Foot Prints

Healthier Moms & Babies

Quarterly Newsletter Fall 2007

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"Better babies one baby at a time"

HMB receives grant for consulting services

The Foellinger Foundation has awarded Healthier Moms and Babies a Williams Lecture Grant to receive consulting services. Through the Foundation's generosity, Peter Brinckerhoff, a nationally known authority on nonprofits and board governance issues, will advise seven area nonprofits, including Healthier Moms and Babies, on generational issues.

Peter Brinkenhoff, Author of "Generations, the Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit"

To be eligible for this grant, agency representatives had to attend Mr. Brinckerhoff's lecture on May 18 and the workshop that followed. The grant application required a summary of the agencies' generational issues and what advice was needed from Mr. Brinckerhoff.

Healthier Moms and Babies asked to be considered for the grant because its Baby Boomer staff is providing services to Generation Xers and @s. Because we will soon be developing a website, we asked for assistance to assure that it appeals both to potential young clients and donors of all ages. We also asked for help in eventually attracting some staff and board members in the same generation as our clients.

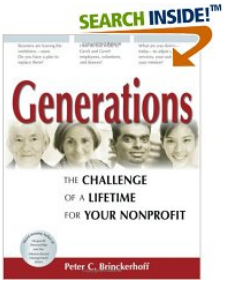
An acclaimed author on nonprofit issues, Mr Brinckerhoff shared the results of his research from his latest book, "Generations, the Challenge of a Lifetime for Your Nonprofit" in the May lecture. With an engaging and often humorous style, Mr. Brinckerhoff described the various ways aging Baby Boomers will impact nonprofits. He also described the differences among Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (which he refers to as Generation @) in attitudes towards work and work/life balance. In addition, he noted that each generation views and uses technology differently.

These differences, according to Mr. Brinckerhoff, will affect nonprofit boards, staff, volunteers and donors, so it behooves agencies to consider the needs of each generation in its planning.

Cheryl Taylor, President of Foellinger Foundation

"The intent is twofold: first, to inspire local leaders with insights from a top expert in the field; and second, to provide funds to help those leaders strengthen their organizations to make a difference in the lives of people they serve," said Foellinger Foundation President Cheryl Taylor.

"This grant will help Healthier Moms and Babies address some burning issues with definitive answers. It will surely strengthen our organizational effectiveness", said Sally Edington, Director.



Peter Brinckenkoff's latest book discussing the generations and their influence on nonprofits

HEALTH CORNER

Nausea and vomiting are common, although very unpleasant symptoms in early pregnancy. But what happens when these symptoms persist during the pregnancy and result in weight loss? Dr Thomas Wheeler, Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist with Women's Health Advantage, helps us understand the troubling condition of hyperemesis gravidarum.

HMB: What distinguishes hyperemesis gravidarum from "morning sickness"?
Dr Wheeler: Routine nausea and vomiting affects two thirds of all pregnancies before 9 weeks gestation. Hyperemesis is the extreme end of the spectrum affecting one of every one hundred gravidas (pregnant women). It is characterized by persistant nausea and vomiting leading to acute starvation, large ketonuria (evidence that the body is breaking down fat stores and muscle in the absence of food) and the loss of 5% of pre-pregnancy weight.

HMB: What causes such severe vomiting?
Dr Wheeler: The exact etiology is unknown—most postulate hormonal stimulus and a psychological predisposition. Some patients demonstrate great sensitivity to increased estradiol and peak levels of BHCG (hormones). A history of migraines, motion sickness and poor adaptation to stress are associated.

HMB: How could this compromise the baby or pregnant woman?
Dr Wheeler: Myth has it that nausea portrends a lower risk of pregnancy loss, but this is little solace for patients with hyperemesis. Maternal psychosocial morbidity is greater than the physical risk, but vitamin B1 deficiency has been reported. Data on low-birthweight infants exist but are not consistent.

(Continued on page 4)

Coordinator's MESSAGE

Ah, the passage of time. In the fall of 1996 when the first babies were born to women that Healthier Moms and Babies served, my own children were in the 9th and 6th grade. This spring that former sixth grader graduated from college; in June, her older brother got married.

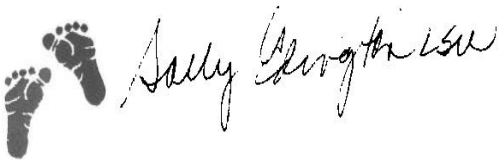
And those little babies that were born in November and December of 1996 would be ten now, turning 11 years old in a few months. By my calculations they are now beginning fifth grade—the oldest children in their elementary schools if they are in public schools. Some of them are probably exhibiting signs of puberty. I hope their mothers remember now the calm and consistency we advised when their nearly one year olds tested them back then.

The babies who were born five and six year ago, are now in kindergarten and first grade. Just beginning their academic careers, I hope they have an appreciation for books and reading that started with the board books we gave them from the Literacy Alliance in their first year of life.

And the little three and four year old who are going to Headstart or preschool--I hope they are happy, curious and confident little people, ready to play well together. I hope the mothers who needed a little encouragement and modeling to elicit responses from their babies and help to regulate their fussy periods will encourage their successes at school.

There are probably about 250 children starting school this year who were involved with Healthier Moms and Babies during their first year of life. The Center for Premature Infant Health and Development at the University of Southern California has determined that 50% of babies born preterm will require special education. We hope that our intervention spared our babies this fate.

So as I fight the urge to buy mass quantities of paper, notebooks, pens and pencils for my own children, I think about what children need to succeed in school beside supplies. In the passage of time, the mothers who were mentored and the babies who were born healthy and at term, and were read to during the first year of life should fare well at school. And with your continuing help, the babies we serve today will be ready for school, too.



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Healthier Moms & Babies Notebook

Baby Laura is six months old and trying to crawl. She loves sweet potatoes and bananas. Her smile is infectious, and she is a bundle of joy. But bringing Laura into the world was no easy feat.

Last October Laura's mother, Megan, was pregnant and miserable. She had been vomiting since her pregnancy began in May. After losing 15 pounds, her doctor inserted a pic line to provide nutrition for her. She had had preterm labor and was taking medicine to prevent it. She had been spotting, leaking amniotic fluid, and she was anemic. Her doctor had ordered bedrest for her, but with two older children (both of them born preterm) and two stepsons to care for, this was nearly impossible.

With her husband working full-time and her mother in Ohio, Megan poured her heart out to her best friend. Pregnant herself, there wasn't much her friend could do but listen. She did have a suggestion for Megan, however. Why not call Healthier Moms and Babies, she said. "I'm working with them and they've helped me a lot." Megan discussed the idea with her doctor, who encouraged her to call.

Feeling "very lost and very confused", Megan called Healthier Moms and Babies. She worked with social worker Mary Crawford. At each visit, she felt more educated about her pregnancy and more reassured. She didn't know that women could get through a pregnancy successfully with her problems.

But Mary helped not only with health education. In November, it became clear to Mary that Megan's family wasn't going to have much of a Christmas. It was too late to get help from the Christmas Bureau, but Mary turned Megan's family into a local church which provided gifts for the children and the baby on the way.

After Laura was born, there were problems with the family's house. Mold was discovered, and Megan was beside herself with worry. Mary suggested ways to work their homeowner's insurance company to remedy the problem.

Megan says Mary has been more than an impersonal caseworker. Their visits are relaxed and comfortable, and Megan says the children and even the dog "see Mary as a friend". With Healthier Moms and Babies, Megan says, "when life is hard, and you open the door, someone's there to help."

Picture courtesy of Celebrity Kids at Jefferson

MEET BRENDA

Healthier Moms and Babies was inundated with resumes when we advertised for an office assistant to replace Rachel Foster, who moved away after her college graduation. We decided her replacement should be someone who can manage the volumes of documents we are sent and produce, and who can also assist with the many reports we must generate for our funders. In addition, she must still be the reassuring and welcoming voice on the phone for the clients and potential clients who call our office.

From the resumes and interviews, one person rose to the top. Brenda Geiger began work on June 18, and she has proven herself to be an organizational wizard and the warm voice who answers the phone. Welcome, Brenda!

Name: Brenda Geiger

Hometown: Fort Wayne IN

Education: Elmhurst High School, AAS in Accounting at Ivy Tech State College

Work Experience: ITT AC/D, accounting and human resources; NAVL Inc, payroll department. Most recently was the secretary/bookkeeper at Sherbondy Associates and a secretary and school assistant at Fort Wayne Community Schools.

Family: Husband, Tim, works in building maintenance at Snider High School. Children Eric (11) and Lauren (4).

Favorite thing about working at HMB: Being a part of this wonderful program makes me feel like I am making a positive difference in moms' and babies' lives. What a rewarding job!

Fort Wayne Medical Society Foundation

Better Babies One Baby at a Time

Healthier Moms & Babies
Rooms 213—215 Plaza Office Building
700 Broadway
Fort Wayne IN 46802-1402

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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(Continued from page 2)

HMB: What treatments do you usually prescribe to alleviate hyperemesis?
Dr Wheeler: I start cheap and easy, then move forward. Behavior and diet modifications first—avoid the stimuli when possible. Phenothiazinines are inexpensive but can cause acute dysphoria (a restless, anxious state). Ondansetron (Zofram) is very helpful and is now available as a generic.
HMB: What's the worst case scenario?
Dr Wheeler: When all else has failed, we've had luck with high doses of cortico steroids. 95% of affected women get better after the first trimester. If you're one of the 5% who doesn't, you might have a PIC line through the whole pregnancy.
HMB: What are some lesser known over-the-counter and home remedies you might recommend for pregnant women with mild to moderate nausea and vomiting?
Dr Wheeler: Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) helps many. Ginger capsules may be helpful, and it's safe. Doxylamine is available in the OTC sleep aids and has a long track record of safety.

Thanks, Dr Wheeler! For more information on nausea and vomiting, check the book, "What To Expect When You're Expecting" 3rd Edition by Heidi Murkoff, Arlene Eisenberg and Sandee Hathaway, BSN; Workman Publishing.

The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation is matching donations with individuals and business dollar for dollar up to $7,500. Donate now and watch your gift double in size!

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