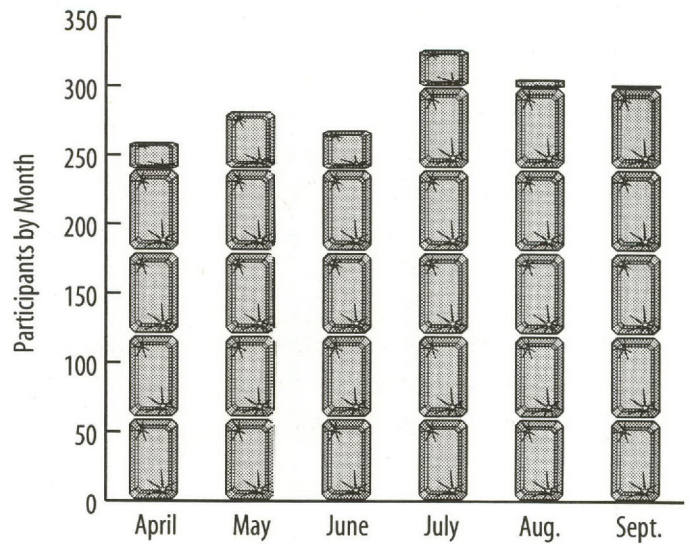
from left:  
 Rosa Shelton, senior nutritionist  
 and site manager  
 Elizabeth Sanchez, receptionist

not pictured:  
 Ana Jaco, breastfeeding peer  
 counselor

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**16.22% Increase**

# *Mass certifications work for Magnolia Multi-Service Center*

## **Magnolia Multi-Service Center WIC Center (Site 26-03)**

7037 Capitol, Suite 201  
Houston, Texas 77011  
(713) 928-9595

Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon

*Darlene Gross*, site manager

*W*IC staffers at the Magnolia Multi-Service Center office held an open house and mass certification once a month for three months in a row. "We were open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. nonstop. One time we stayed until 6 p.m.," says Darlene Gross, site manager. "We certified between 200 and 300 people each time."

Gross says staff members also participated in area health fairs, called clients on the phone to remind them of their appointments, and worked extended clinic hours in the evenings and on Saturdays.

It's difficult to keep the clinic running smoothly when clients forget to bring their required information, Gross says. "But we manage. Good customer service is the most important thing to us," she says. "We take the time to relate to our clients and try to relate to and understand their problems so we can truly help them out."



*front row, from left:*

Darlene Gross, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Juanita Soto, clerk-typist  
 Gloria Harris, part-time health program specialist  
 Olevia Biglow, senior nutritionist – travel  
 Lucille Ozan, nutritionist and assistant site manager

*second row, from left:*

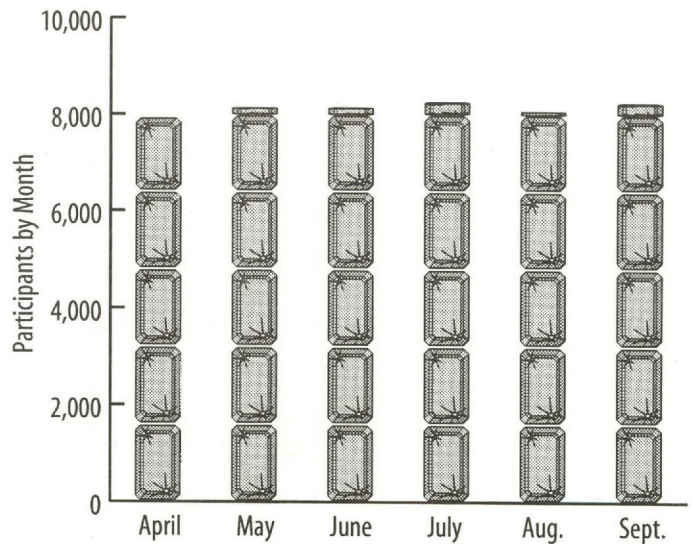
Fandrea Nazir, breastfeeding peer counselor  
 Debra Turner, health program specialist  
 Deborah Cardona, senior clerk  
 Sally Delgado, receptionist

*third row, from left:*

Mary Simon, L.V.N., immunizations nurse  
 Veronica Garcia, senior immunizations clerk  
 Idalia Gutierrez, senior clerk – food delivery  
 Hayde Miller, senior clerk  
 Blanca Almaguer, senior clerk  
 Dyetra Washington, senior immunizations clerk  
 Lorenza Aguilera, information coordinator  
 Rosalinda Neri, clinic assistant

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**3.76% Increase**

# *Northeast WIC Center focuses on follow-up visits, family atmosphere*

## **Northeast WIC Center (Site 26-02)**

9421 Mesa Drive, Suite D  
Houston, Texas 77028  
(713) 633-7985

Monday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Demetrius Freeman*, site manager

Northeast WIC Center staff members call clients who miss their appointments and reschedule new ones for them. Staffers also coordinated their efforts with other social-service agencies to give out the WIC phone number to their clients, says site manager Demetrius Freeman.

“Our biggest outreach challenge is in keeping the clients coming to their follow-up appointments,” Freeman says. “We try to accommodate them by asking them what time they prefer or by referring them to another site that’s more convenient.”

Freeman says that, by remaining pleasant, staff members can encourage clients to return. “We let our clients open up to us by making them feel at home in the clinic,” she says. “We want them to feel like family, not like just a client. In fact, a lot of our participants are on a first-name basis with staff members. If you are customer-friendly, your clients will come back.”



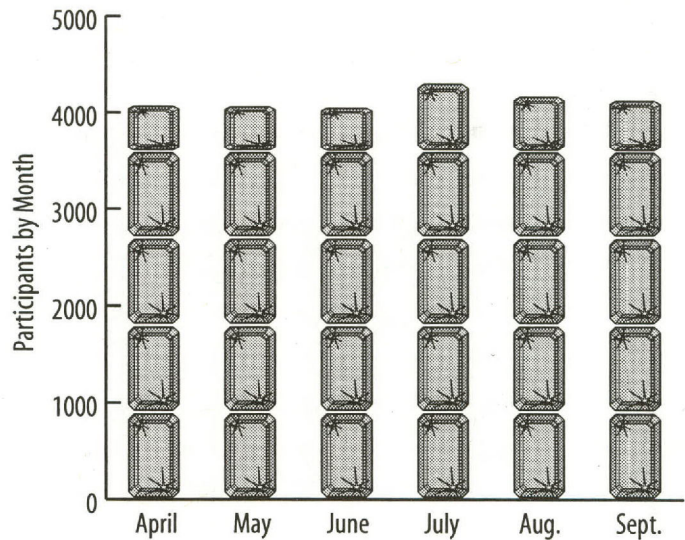
*front, from left:*  
 Dameron Mitchell, senior clerk  
 Demetrius Freeman, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Lela McGowen, clerk

*middle, from left:*  
 Leonora Isaac, clinic assistant  
 Yolanda Zapata, senior certification clerk  
 Elizabeth Rivera, receptionist  
 Diane Reyes, senior immunizations clerk

*back, from left:*  
 Rosie del Campo, senior clerk  
 Ana Cantu, health program specialist  
 Viola Watkins, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**1.33% Increase**

## *Northside WIC staff goes extra mile to help out clients*

### **Northside WIC Center (Site 26-15)**

3018 Berry Road  
Houston, Texas 77093  
(713) 699-0334

Monday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Deborah Boudreaux*, site manager

*M*aking clients happy requires extra effort, but the staffers at the Northside WIC Center are used to it.

"We always schedule our clients' appointments for as soon as possible, and we accept walk-ins, making appointments for them for the very same day," says site manager Deborah Boudreaux. "If the mom comes in with just her baby, we make every effort to add her other kids, too."

Boudreaux says staff members also handed out WIC calendars to clients to pass out at their day-care centers and churches. Staff members also distribute information materials for clients to read while they are waiting, making their visit more comfortable, she says.

"Our site was selected as a pilot site to determine the need for customer-service representatives," Boudreaux says. "We hired ex-WIC moms for the jobs. They greet clients, walk them through the process, screen their documents, explain the vouchers, and show them a video about using the vouchers."

Boudreaux shows how her staff goes the extra mile by telling a story about a pregnant client who came in with an ill child who hadn't eaten in two or three days after his tonsils were taken out. "We arranged for her doctor to see the child again," she says. "We also learned that she had nowhere to stay after being kicked out of her home, even though her new baby was due in two months. We called the crisis hotline,

and she was helped by Casa de Amigos, which found her a home and arranged for someone to care for her child while she was having her baby."

Team efforts like this benefit everyone involved, Boudreaux says. "You grow when you get a team effort from administrators and staff, and sometimes clients can be liaisons to others in the community or at their jobs," she says.





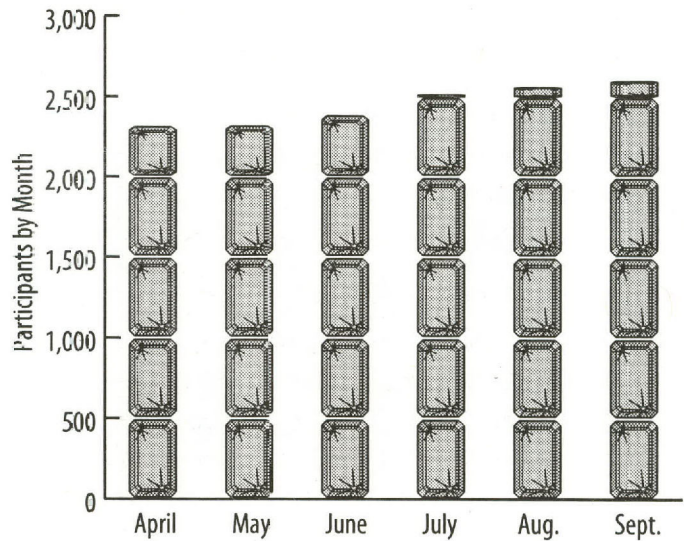
*front row, from left:*  
 Concepcion Garcia, senior clerk  
 Deborah Boudreaux, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Susan Howard, receptionist

*back row, from left:*  
 Karen G. Malone, health program specialist  
 Cecily Eldridge, information coordinator

*not shown:*  
 Brenda Malone, clinic assistant

## Clinic Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**12.35% Increase**

# *Northwest WIC staffers enjoy seeing WIC parents graduate*

## **Northwest WIC Center (Site 26-04)**

8536 Hammerly  
Houston, Texas 77055  
(713) 932-1274

Monday to Tuesday, Thursday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

*Myra Parker, site manager*

*I*n addition to passing out pamphlets and encouraging participants to tell others about WIC services, staff members at the Northwest WIC Center assisted university students who wrote published articles about the WIC program, site manager Myra Parker says.

"I'm happy to see that so many people who come to WIC, really needing the program, are helped over the rough spots in their lives," she says. "They get a job and, no longer needing WIC services, graduate from the program."

But the successes don't come easily, she says. "A lot of people can't provide proof of income or don't have the self-employment forms because their boss will pay them only in cash. We have to carefully explain our forms to them," she says. "We explain to them in advance what forms and documents will be needed and stress how important it is for them to keep track of their WIC ID cards. We also call clients and remind them of their upcoming appointments."



*front row, from left:*  
 Georgianne Brandes, senior immunizations clerk  
 Lucy Love, L.V.N., immunizations nurse  
 Vu Quynh Tuong, senior clerk

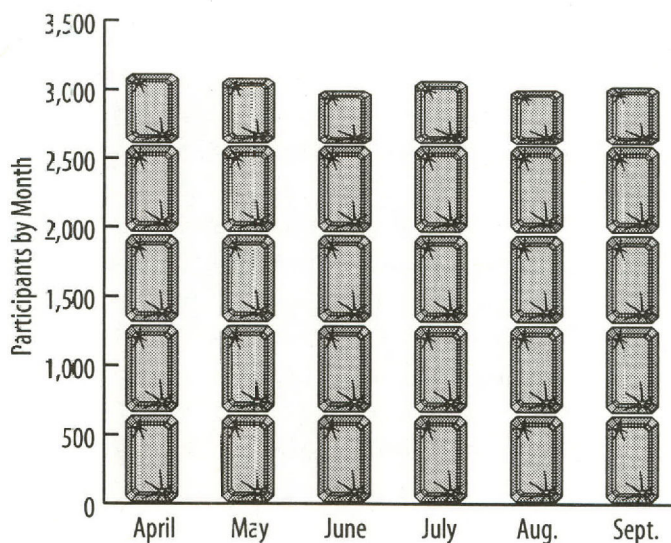
*middle row, from left:*  
 Sandra V. Silva, breastfeeding peer counselor  
 Mary Ann Espinoza, senior clerk

*back row, from left:*  
 Marlys Harden, senior clerk  
 Taylor Mortel, health program specialist  
 Myra Parker, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Sarah L. Vidal, health program specialist

*not shown:*  
 Alma Palomino, volunteer

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**2.95% Decrease**

# *Numbers continue to build for WIC clinic in doctor's office*

## **Dr. Juan Ortega (Site 26-21)**

3313 Orlando  
Houston, Texas 77073  
(713) 692-5494

Monday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Proserpina Saavedra*, site manager

According to site manager Proserpina Saavedra, the WIC site located in Dr. Juan Ortega's office has increased the number of its clients each month. "We're up to about 1,000 clients a month now," she says.

She and her staff recruit new participants by distributing fliers and WIC information at area grocery stores and shopping centers, schools, and restaurants. "I hand out WIC fliers to pregnant women I see in the grocery store, and I encourage them to spread the word about WIC to their friends," Saavedra says.

Because the majority of this site's participants are Hispanic, Saavedra learned to speak Spanish. "It makes our clients happy and more at ease if we can speak to them in their language," she says. "I can converse and conduct nutrition education in Spanish."

Although her clients are primarily Hispanic, Saavedra reaches out to the Asian community also. "I go out in the Asian community, the stores and restaurants, and tell them about WIC," she says. "Not many Asian people come to WIC because they don't know about it and they are sometimes shy. I go out of my way to make them aware of how WIC can help them."

She says WIC staff members should be flexible to accommodate clients' needs and should understand their clients' cultures. Staff members should also be sensitive to the way they present information to participants. "We need to be 'people-conscious.' We should try not to

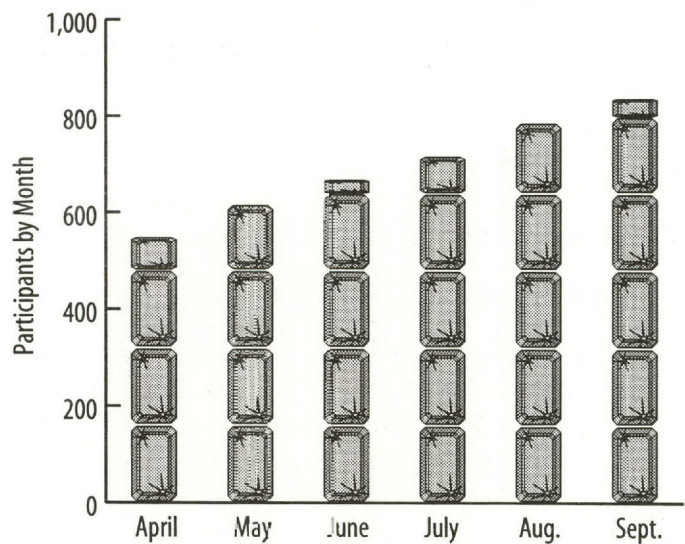
criticize when we give them information," she says. "We shouldn't say, 'Don't do this,' or 'This is wrong.' We should just tell them the correct way to do things."



from left:  
 Proserpina Saavedra, nutrition  
 consultant and site manager  
 Rosa Cervantes, senior clerk

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**52.74% Increase**

# *Ripley House Neighborhood WIC puts clients at ease*

## **Ripley House Neighborhood Center WIC Center (Site 26-28)**

401 Lovejoy  
Houston, Texas 77003  
(713) 923-1743

Monday, Wednesday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Sheela Kore*, site manager

Focusing on customer service, the WIC staff at the Ripley House Neighborhood Center are conscientious about the way they talk to and approach their clients, says Sheela Kore, site manager. "We make them feel at home and make them feel good about coming to our clinic," she says. "We go out of our way personally to help out our clients to make them feel nice so they will come back."

Walk-ins always have a place at the Ripley House Neighborhood WIC Center. "Walk-ins are never refused. We never send them back," Kore says. "If clients are five or 10 minutes late or don't have all of the information they need, we try to help them out, and they are so happy when we do."

Kore and her staff work hard to emphasize that WIC is a supplemental nutrition program and to educate their clients about other health-care issues, she says.



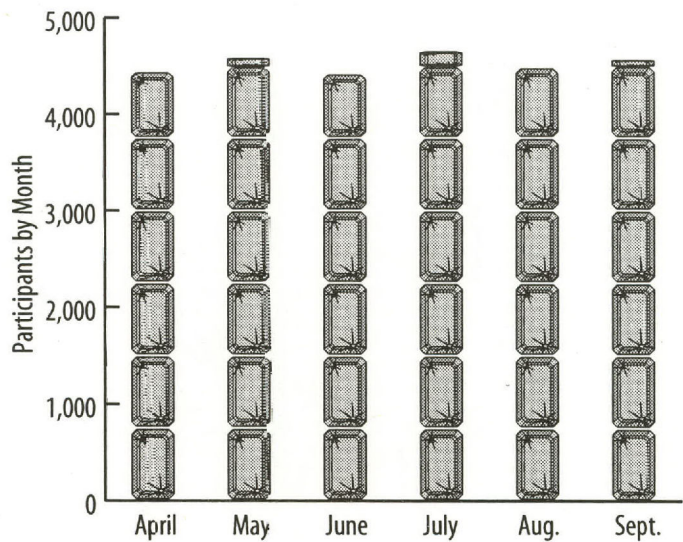
*first row, from left:*  
 Mary de los Rios, clinic assistant  
 Loretta Sanchez, clerk  
 Sheela Kore, nutritionist and site manager  
 Ana Salazar, senior clerk  
 Michelle Perez, senior immunizations clerk

*second row, from left:*  
 Isabel Mirando, receptionist  
 Karen Marchorro, breastfeeding peer counselor – Hermann Hospital  
 Diana Jimenez, senior clerk – food delivery  
 Amelia Gutierrez, health program specialist  
 Grace Headley-Adams, senior clerk

*not pictured:*  
 Armandina Martinez, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

## Clinic Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**2.56% Increase**

# *Riverside Health Center WIC clinic perseveres*

## **Riverside Health Center WIC Center (Site 26-08)**

3315 Delano  
Houston, Texas 77004  
(713) 284-9614

Monday, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Thursday and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Bernadette Smith*, site manager

The biggest obstacle faced by Bernadette Smith in managing the Riverside Health Center WIC clinic is just getting clients in the door, she says. "Many people are convinced that they do not need our services. They may be shy or embarrassed," she says. "But once we get them in the office and explain all we have to offer, they are interested."

The Riverside Health Center WIC staff uses face-to-face solicitation and word of mouth to spread the message about WIC. "We work with the area churches, food pantries, and grocery stores," Smith says. "We just keep trying. We don't stop."

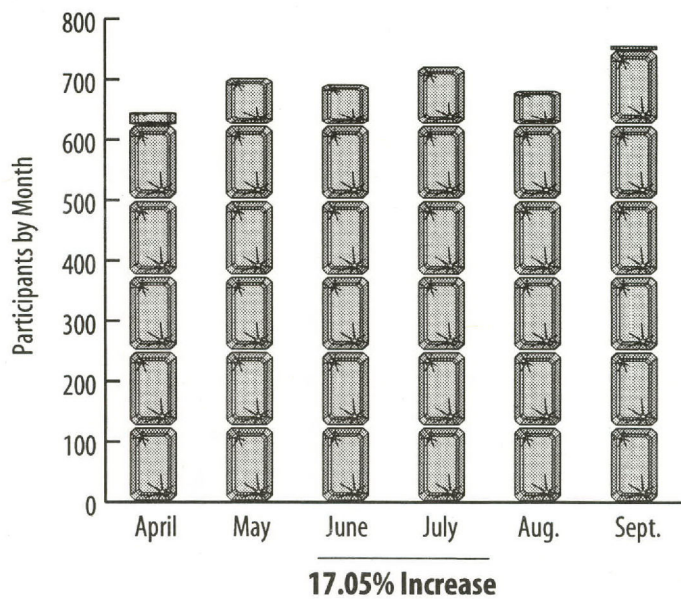
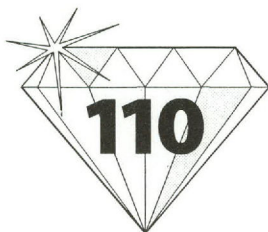




from left:  
 Bernadette Smith, nutritionist and site manager  
 Glenda Mathews, health program specialist  
 Celestine Ukaegbu, breastfeeding peer counselor

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



## *Vietnamese among new clients at hospital site*

### **Sharpstown WIC Center (Site 26-23)**

c/o Sharpstown General Hospital  
6700 Bellaire Blvd.  
Houston, Texas 77074  
(713) 778-2630

Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Thuy Nguyen*, site manager

*A* new site, the Sharpstown Hospital WIC Center, opened Dec. 3, 1996. It is the hospital's first WIC clinic.

Site manager Thuy Nguyen, a nutritionist with WIC since May, says that the clinic's outreach plans include attending staff meetings and workshops at the hospital and informing staff about WIC. WIC staffers also plan to distribute outreach fliers to the Vietnamese community in the hospital's neighborhood.



*from left:*

Sondra Smith, senior clerk

Thuy Nguyen, nutritionist and site manager

# Southwest WIC Center

## *blankets community with information*

### **Southwest WIC Center (Site 26-20)**

6121 Hillcroft, Suite E  
Houston, Texas 77081  
(713) 995-4937

Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Columbus Nwosu*, site manager

Southwest WIC Center staff members leave no stones unturned when it comes to spreading the message about WIC services. "We distribute our fliers to surrounding apartments, churches, grocery stores, shopping centers, doctors' offices, YMCA centers, other kinds of shelters, and to our clients so they can pass them out to people they know and come in contact with," says Columbus Nwosu, site manager.

He says the Southwest site also takes as many walk-in clients as possible. Because transportation is a big problem for the majority of this site's clients, staff members occasionally give rides to clients, he says. Members of the Immunoclinics staff are personnel from Texas Health Steps providers located at Project 26 sites to give immunizations.

Nwosu says the Southwest center's biggest challenge is "crowd control, and keeping the children happy while they are waiting." He says staff members show the children videos and public-television shows, such as *Sesame Street*, *Barney*, and *Mr. Rogers*.

The rewards, however, are worth it, Nwosu says. "WIC is a rewarding job — to see the smiles from the people we can assist and to see the people come back to thank us," he says. "If you have patience and treat people the way you want to be treated, they will come back."

Although receiving thank-yous from clients is nice, it is more important to give thank-yous

to staff members, according to Nwosu. "Appreciate everything the staff does and give recognition to the people who do a good job," he says. "A small pat on the back goes a long way."

Photo, page 45

*front row, from left:*

Miriam Pena, B.S.N., R.N., Immunoclinics clinic manager

Dorcas Adeleye, senior nutritionist and assistant site manager

Columbus Nwosu, senior nutritionist and site manager

Thuy Nguyen, nutritionist and assistant site manager

Rose Mary Phelan, Immunoclinics director of operations

Graciela Aguirre, health program specialist

*second row, from left:*

Elba Rodriguez, clinic assistant

Jovita Fernandez, senior clerk

Esta Collier, senior clerk

Alice Sanchez, senior immunizations clerk

Mary Gonzalez, receptionist

Rita Liandro, breastfeeding peer counselor

Rosa Carlos, administrative aide, Immunoclinics

Noemi Gomez, B.S.N., R.N., Immunoclinics (Mesa Road office)



*third row, from left:*

Sondra Smith, senior clerk  
 Amel a Vasquez, senior clerk  
 Ton Buu, health program specialist  
 Roland Esparza, senior clerk - travel  
 Jane Blancc, administrative aide, Immunoclinics  
 Argie Hcker, medical assistant, Immunoclinics  
 Marza Flores, medical assistant, Immunoclinics  
 Rigoberto Salinas, medical assistant, Immunoclinics  
 Stephanie Taylor, senior immunizations clerk

*fourth row, from left:*

Regina Shelvin, medical assistant, Immunoclinics  
 Yamila Isales, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

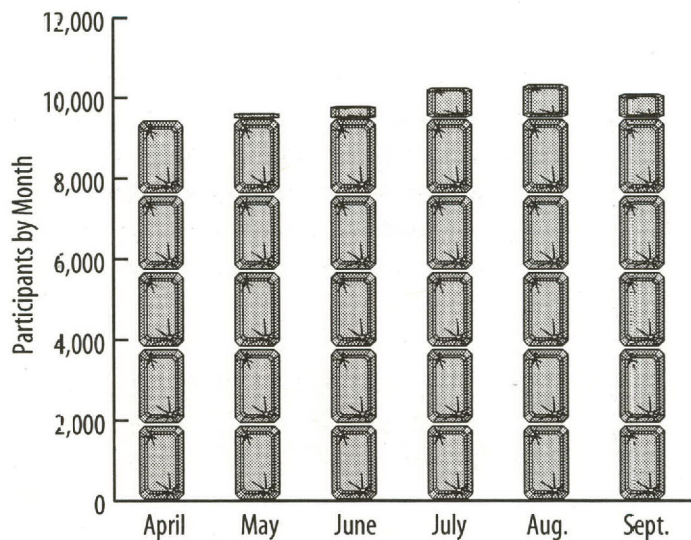
*not pictured:*

Margarita Garza, senior clerk  
 Gloria Gonzales, senior clerk  
 Nancy Herrera, senior clerk

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**6.60% Increase**

## *Sunnyside has high profile in community*

### ***Sunnyside Multi-Service Center WIC Center (Site 26-05)***

4605 Wilmington, Suite 178  
Houston, Texas 77051  
(713) 732-5050

Monday, Thursday, and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

One Saturday a month 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

*Sheila Stewart*, site manager

*W*IC staffers at the Sunnyside Multi-Service Center boost their participation by getting out into the community. "We try to give them a face to connect to the WIC program," says Sheila Stewart, site manager.

As part of the health center, the WIC clinic has a highly visible location in the community. "We also go to day-care centers in the surrounding area to distribute our information, and we go out into the community to hand out brochures and pamphlets to tell people about our programs and how we can help them," Stewart says. "We are out in the community so they can see our faces and connect the WIC program with a friendly face."

She says many people in the community are reluctant to use WIC services because they think that WIC is welfare. "Once we tell them we are a nutrition program, it puts them at ease, and they are able to approach us with an open mind," Stewart says. "Through the personal experience we give them and through the education we give them, we show them that we are a nutrition program, and we show them how we are able to help their families directly."



*front row, from left:*

Felicia Ford, senior clerk  
 Eunice Oduro, health program specialist  
 Charolotte Hilliard, clinic assistant  
 Marva Pellican, health program specialist  
 Stephanie James, senior clerk

*second row, from left:*

Mary Barreto, senior clerk  
 Yvonne Landrum, immunizations clerk  
 Leara Brown, breastfeeding peer counselor  
 Frantay Smith, senior clerk  
 Polly Sanford, senior clerk

*third row, from left:*

Sheila Stewart, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Sammye Malone, receptionist

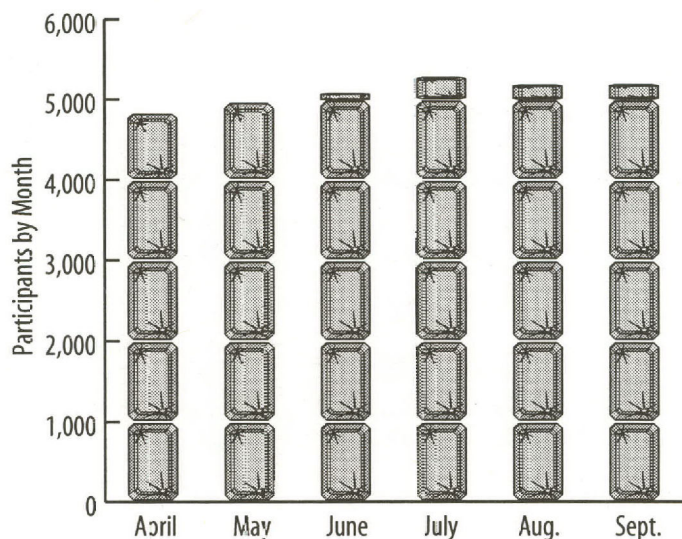
*not pictured:*

Pamela Goodwin, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

## Clinic Results

**Total  
 participants added**

*April - Sept. 1996*



**7.28% Increase**

# *Texas Medical Center WIC overcomes lack of 'community setting'*

## **Texas Medical Center WIC (Site 26-45)**

1115 S. Braeswood  
Houston, Texas 77030  
(713) 794-9627

Monday to Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

*Venese Johnson*, site manager

The Texas Medical Center WIC clinic is surrounded by medical professionals, but the site lacks a "community setting," says Venese Johnson, site manager. "The fact that we are not really in a community setting is a big challenge to us," she says. "We are far away from where some of our clients live, and there are four other sites so close to us. So we make sure our clients are happy so they come to us."

The staff makes exceptions if clients are late and offers classes at 7 a.m. and at 6 p.m. "The more accommodating we can be, the more our clients will want to be there," Johnson says. Staff members also distribute information about WIC to area churches and other neighborhood sites.

Another challenge faced by the WIC staff at the Texas Medical Center is educating their clients and potential clients that WIC is not welfare. "We need to get across the message that we are a nutrition-based program and that we are not just giving food out," Johnson says. "We need to change the concept in the public's mind. We also need to get out the message that working families can still qualify."

Clients aren't the only ones being educated at Texas Medical Center WIC. "All WIC employees at Project 26 get on-the-job training at that site before they go into other clinics," says WIC director Faye Walker.





*front row, from left:*

Deborah Phifer, receptionist  
 Genevia Shields, senior immunizations clerk  
 Venese Johnson, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Adela Chavez, senior clerk  
 Carlotta Arriazola, health program specialist

*second row, from left:*

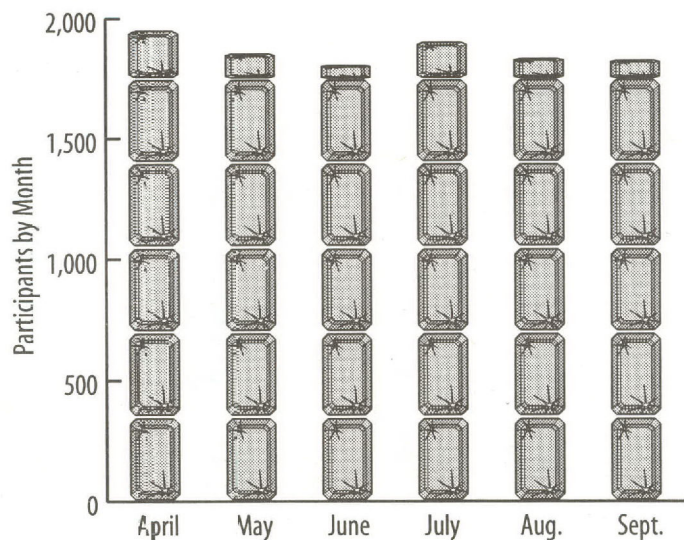
Juan Gonzalez Jr., clinic assistant  
 Glennora Johnson, breastfeeding peer counselor – Hermann Hospital  
 JoAnn Scott, senior clerk  
 Joyce Young, L.V.N., immunizations nurse

*not pictured:*

Laura Wickbodt-Ware, breastfeeding peer counselor

# Clinic Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**6.56% Decrease**

# *West End Multi-Service Center WIC Center faces language barriers*

## **West End Multi-Service Center WIC Center (Site 26-40)**

170 Heights Blvd., Suite 138  
Houston, Texas 77007  
(713) 866-4254

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

*Carole Small*, site manager

*B*ecause of the variety of clients it serves, the West End Multi-Service Center WIC office faces several language barriers, says Carole Small, site manager. "It's Spanish mostly, but several other languages also," she says. "But 50 percent of our staff speaks Spanish. So we are able to deal with it."

Staff members deal with promoting WIC by distributing fliers and pamphlets to area churches, schools, day-care centers, hospitals, doctors' offices, and neighborhood events, Small says. "I also handed out information to the supervisor of the school district's bus drivers so they could spread the word," she says.



*front row, from left:*

Carole Small, senior nutritionist and site manager  
 Guadalupe Rosas, receptionist  
 Janice Melton, clerk  
 Tien Van Tran, senior clerk  
 Hermelinda Aguilar, health program specialist

*second row, from left:*

Shannon Conway, senior clerk  
 Morica Villalon, senior clerk  
 Claudia Demas, senior immunizations clerk  
 Aurdis Jones, L.V.N., immunizations nurse  
 Sandra Mendez, clinic assistant  
 Nanette Rattan, health program specialist

*third row:*

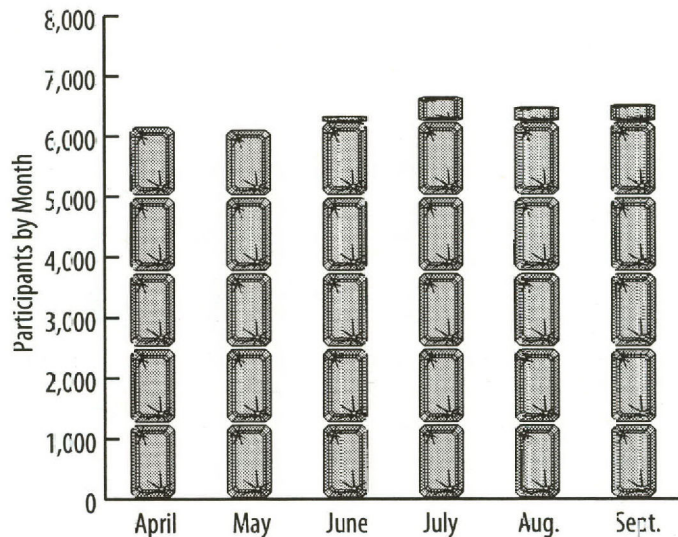
Sandra Narvaiz, breastfeeding peer counselor

*not pictured:*

Felizziana Archibold, breastfeeding peer counselor

## Clinic Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**5.69% Increase**

## *West Montgomery WIC sets sights on youth*

### **West Montgomery WIC Center (Site 26-07)**

6917 W. Montgomery  
Houston, Texas 77091  
(713) 699-9937

Monday, Wednesday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

*Yvonne Cook*, site manager

The West Montgomery WIC Center staff collaborates with area middle schools and high schools to get the message out about WIC.

"Once a year, we go from class to class and talk to the students at the middle school on career day," says site manager Yvonne Cook. "We have practically daily contact with the high school counselor, arranging WIC appointments and transportation."

Volunteers also go to area churches every other Saturday to do referrals and certifications, Cook says.

She admits that time is certainly a factor that is hard to overcome but encourages other WIC staff members to persevere. "Just keep at it," she says. "Sometimes things aren't as simple as they seem, but we were able to increase from zero [in 1993] to about 3,000 clients today."



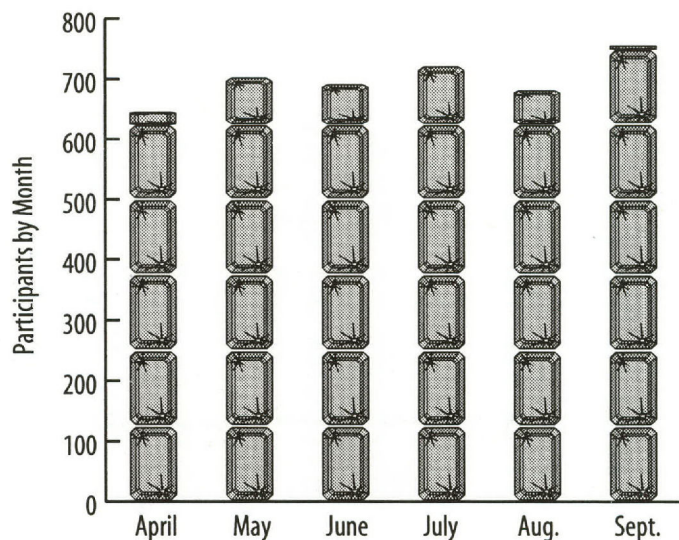
*front row, from left:*  
 Lettie Taylor, breastfeeding peer counselor  
 Etna Rocha, immunizations clerk  
 Susanne Robertson, receptionist

*back row, from left:*  
 Yvonne Cook, nutritionist and site manager  
 Flor Estella Blanco, clinic assistant  
 Krishna D. Mallik, clerk

*not shown:*  
 Maxine Albert, nutritionist  
 Sheila Anderson, health program specialist  
 Gwendolyn Mitchell, senior clerk  
 Gloria Willoughby, L.V.N., immunizations nurse  
 Kimberly Worthy, senior clerk

## Clinic Results

**Total participants added**  
*April - Sept. 1996*



**17.05% Increase**

## *Staff's dedication leads to success in reaching new customers*

A new customer-service approach, well-advertised mass certifications, increased community outreach — and a staff committed to doing all three — is the “magic strategy” that propelled Texas WIC Project 26 to add 4,451 new clients during the May-September 1996 Precious Jewels Challenge.

Directed by Faye Walker, M.S., R.D., L.D., at the City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services, Project 26 ended the federal fiscal year in September 1996 serving 64,562 participants in the local agency's 26 WIC centers.

### **Customer-service contest and community outreach**

“We took a different approach to customer service,” Walker says. “We decided to move beyond getting participants in and out, and to concentrate on what it takes to make a pleasant encounter for each customer.” To do this, Walker formed enrichment teams with a representative from each center. Staff members designed contests for their own clinics emphasizing customer service, outreach efforts, and site beautification. They could work as a team or individually at each center to increase caseload. Staff members at each center also competed for a Super Customer Service Award.

To win the outreach contest as a group, a center had to add the greatest percentage of clients (more than 10 percent) in caseload between May 1 and Sept. 30. The Kashmere Multi-Service Center WIC Center, with an increased caseload of 13.96 percent, won a trip to a WIC conference in the upcoming year. Kashmere WIC staffers will be allowed to attend the next Partners In Growth conference or any conference or meeting of their choice this year.

To win the individual outreach contest, the employee had to recruit and enroll the greatest

number of clients (more than 50) between May 1 and Sept. 30. Health program specialist Maria Rivera won an educational trip.

To win the Super Customer Service Award, an individual had to score the greatest number of points (more than 50) for “Super Customer Service.” Comment cards filled out by clients were used to score this contest. Health program specialist Ana Brizuela (153 positive comments) and senior clerk Sondra Smith (154 positive comments) each won a trip to an educational event this year.

The three trips to the 1997 NAWD conference in San Francisco, awarded to Project 26 for winning the Precious Jewels Challenge, will be given to Brizuela, Rivera, and Smith.

To reach additional new clients, a health program specialist was hired to canvass specific neighborhoods where eligibility was high. “We hired Mr. Ephraim Ukaegbu, who is a tribal chief in his home country of Nigeria,” says Walker. “He brought in more than 400 new customers in addition to building new partnerships with churches and businesses in targeted neighborhoods.” Veronica Paredes, a former VISTA worker at Project 26 and now a senior clerk, also conducts neighborhood outreach.



Senior clerk Veronica Paredes, left, and health program specialist Ephraim Ukaegbu, right, have both been busy conducting outreach for Project 26 this past year. Paredes, a former VISTA worker, conducts most of her outreach at health fairs while Ukaegbu canvasses Houston neighborhoods.

## Training

Eric Kugler, M.Ed., a customer-service training specialist, was brought in as a consultant to work with staff in several training sessions. Every staff member has received this training, which concentrated on identifying customers, looking at the internal WIC process, and creating a list of the complaints that most often "bug" customers. "Customer-service training is ongoing at Project 26," says Kugler. "We're always looking for creative solutions and innovations."

"We wanted to find out what things are affecting the customer, and what changes we could make to improve the process," says Walker. "We also gave frontline staff specific tools for dealing with angry customers. No one does well when a customer is screaming at you. Our first objective is for staff to know what's expected, to know who their customers are, and to get everyone talking the same language."

The second phase of customer-service training will begin this year. It concentrates on "best practices" employed by staffers and on getting closer to what customers want.

## Information partners

Also essential to the new customer-service strategy was implementation of the Information Partnership Program, a pilot project which provided intensive training to 21 WIC moms. These WIC customers then worked in the clinics on days when new customers were certified. The "partners" greeted new clients, briefed them about the certification process, got their paperwork in order, and answered questions before certification.

"These information coordinators took a big burden off the staff so that, when the customer arrived for certification, they could get right down to the business of WIC without having to check paperwork and answer the same monotonous questions," says Walker. "This was key to improving customer satisfaction and staff morale. We've hired about half of the coordinators to continue working with WIC, and others have gotten positions within the health department."

## Staff Appreciation Day

"At Project 26, we sincerely believe that good internal customer service is reflected in how the program performs," says Walker. "We believe that employee feedback should be shown in activities other than the

routine employee-performance evaluation. Therefore, for the past four years, we have held our annual employee-appreciation ceremony on the day when all WIC employees are mandated to attend civil-rights training. The ceremony has added a new dimension to the not-so-popular in-service."

After the civil-rights training, the director and each unit coordinator present awards. "We honor the WIC sites and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership or performance skills," says Walker.

Staff-appreciation awards for 1996 were presented at a ceremony held Dec. 2.

## Nutrition-education awards

Mara Drais, coordinator of nutrition education and client services, presented the following awards:

### ♦ *Greatest Contribution in Nutrition Education*

Ana Cantú, health program specialist,  
Northeast WIC Center

### ♦ *Dedicated Service in Nutrition Education*

Anna Brizuela, health program specialist,  
Alief WIC Center

Yvonneya Brown, health program specialist,  
Teen Team

Clara Harris, senior nutritionist,  
Downtown WIC Center

Leanna Rimmer, nutritionist,  
Teen Team

## Breastfeeding-promotion awards

Bridget Zanolich, breastfeeding coordinator, based her group's awards on monthly statistics. She presented the following plaques to breastfeeding-promotion staffers:

### ♦ *Largest Number of Breastfeeding Women*

#### *First Place:*

Southwest WIC Center,  
617 breastfeeding clients

#### *Second Place:*

Alief WIC Center,  
440 breastfeeding clients

#### *Third Place:*

West End Multi-Service Center WIC Center,  
325 breastfeeding clients

At the Ben Taub Hospital WIC Center, 58 percent of its WIC moms breastfeed their infants, the largest

percentage in any Project 26 site. The most improved clinic in breastfeeding promotion was the Sunnyside Multi-Service Center WIC Center, which increased its breastfeeding rate from 7.5 percent to 12.6 percent.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to the following breastfeeding peer counselors:

- ❖ *Dedication and Longevity*  
Rita Liandro, since November 1993  
Lettie Taylor, since October 1994  
Celestine Ukaegbu, since March 1995

#### *Immunizations awards*

Lillie Peter, R.N., immunizations coordinator, presented the following awards:

- ❖ *Outstanding Accomplishment in Immunizations Automation Pilot*  
Georgianna Brandes, senior immunizations clerk, Northwest WIC Center
- ❖ *Outstanding Support in Immunizations*  
Joyce Young, L.V.N., immunizations nurse, Texas Medical Center WIC
- ❖ *Most Immunizations Administered*  
Linda Floyd, L.V.N., immunizations nurse, Alief WIC Center (4,714 shots in 1996)

#### *Awards for excellent work*

Project 26 acknowledges clinic sites that showed the least number of errors during 1996 self-audits or that demonstrated outstanding performance in clinical evaluation or documentation. Vera Petteway-Nyormoi, senior trainer, presented five sites with the following awards:

- ❖ *Excellent Assessment of Medical History*  
"Airline" WIC site, office of Dr. H.S. Chana
- ❖ *Outstanding Documentation of Special and Exceptional Formulas*  
Alief WIC Center
- ❖ *Outstanding Follow-Up of Mid-Point Screening of Infants*  
West End Multi-Service Center WIC Center
- ❖ *Outstanding Support in Development of Tools for Training*  
Texas Medical Center WIC
- ❖ *Outstanding Support of High-Risk Clients*  
Downtown WIC Center

Two individuals were also honored. They were presented with the following awards:

- ❖ *Outstanding WIC Trainee for 1996*  
Elizabeth Sanchez, receptionist,  
LBJ Hospital WIC Center
- ❖ *Rookie of the Year*  
Leanna Rimmer, nutritionist,  
Teen Team

#### *Customer-service awards*

Nutrition consultants and area supervisors Ola Malone and Gay Quartey awarded individual staffers whose customer service resulted in satisfied clients with no complaints and was conducted with clear communication, amicable handling of stressful situations, appropriate referrals, and pleasant attitudes. They presented the following trophy:

- ❖ *Ambassador of Customer Service*  
Charlotte Hilliard, clinic assistant,  
Sunnyside Multi-Service Center WIC Center
- First-Place Runners-Up:*  
Concepcion Garcia, senior clerk,  
Northside WIC Center  
Sondra Smith, senior clerk,  
Southwest WIC Center

Thirteen staffers were honored with certificates of appreciation. They received the following award:

- ❖ *Outstanding Customer Service to Our Clients*  
Carlotta Arrizola, health program specialist,  
Texas Medical Center WIC  
Ana Brizuela, health program specialist,  
Alief WIC Center  
Yvonneya Brown, health program specialist,  
Teen Team  
Ton Buu, health program specialist,  
Southwest WIC Center  
Rita Canales, clerk,  
Denver Harbor WIC Center  
Mary De Los Rios, clinic assistant,  
Ripley House Neighborhood Center  
WIC Center  
Deborah Jones, health program specialist,  
Downtown WIC Center  
Leanna Rimmer, nutritionist,  
Teen Team



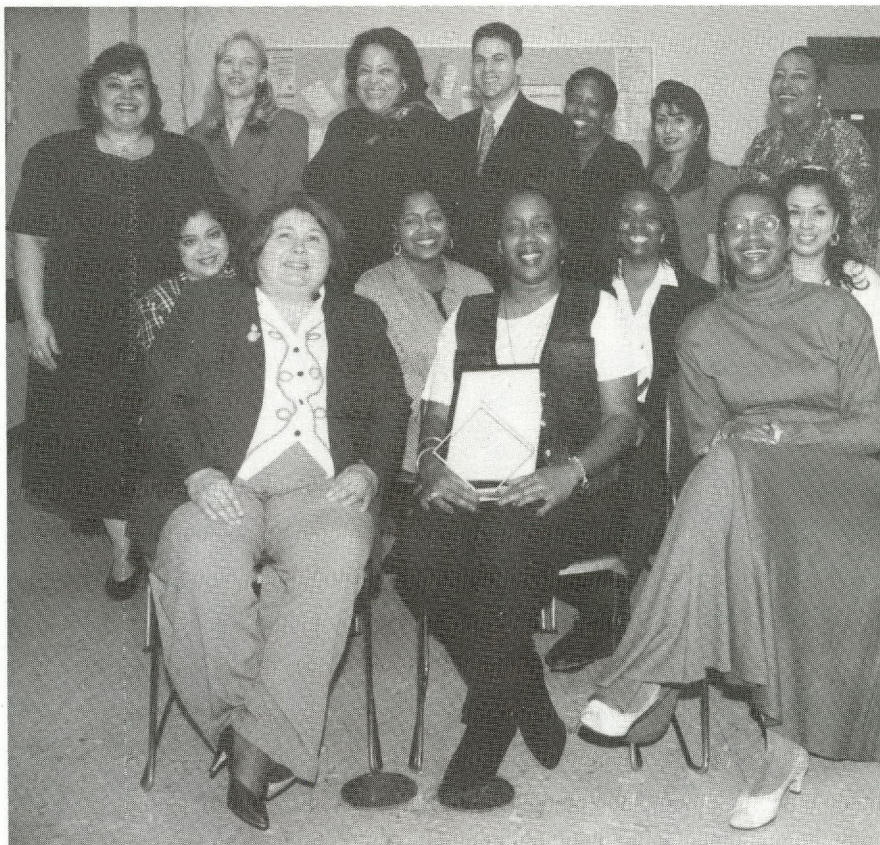
Elizabeth Sanchez, receptionist,  
LBJ Hospital WIC Center

Rosa Shelton, senior nutritionist,  
LBJ Hospital WIC Center

Juanita Soto, clerk typist,  
Magnolia Multi-Service Center  
WIC Center

Tien Van Tran,  
West End Multi-Service Center  
WIC Center

Viola Watkins, L.V.N.,  
immunizations nurse,  
Northeast WIC Center



### *Director's awards*

Project 26 director Fay Walker presented the awards for all-around performance. She presented the following first-place award, which is the most coveted of all awards:

- ❖ *Director's Partners in Quality Award for Outstanding All-Around Performance*  
Texas Medical Center WIC

Performance runners-up who strove to "reach for the mark" received the following award:

- ❖ *Director's Partners in Quality*  
"Airline" WIC Center, Dr. H.S. Chana  
Downtown WIC Center  
Magnolia Multi-Service Center WIC Center  
Sunnyside Multi-Service Center WIC Center

Walker honored one center for showing improvement in more areas than other centers showed. She presented the following award:

- ❖ *Director's Partners in Quality Award for Most Improved Center*  
Southwest WIC Center

Walker also presented Project 26's highest awards to individuals:

- ❖ *Director's Partners in Quality in Outstanding Administrative Support*  
Thelma Sanchez, senior immunizations clerk, administration
- ❖ *WIC Employee of the Year*  
Tien Van Tran, senior clerk,  
West End Multi-Service Center WIC Center

### **"Super Customer Service" leaders**

#### *front from left:*

Concepcion Garcia, senior clerk, Northside WIC Center  
Charlotte Hilliard, clinic assistant, Sunnyside Multi-Service Center WIC Center  
Sondra Smith, senior clerk, Southwest WIC Center

#### *middle from left:*

Rita Canales, clerk, Denver Harbor WIC Center  
Deborah Jones, health program specialist, Downtown WIC Center  
Yvonneya Brown, health program specialist, Teen Team  
Charlotta Arriazola, health program specialist, Texas Medical Center WIC

#### *back from left:*

Ana Brizuela, health program specialist, Alief WIC Center  
Leanna Rimmer, nutritionist, Teen Team  
Ola Malone, nutrition consultant, Houston Health and Human Services Department  
Eric Kugler, contracted customer-service training specialist  
Rosa Shelton, senior nutritionist, LBJ Hospital WIC Center  
Elizabeth Sanchez, receptionist, LBJ Hospital WIC Center  
Viola Watkins, L.V.N., immunizations nurse, Northeast WIC Center

# Highlights in the history of Project 26

Like many local agencies across the state, Project 26 started small in 1974. It didn't stay that way.

Today, Project 26's 223 employees represent 18 languages and serve more than 65,000 clients a month. The clinical professional staff is made up of 30 nutritionists (one holds a Ph.D. in nutrition, eight hold advanced degrees in nutrition, seven are registered dietitians, and two are licensed dietitians), two medical doctors, one registered nurse, 14 licensed vocational nurses, 25 certified clinic assistants, and 23 health program specialists who are trained nutrition paraprofessionals.

The following time line charts Project 26's growth and highlights the major events in its history.

## 1974

- ❖ Vickie Bowie wrote the City of Houston's WIC grant proposal. Administrator Ann Bowen, nutritionist Johnnie Flaherty, and clerk Bernadette Brown were the only full-time WIC employees during the first months of Project 26's existence.

## 1976

- ❖ Eight nutritionists started offering services in July and served 55 clients in one month. Those nutritionists included Nelda Aguirre at the Canal Health Center, M.T. DiFerrante at the West End Center, Jane Fuqua at the Lyons Health Center, Faye Walker at the Northside Health Center, Ann Morgan at the Riverside Health Center, Carol Pierson at the Acres Homes Center, Janice Stuff at Jefferson Davis Hospital, and Joy Wright at the Blueridge Health Center.
- ❖ By September, the participation increased to 250 clients a month. As participation numbers grew, clerks were added as needed. Some of the first clerks to work in WIC included Graciela Aguirre, Doretha Anderson, Sheila Anderson, Ana Cantú,

Deborah Cardona, Finita Coleman, Lila Garza, Gladys Salgado, Doris Vaughn, and Jessie Washington. Each is still employed by the City of Houston either in WIC or in other programs.

## 1979

- ❖ Nutritionist Ann Allen left Houston to join her husband in California. Walker became the nutrition consultant in charge of WIC operations May 8, with a caseload of 8,800 participants. DiFerrante was chief of nutrition services.

## 1984

- ❖ Houston WIC services were moved from all health centers to nearby multi-service centers, reducing the number of delivery sites from 22 full- and part-time sites to five full-time WIC centers. Within two months, caseload increased to 10,000 participants a month.

## 1989

- ❖ Two free-standing WIC centers opened, Northside WIC and Southwest WIC.

## 1993

- ❖ Project 26 launched a major expansion campaign, opened five new full-time WIC centers (North Forest, Northeast WIC, Northwest, Alief, and West Montgomery), and received the Outstanding Outreach Award for 1993.

## 1994

- ❖ The Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) WIC supervised 36 VISTA workers to promote WIC/Immunizations and prenatal health care in the community. The program participation increased by approximately 7,000 participants per month.

- ❖ In June, the Texas Medical Center WIC site became the HDHHS WIC Training Center to standardize training for all new employees.
- ❖ In July, the Riverside Health Center WIC opened to serve Third Ward children and referrals from the Casey Mental Health Institute for Urban Children.

#### 1995

- ❖ In the spring, Houston WIC began providing services in five private doctors' offices and offered EPSDT to WIC participants in three free-standing WIC centers, averaging 1,500 EPSDT screenings per month.

#### 1996

- ❖ In July, Project 26 began piloting the ICES software in WIC clinics.

#### Correction

On page 2 of the December 1996 issue of *Texas WIC News*, the fourth-place winner in the "percentage growth" category of the Precious Jewels Challenge was mistakenly identified in the chart on the left-hand side of the page.

The correct fourth-place winner was Project 13, the City of Laredo Health Department, which increased its clients by 19 percent.

## About the director

Faye Walker, director of Project 26, began working for the WIC program in 1974 as a nutritionist at the Northside WIC Center in Houston. She was promoted to nutritionist consultant and assumed the responsibility for operations of the City of Houston Health and Human Services WIC program in May 1979. "We had a staff of 12, and we were serving 8,800 participants," she says.

A native Texan, Walker was born Nov. 21, 1946, in Luling. Her father was the minister of the Luling Church of Christ, where he served as pastor for more than 50 years. She grew up with three brothers and four sisters.

Walker earned a degree in dietetics from Texas Southern University in Houston and completed her internship at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. She earned her master's degree in nutrition at Texas Women's University in Houston. Walker is married and has a daughter who is a college senior majoring in chemistry.

When she is not working at WIC, Walker is a community volunteer. She is a member of the Wellness Ministry at Brook Hollow Baptist Church and a member of Zeta Phi Beta Service Sorority. As a volunteer, Walker works with pregnant adolescents and teen moms. She also helps raise funds for scholarships.



Faye Walker has directed Texas WIC Project 26 since 1979.

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Austin, Texas 78756-3191.

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Internet: <http://www.tdhl.state.tx.us/hcqs/bvs/bvs.htm>



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Texas Department of Health  
1100 W. 49th St.  
Austin, TX 78756

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