

HealthVisions Update

*HealthVisions Midwest, Inc.—Lake County, IN
Health Ministry Partnership— St. Joseph, Marshall, Elkhart County, IN
HealthVisions Fort Wayne—Allen County, IN
Living for Life—Starke County, IN
Chicago Health Collaborative – Chicago, IL
Healthy Communities of LaPorte County, IN
HealthVisions East St. Louis, IL*

Volume 5 Issue 1: February 2005

This issue features: HealthVisions Midwest Lake County, IN
Maternal Child Health Network

The Maternal Child Health Network of Lake County was established to consolidate efforts to ensure that all available resources within the County are utilized to coordinate prenatal care services for at risk pregnant women. This network of fifteen agencies is able to concentrate on specific challenges that are the root causes of infant mortality, and low birth weight.

HealthVisions Midwest staffs four offices in Gary and one in East Chicago. Eleven Community Health Workers and five Care Coordinators provide a variety of services to the pregnant women. Some of these services include clothes, furniture, food, baby supplies and most important medical care coordination. In the past two years we have served 725 women. The Indiana State Office of Maternal Child Health funds this program.



There are many wonderful stories of new life as a result of the work of the Maternal Child Health Network managed by HealthVisions Midwest, which serves pregnant women in Lake County. Here are a few success stories.



Promotores de Salud

Promotores de Salud Maternal e Infantil serves over one hundred clients. Our attention and focus has been the Latino population for which we provide care coordination services. I would like to share a few of our real success stories. For the sake of maintaining confidentiality I will refer to our client as “Maggie”. Rachel and Eva met “Maggie” during her second trimester of pregnancy. “Maggie” experienced many struggles during her pregnancy. Having been told she had cancerous cells in her uterus, and diabetes, which would require insulin, “Maggie” also faced the stress of loosing her home. As if all of these factors weren’t enough, her Medicaid coverage had been suspended for reasons beyond her control. This resulted in her inability to pay for supplies for her diabetes.

Upon meeting “Maggie”, we immediately recognized that she needed additional support, both emotional and financial. Our program was able to provide that for her and she was able to deliver a healthy baby boy. “Maggie” is now cancer free and owns her own home, with help from our program and the community. Diabetes is an illness that she has to deal with but she has continually learned through training how to control her blood sugars and has adopted a healthier lifestyle.

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SM came to **N.A.T.A.L. E. (Nurturing Assistance to Assure Life Expectancy)** in the first trimester of pregnancy, and was considering an abortion. Due to the resources, referrals and educational information she received from the Community Health Workers, Director, family and friends she decided to have the baby. October 21, 2003 she delivered a healthy baby girl by caesarean. The baby is now one year of age. SM is now employed by Bank One. She received voucher dollars from Step Ahead, which enabled her to begin working. She is now able to pay for her own childcare, and has returned to college part-time. She has her own apartment and a small used car. She is engaged to the father of the baby. He was recently hired by USX Corporation. SM is actively involved with different community church organizations telling her story to other young girls in the hope that they will choose abstinence, but in the event they find themselves pregnant, she also tells them to choose life for themselves and their babies, and that there are many organizations such as the one's we referred her to that can help.

Office: 1021 West 5th Ave
Gary



We Do Make a

Difference.....

Sophie is one of our most outstanding and admired clients at **Great Beginnings**. She came to us as a referral from the Sojourner Truth homeless shelter. Sophie came to Gary from Illinois with a young man, who had promised to love, cherish and take care of her. She found herself homeless and in the depths of despair. He was unable to keep his promises and had to desert his family. His departure left Sophie homeless and in the depths of despair. She had no job, no family, no friends, with one child and a second one on the way. She was depressed and hopeless when Sister Peg brought her to our door. Vowing not to lose her children to DCFS she listened to everything we told her. She attended counseling classes, and began to tell her story to others, who often think “ if she cam survive all she has gone through so can I”. She impresses everyone she meets with her willingness to share her story. She is truly one who pulled her self up with no bootstraps. She recently received a round of applause as she told her story to a group of forty participants at a town meeting held at Healthy East Chicago. There was not a dry eye in the house when she finished. She was also the special guest at an awards ceremony given by Sojourner Truth House, where she still volunteers. She now has an apartment and is working at a local grocery store. She is also looking for a better paying job with affordable health benefits.

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Maternal Child Health Network - Prenatal Care Coordinators, Community Health Workers and Director Clementine DuBose