



WIC watch

WIC: Constant Support in a Changing World

In a few weeks we will have a new U.S. president and administration with the responsibility of ensuring a bright future for our children and opportunities for their families to flourish.

We have heard the candidates' positions on international and domestic issues. Many of those issues directly impact WIC participants and our program. WIC participants have experienced war, many are refugees. Terrorism is a



global issue and one of our agencies had a close brush with a terrible act. Climate change — resulting in fires, floods, tornadoes and mudslides — has displaced families and impacted WIC offices. Racism and prejudice impact us all; some

in our community probably have lost family members to race-related violence.

Obesity is a huge concern for WIC staff as they see the frightening rise of diabetes and chronic disease in young children and their families. WIC families are bombarded with marketing and media, including food, beverage and infant formula ads and the latest and greatest nutrition advice.

The good news is WIC will continue to be here for America's families. Each family, with their unique story, will be served by competent and caring WIC staff who have chosen their profession because they see the value of children and the future their families deserve.

WIC agencies across the country are working to create a bright future for the WIC program as we close in on a half century of service. We are looking for new ways to engage families, provide healthy foods, and be the go-to service for nutrition and breastfeeding support. The new president and administration can depend on WIC to ensure continued service and outcomes as the nation's leading nutrition and breastfeeding program. **WIC works for US!**



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Fall Education Events** 2
 - CWA-MCAH Action Education Day
 - Capitol Visits
- **Policy Updates** 3
 - Federal News
 - State Policy Round Up
- **CWA News** 4
 - Webinars
 - Farmers' Markets
 - Regional Trainings
 - Learning Collaborative
 - Engaging More Families
 - Preventive Services
 - WIC Improvement Survey
 - MyWIC
- **Local Agency News** 8
 - Celebrating World Breastfeeding Week
- **Comings & Goings** 10
 - Retiring: Eliana Schultz
 - In Memoriam: Ron Ulmer
- **Making a Difference** 11
 - Hospital Report
 - Central Valley Indian Health
- **Professional Development** 12
 - Valerie's Story
 - UC Davis Maternal & Child Health
 - CNC Scholar Spotlight
- **Local Agency Partnerships** 14
 - Alameda County
 - Merced County
- **Wellness** 15
 - Men's Health Symposium
 - WWW by the Numbers
 - Good Reads & Resources

CALIFORNIA WIC ASSOCIATION
 1450 Drew Ave., Ste 150, Davis, CA 95618
 (530) 750-2280 • Fax (530) 758-7780
 E-mail: kfarley@calwic.org • www.calwic.org

Federal News

The U.S. government narrowly missed shutting down, again, with Congress agreeing on a **Continuing Resolution** within 48 hours of an October 1 shutdown. But that only tides us over until another looming fiscal deadline in December.



Issues related to funding for vaccine development and programs to stop the spread of the **Zika virus** were delayed by attempts to block funding to Planned Parenthood which treats patients infected with Zika. Efforts to ensure funding to address **lead-tainted water** affecting residents of Flint, MI, were also finally

worked out. On recess until after the November election, lawmakers will take up the issue in December.

During 2016 the **Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act** made excellent progress with a strong bi-partisan Senate version, including ways to further reduce food insecurity for children by providing WIC services to age 6. Yet final Reauthorization was held up due to issues in other nutrition programs. Released later in the year, the House approached it differently, proposing an anti-poverty framework that would cut support to some nutrition plans. By the end of session neither bill made it to the floor, so the CNR will likely be addressed in 2017.



California WIC Ambassadors Melissa Mathey, Renee Alton and Chris Husling meet with Senator Boxer's staff while in Washington DC last February for the NWA Leadership Conference.

 **Make your voice heard!**
Register to vote by October 24.

State Policy Round Up

CWA and the California Primary Care Association (CPCA) teamed up to sponsor **AB 2589 (Gomez)** which addressed horizontal integration of WIC with application for Medi-Cal, Covered CA and SAWS (social services). Although the bill was held in committee (and thus didn't progress further), it successfully ignited conversation about this needed integration. Our thanks go to the many stakeholders who have been working in this space for other services, such as CalFresh, and who stepped up to support the bill.

Another piece of AB 2589 addressed guidance regarding the quality of breast pumps provided in health plans and the development of state measures and outcomes for breastfeeding. Many expert stakeholders engaged in the process and we will revisit these issues in the future. Our thanks go to CPCA for their partnership in co-sponsoring a bill. We look forward to continued collaboration.

These bills supported by CWA in the recent legislative session became law:

SB 23 (Mitchell) Repealed the Maximum Family Grant which denied aid to children born into families receiving assistance, except for exceptional circumstances.

AB 908 (Gomez) Enhanced paid Family Leave and State Disability Insurance compensation especially for lower-income earners.

SB 586 (Hernandez) Provides strategic steps for ensuring high quality care for medically fragile children as they transition from CCS to Managed Care.

Although **SB 654 (Jackson)** was vetoed by Gov. Brown, a strong state coalition for Paid Family Leave was established. Great leadership by California Work and Family Coalition!



CWA staff with Rose McIsaac, Ampla Health WIC, and Madeleine Sher-nock, Welcome Home Doula Services, with Assemblyman Jimmy Gomez and Annabel Snider, health consultant for Gomez' office,

WORKING WITH YOU TO ENGAGE WIC FAMILIES



California WIC has always been a leader and that continues to be true. Momentum is building as our state leadership, local agencies, CWA and partners are working together to try innovative approaches for how we do business. Establishing new ways to provide services, understanding our customers' needs, and having lots of diverse options for local agencies and participants can positively impact participation. On the next few pages you'll read about our joint efforts to promote these innovations, whether through webinars and collaboratives or working with farmers' markets and public health partners. You'll find more info on our website at <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families>.

Fall Webinar Series

They're baaack! CWA took a hiatus from our popular WIC Works webinar series of years past. But this fall they return with a slate of topics focused on best practices for Engaging WIC Families and enhancing WIC services. Check out the details at <http://bit.ly/CWAFall2016Webinars!>

October 26: Engaging Men & Dads – Alameda Fathers Corps is collaborating with CWA to share how they increase involvement of fathers in children's lives by focusing on factors specific to the needs of men and the challenges they face in fulfilling their role as fathers. We'll also highlight CWA's Men & Dads Toolkit. A Learning Collaborative webinar, open to all!



November 2: Welcoming African Americans – Special guest Andrea Serrano from R.O.S.E. (Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere) will join Sarah from CWA to speak on inclusivity, strategies for reaching and engaging African American families, and forming partnerships with communities of color. A Learning Collaborative webinar, open to all!



November 30: Nutrition Preventive Services – Karen & Margaret from CWA will discuss emerging strategies for innovative ways of providing nutrition preventive services all are entitled to, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. You'll also get a peek at a brand-new presentation platform CWA developed to help you educate others about WIC's role in health care reform. (See page 7).



December 7: Reaching Millennials in WIC – Today's young parents, part of the "millennial" generation, have grown up in a changing world that impacts how they communicate and learn best. Join UC Berkeley grad and CWA consultant Maggie Rasnake in exploring general guidelines and specific steps to keep WIC valuable and relevant to clients in their late teens to early thirties.



December 14: WIC Improvement Concepts – Join Karen from CWA to learn the results from the What If Surveys. Many of you submitted your ideas for how to make WIC even better; now you can see what we'll do with that information to benefit WIC and the families you serve.



Farm to WIC

Many WIC families want to shop at their local farmers' market to access fresh produce in season, support local growers and enjoy family time. Yet sometimes it's just too expensive. That can change if their local market is authorized to accept the monthly Fruit and Vegetable Check (FVC), also known as the Cash Value Voucher (CVV), issued as a WIC benefit.



At press time, over 80 markets in California are FVC-authorized, many just recently trained by State WIC staff to accept monthly produce checks. While that's progress, there are over 400 more markets that only accept the seasonal Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) checks.

CWA has a 3-year grant to help connect WIC families with farmers at markets. We can act as a bridge to support communication between local WIC agencies and farmers, market managers, and market associations. Once a market wants to become authorized, State WIC can provide free local training.

We need your help! Enthusiastic support from local WIC agencies can make all the difference in markets seeing the value of building their WIC customer base and wanting to get authorized. See the blue box at right for steps to take.



Here's what you can do:

- Visit <http://bit.ly/FVCmarkets> and see which of your local farmers' markets are already authorized.
- Identify those markets not authorized that would be convenient to your WIC participants.
- Ask CWA for materials and other support to connect with local market managers and growers to help them see the advantages of accepting FVC. Contact Margaret at maumann@calwic.org or call the CWA office.



Before retiring (see page 10), WIC Director Eliana Bushwalter was thrilled to see one farmers' market in San Mateo County accept WIC Fruit and Vegetable Check.

SAVE THE DATE:
25th Annual CWA Conference & Trade Show

We'll return to San Diego for our Silver Anniversary! Plan to join hundreds of your WIC and public health colleagues **April 9-12, 2017**, as we explore together how **Engaging Families for Thriving Communities** can make a difference in your work and our world.

Twelve volunteers from California local and state WIC agencies are planning an enriching curriculum. Two pre-conference workshops, four plenaries, 28 concurrent workshop sessions, local agency sharing exhibits, and a high-energy trade show will provide varied and exciting opportunities for **continuing education**.

Grab the chance to **network with your peers and expert presenters** around issues affecting WIC and other public health programs. And take time for **wellness and fun**, so you return renewed and inspired to continue the vital work you do!

Look for details later this fall on our website and in our **free biweekly Flash e-newsletter**. Subscribe by texting CALWIC to 22828, using the QR code below, or visiting <http://calwic.org/>. See you in San Diego!

Regional Trainings

Did you attend one of our regional trainings this summer? A group of passionate and talented WIC staff traveled to local agencies to provide training on best practices for engaging men and dads, welcoming African American families and creating audio stories for outreach.

While different from most trainings CWA has offered in the past, this opportunity included honest discussion on core issues such as poverty, immigration, racism and family hardship and how they impact WIC. Storytelling is both an ancient and a popular way to provide outreach for services. Working with staff from Berkeley-based **StoryCenter**, attendees were asked to write and record an audio story of a mentor or special person related to their WIC service, as a way of describing the importance of WIC.



Wesley Hibble, Riverside, and Vanessa Castillo, Planned Parenthood WIC agencies traveled to Redding to provide the regional training.



Staff from WIC agencies across Northern California and Shasta Head Start came together to work on best practices.

your work at WIC. If you have ideas for future training topics, let CWA know!

On-Line Learning Collaborative

Want to learn how to make your clinic environment more inclusive and welcoming? Join the online learning collaborative! It's easy to learn and network from your desk. This fall — through conference calls, an on-line forum, and webinars — WIC agencies have the opportunity to talk with other agencies and learn from experts on clinic practices for including men and dads and African American families. On October 26th, our guests will be Alameda First5 Fathers Corps. Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere (R.O.S.E.) will join us on November 2nd.

Come and join the conversation! For more information, visit <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/engaging-wic-families> or contact Sarah at sdiaz@calwic.org.

Engaging More Families, Thanks to Local Agency Leaders

CWA thanks the following local agency staff, and their supportive supervisors, for their participation in the Ask the Community First Task Force, along with other colleagues. These folks also continued on to provide the Regional Trainings and now provide leadership for the On-line Learning Collaborative.

- Vanessa Castillo, Planned Parenthood
- Rebecca Gill, American Red Cross
- Brandi Gates and Renee Alton, West Oakland Health Council
- Wesley Hibble, Riverside University Health Systems
- Camille Medina, Delta Health Care
- Toncé Jackson, PHFE

Wesley, Vanessa and Renee also presented at the NWA Nutrition and Breastfeeding Conference in Denver. CWA appreciates their leadership and the support of their WIC agencies!

Visit our website for the Engaging Families toolkit, reports, forum and webinars.



Connect with CWA



Visit CWA on [Facebook!](#)

Follow us on [Twitter!](#)

Find us on [Instagram!](#)

(Search for California WIC Association or calwic.)



Preventive Services: Making Progress

CWA has been working on many fronts to ensure provision of ACA-required nutrition and breastfeeding preventive services which can positively impact health outcomes.

New Preventive Services Platform

Later this fall, CWA will introduce an on-line platform that provides presentations and resources related to nutrition and breastfeeding preventive services. This is a tool for you to use to educate providers and organizations about WIC, the need for these important health plan benefits, and existing gaps in providing preventive services.



Included in the platform will be examples of WIC staff working in new partnerships with community

health centers and health plans, tapping the expert WIC nutrition and breastfeeding workforce.

Visit the CWA Engaging Families webpage to register for the upcoming webinar, November 30, to learn more!

Upcoming Statewide Meeting

CWA and California Health Plus Advocates, a division of California Primary Care Association, are co-sponsoring a statewide meeting on November 28 to discuss issues related to health care reform and prevention, specific to nutrition and breastfeeding. Usha Ranji from Kaiser Family Foundation and Lorrene Ritchie of UC Berkeley's Nutrition Policy Institute will set the stage regarding the status of preventive services benefits and population health.

Bobbie Wunsch of Pacific Health Consulting will facilitate our discussion about aspects of providing these benefits among health plan representatives, WIC agencies, health centers, community health workers and promotoras, durable medical equipment providers and more. Stay tuned as we share our progress! Thank you to Sierra Health Foundation for hosting this event.



What If...WIC Improvement Survey

Over the past few months, CWA asked you to tell us how you would improve WIC. Thank you to those who responded — we received many ideas! CWA will publish the results in an issue brief next month and a webinar in December. We will describe improvements that can be made at the local level, and others that might take state or federal approval. Some changes can be made quickly and others are long term.



As a large federal program, with nearly fifty years of service, improvements to WIC are expected. But to be most expeditious, we need to get ideas on the table and begin planning! Visit the CWA Engaging Families webpage to register for the webinar on December 14.

MyWIC: Updating WIC for a New Generation

Today we might call current WIC participants "Millennials," and someday they will be called something else, but they will always include young women. Much has been written describing the needs and expectations of this segment of the population. Many aspects of customer service are available for WIC to adopt in order to remain relevant and valuable to young women.



By providing services and support to women and their families using a combination of in-person and tele/remote/on-line education and counseling, modernizing and streamlining program operations and benefits delivery, and adapting various uses of technology,

WIC would be in a better position to serve young families.

Later this fall, CWA will publish a second issue brief on supporting young women and their families. To check out our first one, visit our Engaging Families webpage. You can also register there for the related webinar on December 7.

World Breastfeeding Celebrations!

From north to south and rural to urban, local California WIC agencies celebrated 2016 World Breastfeeding Week with energy, creativity, partnerships, and fun! Many went beyond that week, celebrating National Breastfeeding Month, Black Breastfeeding Week, and more. In fact, we're pretty sure all of you are celebrating – and promoting – breastfeeding all year long! More event descriptions, photos, and contact info are on our website at <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/breastfeeding/314>. Explore these great ideas to create your own event next August!



Northeastern Rural Health Clinics WIC sponsored a breastfeeding awareness walk down Susanville's main street, plus a Big Latch On where local moms were the featured guest speakers.



Alliance Medical Center WIC has honored exclusively-breastfeeding dyads almost every August since 2001. This year over 50 moms and babies – including four sets of twins – enjoyed lunch, camaraderie, games and nutrition education in Healdsburg.



Delta Health Care WIC's fifth annual celebration in Stockton included Zumba & healthy cooking demos, story time for kids. Nearly 1,000 people participated!



Merced County Community Action Agency WIC celebrated WBW at a Merced high school to highlight the new lactation accommodation law for public school students. Mothers received awards and raffle prizes before kids joined in a happy dance.



Antelope Valley Hospital WIC hosted a walk, health fair, raffle, and other activities in Lancaster and Palmdale, all to promote the message that "Babies Blossom when they are Breastfed."



North County Health Services WIC invited pregnant and breastfeeding participants to a special reception in Oceanside, featuring refreshments, raffle prizes, a chance to share stories and support, and a presentation about weaning.



Best Wishes, Eliana!

After more than 30 years serving San Mateo County, Eliana Bushwalter, RDN, former CWA Board member, retired September 30. She directed the **San Mateo County WIC** and other public health nutrition programs the last 12 years. Before that, she directed the correctional and medical Food and Nutrition Services and was the medical center's Chief Dietitian.

Eliana writes, "I was fortunate to spend the last 12 years working with the most dedicated and committed WIC team ever —although not the largest part of my career, definitely the most meaningful. I did a dietetic internship rotation with the San Mateo WIC Program, back when we ran the 'credit card'



carbon copy vouchers! How cool it is that this 'taste' of public health nutrition would end up capping the pinnacle of my life career? I feel so blessed to have been at the helm of a program that cares so much for families and their young children.

What am I most proud of?

When I came to WIC, our team was out at sites doing their thing, but not too many in county Health System leadership were aware of the good work we were doing. I have always been good at advocating and protecting the programs I am responsible for. Now, our WIC team is an integral part of the system of care for our vulnerable families, actively referring and providing warm hand-offs to other services. This has resulted in early intervention for many families at risk of child abuse and we have received recognition from the Board of Supervisors for our innovation and good work.

I have so enjoyed my time on the CWA Board representing the SF Bay Area and all the great WIC directors. Being a member of CWA and serving on the Board helped me build such positive relationships with WIC directors all over California. Why reinvent the wheel when you have such amazing colleagues who are willing to share best practices? Most important, each of them shared their friendship that will last me a lifetime!

In retirement, Larry and I plan to sail on the Bay, then buy an RV and visit every national park we possibly can. Thanks to all of you in CWA for being so supportive during my years with WIC. I hope we can stay in touch!"

I feel so blessed to have been at the helm of a program that cares so much for families and their young children.

In Memoriam Remembering Ron Ulmer



RONALD WALTER ULMER, known as "Poppa Ron" when he was a unit chief at State WIC, died September 13 in River Park, CA, at age 77 after a long fight against cancer. Following stints at Cal-Trans and the Department of Health and Human Services, Ron devoted years of service to the State WIC Program. Mike Elfant remembers, "He was one of the first people in WIC who knew about IT ... when many thought IT meant 'it' and not Information Technology." Even after his official retirement at WIC in 2002, Ron returned to the program to focus his energy on developing training videos and public service announcements encouraging good nutrition for infants and mothers.

State WIC staff who worked with Ron remember him as hardworking, generous, a confidant, an even-keeled and patient advisor, a "hidden treasure," a geek ("Mr. Apple"), and "one of the nicest people I had the pleasure to work with." Many folks at WIC would come to him for advice about electronics. Ron enjoyed a long interest in technology and astronomy, and will be remembered for "his quiet and comforting way" of handling his IT job at WIC and making his way through this life.

My Story: Valerie Ward

Being 16 and pregnant was never my plan as a young woman, but it changed my life in a miraculous way. I knew I must be accountable for my actions and not allow this unforeseen hitch to deter me from pursuing my education. After birthing my beautiful baby girl, I knew from that moment I wanted to give her the best in life, and it inspired me to work even harder. Not having the best relationship with the baby's father, I had to learn to be independent and work immensely hard for the both of us.

I graduated from high school with a scholarship, inspiring me to attend Mount San Antonio College. Dealing with a multitude of challenges as a new mother, I received my Associate's degree six years later—never giving up, forcing myself to persevere. After nine long years in a toxic relationship, I decided to close one chapter and begin a new one. When I was accepted into the Nutritional Science program at California State University, Los Angeles, I knew it was the opportunity I needed; I have never looked back.

Wanting to graduate as soon as I could, I began taking 13-17 units each quarter while working to provide for my family. During my first quarter, I became pregnant with my second child. I opted to view this as a blessing, and continue my journey. I had worked too hard and overcome too many obstacles to allow this to be my demise. I took only one week off of school after the baby was born, determined to accomplish my goals. Now caring for 2 kids, exclusively breastfeeding, working, and finishing up school, I had even more of a reason to succeed. Receiving my Bachelor's degree in Nutritional Science was the most fulfilling day of my entire life!

I had worked for **PHFE WIC** as a clerk for eight years, and was promoted to a nutritionist shortly after graduation. Next, I want to become a Registered Dietitian and earn a Master's degree in Public Health. I also volunteer as a mentor

to teen mothers at Generation Her, a non-profit organization. While there, I offer support and guidance to these moms from my wealth of experience and knowledge so they, too, can make better choices in life and become successful.

I try to make a positive impact in people's lives any way I can. I certainly would not have accomplished my goals without the help of my family, especially my fiancé. He has truly supported my education and made sacrifices for our family so that we can grow as a collective unit. With determination, drive, passion, and dedication I have learned that anything is possible when you put your heart and mind to the test!

UC Davis Extension is now accepting....

....applications for the **Master of Advanced Study in Maternal and Child Nutrition**. Created specifically for working professionals who want to earn an advanced degree in this highly specialized



area, this part-time program is one-of-a-kind. Learn from internationally known researchers and faculty members who have shaped both U.S. and international policy on maternal and child health.

"There is a growing need for maternal and child health professionals who are equipped to deal with some of today's most serious health concerns: maternal malnutrition during pregnancy, inappropriate infant and child feeding practices, and childhood overweight," says Jane Heinig, executive director of the UC Davis Human Lactation Center and program instructor.

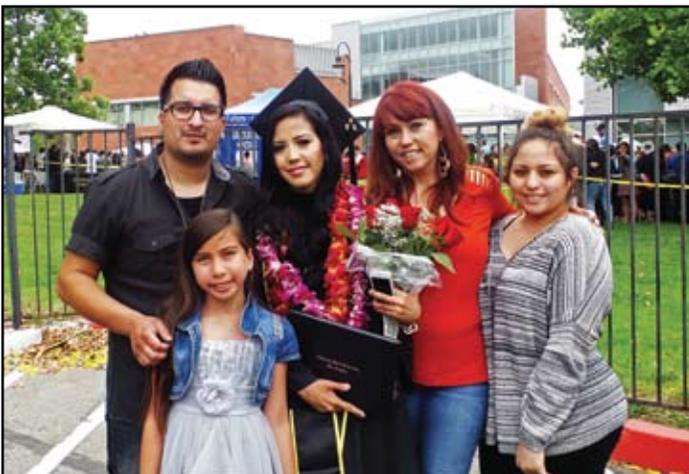
The program trains professionals to design, implement and evaluate nutrition intervention programs for mothers and children from a variety of backgrounds.

Applications are due April 15 for the fall 2017 program.

(800) 752-0881

extension@ucdavis.edu

<http://extension.ucdavis.edu/nutrition>



CNC Scholar Spotlight

While all 2015-16 California Nutrition Corps (CNC) Scholarship Awardees are listed on our website and in the last WIC Watch, we want to highlight two of the awardees here. We hope their stories inspire you to pursue your own career goals! CWA thanks General Mills for being our scholarship sponsor from 2002 to 2015/16.

Reem Salameh - Anne Peterson Memorial Scholarship

"Growing up in a large Middle Eastern family meant buffet-style portions for every meal... in a culture that viewed rejecting any food you're offered as the ultimate sign of disrespect. By the time I reached middle school, gaining and losing weight was the norm. In high school, I made the life-changing decision to say "no" to endless portions and unsuccessful diets, and make nutritious food choices and accepting my body the new norm. That decision led to another: to become a dietitian and help others with empathy and the knowledge that healthy food is transformative."



As a Middle Eastern child growing up in the wake of September 11th terrorist attacks, Reem struggled to reconcile her family's culture with the culture being picked apart in the media. Her challenges with eating and weight, prejudice, and assimilating to American culture ultimately helped prepare her for work as a Degreed Nutritionist at **American Red Cross WIC**. Understanding the struggles of her clients, many of them newly-arrived refugees, helps her educate families about making small, but critical, changes in eating habits and breastfeeding practices.

In addition to serving participants in Arabic, Reem was motivated to learn Spanish in order to reach more people who have historically been restricted from receiving quality health-care and experience greater cultural barriers to healthy practices. Reem enjoys mixing her creativity and photography skills with her passion for nutrition, and looks forward to continuing with WIC as a Registered Dietitian.

"I made the life-changing decision to say 'no' to endless portions and unsuccessful diets, and make nutritious food choices and accepting my body the new norm."



Carolina Zayas - Stefan Harvey Scholarship

"The night I was born in war-torn El Salvador, my parents feared leaving for the hospital in the middle of the night due to the civilian curfew. After emigrating to the U.S., where they hoped to provide me a better future, my Spanish-speaking parents relied on me to be the translator for things that were beyond my understanding. I witnessed first-hand the discrimination, struggles and barriers they faced as immigrants, and learned the value of hard work, education, and opportunities."



As a bilingual nutritionist for **PHFE WIC**, Carolina has encountered many immigrant families similar to her own. With this experience, she can make deeper connections with families while providing meaningful nutrition and breastfeeding education and referrals to community programs for food, shelter, or medical services.

Having finished the PHFE WIC Dietetic Internship in February, Carolina plans to continue giving back to the WIC community close to her heart, where she feels her experience has taught her to be an effective leader. Her supervisors describe her as friendly, calm, respectful, and mature — all great attributes of a leader, for sure. Now a Registered Dietitian, Carolina is taking the CLE course at UCSD this fall. She aims to become a WIC supervisor and help create a place where families feel welcome and understood.

"I witnessed first-hand the discrimination, struggles and barriers they faced as immigrants, and learned the value of hard work, education, and opportunities."

WIC & First 5 Promote Child Development

Alameda County WIC offices and Help Me Grow (HMG), a program of First 5, are working to help families monitor their children's development and act early on concerns by using developmental checklists and placing developmental messaging throughout their offices. Eastmont WIC staff in Oakland designed the project implementation, received two trainings on general child development and on using the checklists, and began distributing checklists to families in November 2014.



Parents who indicate a concern on the checklist or express interest in more information are referred to the HMG



Phone Line. Initial project implementation resulted in over 300 families being referred to HMG for further support. About 27% of families received development or behavior services and about half were referred to other support such as childcare,

the Regional Center, mental health services, and playgroups.

A project evaluation (view a copy of the full report at <http://first5alameda.org/help-me-grow-wic-eastmont-evaluation-report>) found overwhelmingly positive responses from both parents and staff. Parents reported that the checklists helped them understand their child's development and how to help them develop. Nearly all of the WIC staff felt the project helped them support families.

Since the project's launch at Eastmont, implementation continues today at seven additional WIC sites in the county: **Alameda County WIC** in Hayward, Fremont, and Oakland (Telegraph), as well as **La Clinica de la Raza WIC**, **East Oakland Health Center WIC**, **West Oakland Health Center WIC** and **City of Berkeley WIC**.

Expansion continues, as HMG Alameda County works with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to share the success of the project nationally and with other HMGs and interested organizations in California.



WIC Joins Hospital to Support Breastfeeding

From 2010-2013, **Merced County Community Action Agency (MCCAA) WIC** had a breastfeeding peer counselor at the Los Banos office. After funding cuts eliminated the position, **Memorial Hospital Los Banos** (MHLB) noticed that the hospital's breastfeeding rates were declining.



Given her experience as a WIC participant overcoming multiple challenges breastfeeding her first son, Cassandra clearly wanted to use her experience to help others, as she had been helped by WIC staff.

In 2015, MHLB encouraged MCCAA WIC to apply for a community grant, open to any organization that would impact the health of community members. When awarded the grant, MCCAA hired Cassandra Soto to assist new moms with breastfeeding at MHLB each weekday, run a breastfeeding support group, and provide breastfeeding classes and support at the Los Banos and Dos Palos WIC offices.

Their grant goal was to raise breastfeeding initiation rates by 6 percent in the Los Banos and Dos Palos population in one year. The results: initiation rates rose from 57 to 70 percent! A second goal was to raise exclusive breastfeeding rates at six months by 5 percent; once again they exceeded their goal when these rates rose from 17 to 32 percent. For all infants breastfed at all, rates increased from 19 to 25 percent.



Although the grant has ended, MCCAA received more Peer Counselor funding through WIC. Today, Cassandra continues to provide breastfeeding support to moms at MHLB as well as at the Los Banos and Dos Palos WIC offices. She also works at the Obanion clinic twice monthly, which had never had peer counselor services.

Since MHLB is working toward Baby Friendly Hospital designation, this partnership with WIC helped them move one step forward in that process.

"Memorial Hospital Los Banos is very excited to collaborate with WIC. Your group brings a lot of knowledge to the table."

—Misty Mendonca, Family Birthing Center Manager, MHLB

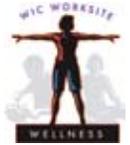
Men's Health Symposium's a "10!"

All 15 male employees of the **SLAHP WIC Program** attended the South Los Angeles Health Projects' 7th Annual Men's Health Symposium held in late July. After a hearty breakfast and a wonderful welcome from Executive Director Heidi Kent, the action started. Representatives from Health Net were there to take health readings followed by a presentation from Tracy Simmons about how to use one's numbers for better health. Andy Padilla followed with a heart-pumping physical activity break and a talk on customer service and communication. One employee attending was quoted as saying: "This was a 10 out of 10!"



WWW by the Numbers

Did you know that CWA's WIC Worksite Wellness Campaign has been going strong since 2009? Here's a snapshot, by the numbers:



- **45**, or 51%, of California's 83 local WIC agencies are certified Well WIC Worksites
- **80%** of California WIC participants are served by these Well WIC Worksites, and thus benefit from employees working within a "culture of mutual support and physical, mental, and emotional well-being"
- **20+** more local agencies have committed but are not yet certified
- **2017** could be the year we certify more agencies – will yours be one of them?

Find out more at <http://calwic.org/focus-areas/wic-worksite-wellness> or contact Margaret at maumann@calwic.org. **Let's make it happen!**

Good Reads & Resources

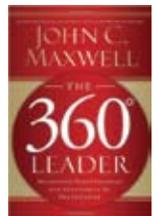
In the Spring 2016 *WIC Watch*, we asked, "What are you reading?" Here are two resources your peers recommend as helpful in becoming a competent and confident WIC and public health professional.



Ellen Gowen at **North County**

Health Services WIC appreciates the weekly emails she gets from the Year of Happy course: <https://positivepsychlopedia.com/year-of-happy/>. Ellen shares, "This is the second year I have done this and I find it helpful for creating wellness presentations to staff." Sign up to start in the New Year!

Lisa Gribble of **Riverside University Health System Public Health WIC** in Indio recommends The 360° Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization by John C. Maxwell. Lisa reports, "I learned how to 'Lead Up' by looking for ways to lighten the load of my leaders and being prepared when I take my leader's time. I learned to 'Lead Across' by focusing on *completing* my fellow supervisors, not *competing* with them. Finally, I learned to 'Lead Down' by seeing everyone as a '10', placing people in their strength zones, and helping each team member develop as a person."



Share your favorites! Email Margaret (maumann@calwic.org) a brief description of a book, website, app, video, or other resource and how you've found it helpful. We'll gladly share it with our readers!



California WIC Association
 1450 Drew Avenue, Suite 150
 Davis, CA 95618

CWA Directors 2015-2016

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Samar McGregor, President
PHFE WIC Program

Tina Canales, President Elect
Clinica Sierra Vista WIC Program

Rose McIsaac, Past President
Ampla Health WIC Program

Debra Leigh, Treasurer
Planned Parenthood Orange County

Kelly Wilson, Secretary
Glenn County WIC Program

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Irene Salazar, Orange-LA Basin Region

Veronica Castillo, Bay Region

Mary Sammer, Great South Region

Ilse Arrambide, Central Valley Region

Lisa Matthews, Delta/Sierra
Gold Region

Jacob Dowling, Sierra Cascade Region

Jennifer Remmers, North Coast Region

SMALL AGENCY CAUCUS

Shirlee Runnings

NATIVE AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE

Irene Mason

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Kiran Saluja, Andrea Weiss

Tracie Barrow

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIRS

Chris Husing, Vacant

Tell Your Story & Inspire Your Colleagues!

**Send us your agency's article ideas, photos, and best practices
any time, and by February 17, 2017 for the
Spring Conference Edition.**

**Keep
us
up to
date!**

**To update your e-mail or mailing address, request more
copies, or submit article ideas or drafts, contact
Margaret Aumann at:**

maumann@calwic.org

CWA, 1450 Drew Ave., Ste. 150 • Davis, CA 95618

530.750.2280 phone • 530.758.7780 fax

**Read this and past issues of the WIC Watch online at
<http://calwic.org/news-a-publications/wic-watch>.
Share the link with colleagues, family & friends!**



What Does WIC Mean to You?

*In a year-long effort to dig deep and build up their WIC Team, **Sonoma County WIC** staff spent an hour of each staff meeting working on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) issues such as accountability.*

Ten months into the process, the facilitator asked each of the WIC staff to write down three separate words describing what WIC meant to them. She then made a "word cloud" mural out of it and presented it to staff.

Director Tracie Barrow says, "It was a culmination of building trust in the group. It has been hard work but we are a greater team because of it. It now is displayed proudly in our Santa Rosa WIC waiting room!" See page 2, also.

Want to create a similar unique experience for your agency staff? Create a word cloud online (<http://tagul.com> is one option) and print it on canvas (try <http://canvaschamp.com>).



Save the Dates

**California
Breastfeeding Summit**
January 25-27 • Anaheim
californiabreastfeeding.org

NWA Leadership Conference
February 26-28 • Washington, DC
nwica.org

**CWA Annual Conference
& Trade Show**
April 9-12 • San Diego
calwic.org/events