

PARTNERS IN COMMUNITY

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"A Level of Excellence in Community Health" A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

DEAR FRIENDS,

This fall, fierce hurricanes nearly devastated low-income communities that have been carefully building structures to assure good health. Floods in Appalachia received less attention, but caused their own brand of misery for some of our country's most disadvantaged families. Because we are at war, young people from places where opportunities are so limited are leaving to serve, and some are making the ultimate sacrifice. Yet, **even with these dramatic challenges, a level of excellence in community health continues to exist in towns and counties across the South where we are partners to local health efforts.**

I spent much of the last few weeks in West Virginia, visiting programs that meet community health needs in cost efficient, creative, effective ways. Their level of excellence is the result of an enormous amount of work. A young mother in Fayette County, West Virginia, described her community's health outreach workers: "They go the extra mile. If they got paid for all that they do, they would be the next Rockefeller!"

Here is a description of some of this wonderful work. It **links community people who understand the strengths of their peers with university students, staff, faculty, agencies and clinics in five states, and hundreds of towns.** It makes people healthier, and it is transforming for all concerned. **Please be part of it with your contribution.**

Sincerely, *Barbara Clinton*

Student Community Health Coalition sponsors National "Make a Difference Day"

APPROXIMATELY 200 volunteers organized by the Student Community Health Coalition (SCHC) convened in north Nashville on October 22. They painted murals inside the Bordeaux Enhanced Options School, painted and landscaped at Cumberland Elementary School, expanded a garden dedicated to child victims of gun crimes, and added a community garden to the North Nashville YMCA. Ladawna Parham, SCHC Program Director, noted, "During times of crisis around the world and across the country, it is important to remember that opportunities exist daily for us to serve our communities."



AmeriCorps members help expand a community garden dedicated to child victims of gun violence.

SCHC Director Ladawna Parham receives 2005 Excellence in Aging Award

The Greater Nashville Regional Council Area Agency on Aging and Disability honored Ladawna and the SCHC for keeping seniors healthy and independent. **Under Ladawna's leadership, SCHC provides thousands of free health screenings, provide sight-saving intervention and referrals, free early breast cancer detection, arthritis fitness classes, and loneliness outreach to isolated seniors.**

MIHOW gives new mothers the know-how: VU program pairs low-income moms with women from their communities as mentors

By SUZANNE NORMAND BLACKWOOD
Staff Writer, Nashville *Tennessean*

SOUTH NASHVILLE - YEARS AGO, Vanderbilt University medical and nursing students went to Appalachia to hold health fairs for the impoverished communities there.

Their frustration about the absence of basic health services led to the decision to found **MIHOW, or the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker program.** "They were very moved by the health care services needed in these underserved areas," said program director Minda Lazarov.

The 23-year-old program is operated by the Center for Health Services and **has sites in Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Mississippi.** It helps low-income, expecting and new mothers get the prenatal and postnatal care they need. **The program's approach is to have women from the community who have already experienced motherhood visit other women on a regular basis, serving as mentors, offering information about nutrition, child development, parenting, and links to medical and social services.** The program has traditionally served whites and African-Americans from poor rural areas. But **in recent years, MIHOW has reached out in cities and to immigrant families.** Mothers helped by the program include women from Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

In Latin America, children are prized; motherhood is sacred. But in the U.S., immigrant mothers may not get services because of a language barrier or fear of deportation. And that's where MIHOW comes into the picture. "Whether native born or not, all MIHOW families are extremely low-income," said Lazarov, "and many live at half of the poverty level." Lazarov said someone once referred to a MIHOW worker as "like a second mom."



A West Virginia MIHOW outreach worker, *right*, makes a monthly home visit to a young mother and her 4 month-old daughter. The focus of this one-hour visit was appropriate infant feeding practices.



The Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program has served more than 12,000 families throughout the Southeast since it started in 1982.

Community Scholar and Emphasis Programs Launch Student-Run Free Clinic

MEDICAL STUDENTS Kristina Collins and Katie Cox have a passion for solving health care access problems. They spent the summer of 2004 as Community Scholars, preparing for **the launch of a student run free clinic**. The following summer, medical students Dana Guyer and Sara Horvitz continued their work. Working with community residents, Katie, Kristina, Dana, Sarah, and 60 other medical students teamed with United Neighborhood Health Services and the Salvation Army. Now, a year after the first community survey, **the doors of the Shade Tree Clinic are open, serving north Nashville neighborhoods where residents have little or no access to care**. Open two days per week, the clinic provides health care, diagnostic tests and screenings, health care, education, and social services.

SCHC Breast Health Initiative

LED BY AMERICORPS MEMBER and social work student Natalie Worley, the Student Community Health Coalition's Breast Health Advocate program has ambitious goals. **In 2006, 1,000 senior women will receive education on breast health, mammography referrals, and help with navigating the health care system to receive a mammogram**. In addition, 300 senior women will receive free clinical breast exams at health fairs in 13 counties. Any woman whose screening detects an abnormality will receive follow-up services. A member of the team of trained peer educator Breast Health Advocates will confer one-on-one with the senior woman on issues of breast health.

In 2005:

- ◆ 1645 women, including minorities and underserved women, were educated about breast cancer and breast self-examination.
- ◆ 242 senior women who had never had a mammogram or had not had one within the last year were referred to mammography services.
- ◆ 4 new Breast Health Advocates representing a minority population were recruited and trained.

THE ADVANTAGE OF CONTRIBUTING NOW The Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 (KETRA)

GIFTS MADE to the Center for Health Services between August 28 and December 31, 2005 may serve as a tax deduction in amounts up to 100% of your Adjusted Gross Income. That means that a donor who earns \$200,000 per year can deduct up to \$200,000 in charitable contributions in 2005 if the gifts consist of cash and fall within the qualifying period. (Normally, charitable deductions cannot exceed 50% of a taxpayer's AGI.)

For example: John Smith is retired and earns \$60,000 per year. In other years, his maximum charitable deduction would be \$30,000 (50% of his AGI). But this year, he decides to accelerate his giving and donates \$60,000 from a bank CD to the CHS, or any other qualified nonprofit entity. If the donation is made before 12/31/05, he may claim the full \$60,000 as a charitable deduction.

These KETRA charitable gifts enjoy another advantage for high-income donors. They are exempt from the usual 3% phase-out of itemized deductions for taxpayers whose income exceeds \$146,000.

This update provides only partial information about the new law. Please consult your tax advisor in advance about claiming deductions.

Service Training for Environmental Progress (STEP) Examines Wetlands

CONCERNED THAT the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and the Corps of Engineers do not take **action against developers and others who destroy wetlands**, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Sierra Club designed a project to get at the facts. During summer 2005, students Thomas Upchurch (University of the South) and Tatum Clinton-Selin (Rice University) inspected wetlands that developers or municipalities had promised to reclaim in return for permits for development. Only a minority of the wetlands they inspected were healthy; some were considered absolute failures.

The mission of the Vanderbilt Center for Health Services is to facilitate community-based solutions to problems that impact human health.

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